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Press Release

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NYC Transit

IMMEDIATE

MTA Adds More Outreach Opportunities for Public Input on Draft Plan to Reimagine Queens Bus Network for First Time in 100 Years

Redesign Seeks to Redraw Borough's Bus Network to Shorten Commute Times, Speed up Buses, Increase Intermodal Connections and Add Frequency on Major Corridors to Benefit Majority of Queens Customers

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced additional public opportunities to provide feedback on the draft plan for the Queens Bus Network Redesign as part of a customer-led process to completely redraw the century-old Queens bus system to better serve customers, shorten commute times, speed up buses, increase intermodal connections and provide more frequency and choices to travel within the borough and to Brooklyn, Manhattan and the Bronx.

"The Queens bus redesign is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to completely redraw the bus network in ways we know will work better for everyone and for our customers to have a say in what bus service will look like in Queens," **said MTA NYC Transit President Andy Byford**. "Queens customers know how important buses are and how they can be used to serve the neighborhoods better, which is why we absolutely need our customers' help reimagining how public transit serves Queens."

The Queens Bus Network Redesign's draft plan addresses customer concerns that were expressed during public outreach of the redesign's Existing Conditions report, which sought to accurately depict the status, operations and flaws of the current Queens bus network using customer feedback, ridership and demographics data, and service performance and operations data. The redesign's goals included:

- Improving service reliability
- Improving bus speeds
- Expanding bus priority such as bus lanes and use of traffic signal priority technology by working with New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT)
- Improving traffic enforcement through use of MTA's automated bus lane enforcement initiative and close collaboration with NYC DOT and NYPD
- Improving connectivity at population centers and destinations, at intermodal transfer locations, and at emerging residential and commercial developments
- Balancing bus stop spacing from an average of 850 feet apart to 1,400 feet by consolidating or removing closely spaced or under-utilized bus stops. On average, a bus takes 20 seconds to more than 1 minute to pull into a bus stop and then reenter traffic. NYC Transit bus stops are the closest-spaced in the country, some of which are as close as two blocks apart. When reviewing candidates for stops, NYC Transit considers factors such as geography and proximity to schools, colleges, hospitals, community centers, libraries or senior centers
- Improving connections between areas with high densities of residents with mobility impairments and existing and future accessible subway stations
- Working with the NYC DOT to improve bus stop accessibility and customer amenities such as shelters, bus bulbs and real-time digital service information signs

Under the [Fast Forward plan](#) to improve bus service, NYC Transit is redesigning the bus networks in every borough of New York City, starting with the Staten Island Express Bus Redesign that was implemented in August 2018 and has resulted in tangible improvements in bus speeds and reliability, and increases in frequency and trips. The MTA has released the proposed final plan for the Bronx Bus Network Redesign, and recently launched the Brooklyn Bus Network Redesign.

Before proposing the draft redesign plan for Queens, the MTA conducted a thorough study of the existing bus network, surveyed customers in person and online, provided nearly 11,000 informational pamphlets, and hosted nine open houses, 12 street outreach events, 11 meetings with civics groups and seven community boards to gather feedback on customers' commuting patterns and itinerary suggestions. The MTA also took into consideration the results of nearly 2,000 online customer surveys specific to the Queens redesign. The study identified areas to target for change, such as neighborhood route improvements, individual route improvements to provide more direct service, balanced stop spacing and improved crosstown connections.

The draft proposal seeks to completely redraw the bus routes, which were mostly unchanged since they were converted from old trolley lines from the turn of the 20th century or consolidated from private bus companies that

began serving Queens in the 1910s. Many of those companies served three central hubs in Queens, leading to three separate spoke-and-wheel networks to Flushing, Jamaica and Long Island City that severely limited the coverage area. The draft plan takes into consideration the service performance of each bus route, the speed, ridership and reliability on key corridors, and how individual routes contribute to the larger network. Recommendations were developed in collaboration with NYC DOT, with focus given to identifying key corridors where roadway treatments and traffic signal improvements can be implemented to expand bus priority and better support sustainable, all-day bus service. The details of NYC DOT's proposed bus priority plan for Queens are included in the draft plan for the Queens Bus Network Redesign.

LEARN ABOUT IT

The Queens Bus Network Redesign draft plan is available to review on the MTA's dedicated website for the project: <https://new.mta.info/queensbusredesign>. The website includes many interactive features to encourage customers to comment on the draft plan, such as:

- [The full draft plan](#) with individual profiles for every route in the proposed new network
- **A digital look-ahead trip planner** programmed with draft plan proposals, allowing customers to build hypothetical itineraries using proposals detailed in the draft plan
- **A comparison chart** showing existing route compared to the new routes proposed in the draft plan
- **A web-based app called Remix**, which displays a map of the proposed new network with interactive features allowing the public to explore the proposals on the map and leave comments on specific routes and stops
- **MetroQuest**, an online survey to leave comments on the draft plan

TALK ABOUT IT

The redesign process is iterative, and the MTA is hosting outreach sessions at major subway stations and bus transfer points across Queens in January and public workshops in January and February to provide customers with information on the proposals in the draft plan. Residents can ask questions and provide feedback on the proposed redesigned routes and bus stops. The interactive public workshops do not have scheduled programming such as a presentation, allowing customers to drop in at their convenience.

Two additional dates in Jackson Heights and in the Rockaways have been added to the updated calendar of public outreach that is below. Additional events, such as community board meetings, will be added to the Queens Bus Network Redesign website as they are confirmed:

Monday, Jan. 13, 4-7 p.m.

Sutphin Blvd-Archer Av 

Tuesday, Jan. 14, 6-9 a.m.

Rockaway Blvd 

Wednesday, Jan. 15, 6-9 a.m.

Court Sq-23 St 

Wednesday, Jan. 15, 7-8:30 p.m.

Southridge Building I, rumpus room

33-04 93rd Street, Jackson Heights

Thursday, Jan. 16, 4-7 p.m.

Beach 54 St 

Tuesday, Jan. 21, 6-8 p.m.

Greater Ridgewood Youth Council

59-03 Summerfield Street, Ridgewood

Wednesday, Jan. 22, 6-8 p.m.
Queens Flushing Library
41-17 Main Street, Flushing

Thursday, Jan. 23, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
SUNY Queens Educational Opportunity Center
158-29 Archer Avenue, Jamaica

Tuesday, Jan. 28, 6-8 p.m.
Queens Borough Hall
120-55 Queens Boulevard, Kew Gardens

Wednesday, Jan. 29, 6-8 p.m.
J.H.S. 202 Robert H. Goddard
138-30 Lafayette Street, Ozone Park

Thursday, Jan. 30, 6-8 p.m.
Langston Hughes Library and Cultural Center
100-01 Northern Boulevard, Corona

Tuesday, Feb. 4, 6-8 p.m.
Jacob Riis Settlement
10-25 41st Avenue, Long Island City

Wednesday, Feb. 5, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
RISE/Rockaway Waterfront Alliance
58-03 Rockaway Beach Boulevard, Far Rockaway

Thursday, Feb. 6, 7-8:30 p.m.
Rockaway YMCA
207 Beach 73rd Street, Arverne

WHAT'S NEXT?

After the workshops, the MTA will incorporate community and customer feedback to craft a proposed final plan for the Queens Bus Network Redesign. The proposed final plan will be released in spring 2020, with additional community outreach events scheduled to solicit a final round of public feedback as well as a public hearing. The final plan must be approved by the MTA Board before implementation.

Presentations that were given to the public, the Queens Borough Board, community boards and other interested parties are also available at new.mta.info/queensbusredesign.

ABOUT THE CURRENT QUEENS BUS NETWORK

- The network has a total of 77 bus routes within a widespread system that has three centers in downtown Flushing, downtown Jamaica and Long Island City. The current average bus speed is 8.7 miles per hour, continuing an overall borough-wide slowdown since 2015.
- About 52 percent of Queen's 2.3 million residents rely on public transit for their daily commutes. Eleven percent of those commuters rely solely on buses.
- More than 94 percent of Queens residents live within a five-minute walk of a bus stop.

- Bus stops in Queens are spaced very close together, leading to frequent bus stopping and longer commutes. Many stops are 500 to 1,000 feet apart, which is shorter than the average bus stop spacing systemwide and far closer than peer transit systems worldwide.