A meeting of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC) was convened at 12:00 noon on September 8, 2022 on the 20th floor, Conf. Room #4 at 2 Broadway, New York, NY 10004 and on Zoom.

**Member Attendance**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Gerard Bringmann (Chair)  Andrew Albert (Vice Chair) | Present  Present |
| Randolph Glucksman (Vice Chair) | Present |
| Francena Amparo (MNRCC) | Present |
| Richard Cataggio (MNRCC)  Rosalind Clay Carter (MNRCC) | Absent  Present |
| Francis T. Corcoran (MNRCC) | Present |
| Stuart Goldstein (NYCTRC)  Peter Gorry (LIRRCC) | Present  Absent |
| Christopher Greif (NYCTRC) | Present |
| William Guild (NYCTRC) | Absent |
| Marisol Halpern (NYCTRC)  Karen D. Hamilton (NYCTRC)  Cicely Harris (NYCTRC) | Present  Present  Present |
| Sharon King Hoge (NYCTRC) | Present |
| Trudy L. Mason (NYCTRC) | Present |
| Scott R. Nicholls (NYCTRC) | Absent |
| Bryan Peranzo (LIRRCC) | Present |
| Larry Rubinstein (LIRRCC)  Michael Stanton (MNRCC) | Present  Present |
| Burton M. Strauss, Jr. (NYCTRC)  Christy Tolbert (LIRRCC)  Walter Zullig (MNRCC) | Present  Absent  Present |
|  |  |

**Staff Attendance**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Lisa Daglian (Executive Director) | Present |
| Kara Gurl (Research & Comm Associate)  Jessica Spezio (Administrative Assistant) | Present  Present |
| Shaul Picker (Research Intern) | Absent |

**Non-member Attendance**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name**  Jeremy Feigelson  Richard Ravitch  Peter Ramos  Ray Raimundi  Kevin Duggan  Dave Colon  Greg Mocker  Danny Pearlstein  Dan Bianco  Joel Ettinger  Mark Lebow  Bohdan Oryshkevich  Jim Blair  Debra Greif  Bradley Brashears  Ron Troy  Jon Lindenbaum  Jim Katzenberger  Jason Anthony  Lenny Picker  David Kupferberg  Mike Howard  Eric Wollman  Clayton Guse | **Affiliation**  MTA, Special Counsel  Former Lt. Governor and Chair of MTA  Metro-North  MTA  amNewYork  Streetsblog  Pix11  Riders Alliance  Concerned citizen  Concerned citizen  Concerned citizen  Concerned citizen  Concerned citizen  Concerned citizen  Concerned citizen  Concerned citizen  Concerned citizen  Concerned citizen  Concerned citizen  Concerned citizen  Concerned citizen  Concerned citizen  Concerned citizen  Daily News |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Approval of agenda for September 8, 2022 meeting***  ***Approval of minutes for June 2, 2022 meeting***  **PCAC Chair’s Report/ LIRRCC Chair’s Report:**   * Yesterday, Governor Hochul announced that masks are now optional on transit. PCAC issued a statement saying, “The Governor’s 'mask optional' announcement is welcome and restores a sense of normalcy as we get back on trains and buses to return to work and school. Some of us may still choose to wear masks to protect ourselves – and that’s OK – so they will not disappear entirely, but it's one less contentious 'Rule of the Rails' that needs to be enforced when there are so many that are critical to rider safety.” * PCAC Staff recently organized a Press Conference in support of congestion pricing and got good participation from our elected officials (including the Manhattan Borough President) and excellent press coverage. As most of you are aware, the virtual public hearings on Congestion Pricing have been very well attended with many varying opinions, both pro & con being offered. * Our Executive Director, Lisa Daglian, is working diligently with MTA Human Resources to fill our open staff positions and we hope to start the interview process for our next Associate Director within the next couple of weeks. * At the LIRR, all of the mega projects (3rd Track, East Side Access & the Penn Station Renovation) appear to be continuing on schedule. Lisa & I attended the press conference held to celebrate the opening of the first section of 3rd Track in New Hyde Park and while we were unable to attend due to short notice, Governor Hochul & Janno Lieber held a press conference this past Tuesday to provide an update on the Penn Station Renovation. * The LIRRCC continues to push for a formal policy regarding the use of mechanized scooters and e-bikes on our trains and train platforms/stations. In response, it appears that the LIRR will be rolling out public service announcements advising our riders NOT to be riding these devices on our platforms or within our stations. * On a personal note, while I'm fairly familiar with Commuter Rail, I've taken tours of the Bus Command Center in Brooklyn (with Randy & Andrew) and the Subway Command Center (along with members of the Transit Riders Council) to get a better understanding of how our buses & subways operate. In addition, the LIRRCC took a field trip to the LIRR Movement Bureau in Jamaica, in lieu of our August meeting.   **C. Greif** On the Long Island Rail Road ADA side, I saw them testing a test train on the new track at Mineola, but they still have to work on the switching. The second thing is, it’s great to see that LIRR Cares is available at Jamaica, Penn Station and Atlantic Terminal and soon Grand Central.  **S. Goldstein** I wanted to mention that at the Rail Control Center, the tour was very impressive about the upgrades that they plan and how they are going to reorganize certain segments and modernize the board. We did see an old issue that they still haven't tackled, and I want to make sure that it's on the record, that again, if there is an issue that disrupts the subway system, there still needs to be better interaction with the surface transit operation. They still don't have anybody from the bus network embedded at the Control Center, and vice versa. We have to plan and be resilient. This an old issue, but it still hasn't been tackled.  **T. Mason** On a positive note, they do have now embedded police, fire and other essential services right there at Rail Control.  **R. Glucksman** Back when I worked there, we always had direct communication with the EMS, 911, the fire department and the police. What’s new is just the personnel being there.  **NYCTRC Chair’s Report:**   * Ridership appears to have plateaued for a few months, at the 60 to 61% level of ridership. Labor Day was particularly high and since Labor Day have increased. Today the schools started again and that will probably mean even higher ridership on the system. * Weekend ridership has already been high, so for discretionary travel, people are choosing transit. Saturdays and Sundays are standing room only on some lines because of the massive amount of work that's being done on weekends. * End of September for expected return of Z train after Archer Ave work * Tremendous use of #7 line for Mets, US Open (extra service provided) * Events highlighted extraordinary need to make Mets-Willets Pt station accessible!   **L. Daglian** At the rally that we held for congestion pricing, Assemblyman Robert Carroll ‒ who is also a big Mets fan ‒ was there, and I spoke to him about the importance of making Mets-Willets Point accessible. He committed to working with us on that.  **C. Greif**  I agree that we need to make it truly ADA accessible, with ramps and elevators.  **M. Lebow** My son Jeff Lebow works for the Mets. He's in charge of player development, which includes scouting and minor leagues and promotions and arbitration and all that sort of stuff. If we can be of any help to you, please let me know, because he attends all the major administration meetings at the Mets whenever they are deciding anything so if I can help let me know.  **L. Daglian** Thank you,I'm going to put my email in the in the chat.  **MNRCC Chair’s Report:**   * Member Rosalind Clay-Carter spoke at the July 25 Joint Committee Meeting advocating for some of the ideas that we as a Council had approved such as restoration of Quiet Cars and better mask enforcement. She did a great job! * Now that Congestion Pricing has gotten the go ahead, hearings were held during the month of August. Not everyone is on board with this. Rockland County Executive Ed Day issued a press release opposing the process for many reasons including that none of the members of the Traffic Mobility Review Board represent the west side of the Hudson. The County Executive also cited the “value gap” which exists because the county pays more for services than it receives. * On Thursday, August 18, the MTA released its new Train Time app which includes Metro-North and the Long Island Rail Road. I downloaded it and noticed that it is much better than the previous two separate railroad versions. While waiting for my train at Tarrytown, which was slightly delayed, I took the opportunity to ask some nearby customers if they had tried it, and I got only positive responses. The app has seen a few updates and enhancements due to user’s feedback. * The same day, we were hosted by several Metro-North managers. Kevin Kearney explained what goes on at the Track 25 Control Center which handles train movements (or non-movements – if there are problems) with Grand Central Terminal and the conference room overlooking the Rail Traffic Center which controls train movements throughout Metro-North territory. Chief Transportation Officer Joe Lagana explained how the RTC operates and answered all of our questions. * We then returned to the Information Kiosk where we were met by Paige Biancamano who escorted us to the East Side Access portion of GCT. We were provided with PPE (helmet, safety vest and safety glasses) and given a required safety talk. After that, we walked into the brand new, under-construction portion of East Side Access which will be accommodating customers before the end of this year. Paige answered all questions that were posed and explained how things have changed since the project was first proposed nearly two decades ago. One thing of note is that the number of ticket windows was reduced from 12 to four, to accommodate the fact that an increasing number of customers now purchase their tickets via the mobile ticketing app.   **L. Daglian** Jeremy is here, so let's let him begin.  **J. Feigelson** Thanks for the invitation and for the chance to be with you. As Lisa said, I joined the agency in March from private law practice after a long career of local government as sort of my night job, and now it's my day job. I’m glad to be here.  **Presentation:** **Fare Evasion Task Force Overview, Jeremy Feigelson, MTA**  ***Presentation Link:*** [***https://youtu.be/ooqGzzlXjhQ?t=950***](https://youtu.be/ooqGzzlXjhQ?t=950)  **G. Bringmann** We greatly appreciate that. A couple of observations. You mentioned Fair Fares. I think the biggest problem with Fair Fares is that they really need to do more outreach. A lot of people don't even know that it exists. PSAs on it should be stepped up. I was thrilled that you mentioned that you're dealing with high school students. One of the things that amazed me the most was, I used to catch the E train out of Penn Station. I was watching all these high school students hop the turnstile. These are kids in uniform, so I'm assuming if they're wearing uniforms, they're probably going to private schools and probably can afford to pay the fare and yet they're jumping over the turnstiles. I’m looking forward to seeing new approaches and while fresh approaches are great, sometimes even old approaches just need to be reinforced. I know the police can't be at every turnstile at every station, it's just too overwhelming. But again, Penn Station, you very rarely see any police there. Whether you’re taking the E train or you go to the other end for the 1/2/3 trains, this is a major station with major traffic.  **A. Albert** I do a lot of riding, and I cannot take a trip anymore without noticing multiple fare evasion incidents taking place. There are families that send their children under the turnstiles to go and open the slam gate and then the entire family goes in. This is all walks of life doing this now. $550 million in losses is an awful lot of service that could be provided, so we have to do something. New York relies on the fare to pay the bills more than any other system.  **S. Hoge** I think that it would be very helpful to have some kind of public relations campaign that makes it clear that this is illegal. Fare jumpers are robbing the other passengers. The attitude has to really be changed among the ridership.  **J. Feigelson** I appreciate the comment. You'll see in Janno's speech from back in April, the way he put it was that paying the fare wasn’t something you did for the MTA, it's done for each other. That's the message that I think you'll see the panel getting behind.  **S. Goldstein** I'm glad to hear you talked about social services aspect and trying to encourage people to get access to reduced fares. For the people who you said are determined to try to beat the system, have you looked at whether we need to look at the fines and penalties for chronic offenders, and look at disincentives? Is that part of the scope of what you're looking at?  **J. Feigelson** Everything that you just mentioned is in scope for the panel. We're looking at the TAB, we're looking at the penalty scheme, the regulations, what sort of legal path would be there to make some changes to that, that's all very much in scope. The panel will actually be making a field visit to the TAB to see the enforcement hearing process with their own eyes. So that's all very much part of what the panel is about.  **S. Goldstein** What's the panel's work thesis? Who is the entity that will be monitoring whether these proposed enhancements work? Is there someone within MTA Central? What's the plan on how we're going to monitor the evasion, fixes, and evasion losses post-panel?  **J. Feigelson** Chairman Lieber is personally laser focused on these issues. This is a very high priority for him, and I think you're seeing today a tremendous amount of senior management attention to all these issues. When the panel report is issued, it's going to have a list of recommendations and the recommendations will have an implementation path. There will be a lot of work that needs to be done across this agency and a lot of agencies that we partner with on these issues, including NYPD, HRA and others.  **S. Goldstein** Alright, so once it's sorted and settled what division or unit within the MTA is going to monitor progress post-panel, I'd appreciate if they can share that with our group.  **J. Feigelson** Absolutely. Thank you.  **M. Stanton** With the Bridges and Tunnels observations, you mentioned fraudulent license plates and concealed license plates. What about collections of pay by mail? What are the trends there and is that part of the scope here?  **J. Feigelson** We do that as mostly a separate issue. When we talk about evasion, we're talking primarily about the people who sail through with a deliberate effort to avoid the toll. There's been a lot of press reports about all the gizmos that people attach to their cars to obscure or rip license plates. There are these James Bond devices you can buy online that will actually roll down and conceal your license plate. There are devices that will flip your license plate and display a fake one as you approach a license plate reader. Evasion measurements on bridges and tunnels is relatively easy compared to the other systems because we've got the tolling gantries and stopped the automated license plate readers. We know that the EZ Pass saturation is extremely high. We're collecting from 95% of the drivers. We have to mail you the bill and the follow up on that, we haven't really defined internally as evasion. Bridges and Tunnels seem extremely focused on trying every day to get better.  **W. Zullig** The New York County District Attorney recently sent what I think is a very bad unfortunate message by saying he's not going to prosecute what he considers to be minor crimes such as fare evasion. I think a lot of police officers probably figured, why should I bother issuing summonses to these people when the DA isn't even going to prosecute them, at least not in Manhattan? Are you hopefully working with the Manhattan DA to get him to change his mind?  **J. Feigelson** We're in touch with all five DAs and there are five DAs with a range of approaches to these issues. I think you're probably referring to the day one memo from DA Bragg when he was sworn into office. He did say in that memo that fare evasion was mentioned as an example of a minor crime that generally wouldn't be prosecuted. Other DAs will prosecute it but not as a criminal offense.  **G. Bringmann** We touched on subways quite a bit but we didn't really touch on commuter rail. We have people on the commuter railroads who have IOUs for not paying the fare, some 15 to 20 times now and that escalates to hundreds of dollars. Where are we on that with prosecutors?  **J. Feigelson** First, there is a real balance to be struck between enforcement and keeping service running. It's a real issue. There's a balance to be struck between the evasion enforcement and the safety of our workers, especially those who are not law enforcement, like a conductor. So those are very real concerns and finding the right balance there is a challenge. I will say that we saw this when we went out on our Metro-North field visit, that the conductors are very attuned to this issue. They're trained on it and if they come across a “frequent flyer,” we know who those folks are. The protocol is that if someone is again refusing to pay, the conductor doesn't attempt to enforce, the conductors’ instructions are to call the MTAPD who are patrolling in cars up and down our train lines.  **A. Albert** When former Transit Police Chief Delatorre was in charge, he wanted to try to actually ban people from the system.  **J. Feigelson** There is a limited legal authority these days. They ban folks from the system for sexual assault or assault on an MTA employee, you may have seen in the news our leadership team in the Bronx supporting asking the judge to issue a ban in the case of an employee assault recently. So I'm not sure there's a current legal authority that would allow us to do that.  **L. Daglian** There are people on camera who have questions and comments and I know that there are more in the room. It's one of the reasons why PCAC is going to sit down with Jeremy and share thoughts, comments and questions and have a dialogue. So we greatly appreciate your time and we'll continue that again. If anybody here who's not a member of PCAC has questions or comments, please email them to me.  **G. Bringmann** At this time, I'm going to turn the meeting over to one of our members, Trudy Mason, to introduce our next guest.  **T. Mason** It has been over 40 years since I first had the honor and privilege of working with Dick back when he was the Chairman of the MTA. Before Dick came to the MTA, he first helped get the New York State Urban Development Corporation out of bankruptcy. Then, he helped to get New York City out of bankruptcy during the horrible fiscal crisis. When he took over as Chair of the MTA, it was in a lot worse of a fiscal crisis of its own than it is now. He developed, among so many other things, the Capital Program, and the most wonderful thing that he did is that he established the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA. Without him, we would not be here today. I had the pleasure of carrying that legislation, which he wrote, up to Albany for him. He then eventually became the Lieutenant Governor along with so many other titles that I could give him. There is so much more that I could say. Over the years I have learned so much from this man. With that said, I'd like you all to meet my friend, Dick Ravitch.  **D. Ravitch** Thank you. This is the first time I’ve been back since I was the Chair of the MTA, and it’s very emotional. I’m glad to be here with you all. It’s a funny story of how I was made the Chairman of the MTA by former Governor Ed Koch. I had a meeting scheduled with him about not defunding Channel 13. Instead of talking to me about Channel 13 during our meeting, he turned to me and said, “I want you to be the Chairman of the MTA.” I was taken aback at first, but he said he won’t take no for an answer. I agreed to take on the role, and when he announced my appointment, he said publicly that the fare would not go up for a year. There was no way we could wait a year, because the MTA was out of money. I soon realized that there was not enough money to fix the system or buy new equipment, and that I had to raise the fare. With regards to the current financial crisis, I believe that number one, we have to repay the federal debt right away. Number two, I think federal funds should be spread out over a number of years, but we have to deal with the operating crisis right away. Funds should not be used up now to create an even bigger issue down the line.  **Topics of discussion:**  - Congestion Pricing  - New revenue sources for the MTA  - Penn Station  - New York’s economic recovery  - Operating budget and fiscal crisis  **Guest Speaker and Q&A:** Richard Ravitch, former Chair of the MTA, former Lieutenant Governor, and former chair, New York State Urban Development Corp  ***Presentation link:*** [***https://youtu.be/ooqGzzlXjhQ?t=3410***](https://youtu.be/ooqGzzlXjhQ?t=3410)  **L. Daglian** Do you have any specific thoughts on operating funding?  **D. Ravitch** I think as long as cars are filling up on gas there should be a sales tax.    **R. Glucksman** Back in 1980 when I was a Motorman on strike, we received a letter from you saying we had to give two days back. I just wanted to share that memory with you.    **A. Albert** I agree with you on the gas tax. You did say that you believe congestion pricing is going to be gutted. Are you referring to the exemptions?  **D. Ravitch** Yes. People are going to cheat. They can get New Jersey plates and find other ways around it.  **S. Goldstein** Your fiscal wisdom is very much appreciated. Is there anything you'd want to share if you were still at the helm? Is there anything we should be tackling?  **D. Ravitch** We have to work with the labor unions. I feel they need to look at and review the contracts so they are current.    **A. Albert** I have to say that serving on the Board with labor, including John Samuelson and Norman Brown, that they have been doing their share trying to get riders back.  **D. Ravitch** They haven't done anything to protect their membership.  **S. Hoge** Do you have any other ideas for operating funding besides a fuel tax?  **D. Ravitch** I see an option for corporate income tax, in context of the state having unemployment insurance funds. The Governor will have to ask the legislature for $7 to $8 billion and will require a new tax revenue.  **L. Daglian** There's a question in the chat about John Samuelson's idea of moving $1 billion from the congestion pricing lock box funds over to operating.  **D. Ravitch** I think it's absolutely critical and therefore that's why I said earlier the MTA or legislature is going to have to deal with a new source of revenue for our capital.  **S. Hoge** What kind of relationship do you have with the Governor?  **D. Ravitch** I knew Kathy back when she worked for Pat Moynihan. I have not spent any time with her in the past few months.  **K. Duggan** What would you say to the Governor or Chair about people trying to cheat the congestion pricing issues?    **D. Ravitch** I only know what I read in the papers. I believe it's not going to produce $1 billion in revenue to enable MTA to borrow $15 billion.  **S. Hoge** What are your thoughts on selling station sponsorships to raise money?  **D. Ravitch** I am all in favor of anything to raise money for the MTA. If a rich guy wants to name a station after himself, then write the check.  **J. Anthony** There are only two bus routes that go to our Amazon location in Staten Island. What are your thoughts on shuttle buses to get Amazon employees to and from work?  **D. Ravitch** Without understanding the particulars and the expense of it, I think the MTA should maximize transportation to these locations.    **A. Albert** What about value capture?  **D. Ravitch** Sure, that would be something to discuss with the city.  **C. Guse** You mentioned congestion pricing revenue may not be up to snuff. I'm interested on your take on the MTA cost when it comes to how much money the region is requesting from the federal government.  **D. Ravitch** Prior to this meeting I reached out to someone regarding how much infrastructure money will be given to the MTA, but I was unable to reach her so unfortunately, I don't know that answer.  **G. Bringmann** Thank you so much for being with us Mr. Ravitch, we appreciate you taking time to come here today.  ***Old Business:***  **C. Greif** Are we going to be doing any new surveys for the new year, maybe a survey on accessibility or fare evasion and cleanliness in the stations?  **L. Daglian** I think that we should wait to see the outcome of the fare evasion task force and the report. I don't think that we need to mirror the work that they're doing, because it's unbelievably excellent. So let's see what it looks like before we decide and let's meet with them. It's definitely something to look into when we have more staff as well.  **G. Bringmann** I agree Lisa. We're hoping that if everything goes according to plan, we should have possibly two new staff members in the beginning of the year. Okay, any anybody else for old business or new business?  ***New Business:***  **S. Hoge** All around at the World Trade Center station they've got round red and green forward and back signs and you can confuse them with the 4/5/6 and the 1/2/3 train signs. Someone should tell them to make those signs a different shape so that you don't confuse them with the subway signs.  **A. Albert** Are those DOT signs or the World Trade Center itself?  **S. Hoge** I wrote to the Association for Downtown New York, and they said they don't know who puts them up but they should be a different color as it gets very confusing.  **C. Greif** They are World Trade Center accessible signs.  **G. Bringmann** If no one has anything else, can I have a motion to adjourn? Thank you everyone.   |  | | --- | | ***Adjourned*** |   **YouTube link:** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ooqGzzlXjhQ**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ooqGzzlXjhQ)  **Action Items:**  **None**  The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.  Respectfully submitted,  Lisa Daglian  Executive Director |
|  |
|  |