



PCAC

PERMANENT CITIZENS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MTA

Meeting Minutes of

June 2, 2022

A meeting of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC) was convened at 12:00 noon on June 2, 2022 on the 20th floor, Conf. Room #4 at 2 Broadway, New York, NY 10004 and on Zoom.

Member Attendance

Gerard Bringmann (Chair)	Present
Andrew Albert (Vice Chair)	Present
Randolph Glucksman (Vice Chair)	Present
Francena Amparo (MNRCC)	Present
Richard Cataggio (MNRCC)	Absent
Rosalind Clay Carter (MNRCC)	Present
Francis T. Corcoran (MNRCC)	Present
Stuart Goldstein (NYCTRC)	Present
Peter Gorry (LIRRCC)	Absent
Christopher Greif (NYCTRC)	Present
William Guild (NYCTRC)	Absent
Marisol Halpern (NYCTRC)	Absent
Karen D. Hamilton (NYCTRC)	Present
Cicely Harris (NYCTRC)	Absent
Sharon King Hoge (NYCTRC)	Present
Trudy L. Mason (NYCTRC)	Present
Scott R. Nicholls (NYCTRC)	Present
Bryan Peranzo (LIRRCC)	Present
Larry Rubinstein (LIRRCC)	Present
Michael Stanton (MNRCC)	Present
Burton M. Strauss, Jr. (NYCTRC)	Present
Christy Tolbert (LIRRCC)	Present
Walter Zullig (MNRCC)	Absent

Staff Attendance

Lisa Daglian (Executive Director)	Present
Bradley Brashears (Planning Manager)	Present
Kara Gurl (Research & Comm Associate)	Present
Jessica Spezio (Administrative Assistant)	Present
Shaul Picker (Research Intern)	Present

Non-member Attendance

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Catherine Rinaldi	MTA
William Schwartz	MTA
Jessica Mathews	MTA

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Hector Garcia Patricia Imbro Debra Grief Richard Tjoa	LIRR NYC Transit Concerned citizen Concerned citizen
Andrew Kurzweil Ron Troy William Sanford David Kupferberg Michael Amabile C. Boylan Katta Thomas NY 1 News Joshua Greenberg Linda Henninger Elissa Kyle Finnley Staub Lucille Scafide Jim Katzenberger Matt Kemper Charlton D'Souza Joseph Schneider Robert Hale Marsha Desormeaux Kapish Singla Mike Howard Vincent Tessitore	Concerned citizen Concerned citizen Concerned citizen Concerned citizen Concerned citizen Concerned citizen Concerned citizen NY 1 News Concerned citizen Concerned citizen Concerned citizen Concerned citizen Concerned citizen Concerned citizen Concerned citizen Passengers United Concerned citizen Concerned citizen Concerned citizen Concerned citizen Concerned citizen SMART

Approval of agenda for June 2, 2022 meeting Approval of minutes for March 3, 2022 meeting

PCAC Chair's Report/ LIRRCC Chair's Report:

- A press conference was held on Tues 5/31 regarding major service improvements on the LIRR with the opening of East Side Access, which will be known as Grand Central Madison going forward. Details on this service expansion will be made available shortly.
- We are continuing our outreach with elected officials in an attempt to fill numerous vacancies on all three councils.
- The Nassau County and Suffolk County Executives' nominees for the MTA Board have made it through the Senate, and we expect to see them at the next Board meeting, assuming the Governor signs off on their appointments. Nassau County Exec Blakeman renominated David Mack, whose term expired when CE Curran left office. Suffolk County Exec Bellone nominated Samuel Chu, the chief executive and founder of Edgewise Energy, a clean energy startup. He formerly served on the Suffolk County Planning Commission and has chaired the county's Workforce Development Board. Chu previously served as Bellone's chief of staff and as county commissioner of Labor, Licensing & Consumer Affairs. It

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will be good to have full Long Island representation on the board again, especially with Grand Central Madison and Third Track coming on line later this year.

- The MTA Track intrusion Task Force released their report last week after the May MTA Board Meeting. If you have not seen a copy of this report and you would like one, please advise the PCAC office.
- We finally had some movement on WageWorks, with Congresswoman Rice and Senator Gillibrand introducing legislation that would allow people with money trapped in the pre-tax transit benefit program to finally be able to get it out in a one-shot arrangement that would also require them to pay taxes. LIRRCC has been working on this for two years, and Larry Rubinstein had been key in getting in touch with people who have trapped money to illustrate the problem. Unfortunately, this won't help people who were laid off or otherwise lost their jobs and money, but that's something we're still working on.
- The MTA working group on Resiliency held their 4th (& final) meeting on Thursday May 25th and is hoped that their report will be issued sometime during the MTA's June Board Meeting. I had the pleasure of serving on that working group.
- Lisa has been asked to serve on the Blue Ribbon Fare Evasion Task Force, which had its first meeting yesterday. Stopping the financial bleed at the turnstile, and those who come in to do others harm, is key to the system's future.

R. Troy: Can we consider another name option other than Grand Central Madison? People will confuse it with Madison Square Garden.

T. Mason: Yes, people have asked if LIRR will go to Madison Square Garden and there is a lot of confusion. I think we can go on the record or send a letter to have them reconsider the name.

L. Daglian: At the press conference I attended on Tuesday, the Governor and Janno were asked about the name. They said there were focus groups with riders and since the exits are on Madison Ave, it made sense and was done through the MTA's communications office.

T. Mason: I also attended virtually. I'm going to offer as a motion that we think it is not a suitable name, and it has caused confusion and is there any possibility of reconsidering another name?

A. Albert: I'll second it. Everyone knows where Grand Central is. We can possibly call it LIRR East Side Terminal, but I think Grand Central Madison is not the right name.

L. Daglian: It heightens a split between the two railroads and causes confusion with MSG.

C. Greif: I'm also disappointed in the new name and that they didn't include me in any of the meetings they had regarding accessibility.

G. Bringmann: Members voted and the motion carries.

NYCTRC Chair's Report:

Ridership Update

A. Albert: We hit a record 3.6 million riders on a single day. Ridership has plateaued, but the high weekend ridership shows people are eager to use the system.

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Safety Update

A. Albert: Additional police have been added throughout the system. I've been told in the latest report that 1379 homeless people have accepted services. The teams continue to remove passengers and homeless people at the end of the lines and get them the services they need.

Fare Evasion

A. Albert: I was at 14th Street/ Union Square and saw two police officers allowing swarms of people to just walk through the slam gate. I reported them to Chief Wilcox, and I did tell the officers about the fare evaders, and they said to me, "we can't catch everyone."

T. Mason: I was at 14th Street/ Union Square about twenty minutes after Andrew was. I also witnessed the slam gate being opened, and people were pouring into the station. I said to the officers, "look at the people entering through the slam gates and none of you are taking action."

Queens Bus Redesign

A. Albert: They have reconsidered some aspects of the Queens Bus Redesign that some members of the community raised during the first round of public outreach. We will hear more about that from our guest speakers later on in this meeting.

New Times Square Entrance/Exit

A. Albert: I recently went and visited the new Times Square entrance, it's much easier to find than the previous entrance. It's a nice big entryway and you don't have to walk around track 4 to actually get to the trains.

181st Street Escalator Repair

A. Albert: Escalator outages at this station are troublesome. The MTA says it can be six months until the escalators are fixed. There are elevators at 181st Street and at 184th Street but it is uphill and can be a problem to reach. We have also heard that Columbia University will be partially paying for an elevator at the 125th Street station on the #1 line.

D. Greif: I was almost knocked over in my wheelchair yesterday entering through the slam gate by someone who practically jumped over me to get in without paying their fare. The fare evaders can cause harm to us with no regret to our safety.

L. Daglian: We just had our first Fare Evasion Blue Ribbon Task Force meeting yesterday. I'm in a fortunate position to hear your issues and I will raise these issues on accessibility and the safety concerns at the next meeting.

Presentation: MTA Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Micro-mobility Strategic Action Plan by Jessica Mathew, Senior Advisor, Special Projects & Initiatives, MTA, and Will Schwartz, Deputy Chief, State and Local Government Affairs, MTA

Presentation Link: <https://youtu.be/GLCHev9bhuY?t=2065>

A. Albert: I have witnessed people with bicycles on the trains not being considerate. I see people zipping down platforms on scooters, and there is the fear of the exploding batteries. What are we doing about this?

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J. Mathews: There currently isn't secure bike parking at either end. We realize this is an MTA-wide hazard and are doing an assessment regarding the scooters.

L. Daglian: All of our councils have this same concern about electric bikes and scooters.

C. Greif: I just want to be sure accessibility is prioritized. Wheelchairs, walkers and strollers need to have a smooth transition into and out of the system.

S. Goldstein: In the slides you talk about the numbers of bike rides. Does that translate into individual users to get a sense of how big this community is? Is a time restriction on the rail still being considered?

J. Mathews: Urban Cycling Solutions did a bike census for New York State, and we should be able to answer that question soon. A time restriction is definitely on the table, the permit requirement has been waived but bringing bikes on during peak hours is still discouraged.

G. Bringmann: You said "discouraged" during rush hours, but it's actually prohibited especially with ridership coming back. People have been getting away with it for now, but there won't be room for the bikes soon enough.

K. Hamilton: There is barely enough room for passengers, let alone bikes, as the ridership on the LIRR is almost back to pre-pandemic capacity.

Discussion and Vote: PCAC Bike-Ped Access Recommendations to MTA by: Kara Gurl
Presentation link: <https://youtu.be/GLCHev9bhuy?t=3050>

T. Mason: The local Community Boards need to be included in all of these upcoming meetings. The small local businesses should also be involved in the discussions, not just the major corporations.

M. Stanton: I don't see the word "equity" here and we should add it along with economic disparities.

K. Hamilton: We need to think about our landscape and outdoor accessibility issues. I like the idea of bike lockers because if everyone decided to bring their bikes, there wouldn't be room for people on trains so it's a good option.

C. Greif: The bike parking or lockers can interfere with accessibility so it must be thought through. Also, the buses that have bus racks are the S53 in Staten Island.

Presentation: Cathy Rinaldi, President, Metro-North Railroad and Interim President, LIRR: East Side Access Service Plan Update

Presentation link: <https://youtu.be/GLCHev9bhuy?t=3926>

A. Albert: In the "More Choices" slide, are you implying through service at Grand Central?

H. Garcia: Not at all, it's just an arrow on the slide.

R. Glucksman: Will there be through fares from Metro-North to Long Island Rail Road?

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H. Garcia: We haven't gone that far yet. We have to wait and see. For now, it's separate fares.

G. Bringmann: Was platform F incorporated into the service plans for Brooklyn service? Will it affect service during peak times?

H. Garcia: There will be a few direct peak trains to Brooklyn but it will mostly be up and over.

M. Stanton: What kind of data do we have on transfers between Long Island and the subways at Grand Central?

H. Garcia: We are providing service where it's needed as it's needed. If there is a need for change, we can make those revisions.

L. Daglian: Conversations that I've had lately have suggested that more people returning to the offices around Grand Central will likely be walking to their destination instead of transferring.

K. Hamilton: Will there be an increase in service during off-peak hours?

H. Garcia: All lines will have increased service and spread-out service.

T. Mason: They are anticipating more people returning to the Grand Central area, but there are people who will work in the outer boroughs as well. I'm suggesting contacting the Mayor's office sooner rather than later.

H. Garcia: We will be engaging with all stakeholders after.

T. Mason: No, not after—you should be doing it now.

H. Garcia: Yes, I meant to say we are aggressively engaging now. We have our website, and we will have virtual public meetings where you can ask questions and provide comments.

C. Greif: Do you have any information on the accessibility of this station to share with us?

H. Garcia: We are only working on timetables, but we will be taking a survey and working with the accessibility teams. I will be in contact with you.

S. Goldstein: So, with the outliers like Brooklyn and Hunterspoint Avenue—I'm interested in a little more information on the number of trains coming in as opposed to leaving. Is service increasing in both directions?

H. Garcia: Yes, we will be running more trains in both directions. There will be more options for reverse peak commuting to Long Island.

S. Goldstein: I'm talking about jobs and activities in the borough of Brooklyn where the Long Island Rail Road started. The material so far in the media talks about an increase in service from Brooklyn, but I'm asking you if the plan released today will have information about an increase in service to Brooklyn? Also, will through trains be available only on weekdays?

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H. Garcia: Yes, you will see when it's released this afternoon, but we increased service to Brooklyn. Right now, through trains will only be during peak periods.

S. Goldstein: My last comment is that we need to make sure that we're consulting the city of New York and others involved in the conversation because we have the Barclay's Center right at the hub of the railroad with events. We really need to be conscious of not disenfranchising riders that start their trips in Brooklyn or Long Islanders or others that are getting to Brooklyn as a destination. Also, Hunterspoint as well because Long Island City is a major area of development.

A. Albert: I know this isn't your fault Hector, but I really wish the MTA wouldn't say that East Side Access will save riders 40 minutes of travel time per trip.

G. Bringmann: When Cathy said it, she said it will be 40 minutes a day. I took that as 20 minutes each way. That sounds more realistic.

R. Hale: Can you summarize the extent of off-peak service increases?

H. Garcia: I don't have the exact number but service increases overall. We broke down the tables by branch so you will be able to see which trains go to specific locations.

L. Daglian: Will those be paper timetables?

H. Garcia: They can be printed offline; they are formatted for printing.

C. D'Souza: Will there be overnight and weekend service to Grand Central Madison? Will CityTicket be accepted at the new station?

H. Garcia: I believe they close for a few hours overnight. The CityTicket should be accepted, but I don't have an exact answer.

D. Greif: People with disabilities need to know where the elevators are located. They are hard to find currently as well as bathrooms.

S. Picker: Can information be provided to the public on the through service schedule decision-making process and broken down by branch?

H. Garcia: Yes, that's the plan.

A. Albert: When you develop these schedules, will all the branches have an equal number of trips to Penn Station and Grand Central?

H. Garcia: Each branch will have service to both.

R. Hale: It's clear that right now the plan is to give a few branches service to both terminals and there's probably a way to minimize weaving or interlining by dedicating certain branches completely to a single terminal. Have you thought about building the Sunnyside Station to enable transfers?

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H. Garcia: That station is not on our horizon right now.

L. Daglian: I have received several comments about Atlantic Terminal and the request to reiterate that there be sufficient service and one-seat rides to Jamaica and reduced wait times.

R. Troy: If there's a "blackout" deep down in the terminal, will there be generators to run escalators and elevators in the event of an emergency?

H. Garcia: I'm sure we have backup generators, but I don't know the full details as we have been coordinating with multiple agencies.

C. Greif: I want to add that in my conversations with Quemuel, he has informed me they are working closely with the FDNY and continuing ADA training for emergencies including blackouts.

MNRCC Chair's Report:

- On May 19, at a press event that was held in Grand Central Terminal, it was announced that the previous day, post-pandemic ridership records were set on Metro-North, the Long Island Railroad and the subways.
- Shore Line East, a service that was started in May 1990 to initially operate between New Haven and Old Saybrook by the Connecticut DOT has always been operated with diesel-powered trainsets. Service was extended to New London in early 1996.
- That changed on Tuesday, May 24 with the assignment of M-8 electric multiple unit cars (those with the red stripe that operate on the New Haven Line). Upon first learning about this change, I decided that I wanted to ride this "new" electric service on its first day. I drove to Stamford and rode the New Haven Line to New Haven and transferred to the Shore Line East and made a round-trip to/from New London. It was an enjoyable trip.
- Enroute to New London I joined the TEAMS Meeting for the Metro-North Accessibility Task Force, a group that I was assigned to participate in a few years ago. This task force is comprised of participants from Metro-North, and the disability and public transit agencies from all of the Hudson Valley counties served by Metro-North. Discussions involve ADA projects currently under construction and in either the proposal or design phases. Our late vice-chair Orrin Getz was a consistent advocate for making the Suffern, NY station, which is owned by NJ Transit, accessible.

C. Greif: I've heard they are running a test train between New London and New Haven. Have you seen it? They have great acceleration and I think they should be using those faster trains.

R. Glucksman: Yes, I actually rode it and I have to agree that it does have faster acceleration.

C. D'Souza: The combined ticket from Grand Central to New London has to be purchased separately. I also noticed there isn't a ticket machine in the New London station. I have been told by conductors they don't take cash to purchase the tickets. I'm suggesting they add a machine there. The M8 cars also still have the MTA logo on them.

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R. Glucksman: You can pay cash to purchase tickets on the Shore Line. They are a Connecticut DOT service. They purchased 65 cars, and they use them where they seem fit.

Old Business:

G. Bringmann: The legislation that was put out is faulty regarding the MTA Bike and Pedestrian Access Bill. We need to get an amendment, as we are supposed to get three additional council members appointed to the PCAC and councils. They need to clarify who makes the recommendations for MNRCC and LIRRCC.

L. Daglian: We will work to make that change but the elected officials we spoke to said they didn't feel anything needed to be changed.

T. Mason: We need to contact the elected officials directly, who are they? Whoever drafted the legislation needs to make the change.

L. Daglian: Senator Biaggi and Assemblywoman Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas. We contacted them back in December.

T. Mason: I strongly suggest we do it again since it's been a few months already.

G. Bringmann: I agree, we will send a follow-up letter to them.

L. Rubinstein: Hector, to your knowledge is there LIRR construction happening at the Bellmore train station? I went to park my car the other day and there are trucks and equipment occupying two-thirds of the lot.

H. Garcia: Not to my knowledge, but I can certainly look into that. There's a sewer pipe project being run by the county along Sunrise Highway, not sure if that's what you're referring to.

L. Rubinstein: I was with the Governor at the opening of the new terminal at LaGuardia Airport. We should be making recommendations on how to get people over there other than a bus option.

L. Daglian: We have been discussing this at our NYCTRC meetings and our LIRRCC meetings.

A. Albert: I have expressed how an AirTrain from the Woodside LIRR station, which serves every LIRR branch, would be able to transport loads of people to the airport.

S. Goldstein: I asked for a briefing on the new East Side Access service pattern. We need to be mindful of the Brooklyn service patterns. There are no connections guaranteed. We need to analyze the data, so I just wanted to put that on the record.

A. Albert: We also have to monitor service to platform F and how much time it takes to make the connections as well.

L. Daglian: Please send us your comments on our suggestions to the Bike/ Ped recommendations email that we sent out earlier so we can correct and send it over by noon tomorrow.

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K. Hamilton: There is some construction on the LIRR Rosedale Station. The only ADA access is at the end of the station under the scaffolding and it's a long walk and difficult to get to. Also at the Laurelton Station, there is a farmer's market on the weekends, and they take up the entire parking lot. That was an issue because there's nowhere to park for people with mobility issues.

A. Albert: I'd advise you to contact your local Community Board. I know our Board approves our farmer's markets, so that's who probably approved it.

K. Hamilton: Lastly, the meeting on Tuesday for the Bronx Bus Redesign was good, and we were very well informed. The MTA did a great job and I just wanted to let you all know.

New Business:

None

Adjourned

YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLCHev9bhuY&t=1969s>

Action Items:

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Daglian
Executive Director