

A virtual meeting of the New York City Transit Riders Council (NYCTRC) was convened at 12:00 pm on Thursday, October 29, 2020 via Zoom.

Member Attendance

Andrew Albert (Chair)	Present
Burton M. Strauss Jr. (Vice Chair)	Present
Stuart Goldstein	Present
Christopher D. Greif	Present
William K. Guild	Present
Marisol Halpern	Present
Sharon King Hoge	Present
Trudy L. Mason	Present
Scott R. Nicholls	Present
Edith Prentiss	Present

Staff Attendance

Lisa Daglian (Executive Director)	Present
Bradley Brashears (Planning Manager)	Present
Sheila Binesh (Transportation Planner)	Present
Gav Mazurek (Research Intern)	Present
Shaul Picker (Research Intern)	Absent

Non-Member Attendance

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Jason Anthony	Concerned citizen
Andrew Pollack	Concerned citizen
Andrew Kurzweil	Concerned citizen
Matt Kamper	Concerned citizen
Matt Shotkin	Concerned citizen
Yvonne Morrow	Concerned citizen
Debra Greif	Concerned citizen
Alaiah Hussein	Concerned citizen
Cate Contino	New York City Transit
Al Putre	New York City Transit

Approval of Agenda for October 29, 2020 meeting.

***Approval of Minutes for September 24, 2020 meeting.
Vote on bylaws revision – Approved***

Chair and Board Report, including MTA Finances

A. Albert: The MTA has distributed almost 15 million masks. If the proposed service cuts take into effect, 450,000 jobs will be lost, it would lead to massive losses in the GDP. Bob Foran said that the July plan deficit has been reduced by a billion dollars due to various savings, and is in the process of identifying various toll and fare options for the hearings that will take place in late November and December. There is pushback among the board about the 4% hike. There is movement on the commuter rail about possible increases in their rates. There will likely be a vote on a November plan in November, with a final vote in December. Though the Capital Program has been halted, some things are moving forward. Seven accessible stations have been completed since we last spoke,

S. King-Hoge: The elevators from the platform to the mezzanine are already broken at Astoria Boulevard, and there is no signage to let people know that they cannot get all the way up.

C. Greif: There were reports of power issues at Astoria Boulevard. This has gone on for three weeks.

Action item: Follow up about broken elevators at Astoria Boulevard

A. Albert: Replacement of track on the Archer Avenue Line is ahead of schedule and should be done next week, and E service to Jamaica Center should resume. Some E service will continue to run to 179th Street. Work is going on at 207th Street and Coney Island Yards. If we don't get federal financing, there will be a major impact on the capital program. If we keep putting off needed repairs and improvements to the system, we will be in very bad shape. We cannot keep borrowing our way out of this. We are moving to the point where we will be in excess of 20% debt service, and if we keep this up, we will be closer to 25% debt service. We have applied to the municipal credit facility loan program for another \$2.9 billion, which would take us through January.

LIRR ridership is up to 28% of normal, and up to 50% of normal on weekends. 96% of the railroad is PTC ready. He expects the last 4% to take place soon, and they are working with Amtrak in the Harold area. Cathy Rinaldi reported that ridership is up to 23% of pre-pandemic levels, with the Hudson Line down 74%, the Harlem Line down 76%, and the New Haven Line down 78%. They are carrying 46% on weekends. West of Hudson ridership is down 80%. Metro-North is now 100% PTC equipped.

Both railroads are experimenting with a new kind of air filtering, with electrostatically charged particles removing not just COVID, but all germs. This would be a gamechanger, if successful. It could be incorporated into subways and buses.

NYCTRC MINUTES

3

L. Daglian: It is the equivalent of a MERV 16, and works in accompaniment with existing HVAC. It was an idea that a Metro-North chief engineer worked on with NOOR. It could be installed on the entire Metro-North system for \$13 million.

A. Albert: There have been some recent pushings. The chairman asked for the police's help in stopping these crimes, and interim NYCT President Feinberg has said that the crime rate is too high with the crime rate remaining steady with lower ridership. I have had some talks with police officers I have seen, and mentioned rampant fare evasion. They said they were more interested in crimes than fare evasion. I asked them whether they believed that the people committing these crimes are paying their fares. If you stop it at the turnstile, you are stopping a lot of this crime. I talked to the IG yesterday, and she agreed. There has to be a new calculation for fare evasion, which is what the IG is pushing for. We need to get people to feel safe from COVID, and from each other.

Access-A-Ride is being moved to a broker car service, which will reduce the cost of producing the service. Groups who receive this service are worried about a decline in the quality of the service.

Federal Funding Activities Update – PCAC Staff

L. Daglian: After the board meeting, a reporter asked whether the 4% fare hike would continue to be pursued in light of the political and financial climate. The answer was that the MTA is looking at all options. We are working very closely with local and national advocacy organizations in support of federal funding. Andrew submitted a letter to the editor to the NY Post in response to an editorial in support of federal funding, which unfortunately has not been published. Bob Foran said that the budget could be amended if stimulus is passed. The MTA is doing what it can to reduce its expenses, including moving two agencies within the MTA back into 2 Broadway to get rid of a couple of leases. We will be setting up a call with the staffers of Assembly member Amy Paulin about the money that would be raised from a gas tax so we can come up with a recommendation as the state legislature convenes next year.

T. Mason: We should write a letter to the entire New York congressional delegation thanking them for their efforts working with Speaker Pelosi on behalf of the MTA. We should send copies to the editorial boards of the Times, Daily News, Post and News Day.

Action item: Write a letter to the entire New York congressional delegation thanking them for their efforts for pushing for Federal funding, and making copies to the editorial boards of local newspapers.

A. Albert: The MTA's new live subway map is very exciting, and it is an improvement. Though there are a lot of errors I am working to get corrected, such as listing arrival times at terminal stations, and incorrect destinations. We hope to get it much improved from where it is. The R179s are back in service, and seem to be running fine.

Presentation: AI Putre, OMNY Fare Payment Program, Executive Director MTA - MTA NYC Transit; OMNY Update.

A. Albert: When is the time-based OMNY card going to be released, in June or in March?

NYCTRC MINUTES

4

A. Putre: We are going to have a fare increase, so I don't want to do anything between now and March. The best bet will be after the fare increase in March.

A. Albert: Does an OMNY reader lose its alignment?

A. Putre: In theory they don't lose their alignment, but in practice, things happen. Take a picture of it the next time you see an issue. We downloaded new software to all the validators in September, which fixed several issues with processing.

A. Albert: On the commuter railroads, will conductors have special OMNY readers?

A. Putre: They will have the on-board service device we are building, which will be just for the railroads.

S. Goldstein: Has there been any vandalism of the readers?

A. Putre: We have had vandals attack ten of our validators, and we arrested some people.

M. Kamper: Do you have any idea when PATH and NICE bus will get OMNY?

A. Putre: They will get it in 2022 when MetroCard is phased out. PATH will be first among the affiliates to get OMNY. When we let the contract for OMNY, we built in competitive pricing for all the affiliates, anticipating that they would need to buy hardware to use OMNY. We had them bid on that competitively, so they can buy the same hardware that we bought at the same price we bought it. If we had not done this, Cubic would have charged them substantially more.

A. Hussein: What will be the status of the MetroCard for Access-A-Ride?

A. Putre: Paratransit was not initially part of OMNY project. In April, we were asked to take on this project, and we awarded a modification contract. Instead of installing validators on all paratransit and cab service vehicles, we leveraged the Cubic backend, which can be API'd into the Department of Bus system they use to log all of their trips. Customers will only need to establish an account or give them a credit card number over the phone. You will only be charged when you take a ride. You will have to show ID when you board. The operator will then validate you. It will be deployed in the middle of next year. We are designing the system architecture right now.

Old Business

S. Goldstein: Did we ever get any data back on the number of sales of masks in the vending machines.

A. Albert: We will ask again.

Action item: Find out data on the number of sales of masks.

Adjourned

NYCTRC MINUTES

5

This meeting was conducted via Zoom Conference Call: [Zoom Video](#)

Action Items

- **Write a letter to the entire New York congressional delegation thanking them for their efforts for pushing for Federal funding, and making copies to the editorial boards of local newspapers.**
- **Find out data on the number of sales of masks via vending machines.**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Daglian
Executive Director