

A Day on the M8

MOLLY SULLIVAN



ON A BLUSTERY WINTER DAY IN early January, two T.A. staffers rode the M8 bus east across 8th Street and west across 9th Street. Our goal was to learn firsthand from riders how they felt about the drastic MTA service cuts that will eliminate this heavily used bus line. The M8 is a “neighborly bus,” as a woman who got on at Avenue C told us. In the few hours we rode, strangers complimented each other on their accessories and talked about yoga classes. Kids, nannies, parents and friends filled the seats and aisle. As evening started, workers on the night shift were just boarding.

Camille Spry and Sidney

Camille takes her friend’s daughter, Sidney (age 5), home from school on the M8 several times a week. As long as Sidney has been in school at P.S. 3, she has been riding this line. The two have gotten to know their fellow riders who all take the M8 at the same time to pick kids up from school.

What do you think of the MTA service cuts?

C.S.: People need this bus if they live in the East Village and have kids in school in the West Village.

What do you like about this line? What are some experiences you have had while riding?

C.S.: I know so many people just from riding this line! I know that kid in the hat over there, and that nanny. Just from saying hello and seeing them on the same bus all of the time.

Why do you take the M8?

C.S.: To pick up Sidney. It’s very convenient because there is nothing past Astor Place for transportation. There is no alternative except the M14 but that is so inconvenient.

Hugh Sinclair

Hugh rides the bus every weekday to take his two sons, 8 and 6 years old, to school. In the morning they travel from Tompkins Square Park to Hudson Street in the West



JULIA DAY

Village and in the afternoon they head home in the reverse direction. He also rides at other times to run errands. They’ve been making the trip to school for

the past three years, but he has been riding on his own for much longer.

What do you think of the MTA’s decision to cut this Bus?

H.S.: This is a very crowded bus. Look around. If the MTA claims the buses aren’t used enough, why can’t they use smaller buses? They have these large double-long buses blocking traffic and creating congestion. They should use smaller buses on lines that are used less.

How will you all get to school without this bus?

H.S.: There are no alternative buses or subways. We will walk. Our commute will be extended close to 30 minutes each way. It’s just too expensive to take a taxi.

Patrick Nash



JULIA DAY

Patrick rides from the West Village to Avenue A for work two times a week, and has been making the commute for a year.

What do you think of the MTA service cuts?

P.N.: This is a larger issue. Global warming and geopolitical issues are related to transportation. To address these large issues we must address transportation. We aren’t aware of how bad it is to have cars all around us—in terms of polluting our air and putting us into a constant state of shock. The shock and fear we live with from cars compromises quality of life.

What would you like to say to the MTA?

P.N.: New York real estate is valuable. How can we give precious public street space to private cars?

“In the East Village, buses are our only connection to the rest of the city.”

“This bus is very neighborly, people know each other and the bus driver is a sweetheart.”

“I’d rather sit on the bus, read the paper, and say hello to some people I see regularly because that’s a little bit of warmth in this cold, cold city.”

“My friend Tony has cerebral palsy and takes this bus every day from Alphabet City to work for a City agency. It takes him 25 minutes to walk one block. What will he do?”