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Press Release

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NYC Transit

IMMEDIATE

ICYMI: Interim President of NYC Transit Sarah Feinberg Op-Ed in NY Daily News: “A Safe Return for the Subways”

Below is text of Interim President of NYC Transit Sarah Feinberg's op-ed [published today by the NY Daily News](#).

A safe return for the subways: The head of the NYC Transit Authority outlines what will be different when the city begins reopening

The subway system is part of the fabric of New York City — as much as the Statue of Liberty, Broadway and Central Park. Indeed, the subways lace that fabric with some of New York's most enduring, common threads: grit, mobility, buzzing energy and endless opportunity.

I still believe all of that to be true, despite the new challenges a pandemic visits upon transit systems. This crisis has forced us to adapt in significant, fast-moving ways. We organized a full overnight shutdown of trains and platforms for the first time in history, allowing homeless people better options than sleeping on benches. We now disinfect trains, buses, stations and work areas more aggressively and more often than may have seemed possible before. It is a herculean effort at every level, and I am incredibly proud and grateful for the work of my colleagues.

At this stage, we are doing everything we can to ensure that our system remains safe, both for essential workers and for riders who will return in the coming weeks and months.

As the city begins its reopen, some of our broad efforts will include:

- Ramping up service.
- Continued cleaning and disinfecting. For those who have not been riding our system, you will pick up on the difference. A recent customer survey found that more than 70% of riders say the system is noticeably cleaner.
- Clear reminders on how to keep yourself safe. In particular, an insistence that masks are absolutely required.
- We are also implementing some important solutions for our riders, including hand sanitizer dispensers, masks and other PPE offered in vending machines in stations, and decals on floors reminding riders how to move around our system safely.

Beyond these measures, we are working on additional tools that we can put in the hands of riders — like real-time information about how crowded the approaching train or bus is, so riders can make decisions for themselves about whether they want to board, or wait for the next opportunity.

I view it as our responsibility to provide clear, transparent information to riders about what they can expect as they return to the system, and the reality is — certainly in New York but in any city — that social distancing in a transit system will be challenging. That's why a multilayered approach to safety is important, including that our riders are vigilant about mask usage and take other common-sense precautions like coughing into their elbows, frequently washing hands or using hand sanitizer and staying home if they are not feeling well.

Economies cannot reopen without transportation, and people cannot use the transportation system without coming into closer contact with each other than they have been used to over the past few months.

Ultimately, our plan for the subway system isn't just about the coming weeks. It is also geared towards building a transit system that is better, more modern, more inclusive, more efficient, and safer than it ever has been before.

The last few months have been some of the darkest and saddest ever for New York City Transit. Thousands of our colleagues have fallen ill or quarantined. Tragically, 131 members of the MTA family have passed away.

I cannot adequately express the praise and deep gratitude I have for our workforce. My heart is broken over those who lost their lives performing work that helped save others. It is heroism, no doubt. But it is also something both bigger and closer than that; it is human. It is the best of us.

We are committed to forging a better future for our valued employees and customers. New York City's transit system has been doing the impossible since it first opened 115 years ago. Stitch by stitch, we'll not only mend, but strengthen, our fabric.

Better days are ahead.

Feinberg is interim president of the New York City Transit Authority.

