



PCAC

PERMANENT CITIZENS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MTA

2 Broadway, 16th Floor, New York, NY 10004
(212) 878-7087 mail@pcac.org

GERARD BRINGMANN CHAIR · MTA BOARD MEMBER · LIRRCC CHAIR

ANDREW ALBERT NYCTRC CHAIR · MTA BOARD MEMBER

RANDOLPH GLUCKSMAN MNRCC CHAIR · MTA BOARD MEMBER

LISA DAGLIAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LIAM BLANK ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

KARA GURL RESEARCH & COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATE

JESSICA SPEZIO ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Rider Reps Call on MTA to Strongly Recommend Masks Onboard PCAC Statement December 20, 2022

With the holidays, winter and the threat of a “triple-demic” upon us, and in light of Governor Hochul’s update on the state’s progress combating COVID-19, the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC), called on the MTA to go from telling riders that “Masks are encouraged, but optional” to “Masks are Strongly Recommended” to protect themselves and others. Their request to strengthen language in MTA communications materials and digital displays comes on the heels of the CDC’s recent call encouraging people to wear masks to reduce the spread of COVID, the flu, and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and the New York City Health Department’s Health Advisory that urges New York City residents to use high quality masks when indoors and in crowded outdoor settings.

PCAC, whose members represent riders on the Long Island Rail Road, Metro-North and subways, buses and Staten Island Rail, noted that the spread of airborne diseases is more prevalent in winter months, when more of us are indoors. While not recommending reinstatement of a mask mandate, PCAC noted that an increasing number of members of the public at both MTA Committee and Board meetings had spoken about the importance of masks in protecting against diseases, particularly for the immunocompromised.

“This holiday season, let’s spread joy – not germs,” said **PCAC Executive Director Lisa Daglian**. “While we’re seeing more and more riders voluntarily wearing masks, we’re asking the MTA to ramp up its messaging to strongly recommend even more masking onboard. Though there was no evidence that transit was a major driver of the spread of COVID, wearing masks onboard is a small but important step we can take to protect ourselves and our loved ones from the triple threat we’re facing this winter. We hope that mask mandates are a thing of the past, but recognize that there are many riders who are particularly susceptible to airborne illnesses like COVID, the flu, RSV, and the common cold. Masking up isn’t just a courtesy, it’s an everyday protection we can take for a happier—and healthier—holiday season.”