



Testimony of Rachael Fauss, Reinvent Albany
Before MTA Board
Regarding Transparency of Capital Plan Information

August 16, 2019

Recommendation: Release 20-Year Needs, Draft Capital Plan Now

Good afternoon, 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.

I am here to speak to a value that is not highlighted in the AlixPartners Transformation Plan or “reviews” that were released last week, yet is crucially important to ensure public support for the MTA as it undergoes major reorganization changes and seeks to approve the 2020-2024 capital plan. Specifically, we have 4 areas we would like to highlight:

- 1. Where is the \$7.3 billion that the state still owes the MTA?** We understand that new commitments were announced earlier this year toward \$3 billion worth of 2015-2019 projects. Yet Capital Program Oversight Committee documents from July 2019 indicate that only \$979 million in receipts have come in as of June 30th.¹ Discussions regarding rolling over projects from the current plan to the next also raise serious accountability concerns for these funds.

¹ MTA Capital Program Oversight Committee. July 2019 Materials. Page 90.
http://web.mta.info/mta/news/books/pdf/190722_1430_CPOC.pdf

2. **The 20-year needs assessment must be released now.** This document has served as the foundation for understanding the MTA's needs to bring the system to a state of good repair, as informed by your new Enterprise Asset Management system. In the last capital plan cycle, this was released in October 2013, 11 full months prior to a Board vote on a draft capital plan in September 2014.
3. **The Draft Capital Plan must also be released now.** We understand that the Board will vote on the plan at its September meeting. It is now August 16th, and it appears that there will be no meaningful public vetting period. The AlixPartners review of the capital plan released last week indicates that they reviewed a \$50 billion draft plan. Yet the MTA Board has not seen this plan in its entirety, nor has the public or State Legislature. If a publicly-funded consultant can see this document, why can't the public?
4. **Lastly, we strongly oppose moving to a 10-year capital plan cycle,** as the current 5-year cycle provides a framework for public accountability that would be lost with a longer process. 10-years is too long a window given the history of turnover in senior management, and would result in more amendments to the plan. As AlixPartners noted in their review, more amendments to plans create less accountability and makes it harder to track projects.

Thank you for your time.