



NYCTRC

NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT
RIDERS COUNCIL

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Testimony Before NYC Transit Committee Meeting on L Train Plans February 25, 2019

Good afternoon, I am Lisa Daglian, Executive Director of PCAC, speaking today on behalf of the Transit Riders Council.

The last testimony we provided before you regarding L Train work was at the emergency meeting on January 15th, at which time we raised a series of questions about health, safety and mitigation plans. We got an update on Valentine's Day. We appreciate the efforts to keep us informed, but we still have a lot of questions – and we know that many other riders do too. Hopefully we'll get some answers today.

The original "L Smell" seems to have dissipated, and we appreciate the efforts that NYC Transit took to find the root cause. But riders at the Bedford Avenue station are reporting a new set of smells, and problems, resulting from ongoing work – because honestly, the work has already started. We've heard firsthand that "the dirt in the air is thick enough to taste..." and "...it smells like a construction site, probably because it is one." More than one rider has asked if it's safe to breathe – or even be there. We have the utmost confidence in President Byford and the men and women who work for NYC Transit – but riders want independent verification, and we can't blame them. Therefore, it is critical that an independent consultant be hired immediately to address the ongoing air quality concerns that riders are voicing – and that the results of testing are made public.

That isn't the only safety concern we're hearing. Riders are very worried about the proposed 8PM start time and serious overcrowding from 20-minute headways overnight and on weekends. We're equally concerned. While we know that a complete shutdown is not going to happen, we also know that most riders initially preferred a full shutdown. We strongly support a compromise of **planned, periodic full weekend closures** for the duration of the project – Plan C, if you will. It should reduce the overall project timeline, and allow ample time for cleanup of silica and other dust, and other basic maintenance that can only be performed with both tubes closed. Alternate service plans that riders support are ready for rollout, and we urge that the full complement of mitigation measures be put in place overnights and on weekends to address concerns about sporadic service and overcrowding. As someone who lives along the 7 line and has dealt with years of night and weekend closures, sure it's a pain, but it becomes a way of life. It also worked with Clark Street tunnel reconstruction. If L train riders were grudgingly prepared to live without any service for up a year-and-a-half, they tell us they'll manage to get through a year of periodic weekend closures, as long as they know about them in advance and robust alternate service plans are in place.

Today, however, we have two key questions: "Where is the independent consultant?" and "Why not shut it down completely on planned weekends?" The riders spoke before, and they're speaking again. Please listen to them. Thank you.