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Press Release

July 8, 2020

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IMMEDIATE

### MTA and Transit Innovation Partnership Launch COVID-19 Response Challenge to Strengthen Public Transit

#### *Challenge calls for technologies to make public transit safer, cleaner and more adaptive as New York gets back to work*

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and Transit Innovation Partnership today launched a new "COVID-19 Response Challenge" to engage the private tech industry and rapidly evaluate and deploy innovative technologies that make public transit safer, healthier and more responsive to customer and workforce needs in light of the global pandemic.

"To truly modernize every element of how we run our transit system, you have to look far and wide for new ideas," said **Interim New York City Transit President Sarah Feinberg**. "That means tapping into the city's robust entrepreneurial and technology scenes and thinking in new ways about how a vital institution like New York City Transit can embrace innovation in everything it does."

"The pandemic hit us in New York like no other place in the country. MTA took unprecedented steps the past four months, opening itself up to innovative ways to reduce the risk to our riders and our workers," said **MTA Chief Innovation Officer Mark Dowd**. "We are excited to partner with the Transit Innovation Partnership in our quest to find new technologies and approaches that safely remove contaminated aerosols from our public transit system."

"As New York City reopens for business, we look forward to supporting the MTA as it reimagines public transit to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 era," said **Rachel Haot, Executive Director of Transit Innovation Partnership**.

The Challenge calls for companies to submit proposals by July 30 that address critical pandemic-related health and safety objectives for the New York metropolitan region's mass transit network. MTA is specifically seeking companies that have proven innovative technologies that can safely reduce or eliminate contaminated aerosols from MTA's public transit system. The other public agencies participating in the COVID Challenge - New York City Department of Transportation, New Jersey Transit, and the Port Authority - are seeking a broader set of solutions. Companies that submit proposals deemed promising by transit, tech and health sector evaluators may have the opportunity to implement their technology with regional transit systems including the MTA.

Areas of interest include thermal monitoring tools, cutting-edge cleaning equipment, and tools to measure and mitigate crowding. The Challenge adds to the MTA's unprecedented measures to keep the public safe during the pandemic, including the daily disinfection of all stations, train cars and buses in the system, and distribution of masks and hand sanitizer to customers and employees. Companies can learn how to apply at [transitinnovation.org](https://transitinnovation.org).

Areas of interest for the COVID-19 Response Challenge include:

- Thermal monitoring tools and systems to automatically measure body temperatures
- Cutting-edge cleaning materials and equipment such as electrostatic sprayers, new-design air filtration systems, light-based systems and anti-microbial shields
- Approaches to measure and encourage distancing in shared transit spaces
- Tools to measure, communicate and mitigate crowding in trains, buses, stations and other shared spaces
- Tools and frameworks to identify and communicate potential exposure risks
- Tools to measure and support the use of masks and other personal protective equipment
- Innovations in personal protective equipment, including contactless vending and fare card machines, mask and shield designs, sanitizer dispensers, and partitions
- Approaches and technologies to redesign shared spaces and fare collection in vehicles and stations to encourage cleanliness, health, safety and distancing
- Platforms to expand customer feedback and communication opportunities
- Autonomous cleaning robots and robotic equipment to support cleaning crews
- Secure digital services to further support mental and physical health among transit employees, such as counseling, coaching and self-care platforms
- Tools to support remote transit employees such as secure cloud platforms for infrastructure monitoring, situational awareness, operations and service delivery

The Transit Tech Lab is a program of the Transit Innovation Partnership, a public-private initiative created by the MTA and Partnership for New York City in response to Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's call for private sector innovation to improve public transit. The COVID-19 Response Challenge builds on previous collaborations addressing the pandemic, including the MTA's launch of the Essential Connector app with Lab graduate AxonVibe to help essential workers plan journeys during overnight subway disinfection closures.

In addition to MTA officials such as Chief Innovation Officer Mark Dowd, private sector and academic experts with experience in transportation, public

health, urban innovation, infrastructure and artificial intelligence will also evaluate submissions to the COVID-19 Response Challenge. They include:

**Reilly Brennan**, General Partner, Trucks Venture Capital

**Clara Brenner**, Managing Partner, Urban Innovation Fund

**Kenneth A. Bronfin**, Senior Managing Director & Head of International Investments, Hearst Ventures

**Kathryn Cleary**, Senior Vice President, U.S. Business Development, Mastercard

**Nick Grossman**, Partner, Union Square Ventures

**Hilary Gosher**, Managing Director, Insight Partners

**Maria Gotsch**, President & CEO, Partnership Fund for New York City

**Leslie Henshaw**, Partner, Deerfield

**Dylan Hixon**, President, Arden Road Investments

**Peter Meunig**, Professor, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University

**Brian Yormak**, Partner, Story Ventures

#### **About the Transit Innovation Partnership**

The Transit Innovation Partnership is a public-private initiative formed by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Partnership for New York City with the mission to make New York the global leader in public transit. A board of leaders from academia, business, civic organizations and government guides the Transit Innovation Partnership, which brings together diverse stakeholders to realize public-private projects that address top-priority challenges. Learn more at <https://transitinnovation.org>.