**MTA Board Meeting Testimony**

**Congestion Pricing is Good for New York and New Jersey, and**

**Essential for Transit Equity**

**January 31, 2024**

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

We’re celebrating today because Sunday marks Transit Equity Day, observed on Rosa Park’s birthday in recognition of her life and legacy and as a National Day of Action to further the goal of providing frequent, reliable, accessible, and affordable public transportation.

Thanks to the elected officials who last year funded the MTA like the essential public service it is, New York has made great strides in that direction. We’re so fortunate to have champions of the people in Governor Hochul and the legislature, and in the advocacy community with which we are proud to work.

But there’s more to do. Increasing and expanding accessibility across the system is an essential aspect of an equitable transit system. We were thrilled when you settled the 2017 lawsuits and committed to making 95-percent of subway stations accessible by 2055. We share worry that Congestion Pricing lawsuits are delaying that work. The slide Jamie showed on Monday with the big hole in 2023 Commitments that are directly related to CBDTP Delay was unsettling. The work that’s suffering isn’t “just” on subways, it’s across the system.

Hey New Jersey, maybe you and your pals can explain to millions of riders – including from your side of the river – why you’re holding up money for elevators, escalators, signals, tracks, new train cars and station improvements? It would be an interesting teachable moment.

Even as we continue to pursue Congestion Pricing to ensure that riders from around the region can benefit from safe, reliable and frequent transit service that everyone can access, so too are we seeking more equitable fares to allow more people to ride.

Expanding the senior and disability/Medicare discount to the morning peak on the railroads would right a legacy wrong. A weekly CityTicket with optional transfers to subways and buses and encouraging the city to complement the Governor’s fare evasion forgiveness proposal by bringing Fair Fares to the commuter rails would constitute concrete steps towards making transit affordable and equitable for all.

It’s also a sad day. Will Schwartz is abandoning us. Will, you’ve been tremendous and we’ll miss you. Thanks for the great ride, and good luck!