



PCAC

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PCAC Testimony to the MTA Capital Program Oversight Committee Delivered by Kara Gurl, Research & Communications Associate, PCAC October 18, 2021

Good afternoon! I'm Kara Gurl, Research and Communications Associate at the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC.

It's no secret: we're thrilled that the wrong-way LaGuardia AirTrain from Mets-Willets Point has been derailed. But with it, the only silver lining of the project – guaranteeing an elevator at the station – is now also up in the air.

Making Mets-Willets point accessible is long overdue, even by the MTA's standards: the station should have gotten its elevator five years ago, as was pledged by the MTA. While we work to build a 21st century transit and rail system for all New Yorkers and get riders back on board, we cannot leave tens of thousands of people with limited mobility behind. The time has come and passed to make the 7 train and Long Island Rail Road at Mets-Willets Point fully accessible, particularly when the MTA promised to do so seven years ago.

The station saw tens of thousands of riders this September thanks to dozens of Mets games, U.S. Open tournaments, and people flocking to Flushing Meadow Park. Just think: how many people had hoped to get there using transit, but couldn't access the station without an elevator? How many opted for driving or paid for a cab simply because the station isn't accessible? The MTA is missing out on thousands of fares a month from people with limited mobility who would otherwise love to take transit, if only their transit system loved them back.

The Capital Program includes so many critical accessibility improvements that could make our transit system the best option for thousands more New Yorkers – potential riders the MTA cannot afford to turn away at a time with historically low ridership. With more funding for accessibility improvements on the horizon thanks to congestion pricing – and city and state funding in the capital plan – a transit system that works for everyone is closer than ever. There truly is no reason to make riders wait for the AirTrain of any configuration to be figured out before getting an accessible station. It's time for the MTA to pledge to New Yorkers with limited mobility, once again, that they can and will make Mets-Willets Point fully accessible.