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February 17, 2011

Joseph Lhota
Chairman, Metropolitan Transportation Authority
347 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10017-3739

Dear Chairman Lhota:

Yesterday, we convened a meeting of Williamsburg and Greenpoint small businesses to discuss what many see as a transportation crisis in the neighborhood.

Recent shutdowns along the L line, including on critical weekends for businesses, have had a damaging impact on the neighborhood. This meeting was an opportunity for local businesses to share their thoughts on potential ways to mitigate the impact of future L train shutdowns, as well as to discuss transportation issues arising from the massive increase in ridership we have seen in this neighborhood.

We were overwhelmed by the turn out, and by the resourceful input from the over 30 small business owners in attendance, as well as District Leaders Lincoln Restler and Linda Minucci, the Northside Merchants Association, and Community Board 1. We would appreciate your consideration of and response to the following proposed ideas:

- Scheduling work on the L train overnight on weeknights as part of the 'FASTRACK' program that the MTA has implemented on other lines.
- Continuing coordination between the MTA and small businesses to ensure shutdowns are not scheduled during key weekends, such as Taste of Williamsburg or Small Business Saturday.
- Working with the EDC and East River Ferry to increase ferries, cross-honor Metrocards, and/or offer vouchers valid on the ferry during shutdown days.
- Offering buses across the Williamsburg Bridge and between Court Square, Bedford Ave, and Marcy Ave during shutdown days.
- Not shutting down the L and the 7, or the L and the G, on the same days.
- Not shutting down the L over three-day weekends.

As the MTA's September 2011 report to Senator Squadron underscored, the L train has seen dramatic growth in ridership in recent years. Weekday ridership has increased by 93 percent since 1998; weekend ridership has seen an incredible 141 percent increase. Commerce along the L line depends heavily on weekend visitors - especially in Williamsburg and Greenpoint where the L is the primary subway line between Manhattan and Brooklyn.




Small business owners face great pressure at a time when the smallest hiccup or interruption of cash flow can mean the difference between surviving or not. Combined with the dramatic growth the North Brooklyn community has seen in recent years, there is clearly a need for improved coordination on transit issues.

We are grateful that the MTA has been responsive to these needs in the past by agreeing to increase L train service and rescheduling planned shutdowns during Armory Arts Week, and we look forward to your responses on the above. We hope that we can continue to work together to find long-term solutions to North Brooklyn's growing transportation needs.

Please contact Senator Squadron's office at [212-298-5565](tel:212-298-5565) to discuss these proposals and other solutions.

Sincerely,


DANIEL SQUADRON
State Senator
MARTY MARKOWITZ
Brooklyn Borough President
JOSEPH LENTOL
Assembly Member
STEPHEN LEVIN
City Council Member

cc: Seth Pinsky, President, New York City Economic Development Corporation