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SENATOR JOHN C. LIU  
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TRANSPORTATION

July 22, 2024

Janno Lieber, Chairman  
Metropolitan Transit Authority  
2 Broadway  
New York, NY 10004

Dear Chairman Lieber,

I am writing on behalf of concerned bus riders of northeast Queens about the Proposed Final Plan of the Queens Bus Redesign. After gathering extensive feedback from various neighborhoods, it is clear that several critical issues must be addressed in the Final Plan to adequately expand service, increase frequency, and fill the many gaps in the existing public transit system. Without addressing these important concerns from riders, many aspects of the Proposed Final Plan seem to be more intent on cutting costs rather than serving the actual goals of the bus redesign, which is to meet customers' priorities for more reliable service, faster travel, better connections and ease of use. As you have previously projected a balanced MTA operating budget through 2027, the MTA must provide a clear explanation for how bus service will actually be increased overall.

Throughout Queens, bus riders are concerned that nearly every express bus line is slated for a reduction in service. Examples include the elimination of the QM3, which would add transfers to northeast Queens commutes to Midtown, and reductions to the QM5 would increase wait times from 30 to 51 minutes during peak hours.

Reductions in express bus service will cost bus riders more than just time, but also money. QM3 commuters will now have to take the local bus and transfer to the LIRR to get to Midtown, costing \$7.90 during off-peak hours and \$9.90 during peak hours, a significant jump from the \$7.00 they currently pay on the QM3. Given Queens' significant lack of subway access, express buses continue to be an indispensable part of daily commutes to work, and the MTA must reconsider these reductions.

In Bayside, residents and businesses have expressed concerns about the reduction of service to the Bell Boulevard business district. Rerouting the Q31 away from Bell Boulevard to Utopia Parkway will significantly harm local businesses and reduce commuter access to the Bayside Long Island Rail Road station. This reroute leaves Bell Boulevard with only one remaining bus line, the Q13, and would force multiple transfers for current Q31 riders who use the line to access Bell Boulevard for work, shopping, and dining.

Two high schools - Bayside and Francis Lewis, that currently have direct access to Bell Boulevard via the Q31, would now require transfers. Likewise, commutes to and from other area schools would

become more complex, leaving students from Cardozo High School, Queens Community College, York College, and St. John's University unable to conveniently access Bell Boulevard.

Although the bus line reroutes and stop spacing in the Proposed Final Plan would increase the speed of individual bus lines, constituents have expressed concerns that the removal of stops will lead to multiple transfers and disproportionately impact seniors and people with mobility issues.

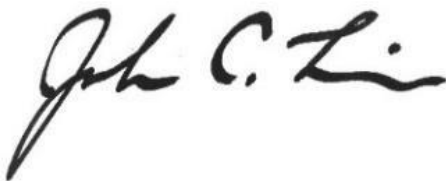
In Flushing, the Q27 currently services many senior centers and religious institutions around Kissena Boulevard and Holly Avenue. Residents are concerned the planned Q27 reroute to Sanford Avenue and Parsons Boulevard will isolate this area's numerous senior citizens from important institutions like the SelfHelp Benjamin Rosenthal Senior Center, Hindu Temple Center of North America, BAPS temple, and many other popular destinations. Although it is stated on the route profile that the Q17 and Q25 would serve the discontinued segment, neither route is planned to service Holly Avenue.

The change would add a 10 minute walk (0.4 miles) for senior citizens traveling to the Benjamin Rosenthal Senior Center from the nearest Q27 stop and a seven-minute walk (0.3 miles) to the Hindu Temple Society of North America. Walk times for shoppers on the Kissena Business Corridor and PS24, as well as other religious centers, would also increase. It is important that these reroutes consider the disproportionate impacts on senior citizens and people with mobility issues.

Finally, the MTA plan must address bottleneck choke points, such as Main Street and Roosevelt Avenue, which continue to cause delays for downtown Flushing commuters and adversely affecting local businesses that rely on clear and accessible storefronts. The map of the Proposed Final Plan shows 12 bus lines that go through that intersection which will inevitably exacerbate crowding and congestion in the area.

As we approach the final phase of the redesign, the MTA must incorporate these community concerns into the final plan and engage more closely with riders in northeast Queens to develop solutions that better serve our needs. As the largest bus network in the five boroughs, it is imperative that this redesign improve service for all residents. With the MTA projecting a balanced budget through 2027, it is equally important to explain to riders how the redesign will increase overall bus service. I hope for your prompt attention to these matters and look forward to constructive communication to resolve them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John C. Li". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping underline.