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IMMEDIATE

MTA to Hold Public Meetings on Reconstruction of L Line's Canarsie Tunnel

Meeting Marks Beginning of Robust Community Engagement about Construction Options and Alternate Service Plans

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced the first of two public meetings to discuss future reconstruction work on the Canarsie Tunnel, which carries the train under the East River between Brooklyn and Manhattan.

The first meeting will be held on Thursday, May 5 at 6 p.m. at the Marcy Avenue Armory at 355 Marcy Avenue in Brooklyn. A Manhattan-based public meeting to be held later in May will be announced soon.

MTA Chairman and CEO Thomas F. Prendergast and MTA New York City Transit President Veronique "Ronnie" Hakim made the announcement in conjunction with elected officials representing Williamsburg, including U.S. Representatives Carolyn B. Maloney and Nydia M. Velazquez, New York State Senators Martin Malavé Dilan and Daniel Squadron, New York State Assembly members Joseph R. Lentol and Maritza Davila, New York City Council Members Stephen Levin and Antonio Reynoso, and Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams.

"The heavy damage sustained by the Canarsie Tunnel during Superstorm Sandy requires that we undertake a full reconstruction in order to ensure the integrity of the tunnel and the safety of our riders for generations to come," Chairman Prendergast said. "The public meetings that the MTA will host in partnership with elected officials will mark the official start of a robust community engagement effort in which we will detail the need for the project, solicit feedback from the public on the potential construction options and begin a collaborative process to develop an alternative service plan to mitigate impacts on train riders."

Any 24/7 closure of the Canarsie Tunnel's two tubes is unlikely to begin before January of 2019, leaving ample time for both the selection of a construction plan and the development of service alternatives. At the same time, procurement of design and construction services for the project must begin to move forward this year to ensure that hundreds of millions of federal dollars that have been secured by the entire New York Congressional delegation are not lost.

"The reconstruction of the Canarsie Tunnel will be an unprecedented response to an unprecedented natural disaster and will unfortunately lead to substantial inconvenience for many of our customers," President Hakim said. "We are committed to working hand in hand with the community to inform our decision on construction alternatives and to replace as much service as we can during this unavoidable reconstruction project."

MTA New York City Transit is weighing the operational and engineering impacts of multiple proposals for rebuilding the Canarsie Tunnel's two tubes. The public meetings will include an in-depth discussion of the potential construction approaches currently under consideration. They will also include an open house at which community members can discuss their concerns with MTA staff; a presentation from MTA and NYC Transit leadership and technical staff; and a question and answer period.

Following the meetings, MTA will continue an aggressive community engagement process – meeting with residents, businesses, community boards, merchant groups and civic associations in Brooklyn and Manhattan communities along the line.

"I am thrilled that the MTA has followed through on its commitment to hold public meetings on work being done on the Train and has given us a concrete date for the first public meeting," Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney said. "The plan should take into account the needs and concerns of the people impacted, and I am delighted that the MTA will be listening to what residents and local business owners have to say."



"The Train is a vital transportation artery for working families in New York City and any changes require close community consultation," Congresswoman Velazquez said. "We must ensure adequate transportation options are available for hardworking New Yorkers."


"For the MTA, tube repairs are a necessary safety measure and much-needed improvement to an already stressed line; for the commuters and businesses, it's time and money lost," Senator Dilan said. "Today's announcement of community meetings regarding tube and line repairs to the is welcome news. It shows that the authority intends to make good on its commitment to bring the up to a standard of service that will meet future demand. It also shows that it has every intention of meeting requests to directly engage the concerned riders and businesses in the community."

"This town hall is part of a public engagement process that can and will bring better outcomes for riders," Senator Squadron said. "The train is a transit lifeline for many, and I thank the MTA for moving forward on this town hall I requested, along with community members and colleagues. We know this kind of engagement can bring results and mitigate impacts, especially by including City agencies and all stakeholders. I thank Chair Prendergast, the MTA, and my colleagues for their focus on this critical issue to our community."

"The upcoming town halls in Brooklyn and Manhattan are just the beginning of an ongoing dialogue between the MTA and the community," Assemblyman Lentol said. "The impact that an train service disruption will have on Brooklyn and Manhattan is far-reaching. By having many town halls leading up to the closures we will ensure that all who will be affected can provide insight on how to minimize the impact. I look forward to working with my colleagues in

government and the community to craft innovative solutions to this problem. New Yorkers are resilient and many times the best solutions come from my constituents. I have faith that the process will be fluid and that together we can all solve this seemingly insurmountable service disruption."



"I am pleased that the MTA has heard our calls for early and regular community engagement on the proposed  train construction," Assemblyman Davila said. "I look forward to working with the MTA and the communities of Bushwick and Williamsburg to ensure that, in the effort to make these much needed repairs, we minimize any negative impact to our thriving and diverse neighborhoods along the  line"

"I am pleased to hear that the MTA is commencing on community engagement around the future of the  train. In order for there to be trust, there must first be communication," Council Member Levin said. "Thousands of straphangers are trusting those in charge to listen to their needs. That's why I welcome robust engagement with the public. I encourage all agencies and my colleagues to make a strong commitment to an open and responsive process."

The Canarsie Tunnel suffered extensive damage to tracks, signals, switches, power cables, signal cables, communication cables, lighting, cable ducts and bench walls throughout a 7,100-foot-long flooded section of both tubes. Bench walls throughout those sections must be rehabilitated to protect the structural integrity of the tubes.

During this rehabilitation process, the MTA will also make significant improvements to stations and tunnel segments closest to the under-river section. New stairs and elevators will be installed at the Bedford Av station in Brooklyn and the 1 Av station in Manhattan, and three new electric substations will be installed, providing more power to operate additional trains during rush hours.

MTA New York City Transit has taken several steps to ensure the Canarsie Tunnel remain reliable until permanent repairs can be performed. The agency is inspecting the tunnel's walls more frequently, and has installed redundant power cables to ensure the pumping system will operate without interruption.

The Canarsie Tunnel was one of nine underwater tunnels that flooded during Superstorm Sandy, all of which required extensive rehabilitation and repair. Some of that work has been accomplished during night and weekend closures, while the  line's Montague Tunnel under the East River was closed for more than a year and the  line tunnel under Newtown Creek was closed for two months, both for complete renovations.