A meeting of the New York City Transit Riders Council (NYCTRC) was convened at 12:00 pm on Thursday, September 29, 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 Absent

Sharon King Hoge Absent

Karen Hamilton Present

Cicely Harris Present

Trudy L. Mason Excused

Scott R. Nicholls Absent

**Staff Attendance**

Lisa Daglian (Executive Director) Present

Kara Gurl (Research & Comm. Associate) Absent

Jessica Spezio (Administrative Assistant) Present

Shaul Picker (PCAC Intern) Absent

**Non-member Attendance**

**Name**  **Affiliation**

Barney Gray VP Stations Business

Cate Contino

Eric Wollman Concerned Citizen

William Stanford Jr. Concerned Citizen

David Kupferberg Concerned Citizen

Michael Howard Concerned Citizen

Jason Anthony Concerned Citizen

Debra Greif Concerned Citizen

|  |
| --- |
| **Board/ Chair’s Report:** |
| **A. Albert** Welcome to our September transit riders council meeting. We don't actually have a quorum at this moment. We will suspend the approval of the agenda and minutes for now and just move into the chairs report. I just got handed some really exciting information that our ridership hit a new mark and is now 3.87 5 million riders on the subway and with the bus combination that puts us at 5.7 million subway and bus riders for the day. Another piece of information, obviously, that everyone has heard is that cameras are coming to all 6400 Plus subway cars, another piece of good news. We got a presentation on the capital program and how many things are involved in it. From accessible stations to extending the Q line up into Harlem and Park Avenue 125th Street, so you've got an immediate Metro North connection. We've seen track and signal we've seen all of this stuff. But I must tell you, when they broke it down by how it is being funded, approximately 27% of that capital program is funded by Congestion Pricing. So, it is really important that we get that in place. You may have seen news about a Penn Station update. We have just approved yesterday for a new team. Amtrak and New Jersey Transit are part of this a joint venture by FX collaborative architects WFP USA and British architect John McCain. This team is now going to be giving an update and there are many different options they were looking at for Penn Station. We will absolutely keep you posted on the progress of this ongoing development. But this is really good news and I know that New Jersey Transit and Amtrak are sharing the costs, and that's important, because it's not just the Long Island Railroad paying for it. You may have seen ranking of stations, there is now polling going out and people are giving their opinions on various aspects. I'm a little surprised that most of these stations are in one particular area considering I ride frequently, and I can critique stations through the system. The worst ranking stations are 110 Street Central Park north on the 2/3 and 116th st on the 6 train. The 125th street station on the 2/3 line, the 191st street station on the 1 train and 149th Street/ third Avenue on the 2 and 5 train. Interestingly, the highest ranked station was Eastern Parkway/ Brooklyn Museum on the 2/3 line. Harlem and the South Bronx stations need attention, there's no doubt about that I have heard and seen. There's an inordinate number of homeless individuals that have taken the 110th Street Central Park North Station on the 2/3 as their residence and I continually report it.  **C. Greif** I have a question that you mentioned about the stations accessibility, we definitely know that the list for RFPs are supposed to start, Sheepshead Bay is listed and Church Avenue. We just wanted to make sure when they do this work, that making them ADA accessible a priority.  **A. Albert** There's a list of 70 stations to be made accessible in this next week. So I don't know that Barney will be speaking on that. Moving on with the rating of subway lines by passengers and the L, the G the Q and the 7 were rated the highest. Obviously, the L and the 7 train are CBTC equipped lines, so they get a more frequent and more reliable service. Amongst the worst ranked lines are the D/ A and the J/ Z line. I'm shocked the C isn't on there. OMNY has reached a momentous milestone. Last week it hit the 500 million taps. They are moving expeditiously to get half fare and reduced fare options available on Omni. I believe if you're using an electronic device that may already once you log in and update your account, it may already be available on electronic devices not on the cards yet. That is coming before the end of the year as well as what I'm hearing. They are moving towards OMNY machines being installed soon. They won't obviously remove all the MetroCard Vending machines because a lot of folks are still using them and we're not ready to replace all of them.  **C. Greif** They're asking everyone, and I'm making this clear for the record that right now we need everyone to please fill out the option to choose the card or the app because it will be an easier transition.  **A. Albert** Thank you. Let me get through a couple of quick items, and then we'll introduce our guests and get right into his presentation. I think everybody has heard Andy Byford is leaving Transport for London. He is coming back to the United States. I know he loves New York. Hopefully he's coming back to New York, but we'll see in what capacity. He's done a great job in New York and in London. I don't know what his next steps are going to be. But hopefully we'll find out. Access a ride is coming out with an app that is going to be usable, much as all of the other kinds of train apps. It's an updated one. They showed a pilot of it at the Board meeting the other day, it's very impressive. You'll be able to track your ride, how far away it is. It'll give you a price right away and who your ride supplier will be. Now our chief of Stations Business Unit, Barney Gray is going to tell us about what he does, which is as opposed to operations as I told Stuart earlier, he's going to speak to the general issues associated with stations, what they're finding what they need to do, and how often inspections take place, and all of that. So thank you so much Barney for being here.  **Presentation:***Barney Gray, Vice President, Stations Business Unit*  View Video presentation: <https://youtu.be/wAUcNUxhJow?t=1110>  **B. Gray** Thank you for the invite, I appreciate it. Just to note, I don't have a car. I appreciate the opportunity. There's always some confusion between sort of what we do and what transit stations does on the other side. I'm going to just walk you through that and give you some information about my group of folks that represent our group. I'm going to allow you an opportunity to ask me some questions at the end.  **A. Albert** When you say outside of the stations, where does the inside versus the outside happen, at the top of the steps?  **B. Gray** Yes, and outside. So at the top of the step, and then outside of the platform area.  **L. Daglian** Thank you so much. I have a question about the station refreshers. Are those part of the work that you do? How are those stations selected? I'm wondering how communities and businesses can get engaged in helping to fund some of those, through some kind of participatory budget or discourse with the MTA.  **B. Gray** Transit has been facilitating that extra perspective, they reached out and we've been working together, to look at the stations that we will be visiting and if there's an opportunity for us to piggyback off one another. That effort is really being led by transit with us sort of collaborating together to make sure we're doing it smartly and efficiently.  **S. Goldstein** Just piggybacking off of what Lisa, on this slide. She was asking you about the first half of the art now I'm interested in the second half types. So, for the active projects and the ones that are upcoming, can you give me a sense of the percentages by type of what you're doing. Is the larger focus on our underground stations or on our elevated stations? If you could give a rough run percentage wise of what's in the group now and what's upcoming?  **B. Gray** Sure, that's fair. I think underground stations represent about 60% of our stations might be a little higher than that-- just by the sheer magnitude of how many of them are underground, most of our work is going to be on the underground station.  **S. Goldstein** The projects align with the numbers we have are done by type?  **B. Gray** Yes, They do. When we look, we're looking at Borough equity, we want to make sure we're looking at all of our roles addressing across them collectively. We have to address the state of good repair that is in the worst condition. So that also plays a factor. Then there's ADA distribution, so we are making sure that we're being fair and equitable with respect to the ADA community.  **C. Greif** When you do the work on accessibility in stations, for example the elevators in the front leg at Fulton Street 2/3 line and the hump, it's in the middle of the station, there's staircases in the way and there's not enough ‘edge’ room. That's where we have a lot of the issues with accessibility for wheelchairs, walkers, and any mobile device of accessibility. How can that get changed or fixed?  **B. Gray** Well, I don't know if you work with Quemel, I meet with him at least monthly. He’s become our eyes and ears with respect to what we should be doing to address some of those needs. Our regularly coordinated meeting, with Q and his staff, Sarah, Rachel is in that meeting as well, to make sure that we're addressing some of those.  **E. Wollman** You talked about inspecting stations. Right across the street, the Bowling Green station has an elevator that runs I think three levels. The windows on that elevator have been smashed for several months. Has anybody noticed that?  **B. Gray** I can take that back. That one in terms of getting an answer when they plan on repairing? I don't know.  **A. Albert** I think it's just one elevator that has damaged glass.  **C. Greif** Yes, it's the main one on the street level that goes down to the Manhattan/ Bronx bound platform.  **E. Wollman** I know Barclays Center Station is private but you said you'd refer us to the right people. Escalators at Barclay station are broken and only one is working. You go up by escalator, the down side is always off and they have barriers to discourage you from walking down them, which I wouldn't want to do. Why is the private sponsor allowed to only maintain one escalator? I know it's not directly an MTA problem, but it must be in the contract somewhere where they have performance standards to maintain.  **B. Gray** Obviously I'm not, but I can find out for you.  **A. Albert** If you say there's a barrier to prevent you from walking down then doesn't that imply that work is being done on the escalator.  **E. Wollman** It does. But it never is and I go there a lot to see my doctors.  **L. Daglian** I'm wondering if you have a list of the stations that you could share with us that are sort of next up that you're taking a look at. I know that there are different components of each station but there are some stations as a whole, that I think could use more than a more than a refresher. So I'm just wondering if you have there's a list of decisions in an order that we could see.  **B. Gray** What I have that is shareable would just be a list that included either elevators and escalators to be replaced or elevators and escalators that will be installed.  **L. Daglian** I guess I'm going beyond elevators/ escalators and looking at stations in general, say to good repairs on stations.  **B. Gray** I also have a list of stations that are part of the program to either get a renewal some type of component repair or make ADA accessible and I will see what from that list is shareable and I'll follow up with you.  **A. Albert** That actually raises what to me is the most important issue today which is: who reports station conditions to the proper of departments for repair. Is it the clerks that are in a station on a regular basis? Do they report it with the station managers periodically who go through the stations? Is it an inspection team of yours or someone in operations that checks stations. Who is assigned to actually do that and how frequently do they do so?  **B. Gray** It's all of the above. If the attendants see something they should say something. If a worker or janitor see something they are also told to report it. In addition, the inspection we do were part of the condition survey. So there's a team going out to every station during those inspections so right now we just finished our five year assessment of the station. I can't speak on the operations to try and decide because I don't know their schedule but I'm sure they go through a similar product.  **A. Albert** Rich Davey's philosophy now is when you're when you're doing work in a station or you're closing it ‘do as much different kinds of work as you possibly can’ like they're doing on the concourse line now.  **B. Gray** Yes, Which is why we're collaborative writing with each other to make sure.  **J. Anthony** Hi, Barney. Oh, I need to bring your attention on my home station, Atlantic Ave/ Barclays Center. There's a particular elevator (elevator 302) The signage is still not updated yet.  **B. Gray** I believe there's someplace on the website, where you can leave comments, questions, concerns related to specific stations, elevators and escalators. I'll certainly do what I can but I would encourage you to do that as well.  **S. Goldstein** One of our rules is oversight, you know, and you have a very robust team. What's your biggest challenge right now, from doing what you do? These things that everyone mentioned today are very important, but they're not under your purview. In terms of what you do in the capital process, what's your biggest challenge? The lead board should know that.  **B. Gray** We have a really aggressive program over this year and next year, we're coming out of this COVID environment. It's been really challenging from both a contractor perspective, as well as a staffing issue. A lot of people decided during COVID that they wanted to take some time off or work from home. My biggest challenge is making sure we can deliver what we've committed to, from both a staffing perspective, making sure that the contractor pool can keep up with our demand so we're constantly trying to engage new contractors.  **A. Albert** I was told there are monthly inspections of the elevated structures undertaken to make sure that the full bolts or whatever and they do outside the stations, do you get reports on those inspections at all.  **B. Gray** They're constantly doing inspections, I would imagine daily, there's a number of groups on the operation side that does that. The only way I would be involved would be to the extent that they were looking for us to either support them in some kind of way.  **A. Albert** If they do an inspection on the outside of the station while they're inspecting elevated structures, and they see a structural issue- would that be reported to your department?  **B. Gray** No, They would actually take care of it.  **A. Albert** Let me let me say thank you so much, for being here and for answering our questions.  **B. Gray** Thank you all your questions and concerns are valid to the extent that I can address and answer some of them I will, but I encourage you to visit the website.  **S. Goldstein** Could we do a debrief for a moment? I think what Lisa was raising and what I was raising, because we had these concerns before, whether there's equity (and he's not making those decisions) on how these projects are being addressed. So that may be something if he does share those lists with you have as the active project is broken down and shared with the board this way. The other thing that he's telling, because remember what our role is, besides advocacy for the riders is to do agency oversight, he's telling you about an issue with procurement and the inability to get a vendor or a broader pool of vendors to do the work because staffing has been an issue with COVID and even before COVID. I would ask Lisa to maybe let's follow up in an executive way, because remember, we talked about impediments to procurement with changes in procurement rules, or whether that's an impact, you know, impacting their vendor pool. We talked about that last year. The lack of venue came up at the board meeting, when it was mentioned that we only have two car manufacturers to choose from now.  **L. Daglian** I think that that's an industry wide issue, not just for transit. But construction is ramping up. So even 10 years ago, there weren't many vendors and now they're more limited number of vendors. There are different rules in place, and the cost of the projects are so high. But that's something that we can pursue both internally and externally with some of the trade organizations, you know, represent some of the contractors to find out what kind of work they're doing. But yes, we will do that. Absolutely.  **S. Goldstein** He's really only focusing on those projects that are in his portfolio but it's welcoming to hear that if there is something that's passed on about a project that they're working on, they'll get that.  **C. Greif** When you submit these complaints in to the MTA complaint system, it's a miracle if you do get a response back. I put in a complaint, and I took pictures, and I still have the pictures and It looks like somebody's beat up the whole station and no one got back to me.  **A. Albert** When you got a response, was it an automated response or an actual response that address exactly what you said.  **C. Greif** The general Thank you, we will get back to you.  **A. Albert** Okay. We need to move to old business. Does anyone have any items of old business?  **Old Business:**  **S. Goldstein** I'm going to ask one question about the station cleaning schedule- did we get an update?  **A. Albert** It's still an ongoing concern. We haven’t heard back. Deborah, what's your issue?  **D. Greif** to follow up on what Stuart and Chris said about cleanliness and the issues we have on the outside stations, and we report it correctly. We're not always given the first the automated response, but they're really not following through with us. Also, Chris and I do have the apps to let us know when elevators and escalators are out. It does help to a point but of course you can't help it when you get to the station and it just got turned off or something happened.  **A. Albert** I think if you'd give a complaint to a booth agent or someone in the station, you're not likely to get a response back. But if you don't see action, just let us know. And we'll follow up.  **E. Wollman** Speaking of station agents, is there any plan to have them resume their full duties?  **A. Albert** I haven't heard anything lately. I think at one point there was a plan to have them stroll around and give assistance and help customers with machines. It's possible when the OMNY machines are beginning to be installed, they may resume that possible roll because I think that would be great.  **C. Greif** The only stations that do have agents is listed on the accessibility website page on the on the MTA site.  **A. Albert** While we are lucky enough to now have a quorum Can we have an approval of today's agenda **Chris:** motion to approve **Stuart:** second. Anybody opposed? The minutes -everybody received them, any corrections or additions to be made?  **C. Greif** I'd like to make a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. **Bert:** Second!    ***Approval of Agenda for September 29, 2022 meeting.***  ***Approval of Minutes for July 28, 2022 meeting.***  **A. Albert** Okay, let's move to new business, which I assume might have some items, Stuart.  **New Business:**  **S. Goldstein** I'd like to bring up new business if we could queue up the photo. Many, many moons ago, we talked about the authorities’ efforts, either through the capital projects, to make sure the rolling stock was protected. In Queens recently, trains that was stored underground on the Queens Boulevard line have been tagged. The graffiti is elaborate, looks like they had a lot of time to do this. We've spent a lot of money to improve track detection. People being in areas that are not authorized such unused tracks and at the storage yards. The other picture that we're going to see is a train stored on Queens Boulevard. I think we have an obligation to revisit the issue in a broad way, whether it's transit police, whether it's structure, yard security etc.  **A. Albert** This is very instructional, because if they have time to do this, somebody who means the system harm, bad, could have time to do something much, much worse.  **S. Goldstein** Are the patrols not happening? Because of COVID? Is it something else? Are people complicitous and letting them in and telling them where to look? I think we should revisit the issue.  **W. Sanford** Please? Can we finally use the express tracks at all times? Between Jay Street and Church Avenue so we get better service.  **A. Albert** Until you rebuild the lower level of Bergen streets so that folks in that very important area can have service and you don't skip Carroll Gardens, Boerum Hill, and Red Hook that whole neighborhood from Jay Street all the way to 7th Avenue is far too great a population to miss out on. Anybody that has ridden the F train south from Jay Street. Have you noticed how slow it goes between Jay st and Bergen? It's really, really slow. There's a lot of interlocking traffic.  **A. Albert**  Are there any other items of new business?  **C. Greif** I actually have two items. The first one is about Access a ride. The new app is still being tested because the company that used to own it, no longer does. It's great for tracking the vehicles and although it still has glitches we know where it is.  **A. Albert** I think that's going to be a great service. You don't have to go out too early and wait. You know the name of the provider, and the type of vehicle.  **J. Spezio** I think it's great that they updated these features. You also have to think how many people actually have smart devices and if they'll be able to utilize the app because a lot of them don't have a smartphone. For example the elderly clients may not know how to use some of those devices so that could also be problematic.  **C. Greif** The other thing is I know we mentioned about accessibility, Andrew, and a lot of things that are coming up with RFPs that are listed. I just hope with the RFPs that come out as well in the Brooklyn redesign, that this will be a good opportunity that the Brooklyn and Queens redesign are going to be adding those elevators to access the stations as they did with the Bronx redesign.  **A. Albert** I can't imagine they wouldn't do it the same way.  **S. Goldstein** For the next meeting, I think we should add something on for new business. The news media's talking about this proposal. The Queensway park, ( Kara- Pls help with this part) we had talked about the Queens link. We had talked about the reactivation of the Rockaway Beach branch. I think we should take a position because it ties into the relegation of the Atlantic branch to it to a scoot. There is a physical connection between Brooklyn and the Rockaway Beach branch.  **A. Albert** They can link it by the line branches off from the Long Island Railroad, you know, near Rego Park, basically, if you restored that, and did what you're suggesting, make it the Queen's link, and even sent it to the Rockaways you could have a service from Penn Station, or Grand Central to the airport in like 20 minutes.  **S. Goldstein** We discussed that when they were years ago when they were proposing the air train. I'm not suggesting that I'm a mayoral representative. I'm saying that the topic needs to be I'm happy to the early air to gamble, but it's the M train, I think. And I think Lisa could weigh in. I don't have the technical expertise anymore. You know, one of the issues related to that was the uncertainty of funding if there was the connection, you know, sources of funding and that sort of driving the train pun intended about moving to the park option. If we do that we preclude so many other things. And it's also tied to the Interborough Express Project, because again, and I am on the record, I don't think the authority has the capacity to manage another line. They can't maintain what they have now. I think the railroad or a new unit would be best.  **L. Daglian** If you can tune into the presentation this evening, or check it out afterwards, when it's recorded. There's a lot of good information about what they're looking at. There are three different options at their portal that down do for the IBX for the Queensway versus the Queen's link. I think that the mayor's office and the MTA said that they're continuing to talk. So that Queen's link is not precluded from the Queen's way, which I think is a great relief to a lot of those who are continuing to fight for it. The funding issue is is going to continue to be that so it needs RPA has been a big champion of that but they're fighting the IBX fight at the momen.t I do recommend the IBX presentation, we had a sneak peek. And it's really, really interesting in the end the option to to look  **S. Goldstein** For the link and the way, is there sufficient room along the right of way to have a train and a park to coexist, is it just that possible, given the residential development that's there now.  **A. Albert** IBX would be a railroad operation because it will be on railroad tracks, basically.  **S. Goldstein** There would be different challenges. If it was NY City Transit, it would be largely outdoors and if we can't even contain the track that's met with the graffiti train now, and securing it properly, then how can take on another responsibility.  **B. Gray**  I told you, because the dog track itself is it's more, it's more crazy. So I like the biller  **L. Daglian** I think they they would be bound by FRA regulations because it would be for IBX, it that would be using an active freight line. In large since it's FRA regulated, it would and I don't know this 100% but that would be a natural extension to consider that it would be managed by railroad, since they are FRA regulated. This is something that we can also continue to follow up with. They're still looking at three options.  **A. Albert** Thank you all. Very interesting meeting and there's a move to adjourn. Thank you all and we'll see you next month.    **Action Items:**  **None**  **Adjourned**  Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAUcNUxhJow>  The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.  Respectfully submitted,  Lisa Daglian  Executive Director |