A meeting of the New York City Transit Riders Council (NYCTRC) was convened at 12:00 pm on Thursday, June 23, 2022 in the 20th floor Conf. Room 4 at 2 Broadway, New York, NY 10004, and via Zoom.

**Member Attendance**

Andrew Albert (Chair) Present

Burton M. Strauss Jr. (Vice Chair) Present

Stuart Goldstein Present

Christopher Greif Present

William K. Guild Absent

Marisol Halpern Present

Sharon King Hoge Present

Karen Hamilton Present

Cicely Harris Present

Trudy L. Mason Present

Scott R. Nicholls Absent

**Staff Attendance**

Lisa Daglian (Executive Director) Present

Kara Gurl (Research & Comm. Associate) Present

Bradley Brashears (Planning Manager) Present

Jessica Spezio (Administrative Assistant) Present

Shaul Picker (PCAC intern) Present

**Non-member Attendance**

**Name**  **Affiliation**

Demetrius Crichlow SVP Subways

Melissa Farley MTA GCR

Ernest Modarelli MTA GCR

William Stanford Jr. Concerned citizen

David Kupferberg Concerned citizen

Ron Troy Concerned citizen

Debra Greif Concerned citizen

Mike Howard Concerned citizen

Carl Perrera Concerned citizen

Joseph G. Concerned citizen

Yvonne Morrow Concerned citizen

Tiffany S. Concerned citizen

Lucas Ricardi Concerned citizen

David Acheampong Concerned citizen

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| ***Approval of Agenda for June 23, 2022 meeting.*** |
| ***Approval of Minutes for May 26, 2022 meeting.***  **Board/ Chair’s Report** |
| A. Albert  The Bronx Bus Redesign will be kicking off on June 26. There are many improvements from the previous years. The Bronx Bus Redesign team worked hard to hear from riders who had concerns about the improvements they wanted, from the hill issues to some of the reroutes, lack of connections, and a variety of other things to make it more user-friendly. There have been some shortenings of routes and there are some percent fewer stops because they're trying to speed the buses up. I'm going to be an ambassador one evening and speak to riders on a route and see how they feel about it. Lisa, you were at the kickoff.    **L. Daglian** Yes, I was. I was wearing a big button that said "ask me about Bronx Bus redesign" and on my way back, a passenger asked me about it. I had some material with me and shared it with them. Some people were interested and asked for more information.    **A. Albert** One interesting piece of the Redesign is that the M100 bus, which used to come from Washington Heights down the West side and across 125th Street into the Bronx, will now end on the West side. There will be a new M100 on 125th Street that goes into the Bronx.    **S. Goldstein** They usually rationalize the schedules when the school season winds down, so the summer may not be the best time to get feedback on this. This may be something we want to help with. There is no systematic way for people to report feedback, so maybe putting it on our website to get people to share their thoughts would be beneficial.    **A. Albert** The MTA will watch and reassess routes should that become necessary.    **L. Daglian** Yes, Rich Davey was asked if it's carved in stone. He said no, this is something we're going to assess, and we're going to make changes as we see needed.    **A. Albert** Marisol, will you let us know if your office gets feedback on any particular routes as a result of the redesign?    **M. Halpern** Sure. The MTA has been good about taking the feedback and trying to find a way to make it work. I'm encouraged by that, and I will keep monitoring the complaints. I know it will mostly be about the loss of bus stops.    **A. Albert** Are the routes proposed accessible to the New Haven line stations that will come online with Penn Access?    **L. Daglian** Cate had said that once the stations come online, they will be.    **C. Greif** They mentioned last night that the Q44 Select was supposed to be extended to Fordham Plaza. Originally it terminated by the Bronx Zoo, but this location will be much better. It's also connected to the Metro-North train.    **D. Kupferberg** I’m concerned about the amount of outreach and how the MTA is doing it. The dates were from Sunday, June 12 until Sunday, June 26. None of the outreach locations are on the MTA website. How are people supposed to know where they are?    **L. Daglian** For the Bronx redesign?  Andrew is doing it later than that date.    **A. Albert** They go beyond the 26th, I'm doing mine on the 29th.    **D. Kupferberg** The locations are not listed on the MTA website. Also, Baychester and Port Morris are known transit deserts, yet nothing will change.    **A. Albert** I'm surprised to hear about Baychester. You can walk to the 5 train, so it’s not as much a desert as other places. Moving along, the next item is the new partnership between the city and the MTA. This is good news, especially since there's been no love lost between the city and Albany like in the previous administration. Since everybody is getting along, the city would like to see buses move faster with more cameras in bus lanes, and more bus lanes. They're also working on the countdown clocks to make them more efficient.    **L. Daglian** Also more camera enforcement for bus lanes.    **A. Albert** Yes, more camera enforcement would be great. There have been occasions when a bus transmitter was not transmitting, and a bus showed up that was not on the countdown clock. I've spoken to Frank Annicaro about that and given him the number of the bus and they do investigate that. If you see a bus arrive but it didn't show up on an existing countdown clock, make note of the bus vehicle number.    **D. Greif** I have an issue with some of the countdown clocks. They can't always be seen because there are other signs in the way.    **A. Albert** That's a DOT issue, not transit. If it’s inside the train station, then it's transit.    **D. Greif** I've complained to DOT, but we haven’t gotten good feedback.  **A. Albert** If the DOT isn't listening, you should go through your Community Board or the DOT Borough Commissioner. Next, the settlement of the ADA lawsuit against the MTA. 95% of stations will be made accessible. It will take time, but it's the right thing to do. This agreement makes congestion pricing even more important because those billions of dollars are necessary to make those stations accessible. Trudy knows the details about congestion pricing, so I want her to give an update.    **T. Mason** New York 1 mentioned this morning that full accessibility will take a while and will be done in 2055. Governor Hochul said that congestion pricing wasn't going to happen for at least a year. It is needed for financial reasons and to reduce traffic. Right now, congestion pricing will be moving ahead as Mayor Adams supports it.    **S. Goldstein** Circling back to ADA and funding, I think it's our responsibility to ensure that funding is set aside for maintaining the escalators and elevators.    **A. Albert** The agreement dedicates 14.7% of every MTA capital program to accessibility.    **S. Goldstein** Other than capital, the MTA has to maintain the system. We know right now that elevators are horrific, escalators break down, and have long repair times.    **A. Albert** Some elevator issues are caused by people bringing heavy things into them that they were not designed for. I've seen people with hand trucks and huge loads.    **L. Daglian** Janno was asked yesterday about elevator maintenance, specifically, the ones under Zeckendorf Towers at Union Square. He said that unfortunately, those are privately maintained escalators, and have always been a problem. The MTA has to keep a better eye on those escalators and in those kinds of agreements with the private developers.    **T. Mason** I've spoken to Lisa about the Adopt-A-Station program and getting public-private money into it. The problem is that to get these 'amenities' into these stations from the private sector, you had to get the money out of the private sector, and that has discontinued on a lot of different projects. It continues to be a problem, which is why the elevators and escalators are now paid for by the MTA. Also, one of the good things with congestion pricing and financing is the amount that will be charged, how it will be charged and who will be charged.    **A. Albert** Yes, the guidelines of congestion pricing will state who will be exempt, what days of the week, what time of the day, and so on.    **T. Mason** Additionally, how much money will come in from congestion pricing and once that is determined some of that money should go to maintenance. Not only elevators and escalators, but other areas that need ongoing maintenance as well.    **A. Albert** It should raise about $1.3 billion which would allow the MTA to get up to about $10 or $11 billion a year towards the $52 to $55 billion capital program.    **M. Howard** The 4, 5, and 6 lines at Union Square need elevators on both sides of the platforms.    **A. Albert** Those lines have issues with curves in stations, causing structural difficulties. Next up is safety issues. Instances of some of the bad crimes that we've seen have receded somewhat. There was one day of 'single police officer' patrolling— after an officer was attacked at the Pennsylvania Avenue Station, that has changed again. Now, they will be in pairs, not next to each other but within eyesight. The idea is to increase the coverage area but will hopefully keep them safe as well.    **L. Daglian** The Supreme Court issued a ruling this morning about the New York concealed carry law, and struck it down as too restrictive. This was anticipated, but it's certainly alarming. We released a statement about this and sent it to all members. We said, “there are already too many weapons in our transit system, and we’re extremely disappointed with what the Supreme Court’s ruling to change conceal carry laws in New York means for riders: in fact, we’re alarmed. After the spate of recent shootings, riders have made it clear that they do not feel safer or comfortable with people more easily bringing guns into the transit system. The state, city, and MTA should continue to ban guns on transit and continue to fight against ghost guns and other illegal weapons. We urge the Governor and Mayor to pass laws emphasizing this ban, similar to the laws the Governor recently passed in anticipation of Roe v. Wade being overturned.” The mayor is having a press conference now and the Governor just spoke about calling the legislature back to Albany to ban concealed weapons from large gathering places.    **A. Albert** MTA still has the right to ban weapons from its system. New technologies, hopefully better, more weapon-oriented metal detectors that will be tested, will help.    **L. Daglian** That will depend on the state law and also state and city regulations. Those metal detectors require staffing of at least two people per device, that's millions of dollars of equipment and multi-millions of dollars of personnel. Some would argue, those are funds that can be used for service, reliability and other improvements to the system.    **A. Albert** You're saying that staffing issue because you're thinking if the alarm is set off, somebody has to be there to apprehend the person?    **L. Daglian** No, the metal detectors are a private enterprise system that uses staffing to go with it, and it's their staff.    **B. Brashears** The mayor has also said that legal experts will do a comprehensive review about what 'sensitive locations' mean. Hopefully, that includes the transit system.    **T. Mason** Thank you, Bradley. The term “sensitive locations” in the ruling was left very vague. The question right now is whether New York City is a “sensitive location,” especially places like Times Square, and specifically the whole subway system.    **A. Albert** Thank you. Some new surveillance cameras have been installed on 55 subway cars. Early reports are that they give a very clear image. They're not real-time cameras, they just record people. The recordings can be surveyed later on. They are invisible to riders, and nobody knows where these cameras are. Lisa, did you want to update us on anything?    **L. Daglian: Staff Report**   * We kicked off the Bronx bus redesign launch yesterday up in the Bronx, which was received well by Bronx residents. * The ADA announcement was very well received by many, although we all wish it would have happened sooner, but it’s great news. * Last night, there was a hearing on Penn Access eminent domain that we testified at in support of the Penn Access Project, bringing Metro-North down to the Bronx. There were several people who had concerns about noise, who were located in Queens. They were calling for sound buffers and barriers, but also wanted a Queens stop. We acknowledged that eminent domain is always unfortunate, but the progress that it makes towards the development of this project is a positive outcome. Starting tonight are public information sessions for the service plan for the Long Island Railroad service to Grand Central with the East Side Access Project. There are three one-hour outreach sessions. To my understanding, there'll be a presentation and there will then be an opportunity for some Q&A. There will be one two-hour session on July 13, which is more of a robust back and forth. You've all seen our statement in which we've called for more of those kinds of sessions, and not only have we said that publicly, but I’ve also said that privately in my conversations with people here.     **A. Albert** We are the only ones who have raised the issue of the Brooklyn service and how it’s going to be relegated to shuttle status. You must plan on people having a seat on their train, whether it's from Grand Central Madison or Penn Station, and would they stay on rather than have a three-seat ride to lower Manhattan and then get on an already overcrowded (hopefully they are by then) subway train.    **L. Daglian** Tomorrow the State Senate is holding a hearing on the Penn Station project. We will be testifying on Penn Station reconstruction, which is the transit component of the project. There are lots of different aspects of that broader project, including the project to the East, and the project to the South. We are mostly concerned with fixing Penn Station now, which is what the Governor kicked off recently. It's an opportunity for us to continue to remind people that this is all going to be pushed back unless congestion pricing starts to happen.    **T. Mason** Lisa and Brad and Kara, I want to thank you all for all the work that you did and for taking all of our views into consideration, as well as for changing the name back to the name "East Side Access.". I put it in writing in my email, but I just wanted to go on the record here right now in our minutes that you’re doing a wonderful job and incorporating all of our thoughts and making a document that was not only what we wanted to say, but eminently readable. I don't know if I'm speaking for everybody else on the PCAC and the Transit Riders Council but certainly, for myself, it was a job well done, and I just want to give you a big thank you.    **L. Daglian** Thank you, I appreciate that.    **S. Goldstein** I was going to say that the team did a masterful job. You had circulated an article and I had a follow-up question on capacity— If there are pressures that we need to relieve on the subway system and not create new bottlenecks with a different service pattern, through-service to Brooklyn, whether it's people working in Brooklyn or whether it's people going to sports venues or other activities or even Lower Manhattan?    **A. Albert** It was quite an enlightening article from the LIRR today. Do we know the schedule for M9 deliveries for the LIRR?    **L. Daglian** I think the M9s have been further delayed.    **A. Albert** Is that Kawasaki again? I think they've delayed the R 211s as well.    **C. Greif** I was with Hector today and we were testing the elevators in the Jamaica station with my mother’s walker. We did see an M9 already being tested on platform F.    **A. Albert** You can see them at the Hillside Yard.    **C. Greif** They're also being reprogrammed for Grand Central. The LIRR is still waiting for an arrival date for the M9s because they said a year but now it's more because of COVID.    **L. Daglian** We have been joined by our guests and we will take the other questions after.    **A. Albert** We are very fortunate to have our Senior VP of Subways, Demetrius Crichlow, join us today to speak about service. The past few weekends for the first time in a while, we were seeing delays because NYC Transit was running as much service as they can with the crews they have available. We’re surprised to see it again. Happy to hear an update on that and other things. Thank you for joining us.  **Presentation:** Demetrius Crichlow, Senior Vice President, Subways  View Video presentation: <https://youtu.be/_qIO6Io1CNU?t=3849>    **B. Strauss** The chart showed a very high percentage of workers out on comp. Is that a continuing problem or has it always been a problem?    **D. Crichlow** That has always been a problem. Availability has decreased since COVID. We've noticed that several folks are out and assaults have increased, including spitting on conductors, unfortunately, which is assault and the person will be out for some time.    **S. Goldstein** Have you seen any change in absences from COVID-related illness?    **D. Crichlow** Yes, there is less COVID-related sickness, or illnesses that are undescribed. We had a hotline set up for workers to notify us when they were in contact with someone and those numbers have decreased substantially from the height of the pandemic, but we still haven't gotten back to where we were.    **C. Greif** When the A was supposed to be running every 10 minutes, one going to Lefferts and the next to Far Rockaway, it still didn’t come in that 10-minute window. I’m glad you brought the C train back, but the schedule timing is off. I could be on a C train from Euclid Avenue to Times Square, and I still beat the A there. Can we improve the performance or speed? The platform on 34th Street, Penn Station is also very unsafe these days.    **D. Crichlow** We looked at the A train specifically, because it's been one of our challenging lines. I think the A, B, and F are all very difficult lines to run. The A particularly because it has so many terminals. It has so many points where you're going to have conflicts. And it is an extremely difficult line to run particularly when service is not normal. One of the things that we've been specifically looking at with President Davey at the helm, is the A. Even if I took a little bit of a hit on another line, do I have the potential to boost the A? It’s a challenge. We have now been piloting having a supervisor and extra personnel at the terminal to try to help get folks off the train and we have had a reduction in the dwell time as a result of it.    **M. Howard** I live in Far Rockaway and I have noticed that the train cars are very dirty since Hurricane Sandy came and no one has washed the exterior of the cars in the yards.    **A. Albert** Is it both the 46s and the 179s?    **M. Howard** Yes, it's all of them.    **D. Crichlow** I know we did have some work done there to the carwash, I'll take a look to see if there's any longer-term impact. You're saying it's been like this since the Hurricane?    **S. Picker** I've also noticed those issues on the A, especially during the shoulder periods in the evening, when you have a train dropping out. That transition period even pre- COVID was problematic because of service schedules like 24 minutes (because of the split between Ozone and Far Rockaway) and with a trip dropped out, you might see a 40-60 minute gap. I'm curious to know what's being done in terms of dispatching to try to address that? They've been running with some modifications, some supplements— you might not need 18 trains per hour in the peak anymore. Any thought of increasing service off-peak?    **D. Crichlow** One of the things that President Davey has said is we do need to look at how we operate, and when our customers travel. Mondays are different now than they were before the pandemic. Is there an appetite to change? I'd say that we're amenable to change.    **A. Albert** We've seen both off-peak and weekend ridership really balloon. While we're on that, when you gave the earlier slide, it was the C and the F that has the most impact, and when we get our monthly report at the Board, they also have the worst statistics. Can't we do something to make those two lines a little better? In terms of crews or whatever is causing the terminal on-time performance, the figures are terrible, both on weekdays and weekends.    **D. Crichlow** I do think that while we look at the A line, there will be some opportunity to check out the C line because they go hand-in-hand. I think where we're trying to go is what can we do to impact the customer which may not necessarily be better for on-time performance but may have better customer perception. For example, in the past, we used to run gap trains. If you saw that there was a gap in service, you would fill it, it does not help you for on-time performance, it costs us money to operate. But it does give a customer a train when there's a gap in service. We are trying to think about what we can do to change the customer perception of the service that we provide. President Davey has been very amenable to ideas like that.    **L. Daglian** How about traveling on the A Line and asking the riders for their input? You'll hear people say at certain times or at specific stations. it’s a lot of brainpower into it but people who are on it every day know it best.    **D. Crichlow** I appreciate that. Rich Davey plans on being in the field at a Transit Talk, anywhere between every two weeks and every four weeks and he will ride the entire system. I recommend that we hit a station on A-line soon. One of the initiatives that the team has pulled together is the ability to look at individual operating time periods.    **S. Goldstein** Are you getting a variety of perspectives from riders and transportation professionals, or retired professionals? Have you done an engagement survey with train operators or conductors, to see whether they have any service delivery suggestions? If you did, can you share that feedback? If not, would it be something you would consider? Employee engagement is one of the tools we use as transportation professionals to improve operations.    **D. Crichlow** We have not done a formal engagement. I think it's a great idea.    **S. Goldstein** I think they'll appreciate it as well. It can improve employee satisfaction, so they feel they're engaged, and they come up with suggestions.    **T. Mason** Are the unions directly involved, or are you dealing directly with the workers? Could you go into more details about the unions and their involvement in this work?    **D. Crichlow** There is no success without having union involvement. It's extremely difficult to change any type of culture without having them understand where we're going, trying to get them to support. We have a good relationship with the union. I was on the phone with the Vice Chair prior to this meeting. There are things that we agree on. We may disagree on how to get there, but we do agree with the direction we need to go.    **D. Greif** The DeKalb Avenue station from 2pm to 4pm with school kids is over capacity. Persons with mobility challenges have a hard time getting through the station. Can you fix some of the signs that block the time clocks? Another issue I face is bus connections.    **S. Picker** Are you considering rethinking loading guidelines? Currently, it's based on the peak load. If you determined loading guidelines based on that, as opposed to demographic factors in the neighborhood, job activity, etc. — have you looked at rethinking the guidelines?    **D. Crichlow** We've had a couple of discussions with Judy McClain from the operations planning group. It’s been discussed, but I won't commit to whether there is a different ideology.    **L. Daglian**There have been conversations about looking at changes to the way GOs are done in addition to improving off-peak service. There has been some talk about better, different uses of technology to help with GOs that would help allow people to work faster, better, smarter, and differently. Has that gone anywhere and is that still being pursued?    **D. Crichlow**That is always a very difficult discussion to have. The first thing that an employee is going to say when you say faster, is safety, right? What we've been challenged with is, what can we give that not just keeps safety the same but adds safety to employees but at the same time, doesn’t add risk. Increased service on the weekend would be nice, but my concern is that we are strapped with resources during the peak period, and the peak load periods during the week, and if you sacrifice some of the peak load headcount to support the weekend increases, you do yourself a disservice.    **D. Kupferberg** Around April 2020, the MTA considered flipping the F and M. The F would go through the city, and the M through the 63rd Street tubes. Is the MTA still considering that?    **D. Crichlow**David, I don't know that answer. I can certainly find out.    **C. Greif** A few months ago the B train was showing that it was running as much service with the crews they had, but it was still running every 6 minutes. I didn't see a delay.    **D. Crichlow** Sometimes, in the interest of providing information, they may provide too much information. The delays may not be in your direction, or you may be past the delay. It may be North or South of you, it doesn't mean that it's specifically in your area.    **C. Perrera** A while back I sent a suggestion for the MTA to look at the A-line, where I mentioned that if they had all the As go from 207 Street to Lefferts Boulevard and have the Far Rockaway A train relabeled and short turn, somewhere in midtown Manhattan like 34th Street or downtown Manhattan, west of Chamber Street, I figured it would be a greater frequency of A express trains from Far Rockaway through Brooklyn. Did they take a look at that?    **D. Crichlow** I don't have the answer for that. I'll definitely talk to Judy McClain.    **A. Albert** I have a long-standing request for an A service change, which is that all A trains go to the Rockaways (both Far Rockaway and Rockaway Park) and the C gets extended to Lefferts Blvd. That would be very tourist-friendly and tourists would know every A train is going to JFK Airport. Judy McClain and I had a long talk about that and she thinks there may not be enough cars or something. The people in Belle Harbor, Neponset, and Rockaway Park are the only people in the entire city relegated to shuttle-only status. Demetrius, thank you for taking the time to speak to us today.    **D. Crichlow** You’re welcome. Lastly, I'll just say forums like this do make a change, with people that are interested in transit and transportation. We don't get stuff done unless we have great ideas, but we can't have them all. I appreciate all your input.    **S. Goldstein** I have Old Business: Did we hear back on the station cleaning schedule?      **A. Albert** I had tried to get the head of stations here today to answer lots of station questions and he wasn't available. I'm still trying.  ***Old Business:***   * What is station cleaning schedule?   ***New Business:***  None  **Action Items:**   * MTA was considering flipping the F & M. The F would go through the city, and the M would go through the 63rd Street tubes. Is the MTA still considering that, or have they reconsidered the switch? (David A.) * Will the MTA look at having all A trains go to Lefferts Boulevard? (C. Perrera) * Following up with the head of stations to get station cleaning schedule (S.Goldstein)   **Adjourned**  Video link: <https://youtu.be/_qIO6Io1CNU>  The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.  Respectfully submitted,  Lisa Daglian  Executive Director |