**MTA Transit Committee Testimony**

**Transit Is Essential for Riders and the Planet**

**September 18, 2023**

Good morning, I’m Lisa Daglian, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC.

Records are made to be broken and we’re happy to be part of the broken record that is higher ridership numbers. Every number represents a person getting onboard – maybe even back onboard for the first time in a few years. Trains and buses are crowded, streets and sidewalks are thronged, and there is a refreshing vibrancy on subways and buses, even as we’re getting jostled or have to wait for the next train because the first one is too full.

The good news is we aren’t waiting as long, thanks to additional service that’s been added on weekends and off-peak, with more to come. The bad news, of course, is having to wait because some numbskull went on a window-smashing spree that took down the W line.

We need a reliable transit system more than ever. Climate Week and the U.N. General Assembly are just warmups for the holiday traffic season and reminders that leaving the car at home is the fastest and most ecologically friendly way to get where you’re going. Congestion Pricing will be another reminder that transit is the best way to get around, with the benefits of improving air quality, reducing traffic and funding critical improvement projects.

Millions of us rely on transit, and there are ways to make it even better. Bus lanes and busways substantially speed up buses— we can’t wait until New York City’s buses finally move faster than a chicken (which can run up to nine miles an hour). When the Streets Plan was first announced last year, we were thrilled to hear the city commit to 150 miles of new bus lanes and busways by the end of 2025. What a major difference for riders! This would be especially true on Fordham Road, a busway whose time has surely come. Unfortunately, the city is currently far behind its bus lane targets: with 50 miles targeted by the end of 2023, only 6.8 miles have been completed.

Mr. Mayor, it’s time to get moving, so buses can too.

Transit ties us together and gets us where we need to go. Four million people can’t be wrong.