

A meeting of the New York City Transit Riders Council (NYCTRC) was convened at 12:00 pm on Thursday, December 19, 2019 in the 20<sup>th</sup> floor Board Room at 2 Broadway, New York, NY 10004.

### Member Attendance

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

### Staff Attendance

Lisa Daglian (Executive Director)	Present
Ellyn Shannon (Associate Director)	Present
Bradley Brashears (Planning Manager)	Present
Sheila Binesh (Transportation Planner)	Present
Deborah Morrison (Administrative Assistant)	Present

### Non-member Attendance

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Andy Byford	NYCT
Lucy Zachmann	NYCT
Joseph Chan	NYCT
Deborah Hall-Moore	NYCT
Andrew Kurzweil	RUN
William Stanford	Concerned citizen
Eric Wollman	Concerned citizen

**Approval of Agenda for December 19, 2019 meeting.  
Approval of Minutes for November 21, 2019 meeting.**

**Chair's Report attached.**

**Board Report:**

- The MTA budget was passed – There was a lot of discussion regarding what was unspoken and not accounted for within the budget – Board member Robert Linn mentioned a lot is not spelled out (i.e. supervisors for the new 500 police)
- Fare evasion discussion
- Homeless in the subway discussion
- Outer Borough Transportation Fund – Toll rebates on Cross-Bay Bridge in Queens and on Henry Hudson Bridge between the Bronx and Manhattan were approved

L. Daglian: Bradley testified in opposition to the toll rebates supporting Commissioner Vanterpool's thoughts on the matter in relation to congestion pricing.

B. Strauss: Will there be any changes to the Verrazano Bridge Two-way toll?

L. Daglian: It would take an act of Congress to change that.

- Ridership trends are good due to Andy Byford and his team – subway and bus performance is continuing to climb – subway station dwell times continue to decrease.

T. Mason: My subway ride on the 6 line has been worse than normal. Headways are supposed to be 3-4 minutes during peak hours but the count-down clocks say "next train 9 minutes", and there are no announcements. We must ask for them to make announcements.

- No budget-driven service cuts
- R179s are coming in with an additional 18 due to delivery delays
- R42s will be replaced and gone by the end of the year
- R32s will be retired next spring, with a few left for emergency situations

E. Shannon: Crowding is an ongoing issue – the Save Safe Seconds Campaign has helped this by dramatically improving train throughput at stations – increasing capacity.

L. Daglian: They have the newer metric of run-times.

E. Shannon: The run-times were adjusted so they could meet their schedules.

- Commissioner Veronica Vanterpool's last Board meeting – her voice will be greatly missed

L. Daglian: There is a strong push for the mayor to appoint someone with a disability to the Board. The Board needs to be diversified, which the Public Advocate is pushing for, among others. It would be difficult for the governor to hold-up such an appointment.

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- Snow storm affected transponders on the 7 line – Andy Byford is on Thales' case to get some answers
- Metro-North holding back money for NJ Transit until they restore express service on the Pascack Valley line
- Customers of the eHail service – expensive to operate – there is now a 16-ride cap on the service per rider

E. Prentiss: Worse than the 16 trips is the \$15 dollars. When I rarely use the service, it costs me \$120 each-way from lower Manhattan to Washington Heights – I will never use Access-A-Ride. It costs the MTA so much money. People in transit deserts such as Throgs Neck really need the service. There are great lawsuits that will be coming down the pike.

L. Daglian: The lack of seatbelts is an issue that Andy Byford wants to look into.

E. Prentiss: They actually do have seatbelts, but they are inadequate – wheelchairs are not secured – industry standards exist that are not being met (hook-downs).

E. Shannon: Jean Ryan has advocated for secure hook placement on Access-A-Ride – they are not installed correctly.

T. Mason: The City has a law on the books from years ago requiring seatbelts in cabs but most don't have them.

C. Greif: Needs to be more training for Access-A-Ride drivers.

A. Albert: NYCTRC Fare Evasion Study

- Places where it is happening the most
- Turnstile cleaning
- Crime of opportunity
- Different forms of fare evasion
- Data-driven decisions must be made
- The 66<sup>th</sup> Street station on the 1 line is problematic (just one example)

L. Daglian: First we will see what has and is being done and conduct a literature review of best practices to determine our next steps.

B. Brashears: We have already been doing a literature review of industry best practices to see what other transit agencies are doing. This will help inform us on how to proceed – we don't want to put Council members in harm's way.

A. Albert: The signage about fare evasion could be improved (i.e. "We have been improving your service, please do your part and pay the fare...").

T. Mason: Signs will not get people to stop evading the fare. We should get some information regarding the before and after impacts of shutting off the alarm gates.

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E. Shannon: The police are doing a pilot about the alarm gates – there is a need to replace the token-booth clerks to be eyes on the system – we need to know where are the worst-case scenarios.

S. Goldstein: There needs to be a look at the gate designs especially for accessibility needs.

A. Albert: Andy Byford is looking into fare gate designs like the example of the JFK Airtrain gates – glass doors close where you can't jump over.

L. Daglian: Accessible stations – there was a press conference this morning. The sign here displays the upcoming 70 accessible stations – expected to be completed within the next 5-year capital plan. Janno Lieber expressed that this will be done faster and cheaper than before with the bundling of projects.

S. Goldstein: Have we looked at the accessible station list in a different way? (i.e. accessible station percentage per line, division, and what that would give us?)

L. Daglian: We are undertaking an accessible map exercise, so we can look at this within that effort.

**Introduction of Speaker: Presentation on Outfront digital information/advertising screens by Joseph Chan, Senior Director of Digital Content, NYCT Strategy & Customer Experience; and Lucy Zachmann, Director of NYCT Advertising & Media, Deputy CDO Planning**

S. Goldstein: Who within the authority creates the targeted real-time information at stations – who makes that happen? In an emergency is there interface with people on the six-wire?

L. Zachmann: Communication managers at each agency create the real-time information. And, yes there is direct communication with those on the six-wire, and we are currently developing a software platform to hopefully launch in February, and the RCC will be the first to use this software so they will be able to let us know in emergency situations.

T. Mason: How was Outfront chosen?

L. Zachmann: There was a massive RFP three years ago and they were chosen. They are a public company that has been in the system for years. All this information is in previous Board books.

E. Shannon: Revenue side of things – in terms of bringing money, is it done by square footage – are you thinking of it in this way? How much space can you spare – how much can you charge?

L. Zachmann: Yes and no. We have been surveying stations for design and placement of screens. The ads are sold and depending on location you can charge more, like down here at Wall Street would be more expensive to advertise than at an outer borough station. Using the data on Outfront sales and ridership will help us to evolve this program.

E. Shannon: So potential of saving new revenue from this approach is hopeful?

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L. Zachmann: Yes.

E. Prentiss: Is there any projection in the future of where these will actually be?

L. Zachmann: As an example of many, they are eight of them at the Bowling Green station today. Forty-five hundred screens have been deployed so far – creating a system-wide network ecosystem.

A. Albert: Where is Outfront getting the feeds for this information – service information?

L. Zachmann: We have been working with Cambridge Systematics to create one API for all of our transit and railroad data.

A. Albert: There are frequently times where the wrong information is given – Outfront screens don't always match the countdown clocks hanging from the ceiling. Example – At Jay St – Metro Tech station on weekends the signs say good service on the B, W, Z, which don't even run on weekends.

L. Zachmann: If it is real-time data it is being pulled from the API. It is a fairly new process – they are evolving as we move forward.

T. Mason: The MTA is in the process of consolidating – so, why does this have to be outsourced? Saving a lot of money?

L. Zachmann: There are a lot of internal people working on this as we develop the software platform that we will take over, however we don't really develop the screens or the software – we are bringing in experts where they excel and do what we excel in (i.e. transit service). Working together to create the software platform for us to run – it's a great partnership.

S. Goldstein: Will these be on outdoor lines and the SIR as well?

L. Zachmann: Yes, I believe so.

A. Albert: Is there any thought to have these on subway entrances, so when train service differs that the appropriate sign can be at the entrance?

L. Zachmann: In some stations that is the case, not all stations are designed that way, but we will be rolling more out as we go (i.e. Totems that stand upright). Digital Urban Panels at the top of stairways where there is a strip at the bottom that displays status and we will be rolling more of these out in 2020 – 150 to be deployed.

E. Shannon: Anywhere in the contract is there a public awareness campaign that has been built in? How does that work?

L. Zachmann: Yes, Joe and Sarah Meyer are working on that content. A really great example is the 14<sup>th</sup> Street station that displayed the L Slowdown customer information – very effective.

A. Albert: Is Transit checking the screens for accuracy, especially for delays?

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L. Zachmann: We are – there is another group that is working on the data feeds as we move forward and learn more.

A. Byford: The Group Station Managers (GSMs), supervisors, CTAs, and even traffic checkers do look out for these things. We are also using Slack to communicate with each other.

T. Mason: Can you explain the coordination between the screens and the countdown clocks?

L. Zachmann: We are trying to move toward one set of data. It is a process – different data – hard wired to a different system. However, we are working on this. When we see large differences in the times (i.e. 5-7 minutes) we look at the data to see what went wrong.

E. Prentiss: Last month the 1 train street elevator was out. Chris and I were looking at the website individually and it was giving different information – very problematic.

L. Zachmann: Very good point – there are challenges there. We have spoken to Alex Elegudin about accessibility needs, and the changes he wants to make. It is a bit of an evolution, which we are working on.

Mr. X: Regarding the clocks – the one you use for the A Division must go – the one you use for the B Division is better. Elevator signage is not accurate.

L. Zachmann: We are looking at ways to improve elevator/escalator information – we will get the data there too.

A. Byford: Valid point Mr. X. I focus on the basics – I get embarrassed on getting the most basic things right. We are building the building-blocks – we are where we are. Two clocks in the same station showing different times is ridiculous and we are working on this – the basics.

E. Prentiss: Is there a way to get rid of the redundancy of the website – why do we have multiple places where we list elevator/escalators out of service. Too many place and that is where the Gremlins get in. Can we streamline? Can't we just have one?

L. Zachmann: Very valid point. We are in the process of updating the website. We are in beta version, which will be the website very soon and turn off the old sites.

S. Goldstein: Special/real-time messaging – the service plan notices – saving money on paper signage.

L. Zachmann: Yes, and that is what Joe will be speaking about.

S. Goldstein: The scope – will this be used anywhere in the bus network?

L. Zachmann: I've been talking with the bus group – unfortunately, we don't own the bus property – it is owned by DOT. But looking to include the screens onboard buses – it's a bit of a process as well to get them talking to one another in the network.

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A. Byford: Yes, that is where we need to get to – to get schedule information on buses and to let bus riders know if there are subway issues before they get off and vice-versa.

A. Albert: On bus shelters is a great place to put these screens.

E. Shannon: As far as the reroutes – I'm wondering is it a staffing or technological issue resolving reroute communications?

L. Zachmann: Subway transit data has been challenging to get around – buses are next. Over the years there have been many things plugged in – where we have to ask can it be unplugged, etc... it takes time, chunk by chunk to work out the issues.

### **Joseph Chan presents**

A. Albert: Strip maps are wonderful with further stops listed at the bottom – is there a map next to this so someone who doesn't know the system knows how far away it is?

J. Chan: Yes, this is still in flux – it is a balance of information issue. And on the right hand side is a station dashboard drill-down for more information.

S. Goldstein: Space limitations on panels – so if I am not from New York City and I don't know its ultimate destination, which is the Bronx – you're only displaying the Manhattan stops – people may not know that Eastchester stop is in the Bronx and not in Manhattan.

J. Chan: These are valid points – again it is a balance of information – this is noted, thank you.

T. Mason: Passenger Information Centers – Have you thought about adding tid-bits of information (i.e. Neighborhood Maps)?

J. Chan: Yes, I like these maps – again it is a balance of information.

A. Byford: The balance is about getting useful information up – it is a balance and you don't want to over clutter it – the simplicity of it is nice. The balance has to be right.

E. Prentis: A number of years ago they made midday bus service limited – you have tourists who watch a bus go by because it is midday – there is no indication that the bus stop has become an express stop because the service has changed. Somehow this needs to be displayed.

C. Grief: Thirty years of ADA – we want it to look nice – hoping we can work on something in the near months? The signage at the platforms is difficult to see – it should be bigger when the next train is arriving.

J. Chan: We have done some walkthroughs on digital content with Alex Elegudin's team and other advocates to address ADA concerns such as this.

L. Daglian: Please use us as a resource, we represent riders all over the City and riders on Metro-North and LIRR. Use us to try out messages – use us as a test group. We are on 16 – come visit.

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J. Chan: Okay, thank you.

***Adjourned***

**Action Items**

- **Create Action Item spreadsheet**

**Youtube Video links:** [Part 1 of 1](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Daglian  
Executive Director