

Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council  
Chair's Report  
July 17, 2014

Congratulations to our Vice Chair Neal Zuckerman, who is now among the newest members of the MTA Board. As you know, Neal was confirmed to the position by the New York State Senate in the waning hours of their last session on June 19. I also want to thank Jim Blair for his service as our MTA Board representative for over a decade. In his time on the Board, Jim served with distinction and was never afraid to ask hard questions about the operation of Metro-North as well as about the MTA and its other operating agencies. I hope that Neal will follow in Jim's footsteps and bring his own set of skills, knowledge, and abilities to representing Metro-North riders on the MTA Board. Later in today's meeting, I'd like to have a conversation among all of us concerning the issues that we believe are important for Neal to address on behalf of the riders as an MTA Board member.

Yesterday, I was the first witness of the day to testify before the MTA Transportation Reinvention Commission. In my testimony, a copy of which is in your packets today, I focused on the infrastructure needs of the MTA system and the need to have strong management in place and to make a strong case for capital investment to meet these infrastructure needs. I stressed the need for communication with the community to build support for public investment in Metro-North and the MTA system as a whole. I also noted the loss of talented and experienced staff throughout the MTA and the resulting impact on the organization. Earlier this year, the Council had a discussion with Metro-North staff on these staffing issues, and we raised them with MNR President Giulietti when we met with him in June.

On Tuesday of this week I participated in a roundtable meeting in White Plains of business, civic, governmental, and academic experts to discuss topics related to establishing the value of the MTA system and building support for continued investment in the our commuter railroads, buses, and subways. This roundtable is a part of the collaborative effort that the PCAC is involved in with the Urban Land Institute-NY, New York University's Schack Institute for Real Estate, the Regional Plan Association and the consulting firm HR&A. At our September PCAC meeting we will hear more about this effort and how it can help to build support for the next MTA Capital Program.

On June 30, I attended a ceremony renaming Grand Central Terminal's restored main entry vestibule at 42nd Street and Park Avenue in honor of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, who led the campaign to save Grand Central from destruction in the 1970s. The space was cleaned, repaired and restored and a plaque honoring Mrs. Onassis and two video displays telling the story of her life and the preservation of the Terminal have been added at this entrance. If you have a few minutes, you might enjoy seeing the fine work that has been done on the vestibule, located through Vanderbilt Hall, adjacent to Pershing Square.

On June 19 Metro-North distributed its West of Hudson Customer Satisfaction Surveys and I asked for a quantity of surveys, which I distributed on my train. As you know, for many years we've worked with Metro-North on these surveys, reviewing the draft documents for East and West of Hudson versions of the survey, and our Chair's

signature appears on every survey under a note asking riders to give their input. This year I was more personally involved in urging riders to let Metro-North know about the quality of their commute.

On Monday, July 7, Metro-North put into effect a set of adjustments to its New Haven and Harlem Line service. These adjustments are a result of Metro-North's efforts to monitor performance, conduct passenger counts and respond to issues raised by riders following the implementation of its May 11 schedule change. Among the changes made were the restoration of connections between trains that had been disrupted by the earlier schedule change and the addition of stops on trains having space to relieve overcrowding on other trains. There are also a number of minor timing adjustments to accommodate these changes