



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

State of New York

February 14, 2021

Dear Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Shea:

As you know, we have been calling for additional policing for the subway and bus systems for over a year, and a much greater focus on mental health care services and interventions for many months.

We want to thank Chief O'Reilly for her continued partnership during this time, and for the responsiveness following the tragic and shocking crime spree that occurred on the A Line Friday night. Our hearts are broken for the victims and for their families. We commend NYPD's work that led to a quick apprehension and later charging of the suspect, and we will continue to do everything we can to assist your efforts.

We believe the additional 500 officers you agreed to dedicate to the subway system is an important first step, which will help ease the fears of customers and the heroic transit workers who serve this city every day.

We believe more is needed, however, and so we are writing today to request an additional 1,000 NYPD officers be assigned to the Transit Bureau to patrol subways and buses immediately. We request teams of uniformed officers be assigned to every station and that officers ride the system throughout the day and during the overnight to ensure the safety of our customers and colleagues.

The fact is that we all see a disturbing trend above ground and below ground, which as you know began prior to the pandemic, and now has been exacerbated by the acute mental health crisis we are facing. Ridership is down 70% in the subway and 50% on buses, and while overall crime remains on the decline, felony assaults have increased 26.5%. In 2020, murder and rape – while they remain incredibly rare and represent a small fraction of crime systemwide – doubled from three to six and three to seven respectively. Assaults on our workers, from harassment and threats to physical violence, continue to occur far too often. Every single one of these occurrences is one too many.

The agencies of the MTA

MTA New York City Transit
MTA Long Island Rail Road

MTA Metro-North Railroad
MTA Bridges and Tunnels

MTA Construction & Development
MTA Bus Company

The Governor and the MTA Board called for additional police officers in the system when this trend was already evident, more than a year ago, and it remains the right call now. We have also urgently asked for additional mental health resources – including for the 311 service to be expanded to the transit system – and we continue that call today. We know there is more the city can do to get help for those who need it most – these requests must be addressed, and quickly.

Even with current ridership down so significantly, we at the MTA remain responsible for the safe, secure and efficient transportation of millions of people each day – more than all of the domestic airlines combined. It is a huge responsibility and one that we take very seriously – and the reality is that while we provide transportation to millions, we simply cannot also serve as social service providers, nor do we have the deep expertise required. Individuals experiencing a mental health crisis deserve much, much better care and closer attention.

The safety and security of our system remains our foremost priority. We know you share this commitment.

Sincerely,



Patrick J. Foye
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Metropolitan Transportation Authority



Sarah Feinberg
Interim President
New York City Transit