



Progressive Caucus of the New York City Council

February 10, 2015

Thomas F. Prendergast, Chairman and CEO
Metropolitan Transportation Authority
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004

Polly Trottenberg, Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation
55 Water Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10004

Dear Chairman Prendergast and Commissioner Trottenberg,

The Progressive Caucus believes Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) has the potential to be a game changer for millions of New Yorkers who rely on public transportation every day. We urge you to prioritize bringing full-featured BRT to New York City because of its unique ability to address a number of critical issues facing low income and communities of color.

BRT needs to be an integral part of New York's transit infrastructure because:

- **Transit access is not equal across all neighborhoods in New York City.** Data reveals that low-income and communities of color are subject to disproportionately longer commute times than their more affluent and Caucasian counterparts.
- **Job growth is in the outer boroughs, but these locations are the least well-served by the current transit system.** Throughout the recession and the slow recovery, outer borough job addition has dramatically outpaced gains in Manhattan. Blue collar jobs in manufacturing, construction, and domestic work are increasingly located in the boroughs, as are new jobs for our city's working class, in areas such as healthcare, education, and retail. A Manhattan-centered rapid transit system that was developed in the first half of the 20th century is not equipped to serve this new reality.
- **Patterns of displacement have further reduced access to faster transit options for lower income families and communities of color.** With the increased polarization of New York's economy and large scale, high-profile developments, neighborhoods that were once affordable to low- and moderate-income families have been completely transformed. Working class families have been pushed farther from the city's core and from rapid transit access. These commuters now rely on local buses for at least part of their journey – the slowest, least dependable mode of transit – or trade-off other necessities in order to endure the costs of car ownership.

The impact of these transit deserts amplifies inequality; reducing employment opportunities, and restricting access to education, healthcare and other services for the working class. It also reduces opportunities for parent engagement in schools and the civic engagement vital to our democracy.

The physical and demographic patterns of the city have changed and the transit system is not changing with it fast enough to ensure equal access.

A realistic, cost-efficient and comparatively quick way to address many of these issues is through the creation of a network of full-featured BRT routes that connect boroughs and neighborhoods to blue collar job centers, and create options for fast transit that were previously unimaginable.

Building on the successes of the Select Bus Service program, full-featured BRT is a cost-effective, efficient way of making more equitable, just, and sustainable.

We applaud the de Blasio administration and MTA for embracing the need for full-featured BRT. The \$90 million committed to DOT for BRT in last year's budget represents a significant down payment on a citywide network. We would like to meet with you and your staff to discuss ways the Progressive Caucus can help bring a network of BRT routes to New York City.

Sincerely,

New York City Council Progressive Caucus



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Chair, Committee on Transportation



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Co-Chair, District 31 – Queens



Council Member Antonio Reynoso
Co-Chair, District 34 – Brooklyn and Queens



Council Member Brad Lander
District 39 – Brooklyn



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Council Member Ben Kallos
Vice-Chair for Policy, District 5 – Manhattan



Council Member Helen Rosenthal
Vice-Chair for Budget, District 6 – Manhattan



Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer
Majority Leader, District 26 – Queens



Council Member Danny Dromm
District 25 – Queens



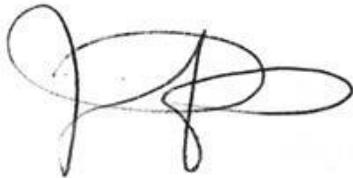
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Council Member Corey Johnson
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Council Member Debi Rose
District 49 – Staten Island



Council Member Julissa Ferreras
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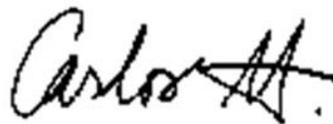
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