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January 17, 2025

Dhruvika Patel Amin, CPA  
Chief Financial Officer and Vice President  
Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation  
524 Main Street  
Roosevelt Island, NY 10044

**RE: Priority Boarding of the Roosevelt Island Tram for New York City Residents**

Dear Vice President Patel Amin,

At the Full Board meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan held on January 15, 2025, the board approved the following resolution with a vote of 32 in favor, 9 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 0 not voting for cause.

**WHEREAS** the Roosevelt Island Tram has ceased to be available to New York City residents as a reliable method of transportation; and

**WHEREAS** a combination of factors has led to a massive increase in the use of the tram by tourists, particularly since the tram has recently appeared in a number of “Top 10 Things to do in NYC” lists and social media videos; and

**WHEREAS** the tram platforms are crowded, and lines often form outside the platform; and

**WHEREAS** what used to be crowding only at certain limited times of day and certain times of year is virtually now a constant. New York City residents now struggle to get onto the tram, often starting in the morning until late into the night; and

**WHEREAS** many residents have given up on the tram while others struggle through the chaos. This is particularly onerous for residents who may be elderly or unable to walk or stand easily. Roosevelt Island is home to a lot of elderly people and to people with limited mobility. The same is also true for families with young children. The vast majority of school age children who live on Roosevelt Island commute to school in Manhattan and many to District 2 schools on the Upper East Side; and

**WHEREAS** New York Transportation Law § 102 says: “No common carrier shall make or give any undue or unreasonable preference or advantage to any person...” It doesn’t say there can’t be any preference shown. It is, therefore, reasonable to give New York City residents priority boarding and return the tram to its original intended use of urban transportation; and

**WHEREAS** the tram is funded by the Roosevelt Island residents through resident land leases and not by New York City or New York State; and

**WHEREAS** precedents for preferential treatment exist, such as:

- In 1976, “Roosevelt Island residents were issued priority passes for the tram and a minibus that travels from the tramway station through the island's Main Street” due to the number of tourists displacing residents (Source: [NY Times](#));
- On December 7, 2023, Governor Hochul announced preferential treatment for residents of Queens and The Bronx who use the Henry Hudson Bridge and Cross Bay Bridge with a toll

rebate program, which is not available for those who do not live in Queens or The Bronx (Release by [Gov. Hochul](#));

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Community Board 8 Manhattan believes that priority boarding of the tram for New York City residents is necessary and in the best interests of the community.

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** Community Board 8 Manhattan requests that RIOC presents an action plan that fully prioritizes New York City residents' boarding of the tram.

Please advise us of any action taken on this matter.

Sincerely,

*Valerie S. Mason*

Valerie S. Mason  
Chair

*Paul Krikler*

Paul Krikler  
Chair, Roosevelt Island Committee

cc: Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of New York  
Honorable Eric Adams, Mayor of the City of New York  
Honorable Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President  
Honorable Jerry Nadler, 12th Congressional District Representative  
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 28th Senatorial District  
Honorable José M. Serrano, NYS Senator, 29th Senatorial District  
Honorable Edward Gibbs, NYS Assembly Member 68th Assembly District  
Honorable Alex Bores, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District  
Honorable Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member 76th Assembly District  
Honorable Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District  
Honorable Julie Menin, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District  
Honorable Diana Ayala, NYC Council Member, 8<sup>th</sup> Council District