

DEAR PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMPANY,

LETTER BY
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WRITER

EDITORIAL LETTERS
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CLICKING
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FINGERS**

- GRADUATES MENTIONED
- WOUTER STROET
 - KYULM KIM
 - WEI TUNG KUO
 - ANTONI ZAMORA
CHACARTEGUI
 - ANNE THERIOT
 - KLARA WAARA
 - SILVIA FAGGIANI
 - FRANZISKA GORALSKI
 - AMBER OSKAM
 - DAVID C. KANE

Dear United States Department of Transportation,
Amtrak, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey,
Delta Airlines, Nederlandse Spoorwegen, Prorail, KLM,
and other related entities,

Americans are currently coming to terms with systemic failure on three levels. Widespread protests spawned by police brutality and racial injustice have joined an economic crisis not seen since The Great Depression. Having claimed over 4 hundred thousand lives in the past five months, COVID-19 continues to cause trouble in parts of the world that opened too soon, suffer from poor infrastructure, or in which the proper measures have not been implemented at the right time.

Across the developed world, this century-defining pandemic has uncovered fault lines in almost every aspect of our daily experiences and in the underlying structures that we might have taken for granted in the past. The adage “the straw that breaks the camel’s back” has come to define so much of this tumultuous period. Yet, such extremes are often a catalyst for rapid adaptations that allow us to move forward in new ways.”

One area where such a fissure has become even more evident is the state of our national transportation infrastructures. It’s no secret that a lot of our stations, airports, bridges, tunnels, railroads, roads, and highways are in bad shape. Though efforts in recent years have been made by local governments to ameliorate these essential arteries, more still needs to be done. This multivalent crisis has arisen as an opportunity to completely rethink what renewal should actually entail.

While engineering feats like the soon-to-reopen Laguardia Airport in New York stand as finite testaments to new environmental standards and technological advancements, they do not yet fully reflect an evolved, holistic, and human-centric mindset; the cultural and social behavior that have rapidly changed in a short period.

New approaches that rely on more immediate and softer interventions could improve our individual and collective experiences and allow us to adopt changes in a quicker yet more sustaining manner. Adhoc solutions like the painting of circles in a number of parks to better instruct city dwellers on how to follow social distancing protocols is one such example.

In the past months, officials and planners have had to ask themselves a series of tough questions. How do we better facilitate the massive flow of people through our systems at different times of the day, month, year? How do we suggest, educate, and enforce that people maintain distance? How will these new measures impact our budgets and economies? How do we mitigate the impact of this crisis on the social structures that normally depend on a careful, unregulated balance of individualistic pursuits and coexistence in this new reality? What can new technologies and sets of tools do to ease these swift transitions?

It's clear that an interdisciplinary approach is necessary to better solve these dilemmas. Students at postgraduate art and design school Sandberg Instituut in Amsterdam are familiar with these set of methodologies and often engage a wide range of skill sets to better comprehend, communicate, and alter the world around them.

This letter is an open proposal to reimagine every step in the process of commuting or traveling in a pandemic and post pandemic context, as a point of inquiry from various vantage points. One condition reflects a more mundane routine and a certain set of factors whereas the other represents a more sporadic occasion for most and another set of elements. However both are accomplished by employing the rich tapestry of interconnected infrastructures and vehicles that are made available to them on a daily basis

Achieved through different forms of empirical investigation, this multilayered research project would ultimately seek to understand how a wide range of

people are adapting to new behaviors, cultural norms, and actual modes of transportation. The study would take in consideration practical issues of time, space, and value, but also the more intrinsic issues of shifting etiquettes, moods, and interpersonal relationships.

As a measure of their completed or ongoing theses and particular interests, a select group of recent graduates from the Sandberg Instituut could offer their insight, intellectual focus, and practical aptitudes in the aim of drawing out a more meaningful set of results.

Wouter Stroet employs cartographic techniques to understand better how our public spaces are direct reflections of those who decide on how they are planned and built. His images capture cataclysmic events in time and space.

Kyulim Kim seeks to identify and highlight places in our concrete urban landscapes that have been overlooked. She employs both sound and image to question how global events have impacted the infrastructural environments we might take for granted.

Wei Tung Kuo is currently developing a mobile application that guides people through their immediate environments, daily routes, and audio instructions that might make them reconsider and come to terms with different aspects of that transitory environment.

Andoni Zamora Chacartegui questions the conventions of physical behaviors. She aims to draw links between these mannerisms and the cultural practices that define our societies.

Together, these four artists, amongst other graduates Aimée Theriot, Klara Waara, Silvia Faggiani, Franziska Goralski, Amber Oskam and David C. Kane, could comprise an invaluable resource to such a research project. Whereas Stroet and Kim could unearth the raw data of time and space, Chacartegui could help evaluate what

changes in collective behavior are occurring. Tying it all together would be a mobile guide based on a multi-narrative paths model in which the users select their own desired journey through a set check in point. This tool would allow them to at once become more aware of their commute or trip and adaptable when it comes to navigating unforeseen road blocks.

We would be honored to invite you to these talent's respective graduation presentations later this year, through either digital or virtual channels, and to introduce you to their work. Reflecting the nature of this research proposal, a guided tour that focuses on the most relevant projects through these shows would provide you with a more concise framework. Please let us know of your interest and we would be happy to provide you with further information.

Sincerely,

Adrian Madlener

Graduates mentioned:

sandberg.nl/graduation2020/draft/wouter-stroet

sandberg.nl/graduation2020/draft/kyulim-kim

sandberg.nl/graduation2020/draft/wei-tung-kuo

sandberg.nl/graduation2020/draft/andoni-zamora-chacartegui

sandberg.nl/graduation2020/draft/aimee-theriot

sandberg.nl/graduation2020/draft/klara-waara

sandberg.nl/graduation2020/draft/silvia-faggiani

sandberg.nl/graduation2020/draft/franziska-goralski

sandberg.nl/graduation2020/draft/amber-oskam

sandberg.nl/graduation2020/draft/david-c-kane