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IMMEDIATE

Governor Cuomo Announces Plans to Bring More Direct, Reliable Service to Staten Island Express Bus Riders

Redesign to Shorten Commute Times and Simplify Network; Riders Will Have Opportunity to Provide Feedback on Preliminary Proposal and Fine-Tune Plan in Coming Months

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the results of a comprehensive two-year study of Staten Island Express Bus service and released a series of recommendations to improve reliability, reduce trip times and simplify the network. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) surveyed more than 2,000 express bus riders across all across Staten Island Express Bus lines, held three public workshops, met with community leaders, elected officials and transit advocates and held a "hackathon" to generate innovative solutions. Following a number of "Bus Summit" meetings convened by Staten Island Borough President James Oddo with elected officials, the MTA and labor, a plan was formulated to redesign and streamline routes to improve express service across Staten Island.

"Innovation and modernization is key to ensuring that New York's transportation networks remain efficient and viable for the commuters that use them every day," **Governor Cuomo said**. "Working with local residents, we will be able to revamp express bus service to provide a smoother, quicker and more convenient commute for the Staten Island residents who depend on it."

The study found that the current system is outdated, leading to overcrowding, long waits and inconsistent travel times. The average express bus makes 27 stops before ever leaving Staten Island. Meanwhile, 83 percent of riders use the busiest 50 percent of stops, and underused stops slow trips and complicate routes.

MTA Interim Executive Director Ronnie Hakim said, "We understand that reliable express buses are incredibly important to Staten Island commuters, so we undertook a comprehensive look at how the existing network could be improved. Our Staten Island customers deserve a direct, reliable commute and we believe these recommendations will deliver those results. We look forward to collecting feedback in the coming months as we fine-tune our plans."

Borough President James Oddo said, "Our commutes are extremely difficult. We all know that reality. Part of the problem is our outdated and inefficient bus routes. We can do better by the people of Staten Island and we can return back to them the precious commodity of time every work day. I applaud Ronnie Hakim and her team and strongly encourage Staten Island commuters to be part of the discussion, debate, and analysis moving forward so that we can make their lives better coming and going."

Senator Diana Savino said, "This is great news for Staten Island! I want to thank my partners in government and the MTA for recognizing the challenges of everyday commuters and helping to find solutions. I look forward to hearing what riders think and implementing the plan."

Assemblymember Ron Castorina said, "There's lots of Community input to be considered ahead, but I can tell you that the antiquated routes that go back to the 1960's are going to change. Common sense measures that cut back on some of the spaghetti-like mapping will be soon be a thing of the past. No more "tour of Staten Island" on your way to and from work. This is a great step to dealing with the hellish commute that we face on the south shore."

Assemblymember Nicole Malliotakis said, "A number of variables contribute to the unreasonable commute times experienced by Staten Islanders and, though we've clamored about it for years, resolving the issue hasn't been an easy process. The MTA's engagement on this issue has been commendable, soliciting advice from any and all who might have ideas on how to cut the time spent getting to and from Manhattan. I'm pleased to see that a slate of possible solutions will be proposed and I'm anxious to see them implemented, especially for the Rosebank community where residents have been heavily burdened by a lack of service. The job is far from done, but I look forward to working with the MTA and my colleagues to find the answers that Staten Island commuters need and deserve."

Assemblymember Michael Cusick said, "After the comprehensive study, this plan is a step forward for Staten Islanders who are absolutely dependent on this express bus system as their primary means of commute. Taking these measures, such as eliminating underused stops and increasing bus frequency, will hopefully help to shorten commute time, alleviate the frustration and provide for more reliable service. These are necessary steps by the MTA in tackling a long-established problem and I look forward to the implementation of these proposals."

Assemblymember Matthew Titone said, "Given Staten Islanders suffer one of the longest commutes in the nation, modifying the express bus routes to reflect how riders' needs have changed is an important step in improving public transportation and our quality of life by reducing time in transit."

City Council Minority Leader Steven Matteo said, "This bus plan is the result of hard work and advocacy, and had its origins in a series of meetings between local elected officials, including the Borough President and I, and the MTA and union management several years ago. We knew then that an overhaul of the borough's outdated and inefficient bus system was long overdue, which is why we pushed for a comprehensive study with a goal of getting Islanders to and from work more quickly and efficiently. However, the proposals the MTA set forth are not a finished product. It is imperative that

residents come to upcoming forums to provide their input and voice their concerns, so we can make this plan the best it can be. I look forward to that process in the months ahead."

City Councilwoman Debi Rose said, "There's no question our current express bus system is cumbersome and outdated. This new proposed framework, designed after months of collecting data and listening to the observations of the people who ride our buses to Manhattan daily, has the potential to speed up commutes and make our bus system more efficient and responsive to the ever-changing realities of our roads. I encourage every North Shore resident who uses our express buses to take a close look at the proposal and give feedback to the MTA, either through its website or at neighborhood meetings that will be planned later this year."

City Council Member Joseph Borelli said, "Commuting to work in Manhattan from the south shore can be agonizing and streamlining bus routes into lower Manhattan and Midtown will reduce some of the headache. I thank Borough President Oddo for his focus on this issue and his willingness to explore all of the options for reducing commute times on Staten Island and I look forward to continuing to work with him in the future to find other creative ways to bring down the length of the commutes here on the south shore."

The study also found that nearly all express bus riders go to one of two places – Lower Manhattan or Midtown, but outdated routes force buses to travel through congested areas in between and leave them spending up to half their time waiting in traffic on congested Manhattan streets. Additionally, the current system is so complex it's nearly impossible for commuters to determine which route serves them best.

The MTA will take this preliminary proposal to riders across Staten Island to solicit input and fine-tune the plan in the coming months. [Click here](#) to learn more and leave feedback.

Based on this study, the MTA proposed a set of recommendations to improve service:

- Divide the network into two routes going to either Lower Manhattan or Midtown to allow buses to bypass congested avenues and city streets and reduce travel time
- Eliminate underused stops on Staten Island, which will allow most riders to continue using their same stop, but with a shorter, more direct route to and from work
- Boost frequency of buses on a smaller number of routes to help mitigate overcrowding and provide shorter average wait times
- Streamline routes on Staten Island, using highways instead of local roads

This system will make better connections to the subway to open up more destinations and enable faster travel. Additionally, these simplified routes will be easier for passengers to navigate and will give drivers greater flexibility to respond to traffic incidents in real time.