



May 24, 2022

Janno Lieber  
Chair and CEO  
Metropolitan Transit Authority  
2 Broadway  
New York, NY 10004

Dear Chair Lieber:

We write to you to urge the MTA to re-open MTA subway station booths for any transactions that were available before the COVID-19 pandemic began. The suspension of transactions at subway station booths has made the MTA less accessible for older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income people, and cannot be justified with public health arguments. We also ask that the MTA roll-out of the OMNY-only system ensure accessibility for older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income people.

The pandemic is not over, and we are alarmed at rising rates of COVID-19 in New York. That said, this policy is unscientific in nature. When the MTA suspended cash transactions at subway station booths at the beginning of the pandemic, we did not know as much about the virus as we do today. We now know that COVID-19 is transmitted through the air, not on surfaces. The existence of the divider between a customer and the station agent makes these concerns about COVID-19 unfounded.

Further, the suspension of cash transactions at subway station booths discriminates against older adults and people with disabilities who use Reduced-Fare MetroCards. It also discriminates against the 9.4% of New Yorkers who do not have bank accounts. There are multiple transactions involving Reduced-Fare MetroCards that can now only be conducted at the MTA Customer Service Center or at MetroCard mobile sales buses and vans.

This is not an equitable or sustainable system. The vans are scheduled very infrequently: twice a month for only two hours at a time. Because of this, lines are often long. We have heard complaints from particularly older adults and people with disabilities who have had to stand in long lines, sometimes in extreme weather. We have also received reports from constituents about buses that never showed up. MTA staff have confirmed the MetroCard bus and van system is stretched thin and that reliability of buses and vans being at their scheduled locations is also a real issue. People who use Reduced-Fare MetroCards should have the same ease accessing important services as everyone else.

The suspension of cash transactions at subway station booths makes the MTA less accessible to many of the most vulnerable New Yorkers. When this policy was first enacted, it was thought that transactions would return eventually, and given what we now know about COVID-19, that time has come. As the whole system shifts to OMNY, we urge the MTA to center the needs of

low-income, older, and disabled transit-users. Any OMNY plans should avoid burdening Reduced-Fare MetroCard and cash users with extra hoops to jump through.

Please let us know what steps are being taken to restore these vital services. We look forward to the resumption of cash transactions at subway station booths, and to hear about how the MTA will ensure accessibility with the coming shift to OMNY.

Sincerely,

Liz Krueger  
State Senator

Joe Addabbo  
State Senator

Jamaal T. Bailey  
State Senator

Cordell Cleare  
State Senator

Leroy Comrie  
State Senator

Mike Gianaris  
State Senator

Andrew Gounardes  
State Senator

Brad Hoylman  
State Senator

Tim Kennedy  
State Senator

Shelley Mayer  
State Senator

Zellnor Y. Myrie  
State Senator

Roxanne J. Persaud  
State Senator

Jessica Ramos  
State Senator

Gustavo Rivera  
State Senator

Sean Ryan  
State Senator

Julia Salazar  
State Senator

James Sanders Jr.  
State Senator

Peter J. Abbate, Jr.  
State Assembly Member

Michael Benedetto  
State Assembly Member

Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn  
State Assembly Member

Kenny Burgos  
State Assembly Member

Catalina Cruz  
State Assembly Member

Maritza Davila  
State Assembly Member

Manny De Los Santos  
State Assembly Member

Inez E. Dickens  
State Assembly Member

Erik Dilan  
State Assembly Member

Jeffrey Dinowitz  
State Assembly Member

Nathalia Fernández  
State Assembly Member

Mathylde Frontus  
State Assembly Member

Emily Gallagher  
State Assembly Member

Deborah Glick  
State Assembly Member

Jessica González-Rojas  
State Assembly Member

Richard Gottfried  
State Assembly Member

Alicia Hyndman  
State Assembly Member

Kimberly Jean-Pierre  
State Assembly Member

Latoya Joyner  
State Assembly Member

Zohran Kwame Mamdani  
State Assembly Member

Jonathan Rivera  
State Assembly Member

Amanda Septimo  
State Assembly Member

Jo Anne Simon  
State Assembly Member

Rebecca Seawright  
State Assembly Member

Al Taylor  
State Assembly Member

Latrice Walker  
State Assembly Member

Stefani L. Zinerman  
State Assembly Member

Brad Lander  
NYC Comptroller

Vanessa L. Gibson  
Bronx Borough President

Mark D. Levine  
Manhattan Borough President

Antonio Reynoso  
Brooklyn Borough President

Donovan Richards  
Queens Borough President

Diana Ayala  
City Council Member

Charles Barron  
City Council Member

Joe Borelli  
City Council Member

Justin Brannan  
City Council Member

Gale A. Brewer  
City Council Member

Tiffany Cabán  
City Council Member

Carmen De La Rosa  
City Council Member

Eric Dinowitz  
City Council Member

Oswald Feliz  
City Council Member

Jennifer Gutiérrez  
City Council Member

Robert F. Holden  
City Council Member

Rita Joseph  
City Council Member

Julie Menin  
City Council Member

Francisco Moya  
City Council Member

Chi Ossé  
City Council Member

Keith Powers  
City Council Member

Lincoln Restler  
City Council Member

Kevin C. Riley  
City Council Member

Pierina Sanchez  
City Council Member

Althea Stevens  
City Council Member

Marjorie Velázquez  
City Council Member

Julie Won  
City Council Member

Kalman Yeger  
City Council Member

**Organizations**

Riders Alliance

Transport Workers Union, Local 100

Transportation Alternatives

cc: Richard Davey, President, New York City Transit  
Quemuel Arroyo, Chief Accessibility Officer, Metropolitan Transportation Authority