

**NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign**  
**Permanent Citizen Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC)**  
**Reinvent Albany • Riders Alliance • TransitCenter**  
**Tri-State Transportation Campaign**

**Via Email**

October 10, 2019

Governor Andrew Cuomo  
Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Mayor Bill de Blasio  
Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie

**Re: Request to CPRB to have MTA publish basic information about MTA 2020-2024 capital plan before board approval, including start and completion times for components of the plan and how they will be sequenced.**

Dear Governor Cuomo, Mayor de Blasio, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, and Speaker Heastie,

We write to request that in your role as appointing authorities of the Capital Program Review Board (CPRB), you ask the MTA to work toward publishing the planned start and completion dates for all projects in the MTA 2020-2024 Capital Plan. This information is especially important because of the ambitious size of the five-year capital plan – 70% larger than the 2015-2019 plan – and the reality that the MTA has a finite capacity to manage and spend capital dollars.

By law, the CPRB must consider the capital plan within 90 days of submission by the MTA, which was on October 1st. In order to ensure that the public and CPRB are well informed about the 2020-2024 Capital Plan, we ask you to work with the MTA to publish the following information:

1. **Prior to CPRB approval: A *schedule of start dates and completion dates*** that clearly shows – in the greatest level of detail currently available – the sequence of when the MTA will work on various categories, elements and projects in the plan.
2. **Longer-term: An *implementation plan, for all components of the capital plan complemented by an enhanced capital dashboard***. As recommended by the Build Trust campaign<sup>1</sup> this will include clear project timelines and construction cost targets, with a schedule for consistent public reporting of progress that does not re-baseline costs or schedules, but rather clearly states original and current goals. A meaningful implementation plan will be used by MTA staff as well as the public, and should be complemented by an improved capital program dashboard to let the MTA, elected officials and public more easily track projects.

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<sup>1</sup> TransitCenter. Build Trust: The MTA Can Deliver a Capital Program That Puts Riders First. September 2019. [https://transitcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/BuildTrust\\_online\\_RGB.pdf](https://transitcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/BuildTrust_online_RGB.pdf)

Giving the public and MTA stakeholders more details about how the MTA will deliver on its 2020-2024 Capital Plan will help to build trust in the agency at a time it will be receiving an unprecedented investment of public funds. Securing substantial new revenue was a precondition for turning around the subway system, but not a guarantee. Success will depend on prioritizing the right projects in upcoming capital programs, and completing those projects on time and at reasonable cost. As members of the CPRB, you can work with the MTA to set up accountability and oversight mechanisms that keep this critical work on the right track. Through this process, the MTA's political and executive leadership will build public confidence in the agency.

The CPRB is well positioned to request start date and completion schedules for, at a minimum, the major components of work being undertaken for the MTA. MTA Capital Construction head Janno Lieber has indicated that the MTA intends to "bundle" more work together so that it can deliver the plan more efficiently, with fewer disruptions to the public. While this may be smart management, it should not obscure which projects will come first, second, and ultimately last. Providing a schedule of project delivery in the most detail available at this time, including the components of "bundled" work, will help to increase transparency of the plan before it is approved by the CPRB.

Looking toward the future, after approval of a final capital plan, the MTA should provide the CPRB and public a more detailed, granular implementation plan. There are helpful models to consider, including the All Stations Accessibility Program (ASAP) Strategic Plan from the Chicago Transit Authority, which prioritized completion of elevators<sup>2</sup> with a phased approach. The implementation plan should be complemented by an improved capital dashboard, providing schedules and budgets in an open data format that allows for dynamic tracking of projects.

Sincerely,

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Cc. MTA Board of Directors  
Chief Development Officer Janno Lieber

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<sup>2</sup> Chicago Transit Authority. All Stations Accessibility Program (ASAP) Strategic Plan. July 2018.  
[https://www.transitchicago.com/assets/1/6/ASAP\\_Strategic\\_Plan\\_508\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.transitchicago.com/assets/1/6/ASAP_Strategic_Plan_508_FINAL.pdf)