



Township of South Orange Village

Office of the Village President

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Village President
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To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Township of South Orange Village, located in Essex County, New Jersey, I am writing to sincerely urge you to consider temporary flexible hours and alternative work schedules (including options to work from home one or more days a week) for your employees who reside and commute from South Orange.

As you are likely aware, Amtrak will be making repairs to New York Penn Station and as a result, NJ Transit has released a service plan for July 10th – September 1st that will directly and disproportionately adversely affect our constituents and your workforce. Our commuters, their employers, local officials, state representatives, and even our own congressional delegation were not consulted prior to this announcement, which would have afforded all of us the ability to ask questions and make proactive suggestions. We all know these repairs are necessary as a result of continuous deferred maintenance, but unfortunately the process was severely flawed and our ability to prepare cut very short.

South Orange is the busiest stop on the Morris & Essex line, serving over 4,000 riders daily including surrounding towns that provide shuttles to our station. We are working around the clock to mitigate the unintended consequences for what's being called the "Summer of Hell" for commuters. Our administration and all departments will do everything possible to assist our residents and even our local business community is stepping up. For example, Work & Play, a local small business that offers co-working and childcare services, is offering special promotions for commuters.

We desperately need you as our partners. If working from home is not an option due to the nature of the job, please also consider allowing your employees to come in a little later or leave a little earlier to avoid the rush hours. While all of our riders will experience numerous inconveniences, working families will feel it the most. Our residents will be receiving roughly a \$5 discount per day for their troubles, but that amount pales in comparison to the cost of additional child care and coordinating new pick up and drop off times so that parents/guardians can get to work. Lastly, capacity issues continue to be of grave concern to me as the public safety of our residents and your employees must come first.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to reach out to me. I'm open to any suggestions you may have to improve this situation and I hope you will consider my request above.

Sincerely,

Sheena C. Collum

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