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June 5, 2020

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TRANSCRIPT: NYC Transit Interim President Feinberg Appears on 1010 WINS

NYC Transit Interim President Sarah Feinberg appeared on 1010 WINS with Brigitte Quinn to discuss NYC Transit's plan for subways and buses to return to full service Monday as the city enters Phase 1 reopening.

A transcript of the interview appears below.

Brigitte Quinn: Phase 1 of the New York City reopening begins Monday and joining us live on the 1010 WINS Newslane, New York City Transit Interim President, Sarah Feinberg. Hi Sarah, thanks for being with us.

Sarah Feinberg: Hey, thanks. Good morning.

Quinn: So much to talk about, but I want to start here—service, is it being increased on Monday? But, will the overnight closings remain in effect?

Feinberg: Yep, so that's exactly right. We are increasing service and we will be as close to regular service—regular weekday service as we can be on Monday. My guess is we'll be about 95% of the way there, Tuesday will be the rest of the way there. But you're right, the overnight closures from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. will continue, those of course help us make sure that we're cleaning 24/7 and hitting every single car and station to clean and disinfect.

Quinn: Any idea how long the overnight closings will last?

Feinberg: Not yet, not at this point. I mean, look we want to get through the pandemic, let's get through the reopening, let's see where we are. I mean I have to say, having the system completely empty for a couple hours every night, it allows us to get an incredible amounts of cleaning and disinfecting done. So, so we're really proud of that work.

Quinn: Okay. I understand Sarah that you're asking Mayor de Blasio for an extra 60, six-zero, miles of bus lanes and busways to try to help ease overcrowding on subways and help buses get through city streets more swiftly. Has he responded to that?

Feinberg: We haven't heard from him yet, I think he has not responded to our letter. Look, this is a common-sense solution for the city. The MTA has long supported additional miles of bus lanes, we have a long way to go to get where we need to be on bus lanes. This is just a common-sense solution that'll make some progress for us right away, so we hope he'll work with us on it.

Quinn: Common sense, I guess because you you're assuming that there is going to be less street traffic and therefore you could open up more miles?

Feinberg: Even if, even at our most congested moments, even when the city is back full steam, it just makes sense to have more bus lanes. We want those buses to be, they're moving a ton of people, we want them to be able to move through the city and avoid as much traffic as possible, have their own lane, be able to get people where they're going.

Quinn: So Mayor de Blasio has said that he wants the MTA to block off every other seat on trains and buses and an MTA spokesperson this week said that that was quote, utterly unworkable. What do you think?

Feinberg: Yeah, I have to agree. Look, anyone who rides our system, who's familiar with our system knows that on the quietest day there are millions of people who use the subway system. And so it's just, look, the city, if the city's going to reopen, people have to get to work right? And if we're asking people to get to work, we got to be able to get them there. We can't say the city is reopening, the economy is reopening, but everybody stay home and no one go to work. People should be smart about this. As we enter Phase 1 we want to be moving essential workers and Phase 1 workers, right? This is not a signal to everyone that now's a good time to jump into subway and go shopping. But if we're reopening the economy, we've got to be able to get people to work and you just can't have it both ways.

Quinn: Are you saying that you don't want people to jump on the trains to go shopping, that you want the trains and the buses for people to try to reserve them for the essential workers?

Feinberg: Right, look, Phase 1 is about essential workers plus Phase 1 workers, right? The construction crews, the folks who are going to be doing the curbside retail, and all of the essential workers who have been using the system all along-- healthcare workers, pharmacists, grocery store clerks, all of those folks. Phase 1 is about Phase 1, the people who are working in Phase 1 plus the essential workers are those who should be using the system on Monday.

Quinn: Okay, so let's say I'm one of those workers. I get on a train, there's a seat but there's somebody in the next seat. What should I do? Should I

stand? Should I go somewhere else or should I tighten my mask and sit down?

Feinberg: The first thing you should do is what makes sense for you. So, you know, look, people have got to be vigilant about their mask usage. Masks are absolutely required in the system, that's the law now, so everyone's going to have to wear a mask. If we see you entering the system and you don't have a mask on, we're going to either turn you around and send you home to go get your forgotten mask or we're going to have a lot of extra masks in the booth so people can come get an extra mask at the booth and be on their way. But if you're on a platform that's crowded, move to a piece of the platform that's less crowded. If you enter a car and it feels crowded, go to the next car. If you've got a few extra minutes, consider waiting on the next train. But look, inevitably this is going to happen to all of us because as people, as more people come back to the city and more people move the more crowded things are going to get. This is going to happen to all of us--if you're on a car that's crowded, keep your mask on, put as much distance between yourself and other riders as you can and generally go about your business. You know, I'm not a healthcare expert, I'm not a medical expert, but I have to count on the Mayor and the Governor and the healthcare experts to know when the right time is to reopen the city and reopen the economy. I take my signals from them, and then I start my system up and I move people to work.

Quinn: And it sounds like you're counting on New Yorkers to use great common sense with all of this. The Mayor has suggested that the trains skip stops to avoid overcrowding. What do you think about that?

Feinberg: Yeah, look, again, you know, maybe this shows how familiar the folks at City Hall are with the subway system. Look, if you just pick people up for the first couple of stops and then you don't pick anybody else up, first of all, the folks who got on at the beginning of the journey aren't going to be able to get off the train, right? We've got to let people off at their stop. Second of all, if you live closer in then three or four stops, you're never getting on a train and how does that work? That just doesn't make any sense. So, you know, look, the transit system is for everyone, right? The compact we make with riders is that you pay \$2.75, we pick you up where you are, we get you to where you need to go and we do it efficiently, and we do it safely. And we don't pick and choose and we don't say some people can use the system and others can't. Our job is to pick you up and to get you where you're going and it's a challenge for everyone at this moment when we want to be able to social distance and everybody needs to be keeping each other safe, and that's the right thing to do, but we just need to run a transit system.

Quinn: Alright, New York City Transit Interim President Sarah Feinberg live with us on 1010 WINS. Thank you so much, good luck on Monday.

Feinberg: Okay, great to be with you. Thank you.