**MTA Board Meeting Testimony**

**“Our Critical Transit System Requires Funding and Partnership”**

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

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

You may be following New York 1’s Twitter poll about the hardest transfers in the subway system. If you haven’t seen it, you should take a look at some of the responses; they’re pretty eye opening. Mine in the E to 7 at Court Square. Riders’ gripes cover four boroughs and the steps they take to transfer between lines – and that’s pretty much the crux of the matter, steps. It’s clear not just from online responses from this poll – but from real life experiences we live and hear about daily – that improving accessibility with the addition of escalators, elevators and ramps will improve the commute for tens of thousands of people every day. You have made the commitment to do that, and we look forward to a 95% accessible system in the coming decades, if not sooner. Hopefully, we can collaborate to find creative ways to speed up some of the projects with partnerships based on the UBS-Elmont model. Mets-Willets Point is a prime opportunity, and we are committed to working with you and all stakeholders to try and get funding discussions over home plate before next year’s World Series.

Obviously, these projects will cost significant amounts of money, even if we do find a great partnership for our Mets-Willet’s Point project. That’s why it’s so critical that Congestion Pricing continue to wend its way through the federal process toward what we hope will be a New Year’s FONSI. The capital program that riders count on – the projects that will take the “tough” out of transfers or will protect our transit system from the next Sandy, Ida, Henri, depend on that influx of funding.

With Halloween right around the corner, we’re hoping that our elected officials are considering the most important treat of all for riders: operating funds. Keeping trains and buses running is critical to the economic health of the entire region and to the millions who rely on them every day to get where they need to go. Without new funding sources, including from the federal government and New York State, the MTA will be seeing bloody red ink for many Halloweens to come, and riders will be ones to suffer. That’s a very scary proposition.