



MTA Press Releases

[Select Language](#) | ▼

Press Release

January 27, 2007

[MTA Headquarters](#)

IMMEDIATE

Governor Eliot Spitzer, MTA Executive Director Elliot Sander, Congressman Anthony Weiner and Councilman Eric Gioia Announce Steps to Address Safety and Security Fencing on MTA Railroads

MTA Executive Director and CEO, Elliot G. Sander, joined Congressman Anthony Weiner (D-Queens, Brooklyn) and New York City Councilman Eric Gioia (D-Queens) today to unveil an aggressive strategy to improve the safety and security of the MTA's two railroads' rights-of-way (ROW).

The recent death of a teenager along the Long Island Rail Road right-of-way underscores the importance of reviewing the MTA's ongoing efforts to protect the public by limiting access to active railways. The MTA is committed to re-examining its safety and security practices throughout the entire commuter rail region served by the LIRR and Metro-North Railroad.

"I believe that the State and the MTA can best address these critically important issues by partnering with concerned community and elected officials, such as Congressman Weiner and Councilman Gioia," Governor Eliot Spitzer said.

"Governor Spitzer made safety and security top issues for me when he appointed me to run the MTA," said Executive Director Sander. "The strategy we are putting forward today fits with that mandate. Congressman Weiner has also stepped up to the plate and is providing seed money for investments we may need to make to further improve the safety and security of the system."

"I am also grateful for Councilman Gioia's role in helping us identify places on our two railroads where improvements can - and will - be made," said Sander.

"Today, I am establishing an MTA Interagency Fencing Task Force that will not just study these issues, but take appropriate action to rectify any deficiencies in our right-of-way fencing," Sander said. "The task force will implement a five-point strategy -- which will expand as necessary -- to improve the safety and security of our system."

Congressman Weiner said, "I'm pleased to announce an immediate infusion of \$500,000 in federal funds to help put fencing around exposed tracks and, when I go back to Washington, I'll fight for even more resources to protect children in our communities."

Councilman Gioia said, "I commend Governor Spitzer and the MTA's new leadership for their responsiveness, and I am eager to work with this new team to examine the issues our investigators found along the LIRR and Metro-North rights-of-way."

"I am confident that this new MTA task force will provide the direction and guidance necessary to improve safety for New Yorkers," added Gioia. "I also want the Governor and the MTA to know that I will do my best to identify new resources for the MTA rights-of-way."

The MTA Interagency Task Force will:

1. Survey the entire LIRR and MNR ROW to identify and fix existing fencing that needs repairing, identify private fencing along the ROW that needs to be fixed and notify the owners of the need to repair that fencing.
2. Review all existing LIRR, MNR and MTAPD ROW inspection processes and procedures as well as existing community educational efforts with an eye toward ways to improve or enhance them.
3. Ensure that railroad employees secure all access points along sensitive areas of the ROW.
4. Work with the MTAPD to increase patrols along sensitive areas of the ROW.
5. Work with our elected officials to identify new resources that can be used to repair existing fencing and erect new fencing as needed.

The work of the MTA task force is expected to take three to six months.

Collectively, the LIRR & MNR have more than 1,400 miles of track, 244 stations, dozens of storage yards and maintenance facilities, and hundreds of pieces of critical wayside electrical and mechanical equipment. While many parts of this extensive ROW are protected with safety or security fencing, fencing the entire system would require nearly 3,000 miles of fence - the equivalent of the distance between New York and Los Angeles.