



**Testimony of Rachael Fauss, Reinvent Albany  
Before MTA Board of Directors**

***Vote No on MTA “Disorganization” Plan***

July 24, 2019

Good morning. I am Rachael Fauss, Senior Research Analyst for Reinvent Albany. We advocate for more transparent and accountable state government, including for state authorities like the MTA.

Two days ago, Reinvent Albany, Riders Alliance, TransitCenter, Tri-State Transportation Campaign and Transportation Alternatives called on this board to vote no on the MTA Transformation Plan, which seems to us is more of a “disorganization plan.”

Under law, you are required to develop a reorganization plan. But it did not have to be this plan -- and it does not have to be an up or down vote. We think it is odd and unproductive that the MTA intends to adopt 100% of the numerous recommendations made by an outside consultant. We also note that the MTA’s current basic structure is the same structure that saved the subways from their near collapse in the 1980s under the fabled leadership of transit greats like Richard Ravitch, Bob Kiley and David Gunn, and that produced record subway and bus ridership.

The MTA has chosen not to solicit any meaningful input on this plan. The public has been given a week to review only 37 pages of the hundreds of pages analysis produced by the publicly funded consultant. The MTA has asked the public to email comments, but why bother? The plan being voted on today is exactly the same as the plan revealed a week ago.

If the Legislature and Governor mandated a reorganization of the education system and this were the process being followed, there would be a public outcry to take a step back and vote no.

In urging you to vote no, we ask you to consider the following, as we raised in our joint statement:

1. **The plan fragments expertise and separates key engineering experts from system maintainers and operators.** For instance, New York City Transit's (NYCT) engineering experts -- the people who actually know about signals, trains, tracks -- are taken away from the day-to-day work of keeping the system running and report to a chief engineer instead of the subway boss. The proposed chief engineer will oversee engineers with completely unlike expertise in everything from subway cars to tracks to bridges and tunnels. **Considering the large number of subway meltdowns and emergencies in recent weeks, this new structure is illogical and ill-advised.**
  - a. Additionally, the plan oddly seems to reverse the MTA's last huge consolidation by splitting the Business Service Center into seven new units under seven new chief executive positions.
  
2. **The plan creates disorganization and reduces internal and public accountability.** It is bizarre and dysfunctional to have the Chief Transformation Officer and Chief Operating Officer report to the MTA Board instead of the CEO. This is akin to having a Deputy State Department of Transportation (DOT) Commissioner report to the Legislature instead of the State DOT Commissioner. State agencies, authorities and private corporations and non-profit organizations have reporting lines in which staff report to senior management, who then report to the CEO.
  
3. **The plan is not grounded in transit agency best practices.** Transit agencies like Transport for London have undergone significant restructurings that could serve as a template for the MTA. But the AlixPartners report does not refer to the management practices of other large agencies in the transit sector. It draws no lessons from the reorganization of peer agencies, nor does it justify recommendations by citing successful execution elsewhere.

In sum, we urge you to vote no today. Thank you for your consideration.