



*“Being the mayor of a city who spent eight years focused on solving infrastructure problems long-ignored by Albany is the optimal training ground to take on the issues facing the MTA.” -*

*Stephanie Miner*

The transit system is in disrepair. The MTA, under Andrew Cuomo, has had an abysmal record when it comes to addressing problems that are plaguing New York City’s residents and commuters. New York’s transit system is crucial to the state’s economic development and it is nothing short of shameful that we have allowed it to decline.

Tracks, signals and stations need to be modernized and made dependable. On-time performance for subways, at a minimum, should return to the 85% rate it enjoyed when Andrew Cuomo took over the system. As of January 2018, it is at 58.1%. On-time performance for Metro North and the Long Island Rail Road are also approaching 20-year lows and commuters are plagued by continual delays and cancellations.

One year after the Governor declared a state of emergency the following has occurred:

- Major incidents (transit meltdowns) are on the rise for both commuter lines and the subways.
- Between 2016 and 2017, on time performance for capital projects dropped from an anaemic 37% to a dismal 22%.
- The state still has not delivered promised funds for improvements to the MTA.
- The state passed a provision requiring the creation of a working group to examine the region’s transit system. However, Cuomo has waited over three months to make any appointments, despite recommendations that it be done by the end of the year. No meetings convening the group have been scheduled.
- Active mismanagement has driven up costs to \$3.5 billion per mile of track for the East Side Access plan, which is already over a decade behind schedule and over \$7B its initial budget. Each mile of track for the East Side Access could fund 20% of Andy Byford’s Fast Forward plan to modernize New York City transit.
- Ridership on the subways and buses has decreased, each by over 2%. Instead, riders have opted for more reliable transit options like Uber and Lyft -- costing the MTA potential revenue and increasing traffic on our already congested streets.

The State’s failure to take action during a state of emergency is endemic of the Cuomo administration’s approach to the MTA. The state fell \$300 million short of delivering state assistance committed for the 2010-2014 capital plan, and has only allocated \$365 million of the \$8.6 billion promised for the 2015-2019 plan.



We do not expect this money to be deployed by the end of the year, but New Yorkers deserve to know where this money is coming from, especially as the state should be preparing a new capital obligation for the next capital program beginning in 10 months. The three capital plans that preceded the Cuomo administration were all fully funded.

As Governor I will put an end to juvenile finger pointing and hold the MTA accountable. Everyone appointed to the board by Andrew Cuomo will have to leave, including its conflict-tainted chairman. I will instead appoint people who have expertise and the ability to work with city and county representatives to provide dependable transit for the people of New York. I will work with the MTA board to establish needed measures to decrease costs and implement a stable revenue structure to support the system.

It is not a surprise me that Albany has turned its back on necessary infrastructure investments. They did the same things in Syracuse while I was mayor. Despite the dire needs in the state's fifth largest city, Andrew Cuomo opted for gimmicks instead of structural fixes to pressing problems. In the absence of Albany we found creative partnerships that increased our capacity to use data and evidence and directed our limited resources to solutions that maximized impact. By putting our resources to better use and working across departments and alongside private providers, we were able to reduce the cost to repair critical water infrastructure projects and improve road quality while also reducing disruptions from construction. Our evidence-based approach put Syracuse on the national stage when it came to innovation in government.

## **Exercise Leadership**

### **Fund the Fast Forward NYC Transit Plan**

We will fund the Fast Forward NYC transit plan to improve the New York City subway service and make sure that spending is tightly monitored and controlled. The MTA will qualify for additional tranches of funding as it meets benchmarked standards for performance. These benchmarks will be transparent, easy to understand, and made plainly and publicly available to the public.

### **Engage the Public**

The public are and always will be the true arbiters of accountability. Engagement of a broad spectrum of the riding community, especially the traditionally underrepresented populations--including youth, low-income riders, people of color, and new immigrants--is crucial to understanding the systems daily vulnerabilities. These riders understand first hand the problems in the system and the improvements they want to see.

Feedback from these groups should occur hand in hand with policy development, both to ensure support for changes and provide greater transparency for those that depend on the system daily.

### Engage Front Line Employees

Even though the system is in bad shape the subway still manages to move over a million people a day. This happens because, while elected officials shirk responsibility, employees on the front line get to work every day and get it done. They know better than anyone what the problems are, what has been tried in the past, and what solutions are actually feasible and necessary. Their views will be invaluable to providing better service to the regions ridership.

## Reduce Costs

### Lead on Wage and Work Rules

The MTA currently plays no part in negotiating wage and work rule requirements for the projects it funds. These are negotiated by developers and the unions, neither of which have a fiduciary responsibility to keep costs down. The impact is not hard to see-- it costs \$3.5 billion to add just one mile of track for the East Side Access project. This is significantly higher than other cities in the world, even after you account for comparative construction costs. The MTA has a responsibility to oversee these basic, management issues, for example, defining the number of staff needed for projects and when overtime rates should apply.

### Fix the Procurement Process

The MTA is under no obligation to select the lowest bidder for contracts. Yet it continues to do so even though it frequently means working with the same few companies, many of which have consistently been behind schedule and over cost. The MTA should adopt a Request for Proposal model that would allow it to weight criteria such as a history of meeting contractual obligations and quality of work performance.

### Increase the Use of Design Build

Design build and other forms of Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) have shown to reduce risk to governments stemming from cost overruns and delays. This does not mean privatizing our infrastructure, it means contracting with a single entity which is responsible for the design and construction of each project. This arrangement transfers the responsibility of completing projects on time to a single entity with a true incentive to get the job done right. It can also mean an accountable party for errors other than New York's taxpayers.



## Plan for the Long-Term

The current five-year plan does not go far enough to effectively define a long-term vision or delineate necessary strategic goals. A ten-year plan, as recommended by NYPIRG, should include financing directives that outlines dedicated revenue for both annual operating costs and long-term capital budgets. Any strategic plan must use evidence to allocate resources to the greatest need- not what color tiles look the prettiest. It must also include a full accounting of the usable life of all of its capital assets and their replacement costs. Performance management systems will be used to assess progress and make benchmark information publicly available.

## Reduce Healthcare Costs

Increased costs are outpacing revenue at an unsustainable pace at the MTA, led by \$1.9B in annual healthcare costs for employees. Other jurisdictions, including the City of New York, have figured out how to negotiate new contracts that include healthcare savings without hurting workers. The MTA needs to follow their lead. This must go hand in hand with a statewide focus on improving the quality of New York's hospitals while cutting out abuse, fraud and waste. A dynamic approach that attacks healthcare costs from both fronts is necessary to make costs sustainable.

## Stabilize Revenues

### Ensuring Our Dollars Get to Work

As a first step in making sure the MTA gets the funding it needs to bring itself into a state of good repair, we will make good on the State's promise of \$8.6 billion in state funding for the 2014-19 capital plan. New revenue sources, like congestion pricing, could make a big impact in our ability to fund infrastructure, and once the MTA proves that it can manage its operations and budget responsibly, we will support their implementation. New York already has the high cost of business, and taxpayers deserve to know that their money is not being wasted before we ask them to contribute more. Any new revenue sources we enact will be exclusively dedicated to bringing subway tracks, signals and station maintenance and repair.