**MTA Safety Committee Meeting Testimony**

**Safety is Riders’ Priority**

**By Lisa Daglian, PCAC Executive Director**

**January 24, 2022**

Good morning, I’m Lisa Daglian, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC. Janno, congratulations on your confirmation as Chair. It’s a well-deserved recognition of your efforts and accomplishments on behalf of riders and the MTA as a whole.

Safety is first and foremost on every rider’s mind these days. The horrifying murder of Michelle Go struck a chord with so many of us: our worst nightmare is being pushed in front of a train. It was only the latest in a string of high-profile incidents, but for many it was the last straw. Simply, many people don’t feel safe riding transit. We were glad to hear that Governor Hochul expedited deployment of SOS teams. It’s critical that riders feel – and be – safe, so they’ll get back on board.

This Committee covers a lot of ground across all of the MTA’s operating agencies and can be the speaker of truth about what’s happening and the MTA’s response. It has the common theme of overall safety, both for workers and for riders and that’s extremely important – not just in the face of the terrible spate of crime we’ve seen, but all the time. Therefore, we are asking that the Safety Committee meet monthly and focus specifically – and in detail – on the issues that are top of mind to all users of the system. Also make it later in the day when more people will be likely to tune in.

Everything outlined in the Work Plan is important and should be reported on regularly – for instance, why are we waiting until July to hear an update on the Homeless Outreach Program? Please give us more detail: why are subway customer accidents per million customers up year over year? Answer questions. What happened to the perpetrators committing the crimes in the disturbing presentation at the end of the Committee book? Some photos show drug usage, others, encampments. Where are they and are they still there? More regular updates would give us all a better idea of where these problem areas are and what is being done to combat them.

Riders’ top concern right now is safety. We know that it is your priority too. We’d like to hear about it with more of a spotlight. Thank you.