HOYLMAN QUESTIONS MTA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ON FORTHCOMING L TRAIN SHUTDOWN

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL   February 16, 2017

q

Hoylman: My constituents demand a seat at the table."

ALBANY – Yesterday, during the Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Transportation in Albany, State Senator Brad Hoylman (D/WF-Manhattan) questioned MTA interim Executive

Director Veronique Hakim on community concerns regarding the forthcoming L train shutdown, focusing on the need for greater public participation in any potential study or proposal to mitigate traffic issues along the 14th Street transit corridor during the 18-month closure.

During his remarks, Senator Hoylman asked Executive Director Hakim for a formal commitment "to meet with the local community" about the specifics of any feasibility study on a plan to relieve congestion and improve traffic flow along the 14th Street transit corridor during the Canarsie Tunnel repairs. In particular, he emphasized the need for "constituents to have a role, not just examining the results of the study, but participating in its design." Hoylman stressed that the MTA must closely engage with residents' concerns over increases in vehicular traffic on side streets.

Executive Director Hakim, in her response, assured Senator Hoylman that the MTA has not made any formal decisions regarding mitigation strategies and agreed to proactively solicit input from affected communities and involve residents and local business owners in the formation of any traffic studies moving forward.

The exchange follows:

Senator Hoylman: We're concerned about the [L Train] study to look at traffic patterns on 14th Street, and making sure that my constituents have a role in not just examining the results of the study, but participating in its design, and understanding when that study is going to take place, what the parameters of it will be, and its methodology, even. Could I get a commitment from you that you will meet with the local community specifically on this study to help design what it might look like and when we're prepared to move forward?

MTA Director Hakim: Why don't we do this? A lot of this work is already underway, because, as we've discussed, and being out in the communities, we want to be back out in the community with some further information about the alternatives that we're looking at, and again, nothing has been decided yet. Perhaps a good way to do it would be to come out, talk to the community about what we're doing, and hear back any other further ideas or things that they think we should be looking at.

Senator Hoylman: Well, I guess that part of that is going to happen next week, and a lot of my constituents will be there to discuss that. They just want a seat at the table to make sure you hear their concerns, and again, I think you've been doing a terrific job up to now, but we would have to make sure that that work continues.

MTA Director Hakim: We'll continue to do that.

Senator Hoylman also noted the lack of ADA accessibility at stations across 14th Street and urged more aggressive commitment to completing ADA accessibility projects at stations along the L line.

Senator Hoylman said: "In Manhattan alone, 50,000 people use the L train to cross 14th street every day. As we approach the 18-month shutdown in January 2019, we must have a plan in place to accommodate these riders, but for my constituents, we need a plan that simply doesn't push the traffic to the side streets. It's paramount that the MTA and DOT involve the local community as they begin to study how to deal with these traffic issues. My constituents demand a seat at the table."

On September 14, the Senator received a letter from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) formally agreeing to the legislators' request for community meetings. The

MTA and DOT's first public workshop in Manhattan on alternative service plans during Canarsie Tunnel repairs will take place on February 23rd at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church from 7 to 9 pm.

Video of the Senator's line of questioning is available here.