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Press Release

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[MTA Headquarters](#)

IMMEDIATE

### MTA Announces 6-Point Plan to Restructure Management of the MTA, Improve System Reliability and Service

*MTA to Reorganize Senior Management Team; Seek to Advance Legislation to Separate Chairman and CEO Positions*

*New Improvement Plan Will Expedite Delivery of 750 New Subway Cars, Target Most Frequent Causes of Delays Plaguing More Than 100 Year-Old Transit System*

*First Phase of Initiative Begins with 8th Avenue Line and at Key South Bronx Bottlenecks*

*Plan Complements Long-Term Capital Investment*

The MTA today is announcing a comprehensive plan to address the top causes of subway delays in order to reduce the disruptions that impact service reliability for customers. The agency will also work to advance legislation this session to separate the Chairman and CEO positions into two, to further strengthen the MTA's leadership team and leadership structure.

Decades of underinvestment in the century-old New York City subway has led to a system that is excessively vulnerable to failures. While the Capital Program provides critical funding to renew, enhance and expand the system by replacing and upgrading infrastructure for the long-term, this new initiative is a comprehensive and focused plan targeting short-term, achievable service improvements. Additionally, the bifurcating of the Chairman and CEO positions builds on the recent appointments of Chief Development Officer Janno Lieber and Chief Operating Officer Phil Eng, and will create an executive leadership team that is capable of executing the largest Capital Plan in history and implementing a comprehensive plan to improve system reliability and service.

Together, the agency's leadership will modernize New York's Transit System for the 21st Century. The MTA Search Committee will direct the recruitment for the Chair and CEO roles.

"Increasing delays are simply unacceptable which is why we have to commit to addressing the immediate problems with all the tools at our disposal. We are implementing long-term capital improvements. But we also need a comprehensive approach that focuses on reducing the system's failures while our capital investment is underway," said the MTA's Interim Director Ronnie Hakim. "We know riders are frustrated – we are too – which is why we are embracing this new plan. Attacking the five key causes of subway delays enables New York City Transit to take a targeted approach that can produce results."

The improvement plan targets the key causes of subway system delays, including track and signal issues; sick passengers and police activity; subway car equipment failures; loading and unloading in stations; and bottlenecks that occur at critical points in the system where lines merge. This plan will implement new technologies and programmatic changes based on best practices from around the world.

The first phase of this system-wide initiative will begin immediately on the 8th Avenue corridor from 125th Street to Fulton Street, a total of 19 stations on the [ACE](#) lines; and at two key hubs in the South Bronx, 149th Street-Grand Concourse and 3rd Avenue-138th Street. There are an average of seven major incidents per month - which delay 50 trains or more - on the 8th Avenue corridor.

This plan will roll out in phases across the 8th Avenue line over the next 6 months, with the MTA introducing individual aspects of the plan on other lines following their debut on the 8th Avenue corridor.

This plan complements the significant upgrades that are included in the MTA's record \$29.5 billion Capital Plan. The MTA's Capital Plan includes more than \$14 billion for New York City Transit and will create long-term solutions after decades of disinvestment.

#### MTA IMPROVEMENT PLAN

##### 1. Reorganizing MTA Leadership Structure

Building on the recent restructuring of management at the agency, including the appointments of Lieber and Eng, the MTA will work seek to advance legislation this session to separate the Chairman and CEO positions. Splitting the positions allows for strengthening the overall leadership team in order to effectively implement the MTA's Capital Plan and achieve needed operational improvements.

##### 2. New Subway Cars and Improved Car Maintenance Procedures

- **New Cars:** The MTA is expediting the delivery of 300 new R179 subway cars with the first arriving this fall and all being delivered by September 2018. Additionally, New York City Transit will accelerate the delivery of 450 new R211 cars. This will involve both an acceleration and expansion of the pending portion of the order for the "standard configuration" R211 cars.

- **Improvements in Maintenance:** On the 8th Avenue line car equipment breakdowns occur 25 times per month, last 19 minutes on average, and cause delay not only to the affected train but to trains all along the line. The MTA will do a top-to-bottom revamp of its car maintenance procedures and the MTA will seek the direct involvement of the original manufacturers in this new maintenance regime. This new initiative will add additional inspectors and redeploy resources to ensure every car receives pre-service inspection before a car ever leaves the rail yard to reduce the likelihood of a mid-trip failure. In addition, key components will be proactively replaced on a regular schedule before they fail. This new component replacement initiative will initially focus on doors, heating and air conditioning, and master controllers, which historically have been the source of the most frequent failures.

### *3. Improving Tracks and Signals*

The MTA has 837 track miles, over 1,600 mainline switches, and 13,000 signals. The system is built to be fail-safe, which means that when a sensor is tripped, all lights go red and everything stops. It keeps people safe, but it also causes delays. In order to limit switch failures, signal failures, and rail defects that cause outages, the MTA is taking four steps: a new and intense preventive maintenance program that aggressively targets components that are most prone to failure, a new initiative to decrease response time when problems do occur; an accelerated move to the use of longer rails with fewer joints that therefore have fewer points of potential failure; and more effective track clearing to reduce track fires.

- **Enhanced Subway Infrastructure Component Inspections and Ultrasonic Testing:** The MTA is immediately initiating a new and comprehensive system for inspection of the track, signal and station infrastructure in the first phase corridor, including doubling its ultrasonic testing from once a month to twice monthly in order to more efficiently detect track defects. Defects identified in any of the components that might lead to a failure will now be addressed more comprehensively not only to repair the immediate problem but to prevent recurrence. This initiative will begin immediately.

- **Rapid Response Teams:** The MTA is also expanding its rapid response teams, creating and deploying additional, well-trained, and fully equipped personnel near busiest stations to address track and signal issues. The MTA will add additional emergency dispatched repair vehicles and trained staff to get repair crews where they need to be faster. These will be expanded to include additional specialists with access to more parts and resources to enable more rapid repairs of all aspects of the subway's tracks and signal systems. The MTA is focused on reducing average response time of its emergency crews to 15 minutes or less, which will get service restored faster and riders moving on their way.

- **Track Design Enhancements - Continuous Welded Rail (CWR):** The MTA is using new construction technology to increase the pace of installation of the most up-to-date type of train rail, known as continuously welded rail to replace old rails. On traditional rails most breaks occur at or near the welding point, but this new type of rail is joined together to form one uninterrupted rail, which means fewer stress points, and, not incidentally, a smoother and quieter ride. The MTA will employ a self-propelled machine called the Critter, a new technology that operates significantly faster than the older method of having workers carry the rail down the tracks. The goal is to lay 3,000 feet of track to cover the entire corridor by September 2017.

- **Technology-Based Track Cleaning to Remove Trash on the Tracks:** Trash on the tracks causes fires; fires cause delays. The MTA has developed portable vacuums that are the first of their kind for transit systems. Initial tests reduced fires associated with trash on the tracks by 51% in the test area. Two portable vacuums will be immediately focused full-time on the 8th Avenue corridor. The MTA has ordered more units to enable a system-wide expansion.

### *4. Mitigating Delays Associated with Sick Passengers and Law Enforcement Activity*

- **Faster Access to EMTs:** When passengers become ill on subway trains, the needed response can cause major delays. It can take a significant amount of time for Emergency Service Technicians (EMTs) to find customers who need their help. Along the 8th Avenue corridor alone sick customer incidents occur on average 28 times per month with the average incident lasting at least 12 minutes, delaying multiple trains. In the initial phase, MTA will hire or train new EMTs, placing EMTs at five key stations to speed up response times and reduce delays. EMTs will be deployed at:

- 125th St
- 59th St-Columbus Circle
- 14th St
- West 4th St-Washington Square
- Fulton St

The MTA is also launching a public awareness campaign, including on-train and in-station announcements and posters to encourage use of EMTs in stations so passengers can get the help they need, as fast as possible without disrupting train service. This element of the program is slated to launch in the fall.

- **Quicker Access to Police Assistance:** In collaboration with the NYPD, the MTA will work to increase the availability of law enforcement at key corridor stations so that they are available to respond more rapidly to address and deter unruly behavior. The MTA is also exploring ways to connect platform controllers on the same NYPD radio frequency to improve rapid response to emergency situations.

### *5. Streamlining Passenger Loading and Unloading in Stations*

Allowing customers to board and unload trains in a streamlined manner is key to reducing "dwell" time (the amount of time a train needs to stay in a station). The MTA is testing a number of different strategies that will allow staff to better communicate to passengers the location of less crowded areas within stations and on arriving trains. The MTA will improve wayfinding on the platform and train cars themselves to distribute passengers more evenly. The MTA is also introducing new training procedures and protocols for platform controllers. Platform controllers will be more visible to customers, provided with new technology, and be trained to better inform passengers about station conditions.

### *6. Targeting System Bottlenecks*

The subway system has numerous points where lines merge and diverge, making the system remarkably flexible and providing customers with many options to get to their destinations. However, as ridership has grown and the MTA has increased the number of trains in the system, these merge points can present bottlenecks, delaying trains and slowing trip times. This program includes more active management of these merge points, utilizing experienced, dedicated service managers and better technology to ensure trains move quickly through hub merge points to avoid delays.