

Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer

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January 22, 2008

Howard H. Roberts, Jr.
President
MTA New York City Transit
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004

Dear President Roberts:

As elected officials representing the thousands of New Yorkers who live and work on Roosevelt Island, we urge you to address the developing crisis in the island's mass transit link to Manhattan and the rest of New York City. Already, Roosevelt Islanders are faced with overcrowding on the island's sole subway connection, the F line. With thousands more residents projected to join the island's population in the near future, as well as a prolonged period of downtime planned for the Roosevelt Island tram, immediate action is required to prevent a transportation overload of critical proportions.

New development already underway is projected to increase the island's population by as much as 80% – to more than 18,000 – within the next ten years. Many of these new residents will be arriving within the next year. Further affecting the island's transportation situation, the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation is planning a major overhaul of its tram system, a project that will entail suspending tram operations for approximately six to nine months, beginning in early 2009. During this time, the estimated 4,000 – 4,500 daily tram users will be forced to use alternative means of transportation – and, as in the case of previous tram outages, the great majority of them will use the subway. Additionally, repairs currently being made to the F train line have often eliminated weekend subway service to the island. Since these repairs are expected to continue while the tram is taken out of service, it will be increasingly difficult for residents of Roosevelt Island to travel between their homes and the rest of the City.

In a letter dated July 26, 2006, Councilmember Lappin urged to you consider means of improving subway service to Roosevelt Island, including the possibility of extending the Q line from the 57th Street/7th Avenue station in Manhattan to the 21st Street/Queensbridge station in Queens, thus increasing the number of trains able to serve

Roosevelt Island. Councilmember Lappin wrote to you again on June 25, 2007, reiterating her concerns about rush hour service levels on the F line. In your response to Councilmember Lappin, dated July 27, you made no mention of the proposal to extend the Q line, instead focusing on the impossibility of adding additional F trains, due to the fact that “AM and PM F service is operating at full track and signal capacity along the Queens Blvd line.”

However, extending the Q line through the 63rd Street tunnel, with a new terminus at 21st St./Queensbridge, would allow NYC Transit to increase service to Roosevelt Island by alternating Q trains with F trains, without adding any trains to the Queens Boulevard line. It is our understanding that NYC Transit has, at times in the past, operated such a service via a currently-unused tunnel under Central Park. While we understand that this arrangement might eventually conflict with service plans for the Second Avenue line, we see no reason why it could not be undertaken as, at the very least, an interim measure.

In your response to Councilmember Lappin you stated that “our recent data continues to show that, on average, the F line operates within passenger loading guidelines.” While this may be true – though it conflicts with the daily experience of Roosevelt Island residents who ride the F line – it strikes us as a somewhat shortsighted view of the problem, in light of the island’s rapid population growth and the impending overhaul of the tram.

Given these realities, it is imperative that NYC Transit seriously consider ways to augment subway service to Roosevelt Island as soon as possible. We urge you to consider extending service on the Q line to 21st St./Queensbridge. If you believe this would not be practicable, we ask that you investigate alternate possibilities for increasing service to the rapidly growing population of Roosevelt Island.

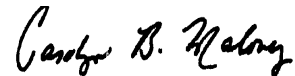
Very truly yours,



Micah Z. Kellner
Assembly Member



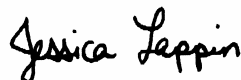
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Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



José M. Serrano
State Senator



Jessica S. Lappin
Council Member

cc: Stephen H. Shane, President, Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation
Deborah VanAmerongen, Commissioner, NYS Division of Housing and Community
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Matthew Katz, President, Roosevelt Island Residents Association