CBC Statement on the MTA's Proposed 2020-2024 Capital Plan

Contact: Andrew S. Rein
212-279-2605, ext. 313

New York, NY - September 16, 2019 - Citizens Budget Commission (CBC) President Andrew S. Rein released this statement on the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA’s) Proposed 2020-2024 Capital Plan on behalf of CBC:

The MTA has released the summary of an ambitious plan to invest $51.5 billion in the region’s mass transit network. Improving MTA infrastructure and service is necessary to maintain New York City’s competitiveness as a place to live and work and to enhance quality of life for New Yorkers who depend upon the system daily. A well-crafted, soundly financed, and well–executed plan is essential for accomplishing this.

The MTA should answer three significant questions when it releases the full plan:

1. *Is the plan spending money on the right things?* The MTA has yet to make public a comprehensive needs assessment. It is unclear whether this plan’s investments will be sufficient to maximize progress on bringing the system to a state of good repair, especially considering significant investment in service expansion.

2. *How sound is the financing plan?* The plan assumes $3 billion in funding from New York State and $3 billion from New York City; neither the State nor the City has authorized these commitments. Furthermore, it is unclear whether the MTA will be able to finance fully $9.8 billion in bonds and pay-as-you-go capital given its projected operating deficits. Finally, bonding out revenue from the new sales tax intercept and real estate transfer tax expansion means that equivalent funding in subsequent capital plans would require additional revenue increases.

3. *Will the MTA be able to implement a plan of this size?* The plan is 70 percent greater than the MTA’s 2015-2019 capital plan; although that plan was approved late, the MTA has committed only approximately 65 percent of it as of June 2019. Fully implementing this new plan will require the MTA to accelerate rapidly the pace to execute projects.

About Citizens Budget Commission

The Citizens Budget Commission (CBC) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit civic organization whose mission is to achieve constructive change in the finances and services of New York City and New York State government. CBC's mission is rooted in serving the citizenry at large, rather than narrow special interests; preserving public resources, whether financial or human; and focusing on the well-being of future New Yorkers, the most underrepresented group in city and state government.