

**Reinvent Albany • Citizens Budget Commission  
NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign  
TransitCenter • Tri-State Transportation Campaign**

October 18, 2019

Board of Directors  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)

**VIA EMAIL**

**Re: The MTA Needs to Show How it will Fund the Full Cost of 581 New Police Officers**

Dear Members of the MTA Board,

At the September 2019 MTA Board meeting, CEO/Chairman Pat Foye said the MTA is in a “*dire financial situation and has real operating budget challenges. Without new funding sources for operations or cost cuts, we will continue to face significant financial constraints, with forecasted deficits in future years.*”<sup>1</sup>

We agree that the MTA faces serious budget problems. Without new funding or major savings in other areas, the proposed increase in the MTA police force will significantly increase the MTA’s operating deficit. Accordingly, before authorizing the hiring of 581 new officers, the MTA Board needs to know exactly how the MTA will find the funds to pay for them without increasing the operating deficit.

We note that the MTA’s budget woes have already led to changes in bus service and reductions in subway cleaning staff.<sup>2</sup> We are concerned that increasing spending on MTA police will reduce the MTA’s ability to maintain a high level of transit service.

According to the Citizens Budget Commission,<sup>3</sup> increasing the size of the MTA police force with 500 new officers and 81 supervisors will cost \$56.1 million in year one and \$119.9 million in year ten. Over the 2020-2023 financial plan, the new officers will cost \$260 million and push MTA’s projected operating budget deficit of \$740 million to \$1 billion.

Increasing the size of the MTA police force will be a large ongoing expense. The Manhattan DA announced in July<sup>4</sup> it would give the MTA \$40 million over four years to reduce fare evasion with funds going to “enhanced technology in the stations, infrastructure hardening, and aid in the

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<sup>1</sup> Castillo, Alfonso. “Transportation, fiscal experts concerned about how agency will pay for capital plan.” Newsday. October 6, 2019. <https://www.newsday.com/long-island/transportation/mta-investments-capital-program-1.37159295>

<sup>2</sup> Martinez, Jose. “Soiled Subways: It’s A Dirty Job, But Nobody’s Here To Do It.” The City. September 10, 2019. <https://thecity.nyc/2019/09/mta-cuts-nyc-subway-cleaners-amid-spike-in-soiled-cars.html>

<sup>3</sup> Citizens Budget Commission. “The High Cost of the MTA’s New Police Officers.” September 25, 2019. <https://cbcny.org/research/high-cost-mtas-new-police-officers>

<sup>4</sup> MTA. Press Release. “Governor Cuomo Announces Agreement to Add 500 Additional Uniformed Officers to NYC Subway and Bus Systems to Improve Public Safety, Protect Workers and Combat Fare Evasion.” June 17, 2019. <http://www.mta.info/press-release/nyc-transit/governor-cuomo-announces-agreement-add-500-additional-uniformed-officers>

research of new station designs for track access.” While a welcome injection of funds, this one-shot source funds only a fraction of the cost of the new hires.

The MTA currently has 2,500 NYPD officers<sup>5</sup> assigned to patrol subway and buses and 783 MTA officers<sup>6</sup> patrolling commuter rail, bridges and tunnels. Before spending scarce transit operating dollars that almost doubles the size of the MTA police force, the MTA should work with the NYPD and its own officers to establish clear goals and expectations and maximize the effectiveness of existing policing.

**In sum, we ask that before the new officers are hired, the MTA Board identify how it will cover the cost of this expenditure without increasing the MTA’s operating deficit.**

Thank you for your consideration. Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact Rachael Fauss, Senior Research Analyst, Reinvent Albany at [rachael@reinventalbany.org](mailto:rachael@reinventalbany.org) or 518-859-5307.

Sincerely,

John Kaehny  
Executive Director  
Reinvent Albany

Andrew Rein  
President  
Citizens Budget Commission

Jaqi Cohen  
Campaign Director  
NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign

David Bragdon  
Executive Director  
TransitCenter

Nick Sifuentes  
Executive Director  
Tri-State Transportation Campaign

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<sup>5</sup> NYC Office of Management and Budget. Adopted FY 2020 budget Supporting Schedules. Page 774.  
<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/ss6-19.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Nessen, Stephen. “The MTA Is Hiring 500 New Cops To Fix ‘Quality Of Life’ Issues In The Subway System.” Gothamist. September 12, 2019  
<https://gothamist.com/news/mta-hiring-500-new-cops-fix-quality-life-issues-subway-system>