

New York City Transit Riders Council
Chair's Report
October 23, 2014

Welcome to our October NYCTRC meeting. As you can see Bill Henderson is unable to join us today due to illness, but Ellyn Shannon is here to fill in. We now have a date for our move to 2 Broadway. We are heading downtown next Friday, October 31 and will be in office on the 16th floor officially on Monday, November 3. Our phone numbers and email addresses will remain the same.

William Ronan, the Architect of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority died on October 15 at the age of 101. He was a close aide and advisor to Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller, and engineered the takeover of the Long Island Rail Road from the Pennsylvania Railroad and secured the takeover of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority and the New York City Transit Authority. As a result the MTA was born on March 1, 1968.

Among his expansion ideas were a subway line under Second Avenue and the construction of a new subway tunnel under 63rd Street, the first of which we know is currently under construction, the latter was completed in 2001.

This all leads us to where we are today. As I'm sure you have all heard, Gov. Cuomo called the 2015-2019 capital plan "bloated" earlier this month. He again rejected toll reform as a source of new revenue, saying there is actually a funding surplus. Right on the heels of this statement, State Comptroller DiNapoli released an annual report on the financial condition of the MTA, that you may have seen, warning that "closing the capital program's funding gap through borrowing would put added pressure on fares and tolls. Each \$1 billion borrowed would increase debt service by an amount comparable to a 1 percent increase in fares and tolls." While additional borrowing could increase pressure on fares and tolls, deep cuts could affect the future reliability of the transit system and jeopardize expansion projects

On the positive side, DiNapoli also stated that the MTA's short-term financial outlook continues to improve with the economy. Subway ridership has recovered from the recession faster than anticipated. On Tuesday, September 23, 6,106,694 customers rode the subway making it the highest ridership ever since daily figures were first recorded in 1985. Four other September days also saw more than 6 million customers, and the 149 million customers over the month were more than in any other September in more than 60 years.

Earlier this month Bill, Angela, and Bradley went to the release presentation of "Getting to the Route of It," Eno Transportation Foundation's latest report on the role of governance in regional transit. Tom Prendergast was part of the event's panel discussion.

***Discussion of letter to Tom*

And finally, a reminder, the November meeting is a week earlier than usual due to Thanksgiving.