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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Issues Letter to New York City on Phase 1 Reopening

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today issued a letter to Mayor Bill de Blasio, First Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan, and NYC DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg outlining a series of key requests as the City is expected to begin Phase 1 reopening next week.

The full text of the letter is available below.

Dear Mayor de Blasio, First Deputy Mayor Fuleihan and Commissioner Trottenberg:

Thank you for your continued partnership and cooperation during this crisis.

To follow up on our last several weeks of meetings, we want to lay out some important elements we believe are crucial to jointly deliver on as we enter Phase 1 of New York City's anticipated reopening next week.

1. The state, the MTA and the City have been clear: face masks are mandatory for all individuals using the transit system. As discussed, we are seeing universal compliance by our workforce and the vast majority of customers at this time. We look forward to working together to continue to communicate to all New Yorkers the importance of wearing a mask or other face covering. As you know, during the beginning of Phase 1, we would like to be able to supply masks to the small group of individuals who may not have a mask or face covering as they enter the system. The state has committed to providing 1 million masks. In order to be able to undertake this important effort, we are also requesting the city contribute 1 million masks for distribution to customers.

2. As you are aware the NYPD is the primary policing force for the MTA and responsible for enforcement. The NYPD and MTA PD have been working collaboratively to ensure compliance with the requirement for customers to wear a mask or face covering on public transportation. We have directed the MTA PD to enforce this measure, but we do not support the arrest of those who are not wearing masks, and we do not believe summonses or tickets should be written. We understand you have directed the NYPD to continue to enforce mask usage across our system in this manner as well, reminding customers that they must wear masks at all times, with no arrests or summonses. As we enter Phase 1, we remain committed to fair enforcement across our system. We recognize that the NYPD faces significant challenges at this time, but we want to be clear that enforcement across the system will be of critical importance.

3. Reopening our transit system and safely welcoming additional essential customers during Phase 1 requires a massive, coordinated approach. Given our shared interest in distributing hand sanitizer to any customer who wants it, and a mask to any rider who needs it, we will need significant additional personnel. The vast majority of our workforce will of course be operating and maintaining the system itself. The MTA has requested the city provide 3,000 volunteers to support this customer facing effort. New York City Transit currently plans to fully staff the system with these additional personnel from 5 a.m. until 8 p.m. during the first week of Phase 1, and during the morning and afternoon rush hours in the weeks following.

4. You have been rightly focused on the issue of social distancing. The MTA has also been laser focused on this issue as you know. The reality of our system, however, is that we are already currently moving about 1.5 million people per day. Wearing a mask and following public health guidance, including frequently washing hands or using alcohol-based sanitizer, remain the most important steps to minimize the public health risk from the virus. To ensure we are doing all we can to provide for social distancing to the extent possible, we are taking the following actions:

- Subways and buses will return to full, regular service by day one of Phase 1;
- Messaging to customers that subway and bus service remain for essential workers and essential trips only during Phase 1;
- Requesting employers stagger shifts and continue to allow for remote work;
- Applying floor markings and decals where possible to assist with social distancing at stations;
- Supplying hand sanitizer where possible to customers across our system; and
- Deploying platform controllers, MTA Police, and additional station personnel to monitor conditions and assist with crowding.

5. This has been a difficult time for the city of New York. Given the anguish and chaos the city has experienced over the last week, the MTA is requesting the city deploy additional NYPD immediately to the subway to ensure the safety and security of the system. We want to make sure our system is safer than ever for riders. To do this, we will need full cooperation and resources from the NYPD. We all share a goal of safely reopening this city and ramping up service on our system. We will need all hands on deck to make this effort a success. Our partnership on the overnight closure has yielded positive results. We will need your help to ensure riders are social distancing as much as possible, deploying staff to platforms and reminding riders to move to less crowded portions of platforms and less crowded cars.

We look forward to hearing from you on these matters.

Thank you,

Pat Foye
MTA Chairman and CEO

Sarah Feinberg
Interim President of New York City Transit