



PCAC

PERMANENT CITIZENS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MTA

2019 Annual Report



Letter from the PCAC Chairman



Dear Riders,

In 2019, as the MTA embarked on several exciting and transformative initiatives, the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC) and Councils continued advocating for riders by advising the MTA, fulfilling our legislative mandate which began over forty years ago.

Throughout the year, the PCAC and Councils focused on ensuring that riders came first and called for increased [transparency and accountability](#) in all of the MTA's activities, including the nascent [Transformation Plan](#) and [FY 2020-24 Capital Program](#) as imperatives for increasing trust in the beleaguered organization. Having a clear understanding of why decisions are made and being given the opportunity to weigh in to help build support among stakeholders.

During the past year, [ridership and performance began to rebound](#) due to substantial changes at all three operating agencies and through the Presidents' visions: [NYC Transit's Fast](#)

[Forward](#); [LIRR Forward](#); and [Metro-North's Way Ahead](#), which combined to make up the core of the FY2020-24 Capital Program. Identifying secure recurring funding to substantially pay for the Capital Program – including through passage of congestion pricing legislation – was a principal focus for the PCAC and Councils.

MTA rider representation in this era of transformation and funding uncertainties is crucial for the nearly nine million daily riders who depend on the system. It is within this context that the PCAC and Councils will continue our work on behalf of riders. The following Annual Report details our 2019 actions as the MTA's official rider representatives. You can count on the PCAC and Councils to be your voice as 2020 unfolds, with all its challenges.

Sincerely,

Andrew Albert

PCAC Chairman and MTA Board
Representative

Who we are...



The PCAC and its Councils are the official voice of subway, bus, and commuter rail users in the MTA region. Originally formed in 1977 by the MTA Board, PCAC was formally established by the New York State Legislature in 1981 to serve as the umbrella organization of the New York City Transit Riders Council (NYCTRC); Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council (LIRRCC); and Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council (MNRCC).

The PCAC consists of 38 volunteer members – all of whom are regular MTA commuters on the Long Island Rail Road, Metro-North Railroad and New York City Transit's subways and buses. Since 1995, each of the Councils has had a non-voting seat on the MTA Board.

The PCAC undertakes a variety of activities to affect positive change at the MTA on behalf of riders, including: holding 32 public PCAC and Council meetings each year; delivering public testimony at MTA Committee and Board meetings and state and local hearings; issuing press releases, giving media interviews and writing op-eds; developing research reports; publishing blog articles and social media posts; and participating in numerous meetings with MTA management and decision-makers. The PCAC and Councils advise the MTA in the formulation and implementation of policy and actions to hold the MTA accountable to all system users.

PCAC Executive Committee

Andrew Albert - PCAC Chair
Randolph Glucksman - First Vice Chair
Mark J. Epstein* - Second Vice Chair
Gerard Bringmann
William K. Guild
Orrin Getz
Burton M. Strauss Jr.

PCAC Comings & Goings

Karyl Berger Cafiero, Research Associate: After 19 years of dedicated and informative work, Mrs. Cafiero retired and moved to Washington D.C. with her husband, former NYC Transit Chief Operating Officer Peter Cafiero, who joined WMATA.

Rhonda Herman, MNRCC Member: Left the Council after 10 years of representing Westchester County and replaced Andrew Saul as a Governor's appointee on the MTA Board.

Michael Godino, LIRRCC Member: Left the Council after 7 years of representing Nassau County and moved out of state.

* See page 16 for PCAC statement on Chair Epstein's passing.



PCAC Event Participation & Advocate Collaborations

The PCAC used several levers to affect change for MTA riders. Many of these actions included participation at regional events and collaborating with advocates and good government groups. Participation at regional events largely focused on adequate funding for NYC Transit's *Fast Forward*, *LIRR Forward*, and *MNR Way Ahead* – including support for congestion pricing; and the need for transparency and public involvement around the MTA's Reorganization Plan. We participated at the Legislative Transit Advocacy and Education Day with NYPTA and met with numerous elected officials to discuss the importance of funding; attended multiple Fix Our Transit Coalition events; and spoke on a panel hosted by TransitCenter called, "Can Riders Trust the MTA Reorganization?"

Our collaborations with advocates and good government groups centered on joint letters calling for transparency and public involvement around major MTA initiatives. We called for prompt appointment of the Traffic Mobility Review Board for the Central Business District Tolling Program (congestion pricing) and that TMRB follow the Open Meetings Law; a deliberative MTA reorganization process allowing for feedback and dialogue with the public; transparency of the Outer Borough Transit Account and MTA Capital Program "Set-Aside" Funds; and for the Capital Program Review Board (CPRB) to be subject to NYS Open Meetings Laws.

To view all PCAC and Joint Letters visit:
pcac.org/pcac/council-statements

PCAC Staff

Lisa Daglian	Executive Director
Ellyn Shannon	Associate Director
Bradley Brashears, AICP	Planning Manager
Sheila Binesh	Transportation Planner
Karyl Cafiero	Research Associate
Deborah Morrison	Administrative Assistant





Public Testimonies & Statements

In 2019, the PCAC and Councils testified in support of riders more than thirty times at the MTA Board and Committee meetings; NYS Legislative Joint Committee Hearings; NYS Senate Hearings; and at New York City Council Transportation Hearings. The themes of these testimonies and statements centered on transparency and public involvement for the MTA's Capital and Transformation Plans and congestion pricing; the need for sustainable and dedicated operating funds; no budget-related service cuts and providing everyday MTA riders with the best deal when it comes to fare increases; and concerns regarding the MTA's new debarment rules and their effect on competition and bidding on capital projects.

To view all PCAC Testimonies and Statements visit: pcac.org/pcac/council-statements





PCAC Public Meetings

The PCAC conducts quarterly meetings with thought-provoking presentations given by various MTA executive and senior staff throughout the year. During the Q&A portion of the presentations, PCAC council members and the attending public ask questions about crucial rider concerns.

In 2019, the PCAC was fortunate to have the MTA's Chief Development Officer, Janno Lieber, who discussed the new construction approach to the Canarsie tunnel project and addressed concerns about the lifespan of the repairs. Later in the year, the MTA's Inspector General (IG), Carolyn Pokorny shared her vision for the office and an overview of investigations both completed and underway. During this thoughtful presentation, council members raised concerns about lack of public involvement in development of the MTA's transformation plan and concerns about fare evasion. The PCAC also hosted MTA Chief Safety Officer Patrick Warren, who provided an overview of the MTA's safety protocols and MTA Police Chief Joseph McGrann, who addressed concerns regarding the homeless in the system and fare evasion, and answered questions about the hiring and training of the 500 new police officers.

To view all PCAC meetings visit:
[PCAC YouTube channel](#)





PCAC in the Media

The PCAC advocated broadly on behalf of riders in media interviews and news articles; by writing opinion pieces and blogs; and in numerous social media posts via Twitter and Facebook.

Two noteworthy opinion pieces were published in response to MTA Chairman Pat Foye's raising the specter of "service guideline adjustments" - meaning possible service cuts. Given operational improvements and better On-Time Performance, the PCAC clearly spelled out the rider position of absolutely no service cuts and the need for new dedicated operating revenue streams.

Service cuts now? Fugheddaboutit
(New York Daily News);

MTA needs more revenue, not service cuts
(Crain's NY).

PCAC also penned several blog articles to support our work. The first, *L Train Miracle Cure? Call us Cynical*, was in response to the Governor's L train project reversal, questioning the resiliency of the new "slowdown" plan and pushing for a more long-term solution. Another notable blog was *MTA Transformation without the Facts*, which pointed out the plan was based on assumptions and not on verified facts and failed to include best practices from other transit systems.

To view all PCAC blogs visit:
AllAvailableDoors.com



"There needs to be another creative, reliable, and sustainable funding source that comes in to fund the system."

Lisa Daglian - PCAC Executive Director, ABC7

"You're throwing into the mix a proposal that is disincentivizing contractors from bidding and possibly raising the cost of those bids."

Lisa Daglian - PCAC Executive Director,
Crain's New York



"There are real questions about the actual dust from this new plan, and how you stop that from coming into trains."

Andrew Albert - PCAC Chair, The Gothamist



PCAC Social Media

PCAC's social media outreach efforts were increasingly successful in 2019. We shared testimony, reports, letters, press releases, positions, and much more to expand our reach and educate riders and stakeholders on the region's vital transportation system.



Reached 13,143 users – 93% of whom were first time visitors – and had 51,973 page views, indicating a significant audience expansion.

pcac.org



More than doubled our following, going from 216 to 461 followers, with an average of 25k impressions per month, with 54k impressions in June alone.

[@pcacriders](https://twitter.com/pcacriders)



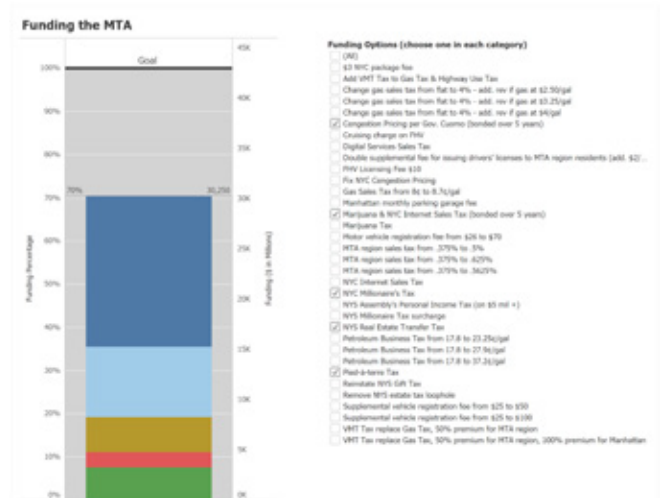
Followers grew 35%, with total post promotions reaching more than 15k people.

facebook.com/PCACriders

Visit:

Do the Math: On Track for a Better Ride

pcac-mtafundingtool.org



PCAC's Interactive Capital Program Funding Tool

Our interactive funding tool was developed to support the MTA's capital program needs by centralizing and visualizing numerous revenue sources that could be used as recurring and sustainable funding streams, a long-time focus of the PCAC. We used the tool in our support of congestion pricing to show that when bonded, it by far raised the most much-needed funds.



LIRRCC Event Participation & Outreach

The LIRRCC participated in regional events to influence decisions regarding rider concerns, including Vision Long Island's Smart Growth Summit; a Long Island Association event for congestion pricing; LIRR's Meet the President event at Penn Station; the opening of the new Wyandanch station, marking completion of the Double Track project; and at LI Contractors Association, moderated by NYS Commissioner of Transportation Marie Therese Dominguez.

The LIRRCC engaged with Long Island elected officials including Nassau County Legislator Arnold Drucker to address ESA affordable commuter parking; Senator James Gaughran regarding LIRR camera usage guidelines onboard trains; Oyster Bay Town Supervisor Joseph Saladino about station parking issues at the Hicksville station; and Senator Anna M. Kaplan regarding the Council gaining a vote for our MTA Board representatives.

In addition, the LIRRCC wrote letters addressing Central Islip Station platform access safety improvements; how cameras are used onboard trains; clarity on e-Tix activation policy; and various LIRR station parking issues.

To view LIRRCC letters visit:
pcac.org/lirrcc/council-statements

LIRRCC Members

Mark J. Epstein Chair (Suffolk Rep.)
Gerard P. Bringmann Vice Chair (Suffolk Rep.)
Sheila Carpenter Suffolk County Rep.
Marilyn Poterson Suffolk County Rep.
Michael Godino Nassau County Rep.
Raymond Pagano Nassau County Rep.
Bryan Peranzo Nassau County Rep.
Larry Rubinstein Nassau County Rep.





LIRRCC Testimonies & Statements

The LIRRCC testified at MTA Board and LIRR Committee meetings and wrote several statements on issues affecting riders. The Council focused on key issues including: reluctantly supporting fare increases with the guarantee of no service cuts; discounts for Long Island college students; delays in PTC installation; LIRRCC MTA Board representation with a voting role; the need for sustainable MTA funding sources; and the MTA's reorganization plans, calling for improvements and accountability.



LIRRCC Public Meetings

The LIRRCC hosted high ranking LIRR executives including: LIRR President Phil Eng to discuss LIRRCC commuter concerns; John Hyland, LIRR Executive Director of Penn Station, East River Tunnels and Infrastructure, and Steven Terracciano, Penn Station Terminal Manager, presenting on the Moynihan Station Project and construction timeline; and Will Fischer, LIRR Chief Innovation Officer, who presented on the myLIRR app and customer signage design.



To view LIRRCC Testimonies & Statements visit:
pcac.org/lirrcc/council-statements

To view LIRRCC Public Meetings visit:
[PCAC YouTube Channel](#)



MNRCC Event Participation & Outreach

MNRCC members participated at regional activities to address various rider concerns, including: a New Jersey Transit Customer Forum with Rockland County Executive Ed Day and MTA Board member Susan Metzger; MNR Connect With Us events; touring the Siemens and Bombardier facilities to learn about PTC installation; and a facilitated discussion on the progress of Penn Station Access with MTA's Chief Development Officer Janno Lieber.

MNRCC also conducted outreach efforts including meeting with MNR President Cathy Rinaldi to discuss issues including our proposal to revamp the MNR performance dashboard; Bronx Freedom Ticket expansion; and the next MNR customer survey. The Council also met with elected officials including facilitating a meeting with Suffern Mayor Ed Markunas and Suffern's Village Clerk Amy Paffenroth to discuss the MTA gaining ownership of the Suffern Station and to make it accessible.

To support MTA ownership of the Suffern Station, the Council wrote to John Kennard, Vice President of Capital Programs at MNR.

To view MNRCC letters visit:
pcac.org/mnrcc/council-statements

MNRCC Members

Randolph Glucksman* Chair (Rockland Rep.)
Orrin Getz Vice Chair (Rockland Rep.)
Francena Amparo Dutchess County Rep.
Richard Cataggio Orange County Rep.
Francis T. Corcoran Westchester County Rep.

* MTA Board Representative





MNRCC Public Testimonies & Statements

The MNRCC testified at MTA Board and MNR Committee meetings and at New Jersey Transit Board meetings. These testimonies included: calling for West-of-Hudson (WoH) riders to have the same 3-month, 10% discount that NJT riders receive for unreliable service; expressing concern about the continuing unreliable WoH service and the need for a station at Woodbury Commons; reinforcing the need for sustainable funding sources for the entire MTA system; calling for a voting role for PCAC reps on the MTA Board; urging the MTA to take over Suffern Station from NJT and make the station accessible; and complaining about canceled and short trains that led to crowded conditions.

To view MNRCC Testimonies & Statements visit:
pcac.org/mnrcc/council-statements





NYCTRC Event Participation

Throughout 2019, the NYCTRC was active in many transit-focused matters and met with elected officials on behalf of riders.

The most pressing issues the Council addressed were the L Train Slowdown; Accessibility; Freedom Ticket expansion; improved transit performance; Borough Bus Redesigns; and NYC Transit's *Fast Forward Plan*. The NYCTRC participated in New York City events related to these issues, including: L Line Reconstruction Project Open Houses; an L Train press conference organized by Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams and Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer; NYC Transit's system-wide accessibility open house on the next fifty accessible stations; at a focus group to identify various accessibility needs; Queens and Bronx Bus Redesigns Open Houses and Workshops to gain and share rider insights; and NYC Transit's *Fast Forward Plan* public meetings and forums, hosted by NYCT President Andy Byford.

NYCTRC Members

Executive Committee

Andrew Albert* Chair (Public Adv. Rep.)
Burton M. Strauss, Jr. Vice Chair (Mayor Rep.)
William K. Guild Mayor Rep.
Stuart Goldstein Mayor Rep.
Christopher Greif Brooklyn B.P. Rep.
Marisol Halpern Bronx B.P. Rep.
Sharon King Hoge Public Advocate Rep.
Trudy L. Mason Manhattan B.P. Rep.
Scott Nicholls Staten Island B.P. Rep.
Edith M. Prentiss Public Advocate Rep.

* MTA Board Representative

B.P. = Borough President





100 Days and 100 Nights: From Astoria to Lower Manhattan and Back

Over the course of several months, a PCAC staffer documented a daily commute from Astoria to lower Manhattan to capture the rider experience. For more than 200 AM and PM peak hour trips, our rider recorded frustrations seen every day – delays caused by signal problems and slow track speeds, and overcrowding on trains, platforms and stairwells. We compared our rider's travel times to NYC Transit's real-time data feeds to capture improvements made through the *Subway Action Plan* (SAP) and the *Save Safe Seconds* campaign. The report included recommendations in the context of NYC Transit's Fast Forward Plan.

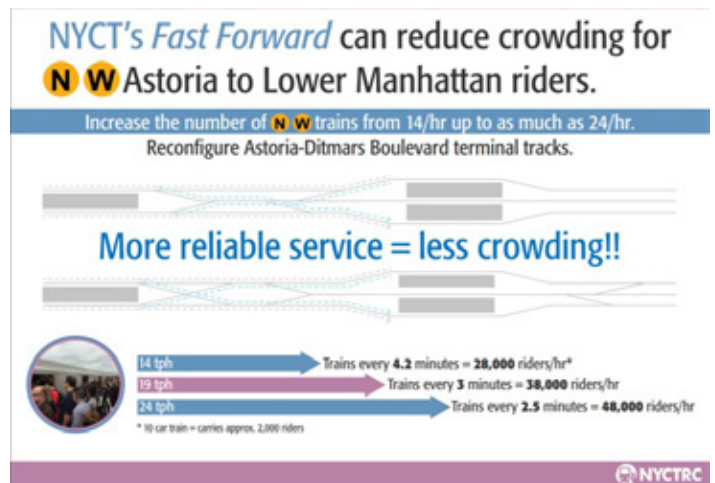
To promote the report, the Council held a press conference with multiple media outlets in attendance. In addition, two supportive blog pieces were published regarding the growth in Long Island City and Lexington Ave./59th Street station crowding conditions.



NYCTRC Route Simplification: internal discussion document

Building off the work from 100 Days/Nights report, the NYCTRC undertook a comprehensive look at interlined subway routes to determine which route simplifications (de-interlining) should be prioritized to improve service conditions and reliability for riders.

To view the report and blog pieces visit:
pcac100daysandnights.org ;
AllAvailableDoors.com





NYCTRC Public Testimonies & Statements

NYCTRC representatives testified at numerous MTA Board and NYC Transit committee meetings, City Council Hearings, and public hearings. Press statements were also issued on a variety of topics, including calling for an independent review of the L Train Slowdown to address safety, durability, cost, and long-term impacts to riders and the MTA, as well as calling for transparency and public involvement.

Throughout the year, the Council advocated for a fully funded *Fast Forward Plan* to build on the successes of NYC Transit's Subway Action Plan and Save Safe Seconds program, which included the need to upgrade the subway's signal system. We also urged the City to contribute \$3 billion to the MTA Capital Program at the New York City Council Transportation Committee Hearing.

In addition, the Council called for the extension of the Atlantic Ticket Field Study; dedicated bus lanes, increased bus lane camera enforcement and transit signal priority in preparation for bus redesigns and congestion pricing; and the need for data-driven decisions when it comes to the growing fare evasion problem.



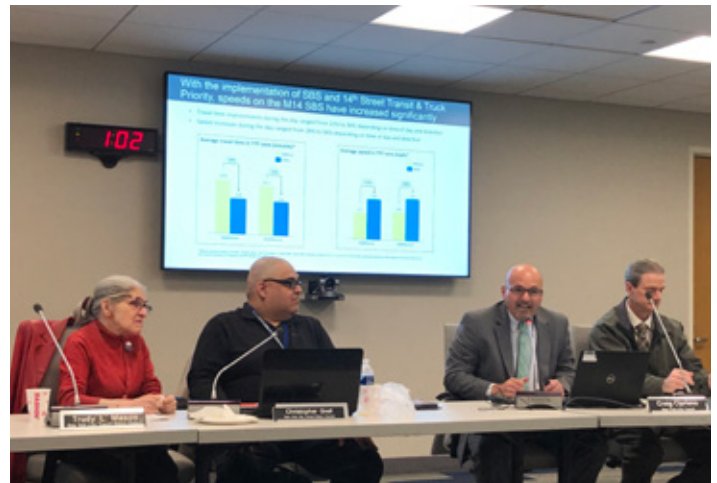
To view NYCTRC Testimonies & Statements visit:
pcac.org/nyctrc/council-statements



NYCTRC Public Meetings

The NYCTRC hosted various MTA executive and senior staff at its monthly meetings, all of whom provided thought-provoking presentations. During the Q&A portion, council members asked questions about crucial rider concerns.

Notable presentations included: installation of CBTC and Ultra-Wide Band signals per the *Fast Forward Plan*, by NYC Transit President Andy Byford and Vice President of Network Resignaling Pete Tomlin; rollout of the new OMNY fare payment system by MTA Vice President & Chief Operating Officer of the Division of Revenue Control Alan Putre; the new Accessibility Advisory Council by NYC Transit Senior Advisor for System-wide Accessibility Alex Elegudin; and the 14th Street Busway Pilot Project by Acting President of MTA Bus and Senior VP of NYC Transit Dept. of Buses Craig Cipriano.



To view NYCTRC Public Meetings visit:
[PCAC YouTube Channel](#)





NYCTRC Outreach

The NYCTRC met with many elected and appointed officials across the city to address various rider issues and concerns. As part of these outreach efforts, the Council met with Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams to discuss the L line construction reversal; AlixPartners and MTA leadership to provide input into the reorganization plan; Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr to discuss expanding Freedom Ticket in the Bronx; Senator Gounardes about the need for dedicated MTA operating funds; and with Assemblywoman Nily Rozic and Senator Leroy Comrie on the MTA Capital Plan, Outer Borough Transit Fund, and the ongoing Atlantic Ticket Field Study.

In addition, the NYCTRC wrote letters on behalf of riders, two of which included: L Train Slowdown and transparency, calling for monthly updates on construction schedule, cost, and safety measures; and a letter calling for a Public Announcement (PA) system for Staten Island Railway riders.

To view NYCTRC letters visit:
pcac.org/nyctrc/council-statements





During the development of the PCAC 2019 Annual Report, our LIRRCC Chair, Mark Epstein unexpectedly passed away. Below is our statement regarding this very unfortunate event.

"We are devastated by the loss of our friend and colleague Mark Epstein. As Chair of the Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council, Mark worked to improve the commute for his neighbors throughout Long Island. He focused on issues that riders cared about deeply, ranging from on-time performance, to parking, to safety, about which he cared deeply. He was extremely active in his community and was always meeting with elected officials to present his unique perspective as a rider and commuter, and to call for improvements.

Mark rode the LIRR regularly and everything he spoke about was from that perspective: simply, he represented riders passionately because he was one. Mark made all riders' issues his issues.

We at PCAC and the LIRRCC send our sincerest condolences to Mark's friends and family. He will be missed."



To download official statement visit:
pcac.org/news/passing-of-lirrcc-chair-mark-epstein



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