



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

## **MTA Freedom Ticket Program Testimony**

January 25, 2017

MTA Headquarters

Good morning.

My name is Eric L. Adams, and I am Brooklyn's borough president, representing 2.6 million who use the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) network to get them to school, work, and various locations throughout our city. I am submitting testimony to you in support of the Freedom Ticket proposal for transit riders, and urge the MTA and Long Island Railroad (LIRR) to commit immediately to enacting a pilot program along the Atlantic Branch of the LIRR.

In Brooklyn, the Freedom Ticket presents an opportunity to support neighborhood development and growth in East New York, especially as the City is now into the implementation phase of the East New York

Neighborhood Plan rezoning. It takes only 10 minutes on the LIRR to travel from the East New York station to Atlantic Terminal, while a peak hour ticket is \$8.25, a significant sum of money for those living in some of the poorest Census tracts in New York State. However, it takes more than twice as long to travel via subway from Broadway Junction to Atlantic Terminal. MTA data shows that nearly 3,500 seats were empty between 9:00 AM and 10:00 AM alone, from Jamaica to Atlantic Terminal. Additionally, the LIRR Nostrand Avenue Station is a five-minute ride from the East New York Station and only two short blocks from the A/C trains in Bedford-Stuyvesant, which would give riders direct access to Wall Street in lower Manhattan. Allowing a transfer between the LIRR and MTA at this junction would not only decrease travel time but it would also broaden travel options for commuters.

I believe that the Freedom Ticket program could be a significant asset in mitigating strain on the existing subway system, especially with the upcoming two-year shut down of the Canarsie Tube and the temporary shutdown of the M line from Myrtle/Wyckoff to Middle Village/Metropolitan Avenue, while also providing residents in East New York the affordable option of riding the LIRR to Atlantic Terminal. From a transit equity standpoint, we will have a section of Brooklyn that will not have rail service for a combined three years as a result of infrastructure upgrades. Though very critical to have done, the MTA has

made investments in the long overdue Second Avenue Subway and is looking to invest in Metro-North station development in the Bronx. It is important that we have a fair and equitable distribution of our investment for Brooklyn's commuters, especially with the new developments occurring along our rail lines and the increase in ridership.

Thank you for your time.