



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Diane J. Savino

Letter to Mayor Bloomberg Regarding Transit Proposals

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August 4, 2009

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Honorable Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Bloomberg:

It is with great enthusiasm that I read of your support of the transit improvements every Island commuter has long hoped for. Some of these proposals are sound steps that would alleviate the longest commute in the nation that many of my constituents endure on a daily basis.

I was impressed with your embrace of the common sense proposal that Staten

Island elected officials have been asking for since 2004, asking for the removal of Verrazano-Narrows Toll Plaza's mechanical arms at the booths and replacing them with an electronic toll collection system for violators. In addition we hope for your support in the removal of the eastbound toll booths.

Moreover, your support, for the defunct North Shore Rail is certainly welcome. Your recognition of the reinvigorated North Sore Rail, coupled with Senator Charles Schumer and our Island elected's long time efforts will at long last, bring this project towards completion

As you are aware, you maintain four votes on the MTA board and those votes are needed to obtain financial support for these projects. Furthermore, as additional action is needed by both the Legislature and the Governor, in order to obtain the legislative and/or regulatory permission for these projects, I am willing to go with you to Albany and seek support for these initiatives.

However, I have some concerns with aspects of your proposal and the reasoning behind them. For example, you are proposing that the fare for cross town bus trips in Manhattan should be eliminated and that the majority of those benefitting from this would be outer borough commuters.

I suggest that a large percentage of riders, on a newly free cross town bus would, in fact be tourists, who would actually delay an already slow bus ride, by hopping on and off while sightseeing.

Furthermore, I am not inclined to subsidize a midtown bus, with no real proof that outer borough commuters will benefit, when fares have risen and bus routes in South Brooklyn and Staten Island are on the chopping block.

Perhaps eliminating the fare at the St. George Station for the Staten Island rapid transit (SIRT) could work for the same reasons stated for eliminating the cross town bus fare. That station is the only collection point on the SIRT and it would make sense, as the overwhelming majority of riders transfer to either the Ferry or the subway and bus, while commuting to work in Manhattan.

Finally, eliminating the fare on the S40 bus route would speed up a notoriously slow cross Island bus, which happens to closely mimic the defunct North Shore Rail right

of way along Richmond Terrace.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter of great importance. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Diane J. Savino
23rd State Senate District