

The Queens Civic Congress is planning an aggressive campaign to get our elected officials into action on two major subway issues: the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Subway and New York City control of its subway system.

Consider the following: The MTA is planning to extend the Long Island Railroad to Grand Central, the N train to LaGuardia Airport, the Long Island Railroad to Lower Manhattan, Metro North to Lower Manhattan, and a Manhattan-oriented 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue subway. What's wrong with this picture? Everything is geared to benefit the suburbs, and Manhattan. Where are Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx? Particularly galling is the fact that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue subway which should be built to benefit all of New York City is focused solely on Manhattan.

The need for major subway expansion in Queens is obvious. Our subway lines are overcrowded and traffic congestion adversely affects our quality-of-life. It's not surprising that Queens is unattractive for commercial expansion. Why should any business leave the congestion of Manhattan for the congestion of Queens? With the present Manhattan mainlines at or near capacity, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue subway is Queens' only hope for accommodating a major subway expansion. The TA's current proposal for a 2 track-local only 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue subway will not meet our needs and also has several other major flaws. The TA, however, cannot get the funding for this 2<sup>nd</sup> rate project unless most of our elected officials vote for it. Thus, the Queens Civic Congress will urge all of our elected officials to vote against funding for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue subway UNLESS it will have 4 tracks. We must make a stand NOW. We cannot and will not let the TA and its Manhattan & suburban oriented allies get away with this.

With respect to the present subway system, it has come down to this. A small group of people meet deep in the labyrinths of the building at Jay Street and unilaterally decide any changes to the system. They don't care how it affects our well-being; they squander our money, treat the people and elected officials of New York City with contempt; they cater to the suburbs and predominantly to Manhattan interests; they obfuscate issues, proclaim empty and misleading slogans, etc. Protected by another bureaucratic layer called the MTA, they are answerable to no one. As we learned last year, dealing with the MTA is an exercise in frustration and humiliation.

This state of affairs cannot continue and only we, the citizens, can do something about it. Mayor Bloomberg has pledged to place control of the New York Subways directly under New York City. This is an absolute necessity for transit service responsive to our needs.

The Queens Civic Congress working with civic groups from Brooklyn and the Bronx will organize a grass-roots movement to secure the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue subway that ALL of New York City deserves and to help Mayor Bloomberg keep his pledge. If New York City controls its subways, it will control its destiny.

Please review and discuss these issues at your next meeting and forward your opinions to us. In addition, are any members of your group, neighbors and friends interested in a more active role in this effort? Please let us know.

## **FOUR TRACKS OR NOTHING!/NO EXPRESS, NO FUNDING!**

### The Latest on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Subway

The TA did not examine such a massive undertaking as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue subway from the standpoint of New York City but only from Manhattan, specifically the Upper East Side. The TA's primary goal in proposing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue subway was to relieve overcrowding on the Lexington Avenue line. No meaningful outreach was made to the people of Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx. Even the residents of the Lower East Side of Manhattan (Alphabet City) are not thrilled with the TA proposal.

The TA is planning to announce the final version of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue subway in the late summer of 2002. This is the plan which will be submitted for funding early in 2003. Many features of the line which are emerging—all unilaterally decided by the TA—are very disturbing:

1. A two track-local only line would mean:

- No express service – ever. The TA calls its 2 track local a “semi-express” which is nothing more than a public relations spin.
- No operational flexibility. Trains will be unable to go around a problem. A track fire, sick passenger or police action which cause delays on a four track line will cause absolute gridlock on a two tracker. This gridlock could even spill over into the present system.
- No routing flexibility. A never ending campaign between the Bronx and Queens will ensue for more train service. (More trains in one borough will come at the expense of the other.)
- No maintenance flexibility. When necessary repairs are made, the line will be reduced to a one-track shuttle—a transit disaster! (The one track shuttle on the 63<sup>rd</sup> St. line was in effect for a year.) There is no compatible subway nearby to allow rerouting..
- Insufficient capacity for major expansion in Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue subway will be certainly the last subway to be built through the length of Manhattan. After bearing with the inconveniences of building a subway, the people of Manhattan will not allow another line to be built solely for the benefit of the outer boroughs. Only a four track line will have enough capacity for enough trains to assure comprehensive subway coverage of the outer boroughs.
- The TA's own employees (TWU Local 100) openly brand the two track line as “fatally flawed.”

2. Deep Bore/Escalator Dependent Stations which will be four times as deep as IRT stations and twice as deep as IND stations. The safest stations are shallow stations which enable riders to exit and emergency personnel to enter quickly. They don't need expensive escalators which too frequently don't work. They are also easier, quicker and less expensive to build.

3. Money Squandered on Artistic Elaborations and Hi-Tech Gimmicks. A subway station is not and should not be an art museum. There is no need for mosaics, designs, floor tiles, etc. which only add to the cost of construction. Hi-Tech Gimmicks may be modern but they are not essential to a New York subway. Most importantly, they can be added later. The TA cites “cost” as impeding the construction of a four track line, but money for amenities seems in abundance.

4. “Remember the G!” Last year, the TA stole the G train from Queens-Brooklyn riders and they have similar ideas for J, M and Z riders. One of their options, under serious consideration, is taking over the Nassau line for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue subway and terminating the J, M and Z trains at Chambers St.!

5. A branch to Queens is shown in their brochures. Yet, the TA does not plan to use this branch for regular service—only for maintenance and emergency bypasses.

6. If the TA does build the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue to South Ferry, one option under serious consideration would end the line in such a way as to prevent expansion to Brooklyn forever.

The Queens Civic Congress will urge our elected officials to vote against any funding for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue subway UNLESS it’s a four track line which serves the needs of ALL of New York City—not just Manhattan. Whether through fares increases, tolls, or taxes, we will not pay for a project in which we were NOT even consulted and from which benefits are, at best, meager.

## New York City - In Control of Its Destiny!

The Present System – The “*MTA Going Its Own Way!*”

In 2001, the TA arrogantly and contemptuously uprooted a long-time riding pattern by rerouting the F train and cutting back the G train. The TA ignored the massive numbers of people protesting these changes, including many of our locally elected officials. This is the most outrageous example to-date of the TA doing whatever it wants. Here are some others:

1. From the time that it came under the parentage of the MTA, the TA has embarked on a massive long-term campaign to cut-back and eliminate express service wherever they can get away with it. This is done without public consultation and against public protest. The only explanation offered is: since other cities do not have express service, NYC does not need it either! Some express eliminations:

- Nighttime express service on the Lexington Avenue line, the Seventh Avenue line (pre-9/11), the 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue A line, the Brooklyn 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue line and the Queens E line. Presently, only the D and Q expresses remain. Recently, the TA restored the F in Queens possibly to promote use of the 63<sup>rd</sup> St. diversion.

-Queens: Express service on the W-Astoria line, the M-Myrtle Avenue line. The TA considered removing it on the #7.

- Brooklyn: Express service on the F-Culver line and on the J between Eastern Parkway and Myrtle Avenue.

- Bronx: Express service between E. 180<sup>th</sup> St. and Gun Hill Road (#2, #5). The TA considered the elimination of the D Concourse-Rush Hour Express and the #5 Dyre Avenue Express.

- Proposed 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue subway: This line would be built to NEVER permit express service.

2. Routing Changes: In addition to the re-routing of the F and the cutback on the G, the TA has also considered removing the #5 from the Nostrand Avenue line in Brooklyn and running the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue subway via Nassau Street forcing the termination of the J and M trains at Chambers St. .

3. The Complete Elimination of Token Booths: Recently, the TA has tried to eliminate some token booths but their long range plans call for the elimination of all of them! They plan to do away with tokens (which a sizeable minority of riders prefer) and replace the booths with vending machines. A “station attendant” would float somewhere in the station.

4. Wasting public money on massive station renovations and high-tech gimmicks: Riders want their stations to be clean and safe. Without public consultation, the TA has begun the CBTC-Computer-Based Train Control. Obscured is the fact that the train would run itself and that the conductor/motorman positions would be merged. This means only one TA staffer aboard a train which is extremely dangerous for both the TA staffer and the riding public.

5. Avoidance of Public Hearings Whenever Possible: Even when they are forced to hold public hearings, the TA treats public recommendations with disdain. The TA’s refusal to work with and disregard of the Lower East Side and Brooklyn merchants on service adjustments during the ongoing Manhattan Bridge work was intolerable.

The Queens Civic Congress wholeheartedly supports Mayor Michael Bloomberg's desire to place the control of the subway directly under New York City. All elected officials praise and promote civil society. Yet, no agency ignores and demeans civic groups more than the TA. This cannot and will not stand. The TA must respect and work with civil society, and care about ALL of New York City. This will not happen unless New York City controls the TA. TA officials will not be respectful of us and our needs until New York City directly controls their jobs.