

Meeting Minutes of November 19, 2020

A virtual meeting of the New York City Transit Riders Council (NYCTRC) was convened at 12:00 pm on Thursday, November 19, 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	Absent
Marisol Halpern	Absent
Sharon King Hoge	Present
Trudy L. Mason	Present
Scott R. Nicholls	Absent
Edith Prentiss	Absent

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>
Andrew Pollack	Concerned citizen
Yvonne Morrow	Concerned citizen
Eric Wollman	Concerned citizen
Andrew Kurzweil	Concerned citizen
Cate Contino	New York City Transit
Howie Levine	New York City Transit
Munsun Park	New York City Transit
Luke DePalma	New York City Transit
Bob Paley	New York City Transit

Chair's - Board Report

A. Albert: The fiscal outlook is horrific. The MTA Board will vote on a 2021 budget at the December meeting. We are in dire need of \$12 billion to get us through the year. If we don't get the funding, the MTA is talking about a 40% cut in subway and bus service, and a 50% cut in commuter rail service, 9,367 layoffs, and a complete halt in the Capital Program.

The MTA is considering 4% yield fare hikes in 2021 and 2023 and is predicting \$16 billion in losses through 2024. Capital Program lockbox funds will be used for operations to prevent further cuts in service. We hope that the \$220 million FEMA reimbursement will come through; the funds are being blocked by the current administration. McKinsey consultants estimate that we should recover to between 80 and 90% of pre-pandemic ridership by 2024.

In the 4% yield fare hikes being discussed at virtual public hearings between December 1 and December 21, there are some possibilities for incentives. Larry Schwartz believes there is a fair amount of fraud in the time-based MetroCards, so one of the proposals is to do away with those, but to lower the current fare. There are some interesting possibilities for flat fares for commuter rail fares which would lower the number of zones to three: city to city, suburban to suburban, and suburban to city.

I have suggested the possibility that because people are not traveling the way they used to, instead of being locked into a calendar month, a 40-trip ticket be issued. Specific service cuts have not yet been spelled out, but options discussed include the elimination of West of Hudson service, the elimination of weekend service on some commuter rail lines, and the elimination of lightly used bus routes in walking distance of other routes.

The vote on the new fares will be held at the January board meeting. Tolls on bridges and tunnels will also go up. It will be an increase of \$6.75 for EZpass users, and higher for other users. They are talking about variable tolls based on times of day and the day of the week, which could be the precursor to congestion pricing.

T. Mason: I have had conversations with the chief economist of the transition committee about congestion pricing. Hopefully, rather than waiting for Congressional action, Biden, when President, can sign an executive order to allow the EA to go immediately into effect and to get the head of the EPA to sign off on it to get money as soon as possible. The Chairman said to go ahead and do this.

L. Daglian: The Chairman has also discussed the categorical exclusion so it could be done without further assessment.

T. Mason: The categorical exclusion would leave us open for lawsuits.

A. Albert: On the LIRR, 429 masks were sold from vending machines, starting on August 6th, on NYCT 1,137 were sold, starting on July 6th, and on Metro-North, 688 masks were sold, which started on July 7th. The other half of the machines on Metro-North were installed on October 8th. The Board will get details of the service cuts, which would take effect in May 2021.

L. Daglian: We have been continuing to meet with national advocates, and on December 1st, we are cohosting a transit forum featuring Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. There are a lot of moving

parts that are active, and we are trying to make pushes before December 16th, which is when the next MTA Board meeting is, to keep the conversation going and get our elected officials to keep their eyes on the prize. There are a number of activities being done nationally. I was on a Crain's event with Senator Schumer. He discussed the Gateway project, and also discussed the need for funding for transit.

Approval of Agenda for November 19, 2020 meeting.

Approval of Minutes for October 29, 2020 meeting.

L. Daglian: We will need to take a position on what we are going to say about the fare hikes. I personally do not get what Larry Schwartz was saying about fraud with time-based passes.

A. Albert: There are apparently a lot of people buying five or ten monthly cards, and since there is an anti-pass back feature, they use a variety of cards to let people in for a few bucks.

L. Daglian: That is not the majority of people and would ruin the ability of people to budget for a month of rides.

S. Goldstein: Are any of our fare initiatives like Atlantic Ticket in jeopardy?

A. Albert: It is not in jeopardy and will continue indefinitely. Bradley has done a lot of research on an extension of the concept into Nassau and Suffolk and is finalizing his work on that, and we will arrange a conference with Mark Young, who is doing the fare initiatives for all the agencies. We will present a possible extension of Atlantic Ticket as a way to get riders back. In addition to the service cuts, they are talking about right-sizing various train routes and bus routes, which means that there are fewer trains in rush hours and more during the off-peak.

L. Daglian: Yesterday I participated in a call with Kathy Wylde with Chief Royster of the NYPD's Transportation Bureau, who is in charge of the 3,300 traffic agents who are responsible for enforcement. She talked about Vision Zero cuts that are impacting highway patrol and collision and investigation squad and talked about data-driven enforcement they are working on. I asked about the enforcement of bus lanes, and what they are doing. She will have a meeting with the DOT to coordinate better.

A. Albert: In regards to the live subway map, I have sent some recommendations to the people working on it, and some corrections have been made. It had confusing destinations for certain trains.

Presentation: Zoning for Transit Accessibility (MTA and DCP Collaboration): Munsun Park, MTA Transit Oriented Development

T. Mason: Does this new initiative come from the One Vanderbilt project – what is the genesis of this program?

B. Paley: Provisions in the zoning text have been used successfully for some time. The Vanderbilt corridor was a major expansion in a very targeted area. The success of One Vanderbilt, which will be opening in a month, I think, underscored how important this

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partnership is with private development to bring accessibility to the system. However, it did not necessarily trigger this project.

New Business:

C. Greif: Cleaning stations – the elevators at West 4th Street station needs to be cleaned – all of them.

S. Goldstein: East Broadway – are they progressing with the renovations? Every time I pass by it looks like nothing is happening.

A. Albert: I know they are working on the Rutgers Tube at various times; however, I haven't seen this work in sometime. So, I will ask and get back to you.

C. Contino: Provides link to project website information.

Old Business: None

Adjourned

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

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Daglian
Executive Director