

Put transit improvements on the Amazon wish list

DETAILS OF THE Amazon HQ2 deal (“Primed for Amazon,” published Nov. 12) came just days before the release of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s proposed budget for 2019 to 2022 and announcement of



upcoming public hearings and potential fare increases of up to 4%.

The timing couldn’t have been worse. As transit riders contemplate how much more they’ll be paying, Amazon will essentially get a free ride.

Don’t get us wrong: 25,000 new jobs will be a boon to the local economy and should bolster local employment. Billions of dollars in construction and other investments will come as well. Unfortunately, none of that money is slated to improve Long Island City’s transit infrastructure.

But it isn’t too late.

An investment by Amazon in transit infrastructure would indicate that it wants

to be a good neighbor. What’s good for Amazon should be good for transit in Long Island City. Not one station near the planned HQ2 is in the MTA capital program. Things like ADA accessibility, new turnstiles, wider access points, reconfigured stairs and more platform capacity will go a long way toward improving trips, particularly in the face of anticipated growth (even before Amazon’s influx). Close to 12,000 residential units are to open in Long Island City by 2020, bringing with them an estimated 23,000 people—many of whom will be fighting for space on the crowded 7 line and in packed stations. That’s not accounting for the L

shutdown and before any new Amazon employees even show up for work.

Improving transit infrastructure for long-term capacity in Long Island City is a no-brainer, and Amazon should demonstrate that it wants to be part of the solution, not an addition to the problem.

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