

**MTA Public Hearing**  
**Requests for Federal Financial Assistance for Capital Improvement Projects**  
**Testimony of Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz**  
**June 7, 2006**

Good evening. Chairman Kalikow and members of the MTA Board. I am commenting here tonight on the need for increased funding by the MTA in its Capital Program and the need to expand its focus in Brooklyn.

I take pride in the fact that the 170 subway stations and the 90 plus bus routes in Brooklyn generate the highest number of transit passengers of any borough in New York City. Despite the many improvements and capital program investments in Brooklyn, the challenge is to make the system more convenient, attractive and easier to use, and to think outside of the box when responding to public concerns.

Downtown Brooklyn is emerging as the City's third Central Business District, and Brooklyn is emerging as a world class City, while MTA is not devoting sufficient resources to meet the future needs of Brooklyn. A broader view of Brooklyn's needs is warranted.

In 2003, I developed Brooklyn's Transportation Priorities for Federal Funding. This includes the Second Avenue Subway and its extension to Brooklyn. Since that time I have also supported the Lower Manhattan-JFK Rail Link Project. Development of the EIS for that project is underway, and last year the Governor supported a new rail tunnel under the East River as the best mean of serving that project, while creating the capacity to extend the Second Avenue Subway to Brooklyn.

Past iterations of the Second Avenue Subway, in the 1920's and 70's also proposed to serve Brooklyn. I believe the Second Avenue Subway should proceed from Hanover Square under the East River to the LIRR Atlantic Branch and proceed down Utica Avenue. That corridor has been identified by the Southern Brooklyn Transportation Investment Study as being underserved, with bus riders equal to 80 % of Second Avenue bus demand. This is one project that is needed to complete Brooklyn's subway system.

In 2003, I also developed my Brooklyn Transit Opportunities to provide needed transit service, including an extension of the V train and operation of an express on the Culver line, G train improvements, and Brooklyn Subway Station Connectivity Improvements. Recently, I wrote Transit President Reuter to request additional service along Brooklyn's Fourth Avenue line. We need a fresh approach to better utilize the resources we have today.

Although the subway system recently celebrated its 100th Anniversary, the City's three separate subway lines (the BMT, IRT, and IND) were not unified until 1940, but 66 years later, there are still missing connections or connections between subway lines that need to be improved. To address this problem, one of my priorities for federal transportation funding is **Brooklyn**

**Subway Connectivity Improvements** to complete missing connections and improve several existing ones.

- I believe that new connections should be constructed at three locations:
  1. between Junius Street (3) and Livonia Avenue (L),
  2. between Broadway (G) and Hewes (J,M) or Lorimer Streets (J,M),
  3. between Court Square (G) and Courthouse Square (7).

Connections between these stations would have helped ease the disruption resulting from the recent Chambers Street switching room fire.

- In Downtown Brooklyn, subway stations are poorly connected to support the tremendous growth we are experiencing in the area. Although the Jay Street (A,C,F) Lawrence Street (M,R) Connector Project is about to get underway, and should proceed while minimizing local disruption, there are at least three additional options that need to be considered. A study is needed to create a Downtown Brooklyn Transit Hub similar to that being developed in Lower Manhattan. Three linkages are among the options that should be considered:
  1. between Borough Hall (2,3,4,5) and Jay Street (A,C,F),
  2. between Nevins Street (2,3,4,5) and Dekalb Avenue (B,M,Q,R),
  3. the Hoyt Street Connector, between the Hoyt Street (2,3) and Hoyt-Schermerhorn (A,C,G)

NYCT recently reviewed the first proposal listed above—connecting the Jay Street and Borough Hall stations—and took issue with the length of the required passageway under Willoughby Street and the need to dip under the 2/3 station. While these are issues, I do not regard them as fatal flaws. I request that this transfer connection be reevaluated to complement the planned Jay/Lawrence connection and extend the Willoughby Street corridor westward, thus improving circulation in downtown Brooklyn. (An alternative is a passageway under the south side of Fulton Street connecting the closed south mezzanine of the Jay Street station and the outbound 4/5 platform.

- Furthermore, existing Free Transfers need to be improved at two locations:
  1. Ninth Street - Fourth Avenue (F,M,R),
  2. New Utrecht Avenue (N) and 62nd Street (D,M).

MTA should initiate the planning and design for these projects

As you know, Downtown Brooklyn is growing at a feverish pace. I am also in constant receipt of requests from local communities to rehabilitate the subway stations in Downtown Brooklyn. Growth has spread to the periphery of Downtown Brooklyn, and now includes DUMBO and the Brooklyn Waterfront.

Old warehouses and former industrial spaces are increasingly being converted for residential and retail use, as more and more people and businesses move into the area. Over the coming years rider-ship at the **York Street** and **High Street** subway stations is going to greatly increase. To meet and welcome this demand, I propose that these stations are transformed into safe and well maintained points of entry for the increasing number of visitors from all over our City.

Ground will soon be broken for the extension of Brooklyn Bridge Park. By the beginning of the next decade the Brooklyn Waterfront will join the ranks of Brooklyn's premier tourist and recreation destinations. Our subway system should be prepared to serve them.

Given the challenges we face, MTA needs to adopt a broader vision for Brooklyn. A vision that will reduce the use of the automobile by our residents and other residents of the region, and increase transit use where transit is underutilized. Two means for doing so that should be considered at remote locations include park and ride and greater use of express bus. The focus should be on enhancing mobility and creating the right combination of transit service improvements to discourage auto use.

Lastly, I want to bring your attention to seven Brooklyn subway stations whose rehabilitation had been deferred. These Brooklyn stations are among 12 stations, city-wide, whose rehabilitation had been deferred.

- These stations include the **Lawrence Street Station**, and **the five Sea Beach line stations** that served 12.5 million persons in 2003.
- I am pleased to note that rehabilitation of the seventh Brooklyn station, the **Smith Street/9th Street Station** is now included in MTA's Capital Program. This elevated station is widely known as the highest in the system. Although not an ADA Key Station, escalator access between the Street and Platform levels is provided. As MTA recently designated its 100th station for inclusion in the Key Station Plan, an expansion of this program should be considered, and this station should be among those to be reviewed

I request that maximum efforts are taken to maintain the reliable operation of the Smith Street/9th Street station escalators, and that the six other stations are rehabilitated as soon as possible. Thank you.