



MNRCC

METRO-NORTH RAILROAD
COMMUTER COUNCIL

2 Broadway, 16th Floor, New York, NY 10004
(212) 878-7087 • mail@pcac.org

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Dear John Kennard, Vice President of Capital Programs at Metro-North,

The Village of Suffern is going through a tremendous time of revitalization, and economic development, particularly near the Suffern train station, which is only two blocks from its downtown. The Village has expressed serious frustration to us, regarding the condition of the station and their ability to meet the needs of the station's patrons. They would love to have the station become a true and welcoming gateway to their revitalized village, but have found over the years, NJ Transit to not be responsive their communications. As such, I have spoken and met with Mayor Edward Markunas several times, who also gave me a tour of the village and station, to identify the station problem areas. They are as follows:

- The station needs to be made accessible: Currently Rockland County para-transit must take its riders from the Suffern area all the way to the Harriman or Nanuet accessible stations to board a train. We have spoken to Susan Meyer in the Rockland County Executive's office regarding a possible change to the regulation, requiring their paratransit service to cross its County/State line to NJ. This would allow them to drop passengers at the closer NJ Transit Ramsey station which is accessible. We learned that adjusting the regulation would create several unintended consequences to the Rockland County paratransit program making the system prohibitively expensive. Thus, the regulation change is not an option. Making the Suffern station accessible is a critical need for the area.
- Repave parking lot: The parking lot, has not been repaved in what looks like decades. It is down to its raw surface, making it difficult to walk on in most areas. It needs to be repaved in its entirety.
- Upgrade parking fee collection method: Currently, a method of paying for parking is, by using a pay box... I think from the 1950's or so. The Village of Suffern is tasked with collecting the money from this box, which seems more like an honor system, as the person drops the money in, but it is not possible to see, what car or spot they are paying for... I believe a nearby stick is often used to get stuck dollars out of the box.
- Upgrade and replace the walkway and stairs leading from the platform to parking: The walkway is poorly lit, brush is too close, and the wooden stairway hand rail has a high potential for splinters.
- Upgrade the station house, and make better use of it through the MNR station net leasing program: The station house looks to have the potential to host a coffee vendor or other lessee, to provide riders a respite area with seating, heating and air conditioning, as well as amenities a vendor could provide in this vibrant village. We have met with Rockland Community College President, Michael Baston, who expressed the value the train station to the college as students come up from New York City to attend. An

improved station environment would be valuable for this growing College as well as the Village and Good Samaritan hospital, a large employer in the area.

- Build a Walkway Over the Right of Way: Currently, Metro-North riders, must walk under a dilapidated, graffiti ridden and poorly lit, underpass to reach the New York bound side of the train station. At the same time, new transit oriented developments, are getting built on the village side of the station. Improving the access to the southbound side of the station, would be very beneficial to the economic development goals of the village.
- Make NJT funds readily available to Village of Suffern: The Village of Suffern has had instances where, a branch has fallen on a car, snow needs to be removed, etc. where an unplanned need to expend money from the NJ Transit fund is required. But again, their agreement with NJ Transit requires gaining permission before expending the money, even in emergency situations. The Village of Suffern has stated that NJ Transit is unresponsive to their communications.

Best,

Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council