

D McShane  
K. Pasce  
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New York City Transit

MAR 31 2010

March 23, 2010

Mr. Damian McShane  
Chairman  
Community Board No. 8 - Bronx  
5676 Riverdale Avenue, Suite 100  
Bronx, NY 10471-2194

**Re: Access-A-Ride Service**

Dear Mr. McShane:

We are in receipt of the resolution unanimously adopted by Bronx Community Board 8 at its February 9, 2010 meeting, opposing any changes in the MTA NYC Transit Access-A-Ride (AAR) program that would eliminate door-to-door service.

A review of many aspects of MTA service, including the Access-A-Ride (AAR) program, is currently underway, due to the significant operating budget deficit that we are facing. This deficit is the result of the combined impact of a \$143 million reduction in 2009 direct state government subsidy; revenue from dedicated state taxes coming in much lower than projected; and an arbitrator's award of a cumulative three-year wage increase to certain union-represented NYC Transit employees. The initial projected budget shortfall was \$383 million for 2009-2010, but an additional \$378 million gap is now projected for this year, based on revised State revenue projections. As the MTA is required, by law, to balance its budget each year, we have no choice but to take significant action, including administrative restructuring, union and non-union employee lay-offs and service cuts, to reduce our operating costs.

The rapid and steep growth in demand for Access-A-Ride service, in combination with the extraordinarily high cost of providing this service, has exacerbated the MTA's annual operating budget deficits in recent years. We currently provide AAR service to more than 136,000 registrants and, on an average, weekday ridership is approximately 27,300 registrants. The end-of-year budget for this service is approximately \$448 million; when responsibility for the service was transferred to NYC Transit from the NYC Department of Transportation in July 1993, the entire program budget was approximately \$14 million. Given the continued rapid growth of this service, it is impossible to balance a deficit of the magnitude that NYC Transit is facing without changes to paratransit service.

While NYC Transit is pursuing changes in AAR service, our plans do not include any across-the-board cuts in service. Thus, we are not planning to eliminate door-to-door service, but to integrate the use of accessible buses and subways in our scheduling itineraries in those instances when AAR customers are able to travel by bus and subway for some of their trips, but require transportation to bus stops served by our fully-accessible bus fleet or to accessible subway stations. Under this initiative, whenever possible, customers will be connected via AAR to a bus, rail or subway fixed-route service for at least a portion of their trip. This is permissible under American with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations for some, but not all, of our paratransit-eligible customers. We simply can no longer afford to exceed ADA regulations by continuing to provide door-to-door service for all paratransit trips

Please rest assured that we will review and consider all future changes in AAR service, relating to trip eligibility, on an individual basis and will continue to fully comply with all applicable ADA guidelines.

Sincerely,



Thomas F. Prendergast  
President

cc: Karen Pesce, Community Board 8  
Robert Bergen  
Joseph J. Smith  
Lois H. Tandler  
Thomas Charles