

# Mayor Adams Announces MTA Board Recommendations

May 26, 2022

**NEW YORK** – New York City Mayor Eric Adams today announced the recommendation of Frankie Miranda, Sherif Soliman, and Isabel Midori Valdivia Espino (Midori Valdivia) to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Board. The mayor's recommendations reflect his commitment to providing the safe, reliable, and accessible public transportation system that New Yorkers deserve. David Jones continues to serve on the board.

"I am proud to put forward a group of MTA Board nominees who represent the diversity of our city and share my vision for a public transportation system that truly serves all New Yorkers," said **Mayor Adams**. "These three nominees bring impeccable professional credentials, invaluable life experiences, and genuine commitment to their neighbors. I am confident they will faithfully serve New Yorkers, and I thank all of them and David Jones for their service to our city."

"Governing bodies that make decisions affecting real New Yorkers should always be composed of people who can give a voice to our diverse communities," said **Frankie Miranda, CEO, Hispanic Federation; and MTA Board nominee**. "As a Latinx queer community leader, a Queens resident, and an MTA rider for more than two decades, I can provide the perspective of everyday riders and share the concerns of the communities I represent. I'm pleased that Mayor Adams recognizes the importance of putting forth diverse candidates for this board, and I am honored that he recommended me."

"As a lifelong New Yorker and regular public transit rider who has marveled at the intricate transit network that moves millions on a daily basis, I am honored to be nominated to serve as a board member of the MTA," said **Sherif Soliman, director, Mayor's Office of Policy and Planning; MTA Board nominee**. "It would be impossible to overstate the MTA's contribution to the broader region, and the prospect of joining the board to help chart a course for the MTA's long-term sustainability is a welcome challenge. Whether you are a student who needs to catch a ride to school, an essential worker who commutes to work, or a family who needs to make a medical appointment,

the MTA is a lifeline, and I will work hard to ensure that it remains a resilient institution for years to come if given the opportunity to serve.”

“I’m thrilled for the opportunity to represent the people of New York and to ensure that the MTA meets the needs of the riders who continue to depend on the system day in and day out,” said **Midori Valdivia, chief operating officer, Coro New York Leadership Center; and MTA Board nominee**. “As we navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, public transit is central to the story of New York's recovery. As a frequent subway and bus rider, and a working mother who relies on the system, I will work with my fellow commissioners to prioritize service improvements and promote transit equity.”

Miranda, Soliman, and Valdivia were all recommended by the mayor and have been nominated by New York Governor Kathy Hochul. Their nominations are subject to confirmation by the New York State Senate.

“In addition to her strong leadership, Midori brings deep knowledge and understanding of the diverse communities that the MTA serves,” said **Carla Artis, president, Greater New York chapter, Women’s Transportation Seminar**. “She seeks out those with different perspectives and experiences to inform decision-making and create more equitable outcomes. I am excited to see more women at the helm of the region’s transportation system.”

“Midori Valdivia brings experience and insight to the board that will make the MTA more responsive and accountable to riders, and her appointment is an overdue step toward making the MTA leadership more representative of the diverse communities the agency serves,” said **David Bragdon, executive director, Transit Center**.

“At a time when the MTA and New York’s transportation network face so many challenges, Midori brings the right combination of experience and technical transportation knowledge,” **Patrick J. Foye, former chair and CEO, MTA**. “She knows how to ask the hard questions and make her opinions heard. This is a win for New York’s transit ridership.”

“Midori Valdivia, Frankie Miranda, and Sherif Soliman are strong leaders who will champion bus and subway riders’ needs as members of the MTA board,” said **Betsy Plum, executive director, Rider’s Alliance**. “With deep experience in public policy and grounding in New York’s diverse communities, all three are well positioned to advance

riders' top transit priorities from reliability to frequency to accessibility. With these nominations, Mayor Adams continues a proud City Hall tradition of sending authentic voices to represent New Yorkers in the major decisions that impact millions of riders every single day."

"It is my pleasure to support the nomination of Midori Valdivia to the MTA board," **Renae Reynolds, executive director, Tri-State Transportation Campaign**. "Midori is a consummate advocate for better transportation and a powerhouse in the realm of policy. She would bring a perspective and energy to the board that is much needed. She values the importance of the voice of the people for whom our transit system serves, and there is no doubt in my mind that she would be a champion for the innovation and change that we need to strengthen the MTA to pursue a clean and equitable transportation future for New York."

"I have worked with Sherif Soliman in a number of capacities over the years, and his expertise in both city and state relations makes him an excellent choice to serve on the MTA board, where that knowledge is imperative to be successful," said **Marc Shaw, former New York City first deputy mayor; and former executive director, MTA**.

"I worked closely with Sherif when I served on the MTA board and can attest to his knowledge and wisdom," said **Carl Weisbrod, former MTA Board member; and former chair, City Planning Commission**. "He will be an outstanding member of the MTA Board."

"Midori Valdivia is simply an excellent choice for the MTA Board," said **Tom Wright, president and CEO, Regional Plan Association**. "She brings a great wealth of government and policy expertise to the role and is sure to help the city partner with state and regional leaders to improve transit service for the riding public. Sherif Soliman, Frankie Miranda, and Midori will complement each other on the board, and we urge the Senate to approve all three nominees without delay."

### **About Frankie Miranda**

Frankie Miranda is the president and CEO of the Hispanic Federation, the nation's premier Latinx non-profit membership organization. He is a well-respected leader with critical knowledge of the challenges and opportunities facing the Latinx community in the 21st century.

Miranda has served in various capacities at the federation since 2006, including assistant vice president of communications, vice president for external affairs, senior vice president, and most recently, executive vice president. In these roles, he managed the federation's operation and expansion initiatives and oversaw the annual gala, which, under his leadership, now raises more than \$3.1 million annually.

Among his many accomplishments, Miranda successfully created the largest Latinx COVID-19 relief fund in the country, providing millions of dollars to support the emergency operations and vaccination efforts of hundreds of organizations in 41 states, DC, and Puerto Rico. He also managed the federation's expansion into Florida and Puerto Rico, creating a vision and mission for the organization's civic engagement and mobilization work in Florida and the immediate and long-term disaster assistance strategy for Puerto Rico. His work is creating powerful change for the communities and partners in these two communities.

Earlier in his career, Miranda held several senior management positions in the communications industry, including director of communications for the local TV stations WXTV, Univision 41, and WFUT UniMas 68; and deputy press secretary for Spanish language media for Hillary Clinton's U.S. Senate campaign in 2000 and Fernando Ferrer's mayoral campaign in 2001.

Miranda holds a B.A. in political science from the University of Puerto Rico and an M.A. in performance studies from New York University. He resides in Queens with his husband Ricardo.

## **About Sherif Soliman**

Sherif Soliman has nearly 25 years of experience in government in various roles. He currently serves as director of the Mayor's Office of Policy and Planning, where he oversees policy development in key areas of the mayor's policy portfolio, including MTA-related issues.

Prior to his current position, Soliman was commissioner of the New York City Department of Finance (DOF), leading an agency that collects more than \$40 billion annually in revenue for the city and assesses over 1.1 million properties with a total combined value of \$1.3 trillion. While serving as commissioner, Soliman was nominated by former Mayor Bill de Blasio to serve as a member of the Traffic Mobility Review

Board, the six-member board charged with recommending toll rates, exemptions, and discounts for the first-in-the-nation congestion pricing program.

Before his appointment as Finance commissioner, Soliman served as chief-of-staff for the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Operations, where he oversaw the functions of over 20 agencies and offices, including DOF and the New York City Department of Transportation. Soliman played a key leadership role in the city's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, overseeing the development and management of the Open Streets and Open Restaurant programs; advising on workforce policies, including the transition to work-from-home; and coordinating with the MTA on personnel protection equipment distribution and other protocols.

Soliman previously served as senior advisor to the first deputy mayor, where he oversaw a portfolio including the MTA, tax policy, labor policy, and pension policy. During his time as senior advisor, Soliman was the administration's lead in securing new revenue for the MTA capital plan, congestion pricing, and a value capture agreement with the MTA on the redevelopment of its old headquarters. Soliman also led negotiations on project labor agreements that covered billions of dollars in public construction work.

In the first term of the de Blasio administration, Soliman served as director of State Legislative Affairs, where he was the administration's chief representative in Albany, and secured the enactment of many priorities, including the nation-leading universal pre-kindergarten program; the first expansion of the bus lane camera program since its inception; life-saving Vision Zero initiatives, such as speed cameras and lower speed limits; and expanded opportunities for minority- and women-owned business enterprises.

Soliman served as director of communications for the New York City Employees' Retirement System, assistant legislative representative in the Office of State Legislative Affairs in the Bloomberg Administration, and chief-of-staff for New York State Assemblymember Eric Vitaliano, former chair of the Assembly Governmental Employees Committee.

Soliman received his bachelor's degree in Political Science from the State University of New York College at Oneonta. He is a lifelong New Yorker and lives in Manhattan with his wife and two children.

## About Midori Valdivia

Midori Valdivia is a transportation, operations, and urban planning professional committed to expanding mobility options for New Yorkers. She is the inaugural chief operating officer for Coro New York Leadership Center, the city's premier civic leadership training organization. There, she welcomes the opportunity to support the leadership journeys of people of color committed to making change in New York City.

Prior to Coro and developing her own consulting practice, Valdivia was the chief-of-staff to the chair and CEO of the MTA. She led the efforts for the successful passage of congestion pricing legislation within the agency and oversaw elements of the launch of OMNY — a new fare payment system that integrates the various transit systems in the region. Valdivia was also the deputy commissioner for finance and administration at the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission, the agency responsible for licensing and regulating taxis and other for-hire services. She led the development of the largest wheelchair-accessible taxi fleet in the nation at the time. Valdivia served as senior advisor to the executive director at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. She began her career as a leadership fellow, part of a rotational development training program, at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

Valdivia immigrated to the United States as a young girl from Japan, and her family is from Peru. She is a graduate of the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs, where she received degrees in public administration and urban planning. She received her bachelor's degree at Penn State University. She lives in Brooklyn with her partner and daughter, fellow public transit enthusiasts.

###