



February 15, 2018

MTA New York City Transit
Andy Byford
President
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004

Dear Mr. Byford:

We write to follow up an urgent request from Astoria business owners for relief, including shuttle bus service between subway stations that are completely shut down while undergoing mainly cosmetic construction as part of the Enhanced Station Initiative (ESI) in Astoria, Queens.

In late October 2017, the MTA closed the 30th Avenue and 36th Avenue stations on the elevated N and W line as part of the MTA's Enhanced Station Initiative, which implements cosmetic enhancements without any structural, signal, or accessibility improvements to these stations. This ill-advised approach is now having serious impacts on Astoria residents and businesses. Unfortunately, the MTA failed to take into account the effect these shutdowns and attendant street impediments would have on the numerous businesses along these busy corridors that depend on the foot traffic from these stations.

On February 1, a meeting was held between the MTA and local business owners to give them a chance to inform the MTA of the devastating impact from those station closures and construction. Over sixty business owners came to that meeting and expressed the dire drop-off in business and pressing need for shuttle bus service to help usher people back to 30th and 36th Avenues. Small businesses in our community cannot be allowed to suffer while these stations are closed for aesthetic enhancements.

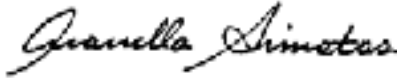
We understand that any improvement project entails inconvenience for the surrounding community. But when livelihoods are threatened, this goes beyond mere inconvenience. When a project will not improve train service or accessibility, it is especially appropriate that the MTA do everything in its power to alleviate the community's suffering.

We respectfully request that you provide shuttle service or other relief to businesses and residents suffering because of the 30th Avenue and 36th Avenue stations that are currently undergoing construction and for the Broadway and 39th Avenue stations that will be affected starting in July. We look forward to reaching a solution to protect the livelihoods of Astoria's small business owners.

Sincerely,



Michael Gianaris
New York State Senate



Aravella Simotas
New York State Assembly



Costa Constantinides
New York City Council