



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

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Transit Riders Have Reason to Cheer As Governor Hochul Delivers 2023 State of the State, Shares Policy Priorities

Today, Governor Kathy Hochul gave transit riders a reason to cheer as she delivered her 2023 State-of-the-State speech and laid out her policy priorities for the coming year.

“Today Governor Hochul showed — again — that she supports transit, covering a wide range of topics, but largely getting to the heart of what matters to regular riders,” said PCAC Executive Director Lisa Daglian. “From committing to ensuring the long-term fiscal health of the MTA, to moving ahead with congestion pricing, to making the reduced fare CityTicket available 24/7, to further increasing funding for mental health services and after care to help improve safety underground, to improving bus reliability by expanding ABLE, to announcing that the Interborough Express will be a light rail project, the Governor has laid out her agenda over the coming months: in many ways, it mirrors ours.

“The first priority must be to ensure that the MTA is on solid financial footing so that it can continue to operate as the essential service it is, and we look forward to a spirited, yet critically important discussion over the coming months as budget talks unfold. Pushing congestion pricing over the finish line will ensure that the capital program — and projects like the Interborough Express — will get funded and built. The installation of Automated Bus Lane Enforcement (ABLE) cameras on 900 buses will catch cars that break the law, making buses more dependable and reducing travel times, encouraging public to rely more on buses. And increasing riders’ sense of safety and security in the system by taking further steps to address the mental health crisis underground will help get more people back onboard.

“We’re particularly proud that CityTicket expansion to 24/7 was in the spotlight today. This discount fare policy, first proposed by PCAC in 2003 and implemented by the MTA in 2004, will open access on the LIRR and Metro-North to tens of thousands of riders across New York City every day. Only one thing could make it better, and that’s making it a Freedom Ticket to ride, by adding the option of transfers to buses and subways.

“The Governor’s ambitious and wide-ranging housing proposal also touches directly on transit — the ‘T’ in TOD. We are hopeful that the \$250 million that is being proposed to

support planning and infrastructure needs will also include funding that focuses on transit infrastructure investments, whether accessibility, station enhancements or other projects that will make the proximate areas more desirable to new neighbors, and new neighborhoods.

“Together, the Governor’s agenda will help increase mobility and equity for hundreds of thousands of riders who live in the region. CityTicket expansion, bus improvements and the IBX have the potential to save countless hours of travel and provide access to more jobs and opportunities.

“We look forward to working with the Governor and legislature to make these proposals become reality, while continuing to prioritize the needs and concerns of riders throughout this process. Together, we can create a 21st century transit system that serves all New Yorkers.”