**Saving Money, Putting Riders First-**

**PCAC Testimony to the MTA Finance Committee**

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

I know we all are anxiously awaiting the New York State Budget that will fully fund the MTA’s 2025-29 Capital Plan, having made the case that the program, which is 90% state of good repair projects, is absolutely essential to avoiding another Summer of Hell. We have spent much of the winter and spring ensuring the State Legislature knows the stakes, and we have confidence they will deliver.

As they deliberate in Albany, PCAC has noted the progress this body has made in keeping both operating and capital costs under control, especially when federal support for transit has never seemed more tenuous. And while we believe Secretary Duffy’s suggestion that DOGE look at MTA finances is laughable and ludicrous, we would be utterly unsurprised if the federal government did everything in its power to strip New York State of badly needed transportation and infrastructure funding.

As we noted in an op-ed in Streetsblog, the MTA’s operating budget is 3 percent smaller today than it was pre-pandemic, with an anticipated $500 million in savings this year without a single layoff or service cut. We’re also thrilled to see fare receipts above budgeted estimates on nearly every MTA mode. On the capital side, improved planning, contracting, and construction have saved $3 billion in the current plan.

While DOGE has taken a wrecking ball to federal agencies, MTA has used a scalpel – saving taxpayers billions without throwing riders under the proverbial bus. Is there more work to be done to make construction projects even faster and more efficient? Absolutely. A lot of the heavy lifting has to happen in Albany, where outdated work rules, contracting and procurement procedures, and other budget-busting traditions are baked into the system. But has the MTA made significant progress worth celebrating? 100 percent, yes.

Finally, we’d like to thank Chair Zuckerman – a former MNRCC member – for continuing to advocate for the needs of riders in your capacity as an MTA Board member despite political pressure to do otherwise. We particularly appreciate your steadfast support for congestion pricing, especially when Suburban voices favoring the program were few and far between. Thank you.