**MTA Joint LIRR and Metro-North Committee Testimony**

**Incorporating Rider Feedback to Improve LIRR Service**

**By: Kara Gurl**

**April 24, 2023**

Good morning, I’m Kara Gurl, Planning and Advocacy Manager at the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC).

Happy birthday to the LIRR! Almost two months into full service to Grand Central Madison, riders and the railroad are still adjusting to the new schedules. With multiple rounds of tweaks and improvements since February 27th, we appreciate that the MTA and the LIRR are looking for opportunities to solve the most glaring issues including adding more service to Penn, lengthening trains, and increasing peak service to and from Atlantic Terminal. As PCAC and LIRRCC have said from the beginning, listening and responding to the concerns of riders is key to ensuring that everyone can benefit from this major investment in the LIRR and Long Island.

That’s why we published a digital survey earlier this month, available at pcac.org: to better understand the major issues commuters are still facing. We hope the information we’re compiling on what riders like, dislike, and their suggestions for improvements will help inform decisions when it comes time for the next round of major adjustments. Many comments so far have focused on bringing back timed connections. It’s clear that commuters have been regularly inconvenienced by narrowly missing their connecting train and needing to wait 20 or 30 minutes—or more—when they previously had timed connections or didn’t have to change trains. While on-time performance is improving, having trains running even a couple of minutes behind can add close to an hour when connections are no longer held.

Our survey has also shown some positive results: commuters heading to the East Side have a faster commute and appreciate the one-seat ride on trips that previously required multiple transfers. As time goes on and more riders visit Grand Central Madison, we’re confident that you’ll quickly reach the next ridership milestone after last week’s millionth trip.

We’re also glad to hear that Mets-Willets Point will have 24/7 service—all the more reason for the station to be made fully accessible! We hope that a funding model similar to Elmont-UBS station can be used, to take advantage of the extensive private investment in the surrounding area.

We hope to see the railroad continue to monitor rider concerns and make ongoing adjustments—riders hold the key to unlocking a better LIRR. Thank you.