



A Memorandum for District 4
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Impending L Train Shutdown

Five years after Superstorm Sandy hit New York, we are still recovering from the massive destruction left in its wake. In particular, the Canarsie Tunnel—which links Brooklyn and Manhattan under the East River with L Train service—suffered significant salt water damage and must undergo substantial repairs and upgrades to ensure long-term safety and reliability. The MTA and the City of New York have announced a plan to begin reconstruction in April 2019 and expect the project to last approximately 15 months. While these repairs to the Canarsie Tunnel are imperative, the L train shutdown between Bedford Avenue and 8th Avenue stations poses a great challenge to the 400,000 New Yorkers who use the L train every day.¹ In addition to being a major artery for transporting people between Brooklyn and Manhattan, the L train is one of few Manhattan lines that travels crosstown, connecting uptown/downtown subway routes. The closure of the L line will undeniably cause major and far-reaching disruptions in travel.

Before the L train closure begins, the City must have a well-developed alternative transportation and commuting plan in place. First and foremost, any such plan must address how to move people along the 14th Street corridor in the absence of the L train. One proposed plan, the PeopleWay, advocates for the closure of 14th Street

¹ New York City MTA. "Fixing the L Line's Canarsie Tunnel." New York City MTA, 2017. Web. 15 Aug. 2017. http://web.mta.info/sandy/pdf/Canarsie-6-08-17_website.pdf

to passenger and commercial vehicle traffic and calls instead for designated lanes for bus, bicycle, and pedestrian use in order to transport people between the 4/5/6, N/Q/R, 1/2/3, F/M, and A/C/E lines at stops on 14th Street, as well as to destinations above ground.² I support the goal of this plan to reduce inefficient, single-passenger car traffic and replace it with more buses, bikes, and pedestrians, which will not only increase the number of people who can transit the area but will also promote the environmental and health benefits of walking and cycling. However, it is essential that any proposal that calls for a change in the current traffic use of 14th Street also address three key concerns of area business owners and residents, as well as New Yorkers who use 14th Street to transit through Manhattan. First, any plan must ensure that north-south avenue traffic continues to flow unimpeded so that these major traffic routes continue to connect upper and lower Manhattan. Second, proposals must adequately ensure that businesses along 14th Street will still be able to receive deliveries and engage in commercial transportation. Third, any plan must show that traffic diverted away from 14th Street will not turn the narrower, residential side streets into parking lots of noise and exhaust fumes.

The impending L line shutdown is a top issue for many New Yorkers and I plan on making the implementation of a sound alternative transportation plan one of my highest priorities when elected to office.

²"14th Street PeopleWay: A New Way Across Manhattan." *Transportation Alternatives*. Transportation Alternatives, n.d. Web. 15 Aug. 2017.
<https://www.transalt.org/getinvolved/neighborhood/manhattan/14th>