A virtual meeting of the Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council (LIRRCC) was convened at 4:00 pm on Thursday, July 8, 2021 via Zoom.

**Member Attendance**

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| Gerard P. Bringmann (Chair) | Present |
| Bryan Peranzo | Present |
| Marilyn Poterson | Present |
| Larry Rubinstein (Vice Chair)  Christy Tolbert | Present  Present |
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**Staff Attendance**

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| Lisa Daglian (Executive Director) | Present |
| Bradley Brashears (Planning Manager) | Present |
| Shaul Picker (Research Intern) | Present |

**Non-member Attendance**

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| **Name** | **Affiliation** |
| Hector Garcia  Christopher Greif  Andy Pollack  Matthew Kessler | LIRR  NYCTRC  Concerned citizen  Concerned citizen |
| Mindy Germain  Patrick O’Hara  Ann Marie Ferrante | Transit Solutions  Concerned citizen  Concerned citizen |
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| ***Approval of Agenda for July 8, 2021 meeting.***  ***Approval of Minutes for May 13, 2021 meeting.***  **Chair’s Report, attached**  G. Bringmann: There is no movement regarding the appointments from Suffolk. Nassau still has no names for their open seats. Based on our concerns about the homeless in Penn Station, Newsday did a full-page article. We will schedule a follow-up meeting with the MTA IG within the next month or so to see if more progress has been made in regard to their audit of the BRC.  I attended my first briefing in advance of last month’s MTA Board meeting, and voiced my objection, with other board members, to the establishment of a new entity to run East Side Access. My primary objection was the plan to outsource track and signal maintenance. Based on our objections, it did not appear in the June actions. I attended my first MTA board meeting, and raised the issue of making Mets-Willets Point accessible now, and not waiting on the Port Authority and AirTrain, but did not get a positive response.  PCAC leadership met with Senator Comrie’s office yesterday on our request to expand Freedom Ticket. He is very receptive to it. Our next step is to meet the next head of the MTA once Pat Foye’s replacement is resolved. There are a few things I want us to vote on, including whether we should send a letter to the CDC, requesting that vaccinated riders on the LIRR no longer being required to wear masks, and to ask the LIRR to come up with different ticket ideas, including a 20-trip ticket. A lot of people are coming back to the city to work on a 2-day a week basis. A lot of people are not happy with the elimination of the combination Mail and Ride train ticket/MetroCard.  *Hector Garcia, LIRR External Affairs*  Weekday ridership is at 40% of normal, and between 60 and 80% on weekends. We brought back most Summer service. We have seen an uptick in complaints about people not wearing masks. Work at Penn is progressing, and the invitation is open if you want to do an August tour.  *Mail & Ride changes*  September is the last month to get the traditional ticket. The Board approved it in February. It saves a lot on administrative costs, and shipping costs.  G. Bringmann: You won’t be able to combine it?  H. Garcia: Correct.  L. Daglian: Maybe, with OMNY, there could be a request for a combined ticket with a discount.  H. Garcia: The OMNY people are focused on regular tickets. If this is important, you should bring this up as they make decisions.  B. Brashears: With Freedom Ticket expansion, we make recommendations in the report to include it on OMNY, and expedite it on the commuter railroads.  *Summer Update*  H. Garcia: We have a Main Line outage at Willis Avenue for a second overpass there this weekend. In July and August, a new interlocking will be installed on the Hempstead Branch.    G. Bringmann: Many people who use smartphones to get their tickets have gotten threatening notices saying you haven’t activated your ticket before you gotten on a train, and that if you don’t do it again, their account might be suspended. Maybe this could be phrased differently.  ***Old Business***  G. Bringmann: We have gotten the WageWorks issue all the way up to the Senate Majority Leader. I don’t know how much further we can go on this. We should follow up with his office.  L. Daglian: I reached out to them today. The two main people working on it are not in the office right now. I suggested we do a press conference in the city so the big dog press can come out.  ***New Business***  G. Bringmann: I want to make sure there are no objections to send a letter to the CDC asking that vaccinated riders no longer be required to wear masks. It makes sense with only half of people wearing masks, and due to the lack of enforcement. We would have to consult with the MNRCC. I brought this up as the State Department of Health just eased the rules on schools.  L. Rubinstein: I think it might not be a good idea with the new variant. It is hard to go back once they are not required. Many people are lying about their vaccination status.  L. Daglian: It is my understanding that MTA employees working in maintenance shops and yards are required to wear masks due to federal requirements.  B. Peranzo: On the train yesterday, half of people were wearing masks, and half of those weren’t wearing masks on platforms. If they aren’t going to enforce it, why require it?  C. Greif: Signs should say people have to wear masks when they get on the train.  G. Bringmann: They are required to wear them on the platform.  C. Greif: At outside stations they don’t have to wear masks. They should be wearing masks at all times. There is a lot of confusion. They should have left it alone.  B. Peranzo: Signs I have seen say you have to wear a mask when you get onto MTA property.  G. Bringmann: We will develop a request to the LIRR to develop different ticket types, including a twenty-trip with a discount.  L. Rubinstein: We were on an East Side Access tour, and it was brought to our attention that there needs to be a discussion on what passages will be named in the station so people are directed to the correct track. It is a bit of a maze and is a bit overwhelming.  B. Brashears: It would be helpful to coordinate a meeting in which we ask questions. Paige, who led the tour and knows the station well, could provide insight on how to navigate that. It could be done similarly to New York City Transit’s travel training done to help orient riders.  B. Peranzo: Paige said that once it is turned over to the LIRR they will come up with the training plan for a naming convention. We can’t have people in there supporting it for only two weeks.  H. Garcia: Construction is supposed be done by the end of December. January is when all our employees working there will start to be trained.  B. Peranzo: There are four escalator banks with four or five escalators each and no staircases. You don’t have the option to walk up and down them if they go out of service for repairs. Hopefully Schindler is there around the clock. What are the guarantees in their contract?  L. Rubinstein: They are working off plans from the 1990s. Why are there 20 ticket booths, which they are going to tear out now?  B. Peranzo: The booths were built nine months ago. We knew they wouldn’t be needed then.  R. Troy: The railroad should make clear how diesel customers will get to Grand Central. It plans to buy new double-deckers. The C3 cars were designed to be too tall to use the 63rd Street Tunnel. Will they make the same mistake again or buy ones that can fit?  **Action item: See whether the LIRR will order new bilevels that can get to Grand Central**  L. Daglian: They said no diesels could go in there because the ceilings are not high enough for ventilation in the terminal.  M. Germain: Our mission at Transit Solutions is to encourage transit to reduce traffic and improve air quality. This year we are moving forward with CarFree Day Long Island. There is a big theme this year on active transportation, including bike to train, and with the Suffolk County bike share program being very successful, this is something we are following.  G. Bringmann: We may want to meet with your or the staff about this. There is legislation in which we might be tasked with some of these things, which are not our wheel house.  M. Germain: The US Green Building Council has a sustainable transportation committee that I sit on and we are all working on this, so we can definitely help there.  **Action items:**   * See whether the LIRR will order new bilevels that can get to Grand Central   ***Adjourned***  **Meeting recording:** [[**Link**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VnmdBkHWgJQ&pp=sAQA)**ed**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OtzgaUzYRCM)  The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.  Respectfully submitted,  Lisa Daglian  Executive Director |