

# Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee

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## ***Systemwide Study of the MTA Finds Transfer Signage and Commuter Rail Parking Management to Be on Wrong Track***

The Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (PCAC) today released [Right of Passage: Reducing Barriers to the Use of Public Transportation in the MTA Region](#). The report examines in-depth affordable ways to increase the use of public transportation and improve its ease of use in the New York metropolitan area. In particular, the report examines how the MTA can improve the customer's experience at transfer points between bus and subway and transfer points between different transit agencies, and improve customer access to commuter rail stations. Based on its research, the PCAC finds the MTA's performance lacking in all three areas.

The PCAC identified and performed field research at the most heavily used bus-to-subway transfer points, focussing on the provision of wayfinding signage and bus shelters. Of the locations surveyed, 32% had no bus shelters and 42% had no in-station wayfinding signage for transferring customers. Even worse, much of the wayfinding signage that does exist was found to be inadequate, giving incomplete, erroneous, or outdated information. For example, many signs leading customers from subways to buses did not indicate the correct station exit to use and some did not even indicate the routes of the buses that stopped there. Further, signage directing passengers from buses to subways seemed to be nonexistent.

The study also looked at how well peak-hour customer transfers are scheduled between Staten Island Railway (SIR) and local buses. Schedules were chosen over signage as a focus of study for Staten Island because the relatively long headways that exist for SIR and bus service make scheduled transfers very important for Staten Islanders. PCAC found that transfers between SIR and local buses are almost completely uncoordinated, creating unnecessary and excessive waiting times for Staten Island customers.

In addition, the PCAC visited selected, major inter-agency transfer points for transfers among the different MTA and non-MTA agencies serving the region. At most of these locations, such as Herald Square, Jamaica Station, and St. George Terminal, the PCAC found transfers to be convenient, with well-designed passageways and abundant wayfinding signage directing customers between different public transportation providers. However, significant problems were found at the Metro-North and NYC Transit Fordham Road stations in the Bronx and the Flatbush Avenue LIRR/NYC Transit complex in Brooklyn. At these locations, much of the wayfinding signage was deficient,

woefully outdated, or simply missing. At the Fordham Road subway station, the hours of the principal entrance for customers transferring from Metro-North were found to be so short that the entrance is rendered almost useless. The subway station also lacks any signage directing customers to Metro-North.

Parking problems always figure highly on the list of concerns of MTA commuter rail customers. Thus, the PCAC examined strategies for relieving parking problems at LIRR and Metro-North stations. Since building more space for parking is often difficult, and other strategies such as feeder buses and encouraging bicycle use have limited applicability, the PCAC concentrated its attention on customer drop-off strategies commonly known as "kiss-and-ride". Selected stations were surveyed on both the LIRR and Metro-North. A wide disparity was found between the two railroads. On Metro-North, where stations were found to have protected curbside space and available 15-minute parking spaces, kiss-and-ride usage was high. By contrast, many LIRR stations were found to have no available curbside space, no dedicated drop-off areas, and poor parking-regulation enforcement, making kiss-and-ride customer drop-offs almost impossible in many areas. This is unfortunate because, in many instances, parking lots cannot be expanded or are owned by municipalities and restricted to local residents, making kiss-and-ride the only viable alternative for thousands of customers.

At a press conference held by the PCAC to discuss the results of the study, PCAC Executive Director Beverly Dolinsky said, "It behooves the MTA to do all it can to ensure that customers find it as easy and convenient as possible to take public transportation. Riders deserve wayfinding signage that is adequate and useful and commuter rail stations that are accessible for families who need kiss-and-ride drop-off areas. We look forward to the MTA's response to our recommendations."

The full report may be downloaded via the below link, or may be requested directly from the PCAC.

**[DOWNLOAD THE REPORT](#) (PDF format).**