



Greetings---

Six Points to Fix the MTA

As a lifelong straphanger and someone who does not own a car, I experience daily our public transit system and know first-hand that service is on the decline and that we must come together now to fix the MTA.

As an elected official, I can tell you that my office receives more emails and phone calls on the MTA than any other issue. I hear it constantly - New Yorkers are uncomfortable on their commutes, crammed into trains and sitting for long periods in decrepit stations on hot platforms. This transportation crisis drains money from their pockets in taxes, fares and lost productivity. It degrades their quality of life by taking them away from their friends and family for needlessly long hours. We have been forced to accept that a bad commute is simply part of living in New York City, but that does not have to be the case. [We need commitment, sacrifice, and a real plan.](#)



The MTA's capital budget is underfunded. We have to find places to add money for newer trains, modern

stations, and efficient equipment. It's time for New Yorkers to be put first and for our Governor and our Mayor to work together to actually address the transportation needs for all of us. [**This is why I released my six point plan to fix the MTA earlier this week:**](#)

1. **Call a special session.** I ask the governor to call a special legislative session so we can find a congestion pricing plan that works - we need to fund the MTA without crushing outer borough drivers who have little choice but to drive to Manhattan. I propose lowering outer borough bridge tolls on bridges such as the Verrazano, Whitestone, and Throgs Neck. We can make up the revenue by tolling the East River bridges. And I want tolling discounts for commuters who live in transportation deserts, who have few MTA options.
2. **Float a bond.** The Legislature should pass and the voters of the state of New York should approve a general obligation bond to be floated by the State of New York for \$4.5 billion dollars so that the state can infuse the MTA Capital Budget with much needed funds to modernize signals and switches and purchase modern open gangway subway cars.
3. **Increase the taxi surcharge.** [**Currently, the state levies a 50 cent MTA surcharge on each yellow and green taxi ride. I propose we increase this to one dollar and that we apply this surcharge to black cars, Uber and other ride sharing applications.**](#) This would bring in between \$225 million - \$300 million dollars in funding for the MTA.
4. **Call an efficiency task force.** For some reason, the MTA is the most expensive transit system on Earth. [**For example, the MTA paid \\$1.7 billion per kilometer for the 2nd Avenue subway while recent additions to the London tube cost \\$450 million per kilometer and the Paris Metro came in at \\$230 million per kilometer.**](#) London and Paris are old densely populated cities that have high labor costs like New York and yet they are able to make additions and improvements to their mass transit systems at a fraction of our cost. The governor must form a task force to find out why it costs so much to operate, and root out waste and inefficiencies.
5. **Divert income taxes.** We should divert a small percentage of state personal income tax from counties served by the MTA towards the MTA's capital expenses.
6. **End the BQX.** The BQX is a creative idea, but it's a \$2.5 billion dollar diversion from the real transit crisis in this city. All current and future funds dedicated to the BQX should be redirected to the MTA Capital budget.

Church Avenue Reconstruction

I was proud to join NYC Department of Transportation, NYC Department of Design and Construction, community leaders and NYC Councilmember Brad Lander to officially break ground on critically important pedestrian safety enhancements at the intersection of Church Avenue and McDonald Avenue.



As I said at the press conference, you don't need to spend much time at the corner of Church & McDonald to realize how busy the intersection is – and the statistics bear it out. Church & McDonald is a high crash corridor in Brooklyn, having been the site of 21 traffic injuries from 2008-2012. This project will help calm traffic and create safer crossings for pedestrians by doing a complete pavement restoration, installing curb extensions, pedestrian ramps, catch basins and replacing the water main.

Special kudos to Councilmember Brad Lander and Participatory Budgeting NYC for spearheading this project and making sure it came to fruition.

The Culture of Albany- Sheldon Silver Conviction Overturned

Former NYS Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, who was convicted on corruption charges in 2015, had his conviction overturned by the 2nd Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals this week. Silver was convicted for illegally accepting nearly \$4 million dollars in return for taking a series of official actions that benefited others. Unfortunately, the appeals court found that in the original instructions to the jury, the judge's explanation of an official action was too broad. Recent precedent from the Supreme Court decision involving former Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell established that an official action must involve formal and concrete government actions or decisions, like holding a hearing or filing a lawsuit, and not routine political courtesies. The Southern District U.S. Attorney's office has stated that they intend to retry the case.

The overturning of this conviction only highlights how important it is to reform the corrosive culture of corruption in Albany. **We must once and for all ban outside income for legislators** so that we can truly close the door on the way that Sheldon Silver and others practiced politics in New York State. I look forward to continuing to fight on the front lines for this and other important reforms.

As always, if you have any neighborhood concerns or policy ideas, please reach out to me by responding to this email for by calling my office at (718) 788-7221.

See you around the neighborhood,

Bobby

P.S. [Please remember to join me for the #GETORGANIZED BK Civic Festival on Tuesday, July 25th at the Prospect Park Band Shell! Doors open at 5:30pm – show from the stage starts at 6pm.](#)

_ We're going to feature wonderful musical performances from very talented artists, booths from fantastic community organizations, food and beverage service, and so much more! Join us!