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## **Williamsburg Developer Unfazed by L-Train Shutdown and Rivals' Keyword Moves**

By Josh Barbanel



The L train shutdown set to begin in the spring of 2019, affecting stops like Bedford Avenue. The 41-story Level tower, located near a ferry stop, plans to provide shuttle bus services to other subway lines. PHOTO: RICHARD B. LEVINE/ZUMA PRESS

At Level, a new 41-story rental tower on the East River in Williamsburg, the threat of competition from developers in Downtown Brooklyn seems like a distant dream, despite the impending shutdown of a transit lifeline for the area.

“We are renting up fantastically well,” said Jeffrey E. Levine, the chairman of Douglaston Development LLC, which built Level.

With the L train tunnel to Manhattan due to shut down in the spring of 2019 for 15 months of repairs, developers in the major transit hub of downtown Brooklyn say they are stepping up search and social media marketing campaigns aimed at Williamsburg residents.

Mr. Levine said Level is well positioned to handle the temporary L train shutdown, with its river views, amenities, a ferry landing and plans for a shuttle bus. He said he isn't worried about the competition buying ads based on words like "Williamsburg rentals."

"If you are putting in a keyword to buy a Porsche and someone presents you with a Volkswagen you are going to buy the Porsche," he said.

Downtown Brooklyn has the Brooklyn Academy of Music and the Brooklyn Cultural District and a developing reputation as urban destination. But brokers say it has a long way to go before it rivals the cultural cachet of Williamsburg.

In three months since the rental office opened, Level, at 2 North 6th Place, has rented out 120 apartments, a rapid pace, Mr. Levine said. The building has 554 units in all.

The building is next to a ferry stop on the East River that is expected to have stepped up service to midtown when the L train service to Manhattan is shut down.

In addition, Douglaston Development has promised to provide shuttle bus service to nearby stops on two separate subway lines, convenient to both midtown and downtown Manhattan when the L train stops running.

The building's amenities include an indoor-outdoor pool with broad views of the Manhattan skyline that is due to open in October. There is also a roof deck, whirlpool, steam room, fitness center, yoga rooms, children's play space and barbecue grills.