**MTA NYCT Committee Meeting Testimony**

**“Good Transit Service Will Help Get Riders Back On Board”**

**By Lisa Daglian, Executive Director, PCAC**

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Good morning! I’m Lisa Daglian, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC.

We can’t overstate the importance of riders getting back on board: it’s a re-energizing sign for our city, region and our transit system. Hopes of students and workers coming back in person “after Labor Day” came more true this year than last, and it’s good to see regular record service levels compared to pre-pandemic numbers in the days since school started.

It’s important that service levels meet and adapt to changing ridership patterns. With weekends surpassing the 70% levels of pre-pandemic ridership, riders should be able to walk into their station on a Saturday afternoon and get where they’re going quickly. Frustrating 15- or 20-minute headways during weekends send exactly the wrong message at exactly the wrong time, especially when riders are giving transit another shot.

That’s why we’re particularly excited about the appointment of the new Weekend Service Czar, Jose LaSalle. We’re looking forward to working with you to make service and the overall transit experience better for riders.

Weekend service is a priority, but it can’t come at the expense of rush hour service. I can’t be the only one who has noticed longer wait times leading to more crowded trains, particularly on Mondays. As we see fewer delays attributed to “we’re running as much service as we can with crews we have available,” wait times will decline. As people spend less time on the platform, their confidence in the system grows — as does their sense of safety and security. Continuing to address issues like smoking in the subway, people behaving erratically and people who pose a threat to other riders will also help increase comfort levels. We know you have the tools to improve service — and the ride experience overall — to help prove to riders that transit is, and always has been, their best option for traveling around the five boroughs.

Even as farebox revenue inches higher, we are still keenly aware of the need for new revenue streams, and will continue to fight with you for new sources of dedicated operating funding. Transit is an essential service as any to our region’s economy and must be treated as such. Thank you.