

A virtual meeting of the New York City Transit Riders Council (NYCTRC) was convened at 12:00 pm on Thursday, September 24, 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	Absent
Edith Prentiss	Absent

### Staff Attendance

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

### 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
Paul Burton	Concerned citizen
Eric Wollman	Concerned citizen
Cate Contino	NYCT
Yvonne Morrow	Concerned citizen
Chief Delatorre	NYPD Transit Bureau Chief

## **Chair's - Board Report, including MTA Finances**

A. Albert: Chairman Foye has framed the funding issue as a job issue. 350,000 jobs and \$100 billion in economic activity in 2021 outside New York City rely on contracts from the MTA. The MTA spends \$50 billion in infrastructure investments, which is great for the construction industry. The Senate is not moving on stimulus, and it is clear that it won't be decided before election day.

Ridership is still going up, but substantially less from last year – down 71%; 99% of people are wearing masks. There are fewer consultants being hired, and overtime is down. There are very low numbers of new COVID cases among MTA employees. Bob Foran mentioned that Moody's downgraded our transportation revenue bond status from A2 to A3, which makes it costlier to borrow.

Larry Schwartz has suggested asking Bob Foran to borrow \$2.8 billion from the Municipal Liquidity Facility, which has favorable rates, to get us through January. We are at 21 percent debt service.

Anthony McCord mentioned that, through retirements and attrition, the 2,700-employee reduction will have already be accomplished without layoffs. Communications, budget, legal, diversity, labor relations, and procurement sections of the various operating agencies have been combined, which should save \$155 million over five years.

Yesterday, the MTA Board codified new rules of conduct. There is a time limit for staying in subway and commuter rail stations, a ban on defecating and urinating in the system, and you can't have shopping carts over a certain size. For the first time in a long time, the Metro-North Train Time app was updated. It is more user friendly. It is only missing the crowding load future, which should arrive within a month.

The R179s are being tested in small groups in non-revenue service and will be put back into service in limited amounts. I just wanted to report about Rikein Wilder. He removed debris that was thrown onto the track at 14<sup>th</sup> Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and when it was tossed back – causing an A train to derail – apprehended, tackled, and held the person who did it for 15 minutes until the police arrived. He was honored by the Chairman and given a year's free MetroCard. We have to make sure the tracks and tunnels are free of people who are not supposed to be there.

Ellyn Shannon, our Associate Director, will retire, probably in the middle of October. She has worked with us for more than 18 years and has been an amazing person to work with. She noticed the ridiculous amount of dwell times on the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Shuttle, when trains would wait to leave on schedule, even if trains were completely full of people. She spoke with Operations Planning and worked with Judy McClain and it was changed to a load and go system. She also worked on projects about the MTA in the Age of Big Data and understood the importance of having clean data to make the right decisions to help riders. She worked to craft projects to make them easier to implement. She will be sorely missed, and we wish her well in retirement.

There are two projects underway now in the subway that are affecting ridership: Parsons/Archer and Sutphin/Archer on the E, and the Rutgers Street Tunnel. The website page for the Jamaica change says that the E is going to World Trade Center, when it is actually running down 6<sup>th</sup>

Avenue and ending at Delancey/Essex after 9 p.m. I mentioned this to the MTA, but we have to get the message out where the trains are running.

***Approval of Agenda for September 24, 2020 meeting.***

***Approval of Minutes for August 27, 2020 meeting.***

*Federal Funding Activities Update – PCAC Staff*

L. Daglian: We have done outreach to educate elected officials on the importance of transit to riders, and to look at it from the economic perspective. Chairman Foye sent a letter to suppliers about the potential losses to their businesses if federal funding does not come through. There is still hope that a package that supports transit will be passed before the election, or the end of the year. There was an event last week on Long Island, that we participated in, that looked at the economic and personal damage that could be caused by massive cuts to LIRR service and the elimination of some branches. Part of the conversation was to bring awareness of the issue to Congressman Lee Zeldin about the economic damage that would result in his district if transit funding doesn't come through, and called on him to use his relationship with the President to make that request. The day before the event, Zeldin and several of his Republican colleagues sent a letter to the Senate leadership calling for an investment in the MTA, and asked if it could be included in a concluding resolution to keep the Government moving.

In two weeks, we will be working with elected officials from Westchester County to get this message out. We have worked closely with the five County Executives in the Hudson Valley who penned a letter to the President, noting the importance of transit to their communities.

I asked the MTA what the loss of FEMA funds would practically mean in terms of what would be cut, and they said they will continue to do the same level of cleaning, but they have to find that money somewhere else. We had also spoken with Representative Velazquez about legislation she was proposing that would provide up to \$5 billion in grant funding for accessibility projects, with language that eliminates the local match requirements for hardship.

*Presentation: Chief Edward Delatorre, NYPD Transit Bureau*

E. Shannon: Do you have a legislative department within the police department that starts to recommend or form legislation that has to happen for recidivism, and make these changes?

E. Delatorre: We have a legal bureau, a legislative unit, and an interagency liaison, and they attempt to be involved in the state laws, but we are not the final say. When it comes to transit, the best answer is to say we have the New York State Railroad law, and maybe we can come up with something in that body of law. What really irks me is that we have different levels of sex offenders that are not even allowed near a school, but they can sit on a subway car right next to the child on their way to school.

A. Albert: If we are successful, how would a recidivist be noticed?

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E. Delatorre: The simplest way is that if someone jumps the turnstile and we apprehend them, a warrant check would tell them if they are banned. The other way is that transit officers are very keen on their areas, and know all the players in the area, and many know their recidivists.

E. Shannon: What is the ramification each time they are caught? Is the penalty high enough?

E. Delatorre: They would get arrested for trespassing, at minimum. The amount does not increase with each time they do it.

E. Shannon: Some things are not categorized as sexual assault, such as masturbation, which is public lewdness. If someone is caught doing it, and caught doing it again, what is the penalty?

E. Delatorre: The person would not be charged as a sex offender, but it would be a misdemeanor and they could theoretically get up to a year in prison. In Manhattan, the defendant is usually held to the charge. Someone only gets banned if they commit a sex crime for the second time and go through the legal process, which could take 1-1.5 years, and then they could be banned as part of the conviction. I am looking for a civil ban that would say that you are not welcome here until you prove you are not a threat to our riders.

L. Daglian: Has anyone been banned yet?

E. Delatorre: As far as I know, there have been no bans.

C. Grief: There are still continued issues with passengers not wearing face masks, and what is the plan to deal with the homeless who don't wear masks?

E. Delatorre: We got hit by that defunding, and our homeless outreach unit no longer exists. Our officers will respond to any violation.

S. Goldstein: Do we have any officers working in plain clothes?

E. Delatorre: In the precincts and housing they did away with their anti-crime. I did not. There are many officers working in plain clothes in the subway, and it is how we make most of our arrests.

B. Strauss: You mentioned some horrendous crimes being misrepresented in transit. Is there any way to change the statistics so they are correct?

E. Delatorre: It is the way the NYPD does it. For the murder, the stairway is our jurisdiction. The rape categorization (from an incident made public over the summer) made no sense. We later established where it happened and although it appeared in August, it was moved to the precinct where it belonged. We also have people who sit in a subway car and get a notification that someone stole their identity, which is a grand larceny. Unless you know where it happened, it goes to the point of notification, which in this case is transit.

M. Halpern: Did you see a reduction in the number of officers assigned to you in transit?

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E. Delatorre: Our patrol strength has seen a reduction. We have lost hundreds of overtime hours, and we are losing officers to retirement and are not seeing new officers being trained to replace them.

J. Anthony: Why wasn't anyone from the precinct at Hoyt-Schermerhorn at the time a transit worker was assaulted?

E. Delatorre: The officers were the first people there, pulled him off the tracks, and stopped the incoming train, which I don't think was mentioned in the news story. They were nearby and heard him scream as the perpetrator ran away. One stopped the train and the other pulled them up. We picked the perpetrator up within two days. Cameras were a big help.

E. Shannon: It would be very helpful for advocates like us if you could put technical terms like larceny and misdemeanors into terms that can easily be understood by riders in the Board books, like robbery and sexual assault.

E. Delatorre: It is probably too complicated to explain in the committee book, but I am available to talk about it.

A. Albert: When your manpower was reduced due to budget cuts, did they say anything about camera access to make up for it. What percentage of fare control areas have camera access?

E. Delatorre: That is really a transit question. Before COVID, we had a working group and were prioritizing stations based on need. I am not sure how far along they have gone. We have a long way to go.

### ***Old Business: none***

### ***New Business***

S. Hoge: The communication about the Sutphin/Archer change has been very poor. It needs to tell people that you cannot connect to the AirTrain.

### **Action item: Ask Transit about messaging regarding the Archer Avenue service changes**

J. Anthony: I have heard that shuttle buses are packed and are unreliable on weekends.

Goldstein: Have we gotten any update on how much the vending machines with the PPE are being used?

### **Action item: Find out about usage of the vending machines that distribute PPE.**

### ***Adjourned***

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

### **Action Items**

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- **Ask Transit about messaging regarding the Archer Avenue service changes**
- **Find out about usage of the vending machines that distribute PPE.**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Daglian  
Executive Director