



Meeting Minutes of July 13, 2023

A virtual meeting of the Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council (LIRRCC) was held at 4:30 pm on Thursday July 13, 2023. Per Open Meeting Law requirements, an in-person quorum was not achieved. The public and members unable to attend in person joined via Zoom.

Member Attendance

Gerard P. Bringmann (Chair)	Present – virtual
Bryan Peranzo	Present – virtual
Larry Rubinstein (Vice-Chair)	Present – virtual
Christy Tolbert	Present – virtual
Peter Gorry	Absent

Staff Attendance

Lisa Daglian (Executive Director)	Present – virtual
Kara Gurl (Planning & Advocacy Manager)	Present – virtual
Jessica Spezio (Administrative Assistant)	Present – virtual
Ryan Leighton (PCAC Intern)	Present – virtual

Non-member Attendance

Name	Affiliation
Anabel Frias	LIRR
Stuart Desser	Concerned citizen
Ron Troy	Concerned citizen
Michael Gilbert	Concerned citizen
Debra Greif	Concerned citizen

**Not approved due to lack of in-person quorum: Agenda for July 13, 2023 meeting.
Not approved due to lack of in-person quorum: Minutes for May 15, 2023 meeting.**

Chair's Report:

- As you probably know already, the MTA is going to be voting on fare hikes for the LIRR, Metro-North & NYC Transit, later this month. These hikes will average approximately 4% and will be the first imposed since 2019. In addition to the fare increases, there is the possibility that both the Atlantic Ticket & 20 trip peak Ticket programs will be discontinued.
- The final approval for Congestion Pricing has been received and the Traffic Mobility Review Board has been convened and will hold its first meeting on July 19th @ 4:00 pm to discuss various pricing options and exemptions. There will be no public speaking at this meeting, but comments/concerns can be submitted. If you'd like the contact information, please let me or Lisa know, and we will forward it to you. We can also forward you the live stream link for this meeting.
- While a majority of the commuters have appeared to be adjusting to the new "post Grand Central Madison" schedules, we are still receiving complaints. While it is doubtful that the LIRR will make any major schedule changes this fall, I will continue to fight for the restoration of timed connections during the evening rush hour. For some of our commuters, a missed connection can mean a 45-to-60-minute wait at Jamaica, and this is unacceptable.
- The LIRR and Metro North are currently investigating the possibility of "zero emissions" train sets to be used in what is now diesel territory. It is my understanding that they will be presenting a report on this later this month at either the MTA Committee or Board meeting.
- Last month, Governor Hochul announced that plans for reconstructing Penn Station would move forward and be "decoupled" from the Vornado plan, which would have included additional — and controversial — real estate transactions and the development of new office towers, along with the construction of nine new tracks to the south. She stated that she wants the plan to modernize Penn Station to move forward to benefit commuters now. There is a competing proposal from a private firm to work with MSG to move forward with a different concept, which has so far been rejected by the MTA.

- In addition, NYC is considering whether to grant MSG an additional 10-year extension, which just cleared a major hurdle at the Department of City Planning. The extension requires MSG to construct various public space improvements around the arena over the next two years, including planters and seating at the blocks' corners, a "3D lenticular art wall" along a currently barren stretch of Eighth Avenue, and new grand entrances to Penn Station at its Eighth Avenue corners. There is still significant community opposition. Next up is a City Council vote. Stay tuned!

Executive Director/ Staff update:

Lisa provided an update on the Research and Communications Associate hiring process. She also shared that Kara and Ryan have been working on a new survey about LIRR service changes that riders would like to see, and they will discuss the survey later in the meeting.

LIRR Updates:

Anabel gave an update on the schedule timetable changes that will be announced later this week and go into effect on September 5, 2023. She also mentioned the ongoing ADA enhancement projects at various stations, starting with Amityville, Copiague, Lindenhurst, and Massapequa Park, and progressing to other stations in the coming months. Anabel addressed questions from a previous meeting about the Montauk trains' speed and sharing that congestion on the Babylon line has decreased since the March and April schedule tweaks. Anabel shared that ADA accessibility at the East Northport station is not currently part of the 2020-2024 capital plan. She also noted that discussions about the Port Washington yard are ongoing with the LIRR and elected officials.

Gerry said he hopes the new schedules coming in September will make easier connections during the rush hour travels and emphasized the inconvenience of missing a connection during the evening rush.

Ron inquired about elevator and escalator availability at Jamaica and the possibility of adding them at the west end of the tracks to improve transfers. It was suggested that announcements be made that escalators are available on the east end of the platforms.

Larry also stressed the issue of making connections when you have to run up and over to catch your next train.

Kara- Survey update/ Social Media

Kara explained the draft survey, which is similar to the previous Spring survey about the first round of service changes. It asks about the respondent's starting and ending stations, transfers, boarding times, frequency of rides, ticket type, and the impact of the new schedule on their commute. Participants are also asked to rate their passenger experience on a scale of 1 to 10 and provide open-ended feedback on scheduling changes. Based on feedback from members, a question will be added about the ease of making train connections.

Kara shared the social media and communications update, including issues related to overcrowding on eastbound Friday trains, particularly on the Montauk line. There are also complaints about hot cars without air conditioning. She shared that the LIRR Twitter account is typically responsive when riders bring issues to their attention. Lastly, she explained that there are general complaints about missed connections and inconsistencies in holding the following train when one train arrives late at Jamaica.

Old Business:

Gerry mentioned ongoing conversations about electrifying the Port Jefferson branch, a project that will likely cost 2.5 billion dollars.

New Business:

NONE

Action items:

NONE

Adjourned

Meeting recording: <https://youtu.be/E6yXdClObmY>

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 PM.
Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Daglian
Executive Director