



A virtual meeting of the Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council (MNRCC) was convened at 12:00 p.m. on January 20, 2022, via Zoom.

Member Attendance

Randolph Glucksman (Chair)	Present
Orrin Getz (Vice Chair)	Absent
Francena Amparo	Present
Richard Cataggio	Present
Francis T. Corcoran	Absent
Walter Zullig	Present

Staff Attendance

Lisa Daglian (Executive Director)	Present
Bradley Brashears (Planning Manager)	Present
Kara Gurl (Research & Com. Assoc)	Present
Jessica Spezio (Admin. Asst.)	Present
Shaul Picker (Intern)	Present

Non-member Attendance

Name:	Affiliation
N/A	N/A

***Approval of Agenda for January 20, 2022 meeting.
Approval of Minutes for November 10, 2021 meeting.***

Chair's and Board Report

Metro-North operated some additional service and posted PDFs on their website for the Christmas and New Year's Day periods. Otherwise, it has been a pretty quiet period.

Although Hurricane Ida struck the metropolitan area last summer, the affects continue to be felt on the Hudson Line with tracks out-of-service between Hastings and Tarrytown. Express service has been limited to/from Tarrytown during the peak hours in the peak direction.

Starting on Friday of the Dr. Martin Luther King weekend, several major track projects were performed along various sections of the Hudson Line.

At the December 15, 2021, Board Meeting, some pilot programs that were supported by PCAC were approved. They include new 20-trip tickets at a 20% discount, and a 10% discount on monthly tickets. Off-peak fares remain in effect through February 28, 2021. Additionally, customers who tap and go with OMNY would be charged the standard \$2.75 pay-per-ride fare for their first 12 trips starting every Monday but any further trips through the following Sunday would be free of charge. As a result, no OMNY customer would pay more than \$33 per week, which is the current price of a seven-day unlimited-ride MetroCard, so customers would receive the benefit of a seven-day unlimited-ride card without paying upfront.

PCAC has advocated for Freedom Ticket for several years, and a few years ago the Long Island Rail Road introduced Atlantic Ticket, which has limitations on its usage to ten stations on the LIRR in southeast Queens and in Brooklyn, to Atlantic Terminal. With the slow return of ridership caused by the pandemic, PCAC released a new report and held press events to advocate for its expansion to all commuter rail within New York City; I attended a kick-off event in October at the Woodside station, and last month at the Fordham Road station on the Harlem Line in the Bronx. Ultimately, the MTA and Board are going with a different pilot program, an expansion of City Ticket, a discounted fare that is now only available within the city limits on weekends. Under the new pilot, both Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North riders will be able to purchase City Ticket on weekday off-peak trains at a fare of \$5, in addition to on weekends.

City Ticket provides a \$2.25 or 31% discount from Metro-North's current weekday fare between the Bronx and Manhattan, which is \$7.25. City Ticket must be purchased and activated before boarding the train. Metro-North's off-peak fare between the Bronx and Manhattan remains \$13 when purchased on board the train.

City Ticket provides a \$2.75 or 35% discount from the LIRR's current weekday fare between eastern Queens and Manhattan or Brooklyn, which is \$7.75. City Ticket must be purchased and activated before boarding the train. The LIRR's off-peak fare between eastern Queens and Manhattan or Brooklyn remains \$14 when purchased on board the train.

MNRCC MINUTES

3

On January 12, the MTA announced that U.S. Department of Transportation released \$6.2 billion in American Rescue Plan (ARP) and COVID-relief that was approved last year.

A meeting which was to be held this morning was rescheduled to next month with the Joint Metro-North/Long Island Rail Road Committee and Cathy Rinaldi and her senior staff. The topic was a discussion of on-time performance and travel times. I had requested a discussion about the latter last summer, which was held, and was happily surprised to see that this meeting would be scheduled.

R. Glucksman: Ridership was 17% on Monday, Tuesday was 39%, so it's much lower than usual; LIRR ridership has been better. Hopefully, when Omicron goes away this low ridership will improve.

W. Zullig: I believe it's averaging about 35% on weekdays. I haven't experienced any disruptions recently on the Hudson Line. There were about 35 people in each car during rush hour, so ridership must be down because of the new COVID variant.

L. Daglian: High profile crimes on the subway likely reduced ridership and heightened peoples' fear, and riders are not differentiating between the railroads and transit. Hopefully, there will be more action on this soon.

R. Glucksman: Hopefully, more will be done to make regular riders feel safe again.

B. Brashears: Starting March 1st, fare pilot programs will begin: 20-trip tickets at a 20% discount and a monthly pass at a 10% discount, City Ticket off-peak on weekends and weekdays, but more needs to be done especially our Freedom Ticket proposal, which would have included free transfers to the subway or bus. We will continue to advocate for that even as we also advocate for City Ticket and the other fare reduction initiatives. We will keep you notified about events where we can voice our opinions.

R. Glucksman: Can you please talk a little about the Freedom Ticket rally in the Bronx?

B. Brashears: The Freedom Ticket rally was the day before the December board meeting. We had very good attendance from elected officials and will continue speaking out for Freedom Ticket expansion.

L. Daglian: We will support City Ticket and will also educate the new class of New York City Council members who just started. We will work with our networks to educate them and suburban elected officials about how City Ticket and Freedom Ticket will benefit their constituents and why expansion is important for reverse commuting. We will also push for the return of express service as Assemblymember Amy Paulin has emphasized in the past.

B. Brashears: We're working on a resiliency report that will touch all of the commuter councils, and Freedom Ticket feeds into this. We will highlight Freedom Ticket in this report in the context of getting cars off the road and more people onto the commuter rails.

MNRCC MINUTES

4

R. Glucksman: The use of the West Shore Line that starts in Weehawken and went as far north as Albany is being reviewed to possibly restore service along the line. I remember Orrin and I had served on the committee many years ago.

W. Zullig: They discontinued the ferries so there was no way for the commuters to get to the trains in Weehawken, causing them to close the West Shore Line in 1959.

R. Glucksman: Did the council members get you their list of priorities for 2022 and what is needed for the website?

L. Daglian: Yes, we are looking for the members bio's to update on our website and the list of priorities, so we as your staff can prioritize your needs and support you all in the upcoming year.

R. Glucksman: Can we review the Bill of Rights, compare what the LIRRCC's issues and suggestions are, and collaborate some ideas for us as well?

L. Daglian: Yes, we discussed this at the LIRRCC meeting last week and we are going to revise some of them and add something new regarding accessibility.

R. Glucksman: I think we should keep MNRCC and LIRRCC the same across the board with the updates. Once the updates are done, we can review this further at next month's meeting.

Old Business:

L. Daglian: Bike-Ped Bill was passed by the State legislature and signed by Governor Hochul. This would add one new member to each of the councils who has an interest in bicycle and pedestrian matters. It will expand our focus and responsibilities for us to provide recommendations to the MTA while they develop their Bike-Ped Strategic Plan to improve bike and pedestrian access to their facilities including bridges and tunnels, subways and buses, and to the commuter rails. There are still items that need to be improved in this legislation, such as there is no mechanism to actually appoint the new members to the MNRCC and LIRRCC. We are working to address this item and others.

New Business:

L. Daglian: We have taken a position on platform doors in subway stations – they should not be a priority. The weight of these doors would require various stations to be completely redone and a small handful are eligible to test this option out. The fact that we also have different types of equipment wouldn't help this idea in moving forward – the train sets don't match. It will not solve the problems - there are tremendous underlying issues that are happening again (pushings) – there are so many and so horrible.

MNRCC MINUTES

5

L. Daglian: Transit Equity Day is February 4th, our friends at Tri-State are planning an event in New Rochelle on that day. I will keep you posted on what they are doing so we can participate.

Action Items:

None

Meeting recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-Tt20uBORM&list=PLDXH0sqF0KljzX5Nz0qc9wfQf7aHH-17P&index=49>

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Daglian
Executive Director