



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John C. Liu

Northeast Queens Elected Officials Announce Additional Bus Redesign Workshops and Articulate Major Concerns with MTA'S Draft Plan

JOHN C. LIU January 17, 2020

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Bayside, NY - Today, Senator Liu and elected officials in Northeast Queens announced two workshops to gather input from the community about the recently announced **Queens Bus Network Redesign Draft Plan**.

The workshops are scheduled as follows:

BAYSIDE

Date: February 20, 2020

Time: 7 PM

Place: Korean Community Services, 203-05 32nd Avenue, Bayside, NY 11361

BELLEROSE

Date: February 27, 2020

Time: 7 PM

Place: Cross Island YMCA, 238-10 Hillside Avenue, Bellerose, NY 11426

The MTA announced plans to hold community workshops around the borough to hear suggestions and answer questions about their draft bus redesign. However, no workshops were initially planned east of Flushing. It is critical that residents of northeast and eastern Queens have the opportunity to provide feedback on the MTA's draft plan, because the area lacks easy access to the subway and, in many places, buses are the sole source of public transportation.

Following a swift and vociferous outcry from constituents who feel loss in draft plan, the elected officials organized these workshops, and also offered several guiding principles for a fair and effective bus design for Queens. First, the bus network changes can be revenue neutral systemwide, but there must be a net gain in areas like Queens and especially northeast Queens, where other transit options such as subways do not exist. Second, the goal of the bus redesign must be to get more people to ride buses, not force people back to driving. Third, express bus service must be increased to offset the congestion pricing penalty. Finally, the MTA must furnish specific data supporting their rationale for changes.

“Overhauling Queens bus service will have a huge impact in Queens, where in most places, buses are the only form of public transportation available,” **said Senator John Liu member of**

the Senate Transportation Committee. “The draft plan proposes significant changes to local and express bus services in our community, and many people have already voiced their understandable dismay over service cuts. In the end, the new bus plan must increase the numbers of residents taking buses, not drive people back to driving, and we will demand practical and common-sense revisions to the draft plan. The MTA can start with a revenue neutral approach systemwide, but in Queens and especially in areas like northeast Queens where subways and other transit options don’t exist, there must be a significant net gain in bus service, especially in light of impending congestion pricing.”

"I have been working closely with my colleagues to update the public on NYCT's Queens Bus Network Redesign initiative, and I am pleased that we were successful in securing additional workshop opportunities for the public," **said Senator Leroy Comrie, Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Corporations, Authorities, and Commissions, which oversees the MTA.**

"Speeding up our buses and improving system wide connectivity is critical to the long-term success of the MTA's bus operations, but it is imperative that this redesign is driven by public input and that we are addressing the needs of our constituencies borough-wide. We will continue to work diligently as this process continues."

“The cuts that the MTA has proposed to bus service in Northeast Queens are misguided and wrong, and the original plan of not providing area residents with an opportunity to make their voices heard was extremely unfair,” **said Congresswoman Grace Meng.** “These two workshops that are now scheduled to be held next month will be critical in showing how our community feels about the MTA’s intention to reduce service. I encourage all who are impacted to come out and sound off about the plan. The public’s input will be crucial. Northeast Queens does not have access to subways. People residing in the area depend heavily on buses, and greater investments must be made. I look forward to the upcoming workshops and will continue to work closely with my government colleagues to ensure that northeast neighborhoods in our borough have the public transportation they need and

deserve.”

“Northeast Queens is already a ‘transit desert’. The MTA’s proposed redesign of the bus routes in northeast Queens would be devastating to my constituents who live and work here. These proposed cuts would make it impossible for those who do not drive to get to work or the doctor,” **said Congressman Suozzi**. “Congestion pricing was sold to the residents of Northeast Queens as a way to generate revenue for improved public transit here. The New York City Transit Authority must use congestion pricing revenues to improve service to this area and not reduce it. I will do everything I can to ensure that transit officials listen to the concerns of the community.”

“I appreciate that the MTA has agreed to add two workshops in our community so that Northeast Queens residents can express their concerns about the bus network redesign proposal. However, the proposed gutting of express bus service in Northeast Queens during off-peak hours and on weekends is simply unacceptable,” **said Assemblyman Ed Braunstein**. “Many express bus riders have no other public transportation options for commuting to Manhattan and would instead be forced to drive. Additionally, a significant number of riders are seniors and these express bus routes are their only option for travel to their doctor's appointments in Manhattan.”

“Queens bus network is long overdue for an overhaul that can provide reliable, accessible service for transit riders,” **said Assemblywoman Nily Rozic** who represents a district that does not have a single subway or train station. “Over the next few months I look forward to engaging with riders and the NYCT to deliver a final plan that meets Queens’ transit needs.”

“It is critical that we have fair and equitable bus routes throughout southeast Queens,” **said Assemblyman Clyde Vanel**. “With this drafted plan, many residents that have limited access to public transportation will find it even more difficult to live their everyday lives. We must

have more and frequent bus service, particularly in our areas with no subway service.”

"In the days since the MTA announced its Queens Bus Network Redesign, my office continues to receive complaints from Northeast Queens residents concerned with elements of the draft plan, including the proposed slashes to express bus service," **said Council Member Paul Vallone.** "In Northeast Queens, where there is no subway access and limited public transportation options for commuters, the MTA should be increasing and improving bus service, not creating a more desolate transportation desert. I am pleased to have worked with my fellow elected officials to bring the MTA to the neighborhood for a public workshop with our Northeast Queens residents, who rely on our city's bus network every day and deserve a seat at the table. I am hopeful for revisions to this plan."

“Residents of the council district that I represent, the only district in the entire city without train service, live near no public transportation except for buses,” **said Council Member Barry S. Grodenchik.** “Yet the MTA’s initial workshop schedule did not include any sessions in Eastern Queens. Now that the MTA has heard from me and from other local elected officials, the workshops set up for Eastern Queens will give residents a chance to provide feedback.”