



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER  
SCOTT M. STRINGER

August 19, 2019

Andy Byford  
President  
New York City Transit  
2 Broadway  
New York, NY 10004

Dear President Byford:

We are writing to inquire about the MTA's progress on the Bronx Bus Network Redesign. As you know, we have both been long-standing champions of bus reform and vocal advocates for network redesign. That's why we remain eager to see this process succeed and to help the MTA deliver fast, frequent, and reliable bus service to the 450,000 riders who depend on MTA Bronx buses every day.

Over the last decade, the Bronx has undergone dramatic changes, adding 65,000 new residents and 90,000 new jobs. The housing stock has increased by 20,000 units since 2008, and neighborhood re-zonings have significantly increased density—and transit demand—in vast sections of the borough. Today, a robust 42 percent of Bronxites commute to work within their home borough, compared to 38 percent working in Manhattan.

Unfortunately, as you are well aware, our bus system has not kept pace with these changing demographic, employment and commuting patterns. Local buses crawl at 6.7 miles per hour and the system is plagued by delays—with 30 percent of Bronx buses failing to maintain steady service during peak hours. Moreover, while sectors like healthcare, food services, hospitality, and entertainment have driven the borough's economic growth in the last decade, and a growing number of Bronxites are commuting to work early in the morning and late at night, off-peak service continues to be meager.

With this in mind, it is absolutely essential that the Bronx Bus Network Redesign is conducted in a thorough and expeditious manner and that it is rolled out successfully. We were very encouraged by your recent statement affirming that you are "committed to improving bus service in the Bronx and [are] absolutely willing to consider an increase in funding." First and foremost, this increased funding should be dedicated to more frequent and reliable service—particularly in the early mornings, late nights, and weekend hours. The current Draft Plan for the Bronx Bus Network Redesign promises increased frequencies on just 12 of the 46 local, limited, and SBS routes that operate in the borough. This is completely inadequate.

Moreover, we strongly encourage you to redouble your collaboration with the DOT and advocate for substantial street-level improvements on Day 1 of the network redesign rollout. To improve speed and reliability for riders, it is essential that the MTA and DOT continue to invest in traffic signal priority technology to help buses move through red lights, dedicated bus lanes to help avoid congestion, curb redesigns to help speed up the boarding and off-boarding of passengers, and well-designed, well-equipped shelters to make the bus system more comfortable and inviting.

As we all agree, these Bus Network Redesigns are long overdue and a lot is at stake for the day-to-day lives of 1.5 million Bronxites and 8.6 million New Yorkers. As such, we commend your efforts and look forward to continuing to work with you.

Sincerely,



Scott M. Stringer  
New York City Comptroller



Alessandra Biaggi  
New York State Senator, District 34

c:

Polly Trottenberg  
Commissioner, New York City Department of Transportation