



PCAC

PERMANENT CITIZENS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MTA

Meeting Minutes of

March 4, 2021

A virtual meeting of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC) was convened at 12:00 noon on March 4, 2021 via Zoom.

Member Attendance

Andrew Albert (Chair)	Present
Randolph Glucksman (Vice Chair)	Present
Francena Amparo (MNRCC)	Present
Gerard P. Bringmann (LIRRCC)	Present
Sheila Carpenter (LIRRCC)	Absent
Richard Cataggio (MNRCC)	Absent
Francis T. Corcoran (MNRCC)	Present
Orrin Getz (MNRCC)	Present
Stuart Goldstein (NYCTRC)	Present
Christopher Greif (NYCTRC)	Present
William Guild (NYCTRC)	Absent
Marisol Halpern (NYCTRC)	Present
Sharon King Hoge (NYCTRC)	Present
Trudy L. Mason (NYCTRC)	Present
Scott R. Nicholls (NYCTRC)	Absent
Bryan Peranzo (LIRRCC)	Absent
Marilyn N. Poterson (LIRRCC)	Present
Edith M. Prentiss (NYCTRC)	Absent
Larry Rubinstein (LIRRCC)	Present
Burton M. Strauss, Jr. (NYCTRC)	Present

Staff Attendance

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

Non-member Attendance

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Cate Contino	New York City Transit
Natalia Quintero	TransitTech Lab
Tyler Bowie	Knorr Brake
Richard Stelmach	Knorr Brake
Ron Troy	Concerned citizen
Mike Howard	Concerned citizen
Matt Kessler	Concerned citizen
Andrew Kurzweil	Concerned citizen
Adrienne Kanter	Stokes Creative Group
Robert Berrios	Concerned citizen
Cliff Hymowitz	Concerned citizen

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Approval of agenda for March 4, 2021 meeting

Approval of minutes for December 3, 2020 meeting

PCAC Chair's Report:

A. Albert: Subway service is now 22 hours a day. Hopefully we are moving in the direction of 24-hour service. Many people, including Pat Warren, have said we have learned a lot about the cleaning processes and trains are still being cleaned during the day. You have heard about all the sensationalist crimes in the subway. There are additional police in the system. Interim President Feinberg has asked for 1,000 officers; we have gotten 644. They are not in places you would normally expect. I have seen them on landings between platforms, not always by the turnstiles. We want them unpredictable, but we also want them at the turnstiles.

S. Goldstein: Is this a net gain, or does this bring us back where we were before many retirements?

A. Albert: It brings us back to where we were many years ago, and I will get back to you on whether it is considered a net gain.

T. Mason: This morning, in the mayor's press conference, he said that he has given us all the police we requested. Maybe we should let him know that we did not get everything we asked for, and are 600 police short?

Action item: Consider writing a letter to the Mayor about the need for 600 additional cops.

A. Albert: There is a plan to not replace booth agents on lunch breaks. This would mean an hour and a half of stations not being monitored at the booth level. TWU local 100 is fighting it. This would not be a good thing and hope this doesn't come to be.

L. Daglian: We tweeted our opposition to it.

A. Albert: From a customer service viewpoint, booth agents obviously help people with inquiries, and give out masks.

T. Mason: Psychologically, it is a presence there, and whether they do anything or not, they give the impression there is somewhere riders can turn to.

A. Albert: Yesterday, there was a call with advocacy groups and various members of the State Legislature about the Governor's grab of \$145 million earmarked for the MTA so it could be used for the state budget. These moneys represent the next fare hike or a service cut, or a host of things.

The Federal Highway Administration is about to announce the type of environmental study the MTA will need to go through to move forward on congestion pricing. If everything is on track, the MTA could start seeing moneys in early 2022.

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Financially, 2020 ended in a decent place, even though the MTA only got \$4 billion out of its \$4.5 billion request. They have been cutting overtime and other kinds of savings. Fares have come in at a rate faster than anticipated. That helped balance 2020 and provide a slight surplus for 2021.

Senator Schumer has said that in the \$1.9 trillion COVID relief package, the MTA will likely get \$6 billion, which is less than what we hoped for. This will take us through 2023 without service cuts.

The MTA has welcomed its new Chief Accessibility Officer, Quemuel Arroyo, a wheelchair user from Washington Heights. Chief Operating Officer Mario Peloquin will leave this month. There are hints of major shuffles that might take place.

C. Greif: It is good to see that cops are also on trains. They have caught people without masks. I am glad to see Eagle Teams back. Maybe you can invite the MTAPD and NYPD to come as the homeless issues are getting more dangerous?

L. Rubinstein: We had the director on homelessness at the LIRRCC meeting and it was a very poor presentation of what they do. She told us about the plans, but we are not seeing any results in regards not just to the LIRR, but also the subway at the 8th Avenue side of Penn Station, which seems to be a congregation point. We have an increase in physical space in Penn Station, so you have more square footage where people are moving in, and the number of people supposedly taking care of this has not increased.

L. Daglian: Cynthia Wilson, who works in Pat Warren's office, is the coordinator of all the contracts with the police agencies involved, the BRC, and S:US on Long Island. It is just her and one staff person. A lot of the activity at Penn Station comes from the outside community. The fact that Kendra's Law passed, but is not enforced, which allows people who are dangerous to themselves and others to be engaged more than encouraged is one aspect of it. And the fact that there is a revolving door after someone is arrested for a host of petty crimes, and then can come back out the next day with limited discretion on the part of the judiciary is something we keep hearing from the police.

S. Goldstein: The City has an outreach solutions team through homeless services, headed by Shane Cox. I am not sure what the city is doing, but before the pandemic, the group coordinated with Sanitation, the NYPD, and others to see that individuals get assistance if they need it. I can send you his contact information.

L. Daglian: We reached out to the Office of the Inspector General, which had done a report looking at the contract with the BRC, and found several deficiencies, and is doing a follow-up report on it.

G. Bringmann: I don't think she has the tools to execute what she wants to. I think at this point we have to wait until the IG report comes out. She admitted that they only took care of 4 or 5 of the nine or so sticking points they had.

LIRRCC Chair's Report

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G. Bringmann: In January, we took a 10% cut in service, and now we are going to take another 5% cut on March 8th, and it seems like it will be a larger cut than announced. We had a conversation with Phil Eng the other day, and they are willing to add trains if necessary, so we will wait and see if there will be overcrowded trains and see what adjustments the railroad will make.

L. Daglian: Phil said some of this was in response to the infrastructure work they are doing, and we then asked if they could tell us which part of it is related to that. We also asked what percent of the savings are coming from savings on overtime, and what percentage is from on train conductors.

A. Albert: We also learned that the Atlantic branch will have more work done on it, meaning there might be more service cuts. Phil said the TrainTime app is right up to the minute and tells us where there is available capacity on the train so conductors can tell people who are concerned about social distancing which cars are empty.

G. Bringmann: The railroad always adjusts schedules in the summer. He also has to deal with municipalities in the Hamptons. Do they want a lot of service out there? I know there is concern with the City of Long Beach. Last summer they told people not to come, limiting the beach to city residents, and the railroad put that in their alerts.

C. Greif: There are a lot of people at the Speonk station complaining with the schedule change. They are very concerned with trains terminating at Patchogue. They can't get to work on time or get home in time for dinner with their families.

MNRCC Chair's Report:

R. Glucksman: We are running the same schedules East-of-Hudson that went into effect in September, with reduced service sort of like a weekend schedule. Since November 8th, West-of-Hudson has been running normal schedules. Rhonda Herman notified Cathy Rinaldi about an issue with homeless people at the White Plains station.

R. Troy: Every summer, the LIRR strips Port Jefferson Branch trains, especially the direct Penn trains, to get enough cars for the Cannonball. Maybe we can find out if they are doing this this summer. Will the LIRR think about getting a design for diesel cars that will fit into East Side Access instead of making them three inches too tall?

Action item: Ask the LIRR about whether its future order for diesel cars will be designed to fit into East Side Access

L. Daglian: Sheila Binesh's last day is planned for next week. I want to thank her for all her time, the white paper she put out earlier this year, and for all her work on behalf of riders.

Presentation: Natalia Quintero, Program Director, Transit Tech Lab, will provide an introduction to the Transit Tech Lab COVID-19 Challenge, with Finalist Spotlight

A. Albert: When we had a presentation from Mark Dowd, this sounded like this would be a game changer, not only killing COVID, but also killing germs down to the common cold. This could go into schools, factories, homes, everywhere.

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T. Bowie: We are actually looking more into the industrial side of things, and are seeing how we can broaden its applications.

L. Rubinstein: For the filtration systems you have in place, how often do the filters need to be changed given that ionization gets filters filthy rather quickly based on their location and the space between them, and are the filters on the subway and rail systems getting changed at the recommended intervals?

T. Bowie: From our initial studies in the New York area, they currently have a 92-day changeout interval for their paper filters. When we replaced them with ours, we found that even if the 92-day interval had a significant amount of contaminant they could go for even up to as twice as long as the existing filters.

R. Stelmach: The one thing to know from our end about the lifetime and serviceability of the MFID element is that tests were based on EMUs like the M7, M8s, and M9s. We will be doing active live testing as well for when it goes into subway service.

S. Goldstein: You are using a variety of technologies. I am the health safety officer for a government agency which is exploring some of these technologies in office settings. With UV lighting, do you have to change bulbs and other things with any regularity?

T. Bowie: The UV bulbs are an industry standard type of UVC and are replaced on an annual basis. We have considered that UV is not something you want to expose people to, so we have it contained within the HVAC unit and have implemented safety interlocks, so anytime the HVAC unit is accessed, in the event the power is not off, it is automatically cut off.

L. Daglian: It was my understanding that this was developed in conjunction with a Metro-North engineer looking at the HVAC system. It takes a village to look at this, and at the time, it was not quite certain whether it could be moved into the subways due to the different kind of air circulatory system, and it looks like that has been resolved. One of the questions we had is whether this needs to be installed in buses. Buses have less of a closed air system, so is that something being considered?

R. Stelmach: Yes, it is. From our point of view, it is an interesting time. As an industry we have never had to address the problems of passenger health or look through that point of view. We have been working so rapidly by harvesting lessons learned from around the world and are taking the best technologies that we have available to put them together, and we do see trickle-down applications. We have gone into some discussions of bus applications, as these low voltage systems are easily retrofittable for automotive or commercial road applications, but we have not gotten there yet.

L. Daglian: I had heard that it would cost \$13 million to equip the entire Metro-North fleet, and something similar for the LIRR. I am not sure if those are real numbers or not. Would the number be similar for subways?

R. Stelmach: We have been pretty open with an industry point of view. It is about roughly six-, seven-thousand dollars per HVAC, and there are two HVAC units per car. Economy of scale comes into play, and these are just the early staged prototypes.

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C. Greif: What is your plan not only to deal with the inside of the vehicle, but with pollution that comes from outside, like if a truck passes by a bus, or if a diesel train passes by?

R. Stelmach: We were doing testing at Croton and there happened to be a P32 running next to us and the doors were open, and we noticed that the diesel smell from the exhaust ended up disappearing. It is a secondary/tertiary benefit to it, but from a cleaning perspective, it is the same.

B. Brashears: For transparency purposes, during the pilot program, are you going to be providing updates at the MTA Board meetings over the next two meetings?

N. Quintero: We generally provide updates on the program once we have results to share, so that is generally at the end of the proof-of-concept period, which is the eight-week period we just concluded. Going into the pilot phase, we will announce the companies moving forward across the various agencies. Once we have results to share, we will share them publicly.

R. Stelmach: We have been following up with the vehicles every 30 days to see how they are performing. That information is compiled in reports and shared with the engineering departments of the railroads for their review as well.

A. Albert: When do the tests on the R160s begin?

R. Stelmach: We should begin at the end part of this month or at the beginning part of next month.

A. Albert: Does this technology hold any promise for use in stations?

R. Stelmach: Sure. It is definitely scalable. It really comes down to a mathematical equation for cubic feet per minute of what the air handling is versus the amount of MBDs or size of MIFDs.

A. Albert: It is now early March. When do you think anyone would have a definite answer to the successfulness of this initiative, and its wider-spread use?

R. Stelmach: We already know the technology works. We have done multiple rounds of testing. EPA has thankfully become directly involved. We know what the data is, how it performs, and how it works in railcars. It can realistically be rolled out on a large scale at any point in time.

B. Strauss: When are we going to hear about the other seven items you are going through?

N. Quintero: Three of the companies under proof of concepts are moving forward with the MTA specifically, while others are going through with New Jersey Transit and the Port Authority. There should be a public announcement of the companies selected in the coming weeks, and we will provide an update on the results at the conclusion of the pilot period.

L. Rubinstein: Are they funded by the MTA for their projects?

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L. Daglian: It is a partnership with the Partnership for New York City and the MTA. There is no cost to the MTA to develop these pilots. Funding for the installation of air filtration, if it goes forward, would be on the MTA.

New Business

L. Rubenstein: I would like to make a motion that we send a certificate to Sheila in appreciation of all the work and everything she has done in the last few years.

Old Business

L. Daglian: One issue raised here before by Gerry is WageWorks and Transit Check, and the fact people are unable to get their benefit dollars out of there. I reached out to Representative Kathleen Rice's office about it and have gotten The New York Times interested in doing a story about it. They are looking to talk to people who have their money trapped in these accounts. We have someone on Long Island who reached out to us, who has over \$1,000 trapped. They want to talk to more people, so anyone you know who has money who can't get it and is willing to talk to the Times next week, please let me know.

F. Amparo: I have more than a thousand dollars stuck in the accounts as well, between Metro-North and the subway. I don't mind talking to the press about it.

Action items:

- Consider writing a letter to the Mayor about the need for 600 additional cops.
- Ask the LIRR about whether its future order for diesel cars will be designed to fit into East Side Access

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