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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

NYC Transit Interim President Issues Letter to Mayor de Blasio Calling for Additional Bus Lanes

NYC Transit Interim President Sarah Feinberg today issued a letter to Mayor Bill de Blasio outlining the need for additional bus lanes as the City is expected to begin Phase 1 reopening next week, with bus ridership expected to increase.

The full text of the letter is available below.

Dear Mayor de Blasio,

As New York City prepares to reopen under Governor Cuomo's New York Forward Plan, public transit will play a key role in ensuring the city's return to normalcy. In particular, a robust bus system will be crucial as workers look to return to their offices. It will also help alleviate crowding on the streets and underground. But to make buses a more attractive option for commuters, they must be able to move freely around the city.

It's for that reason we are urging the city to add 60 miles of bus lanes and busways citywide. This represents a nearly 42 percent increase over the existing 144 miles of bus lanes. We can further improve efficacy by increasing enforcement on existing bus lanes and busways, as well as implementing Traffic Signal Priority on streets across the five boroughs.

We have identified the most urgent corridors as a start towards meeting the 60-mile target. These must be implemented as quickly as possible.

Our priority corridors for new or upgraded bus lanes include:

- In the Bronx: East 149th St.; the E.L. Grant Highway; Tremont Ave.; Fordham Rd.; University Ave.
- In Brooklyn: Flatbush Ave. between Ave. H and Empire Blvd.

On Staten Island: Bay St. between the St George Ferry Terminal and Canal St.; Richmond Terrace between the St George Ferry Terminal and Jersey St.

Our priority corridors for busways include:

- In Manhattan: 181st St. between Broadway and Amsterdam Ave.
- In Queens: Main St. between Kissena Blvd. and Northern Blvd.; Archer Ave. between 146th St. and 168th St.
- In Brooklyn: Livingston St. between Court St. and Flatbush Ave.

Given its importance as a bus corridor, we would also like the Washington Bridge between the Bronx and Manhattan to be buses only during the upcoming construction.

In this difficult time, it's more important than ever that we transport customers as quickly and effectively as possible. With city streets virtually empty in the last few months, we saw average bus speeds rise and commute times drop dramatically. Now with ridership steadily growing (from ~400,000 at our lowest point to 715,000 on June 2) and car congestion returning, we must act to maintain these improvements for our essential customers.

We have seen firsthand how dedicated bus lanes can dramatically improve the customer experience. Following the establishment of the 14th Street Busway and SBS service last year, ridership increased by 14 percent and travel times improved by 24 percent. We want to emulate that success on other lines wherever possible, as soon as possible.

We are all in agreement that New York and its world-class transit system will not only survive this unprecedented worldwide pandemic, but the rebound will make us smarter, better and more efficient. Creating more dedicated bus lanes is one way to make that happen.

I look forward to working with you on this vitally important matter.

Sincerely,

Sarah E. Feinberg

New York City Transit Interim President