

New York City Transit Riders Council
Chair's Report
July 24, 2014

Yesterday we released our report on communication during subway service diversions, entitled *Every Which Way But Direct! A Review of Service Diversion Communication*. Thanks to NYCTRC members Chris Greif, Marisol Halpern, Sharon King Hoge, Trudy Mason, Edith Prentiss, Mike Sinansky, and Burt Strauss for coming to the event and sharing their insights on the issues raised in the report, and particular thanks to Bradley Brashears for all of his fine work compiling the report and for setting up yesterday's event. We had a good group of media on hand, including AM New York, the New York Post, News 12, WPIX-11, Fox 5, and the Epoch Times. As a result of the release, we got the cover of AM New York this morning, as well as coverage through other media outlets.

At the report release, we presented the findings of our study and recommendations for improvements, including changes in the content and placement of signage, and the report was well received by the news media members who attended its release. We met with NYC Transit and MTA Corporate Communications staff on the report about two weeks ago and we will continue to work with them on improving communications during service diversions. NYCTRC members should have received a PDF copy of the report, but if you did not receive the report or would like a printed copy please speak with a member of the staff and they will make sure that you get one.

Also yesterday, Edith Prentiss, Chris Greif and Karyl Berger, along with a host of other disabled advocates, were asked to provide input to New York City Transit regarding proposed designs for the Step Aside program. NYC Transit believes that this program can be helpful to decrease dwell time for trains in stations.

The event took place on the Manhattan platform of the B/Q Prospect Park station that also serves as the terminal for the Franklin Avenue Shuttle. There were four general designs and eight designs that would be placed at boarding areas for wheelchair users available for viewing. NYC Transit conducted a focus group on these designs at Astoria Boulevard and interviewed over 1,000 riders about the choices. We will keep you informed as NYC Transit chooses the final designs that will be used in the system.

This Friday July 25, a portion of the G subway line will close for five consecutive weeks, reopening on Tuesday, September 2. During this time, G line service will be suspended between the Long Island City-Court Square and Nassau Avenue stations. This service suspension is of course a result of superstorm Sandy and the extensive damage done to the Greenpoint tube and the equipment in it when it was flooded with salt water. The corrosion that resulted makes the line much more susceptible to failures and delays, making extensive repairs necessary. Closing a portion of the line during late summer, the period

with the least heavy ridership, is an effort to minimize the impact of these repairs on the riders. Free shuttle buses will be provided during the duration of the work linking the closed stops.

I'll talk more about the potential for more bus service enhancements in my Board report, but another round of bus service restorations and enhancements that were approved last July took place on June 29. The enhancements included restorations of services that were cut in 2010, along with some new expansions to meet evolving service needs. The changes include a rerouting of the Bx23 bus to serve all sections of Co-op City, the extension of the Q19 along Astoria Boulevard and the rerouting of the Q102 bus, the addition of weekend service on the Q103 bus, the rerouting of the M100 bus, and the restoration of the B37 bus as far north as the Barclays Center, with routing changes to the B3 and B70 buses.

Speaking of the B37 bus, Chris Greif joined with others in the Bay Ridge area to hold a welcome back celebration for the B37 bus on Tuesday July 1. The event was attended by a number of elected officials, including our guest today Borough President Eric Adams, Senator Martin Golden, Assembly members Felix Ortiz and Nicole Malliotakis, and Councilman Vincent Gentile. Bill Henderson also attended the event. There was good press coverage of the event, including NY1, News 12, and Brooklyn community newspapers. The B37 is important because it provides north-south mobility in Bay Ridge, Sunset Park, and Boerum Hill for those who are unable to use the 4th Avenue subway, which has no ADA accessible stations south of Pacific Street. Unfortunately, the route was not extended past Atlantic Avenue, making a transfer necessary for those traveling to and from Downtown Brooklyn.

On Wednesday July 16 I spoke before the MTA Transportation Reinvention Commission. I talked about the need to serve new markets and unmet demands within the City the importance of increasing the efficiency of operations to provide better service. I also talked about the need for more accurate information and the ways that technology can make a complicated system easier to understand through better communications with riders.

I also talked about our concept of a Freedom Ticket and how increasing the use of commuter rail within the city could take advantage of an underused resource and improve service for people within the City, particularly in parts of the City that are currently underserved. In my remarks I also discussed some potential methods of funding the MTA's considerable capital improvement needs and stated that regardless of the funding mechanism that is developed, it must include a lockbox provision so that funds that were intended for the benefit of the MTA system will be spent on the MTA system, and not diverted to the State's general fund.