

**METRO-NORTH RAILROAD COMMUTER COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THURSDAY, JULY 20, 2017**

A meeting of the Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council (MNRCC) was convened at 12:00PM on Thursday, July 20, 2017 in the 12<sup>th</sup> floor conference room at the Metro-North Offices – Graybar Building at 420 Lexington Avenue, New York City.

The following members were present:

Randolph Glucksman  
Orrin Getz

The following members were on the phone:

Francena Amparo  
Rhonda Herman

The following members were absent:

Richard Cataggio  
Francis Corcoran

In addition, the following persons were present:

William Henderson	-PCAC Executive Director
Ellyn Shannon	-PCAC Associate Director
Karyl Berger	-Research Associate
David Cuff	-Metro North
Mark Mannix	-Metro North
Kim Smith	-Metro North
Eric Wollman	-Concerned citizen

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### ***Approval of Agenda and Minutes***

The agenda for the July 20, 2017 meeting was approved. The minutes of the May 18, 2017 meeting were approved.

### ***Chair's Report***

Randolph Glucksman summarized the Chair's report. The Chair's report is attached to these minutes.

The members posed questions to Mark Mannix about Amtrak's use of Grand Central Terminal. Mr. Mannix responded that the arrangement is going well, with the only significant glitch occurring on weekends when some riders thought that Amtrak trains were departing from Grand Central Terminal, although Amtrak uses Grand Central only for its weekday schedule.

### ***Guests – Kim Smith and David Smith from Metro-North Railroad***

Mr. Glucksman welcomed the Council's guests for the meeting – Kim Smith, MNR Senior Director, Capital Planning and David Cuff, MNR Manager, Capital Planning – who were on hand to discuss development underway at the Breakneck Ridge station, which serves weekend users who primarily travel to the area for recreational use of nearby trails.

Mr. Cuff said that a common question asked about the work that at Breakneck Ridge is why Metro-North gets involved with trail development. He said that the use of trails is becoming more and more popular and that participating in their development can further economic Development. He said that Metro North has lots of real estate along the Hudson and takes an active role in development around its property, which allows the railroad to influence the design of nearby facilities to protect Metro-North's interests. The railroad's involvement also serves to build goodwill between local residents and Metro-North.

The work near the Breakneck Ridge station involves development of a Breakneck Connector trail, which is a part of Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail. Metro- North participates in steering committees for area for trail projects. It may provide property needed for trail construction and permits for access to its properties, but is not involved in construction. Scenic Hudson is the organization that takes the lead on trails.

The Breakneck Connector Trail is a separate project and is separately funded from other parts of the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail system. It will go forward with or without the other elements of the trail system.

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The benefits that Metro-North gains from the project are new mini-high platforms, ramps to access the platforms and fencing, which is all provided by project funders without direct cost to Metro-North. It would have been difficult to justify this investment internally, as there is no weekday service at the Breakneck Ridge station, but only Saturday and Sunday trains year round. A major piece of the funding came from Assembly Member Sandy Galef, who provided \$200 thousand for station improvements.

The current status of the project is that the lease of Metro-North property was approved in June 2017 and final design is underway. Bidding on the construction work will take place this summer, and the contract award is expected in the fall. The larger trail will need environmental review, and AKRF is preparing an environmental impact statement that began in the early winter of 2016 and will take 12 to 18 months to complete. There is also an engineering consultant working on the project.

Mr. Cuff said that the greater design challenges will lie in the remainder of the trail. Karyl Berger asked whether bike riding is permitted on the trail. Mr. Cuff responded that bikes and rollerblades as well as walking, are ways of using the trail.

Francena Amparo said that the area near the roadways that adjoin the trail is dangerous, as it has little space for pedestrians and they are forced to walk very close to a road where the speed limit is 65 mph. Mr. Cuff stated that there is a proposal to lower the speed limit in the area as part of trail plan. Mr. Glucksman asked whether changes could be made more quickly and whether Ms. Amparo could help to bring them about. Mr. Amparo stated that she could talk to County Administration, but this section of road is next to Putnam County and there are also there are people using Little Stony Point to get river access.

Mr. Cuff said construction on the project is to start this winter. It should not affect Metro-North operations.

Ms. Amparo asked if anything will prevent people from getting on the tracks. Mr. Cuff responded that there will be railings and fencing to separate the trail from the tracks.

Ellyn Shannon asked whether there was consideration of possible future needs in areas where growth may happen.

Kim Smith commented that Metro-North never looks at giving away any right of way where they would be likely to consider expanding in the area and would require the property later. Some pieces of property do not fit into the railroad's future service plans, and this is the case with the Beacon Line where a 27 mile segment of the Empire Trail will run along tracks of Beacon Line. This right of

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way will not be used for revenue service. Orrin Getz stated that he was aware of discussions about the Beacon Line in connection with the issue that freight can only be moved across Hudson at Selkirk. He said that this was a subject of a Metro-North study in 1996.

Eric Wollman stated that he used to attend Croton-Harmon open house and wanted to know will it return. Mark Mannix said that the new facilities on the site are not suitable for an open house. The main building is being replaced, but its replacement will probably not be complete for a few years at least. The main building will likely be addressed in the next MTA Capital Program.

### ***Old Business***

Bill Henderson updated the members about the status of prospective new members. Several recommendations have been made, but they are subject to review by the Governor's office.

### ***New Business***

### ***Adjournment***

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

William Henderson  
Executive Director