



MTA Press Releases

Press Release

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[NYC Transit](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA New York City Transit Hires First-Ever Accessibility Chief

Alex Elegudin Named Senior Advisor for Systemwide Accessibility; Will Drive 'Fast Forward' Plan Initiative to Bring Elevators and Other Accessible Features to Subway and Bus Customers; Will Also Work to Improve Access-A-Ride Paratransit Service

New York City Transit President Andy Byford today announced the appointment of the agency's first-ever systemwide accessibility chief, tasked with overseeing and implementing the Fast Forward Plan initiative to expand accessibility to subway and bus customers, as well as improve Access-A-Ride service.

Longtime accessibility advocate Alex Elegudin will be MTA NYC Transit's first Senior Advisor for Systemwide Accessibility, an executive-level position reporting directly to President Byford. His first day on the job will be Monday, June 25.

"Advancing the cause of accessibility is one of my top priorities and Alex's new role will pull together all of our accessibility-related work streams, touching all Fast Forward projects and all NYC Transit departments," President Byford said.

"I'm incredibly excited to be joining President Byford's executive team," Elegudin said. "The vision set forth in the 'Fast Forward' plan will make NYC Transit work better for New Yorkers of all abilities, with a strong emphasis on improving accessibility quickly. I look forward to being a part of making the plan a reality and helping to make New York City the most accessible city in the world."



Photo courtesy of Wheeling Forward

"Expanding accessibility is a priority for all MTA agencies, with the subway serving millions of people a day having particular urgency," said MTA Chairman Joseph Lhota, who has convened a special working group of MTA Board members to advise on improving accessibility. "President Byford's creation of this new position and Alex's appointment are a victory for all of our customers who need more accessible subway, bus and paratransit service."

ABOUT ALEX ELEGUDIN

In 2003, when Elegudin was an undergraduate in college, a deer-related car accident led to a spinal cord injury, and today Elegudin uses a wheelchair. After his injury, Elegudin continued his studies, receiving a J.D. from Hofstra University Law School, passing the bar exam and becoming a patent attorney while also pursuing a successful career as an accessibility advocate.

In 2011, Elegudin co-founded Wheeling Forward, a non-profit organization with a mission to help people with disabilities to integrate into the community by learning to overcome barriers. In 2014 he co-founded the Axis Project, an innovative multidisciplinary center specifically designed to empower and motivate people with disabilities. In 2015, Elegudin became the Accessibility Program Manager of the NYC Taxi & Limousine Commission.

Elegudin was awarded, along with Wheeling Forward co-founder Yannick Benjamin, as 2017 Person of the Year by New Mobility magazine. He received the Association of Academic Physiatrists Public Service Award in 2017, and was a NY1 New Yorker of the Week in 2015.

A 34-year-old Brooklyn resident, Elegudin commutes via express bus and Access-A-Ride.

ABOUT ACCESSIBILITY AND THE FAST FORWARD PLAN

Currently, 118 stations are wheelchair accessible, and 25 more are currently in progress to become so. Nearly \$5 billion has been invested to make subway stations accessible, including \$1.4 billion in the 2015-19 MTA capital program. The 2015-19 capital program also includes \$479 million to replace 42 existing elevators and 27 escalators. Future capital programs will include funding for additional stations.

On May 23, NYC Transit President Byford unveiled "[Fast Forward: The Plan to Modernize New York City Transit](#)" – which among other initiatives, proposes to add in the span of five years enough new elevators to ensure that all subway riders will not be more than two stops away from an accessible

station. The plan proposes the addition of 180 elevators over the course of 10 years. The plan also proposes modernizing the subway's signal system on a significantly accelerated timeline, redesigning the entire city's bus network, and improving customer service and communications.