



Published in the

TIMES *Ledger*
SERVING QUEENS SINCE 1919

Cuomo and de Blasio Reach Agreement on MTA Funding

October 15, 2015

By Bill Parry

Forgive the riders of the No. 7 subway line for not celebrating the news of Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio's agreement to fund the MTA capital program last weekend. They were too busy dealing with delays, skipped stops, packed trains and crowded platforms, all exacerbated by crowds heading to the Mets playoff games at Citi Field.

The social media group, 7 Train Blues, was more concerned about the MTA's announcement that it will shut down service on two weekends next month due to ongoing work on three major improvement projects.

"We all know the work has to get done," 7 Train Blues founding member Melissa Orlando said. "It's just gone on for so long it just adds to the frustration that we feel. It's always more of the same. At least this time the MTA sent a representative to explain the suspension at the Community Board 2 meeting."

The No. 7 runs straight through the district of City Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer (D-Sunnyside), who has led numerous rallies over the past several years, protesting the weekend shutdowns and dangerous conditions. **Just last month, the Citizens Budget Commission released a study that said the 7 had the highest percentage of stations in disrepair of any line in the city.**

"Investing in public transit is the right thing to do on so many different levels," Van Bramer said. "Given the issues that the 7 train riders face every day, it affects the quality of life. We have to make the MTA more accountable and that's what this deal accomplish-es."

New York state has committed to provide \$8.3 billion, and New York City will pitch in \$2.5 billion toward the program, which totals \$26.1 billion worth of investments to renew, enhance and expand the MTA network of subways, trains and buses.

A key part of the deal was de Blasio's demand that the governor stop raiding MTA funds and redirecting them to non-mass transit projects.

"The state will not divert any funds or fail to provide any funding committed to this capital program" the agreement reads.

"It's called a lockbox — the funds cannot be diverted," Van Bramer said. "The agreement also calls for MTA board members to work with City Council members to make sure the money is going to the places and projects that are most in need of repair."



Published in the

TIMES *Ledger*
SERVING QUEENS SINCE 1919

The city and state will fund on the same schedule on a proportionate basis. Cuomo is already promising to buy 1,000 new subway cars and 1,400 new buses.

However, the program is not fully funded. There is still a \$700 million funding hole that “will be closed by MTA efforts to seek further efficiencies or necessary program reductions,” an MTA spokesman said. Additional fare hikes have been ruled out by the MTA.

Van Bramer will take a wait-and-see approach.

“I just don’t trust the MTA to do the right thing and 7 train riders all believe the same thing,” he said.