

Per Open Meeting Law requirements, an in-person meeting of the New York City Transit Riders Council (NYCTRC) was convened at 2 Broadway at 12:00 pm and at the Manhattan Community Board 10 office at 215 West 125th Street, 4th floor, 10027, and 57 Leonard St, NY* on Thursday, January 30, 2025. Members of the public and Council members unable to attend were present via Zoom.

Member Attendance

Andrew Albert (Chair)	Present
Burton M. Strauss Jr. (Vice Chair)	Present
Dante Arnwine	Present – virtual
Andrew Bennett	Absent
Stuart Goldstein	Present
Christopher D. Greif	Present
Marisol Halpern	Present – virtual
Karen Hamilton	Present – virtual
Cicely Harris	Present
Gene Haynes	Present – virtual
Khalia Hayslett	Absent
Sharon King Hoge	Present
Trudy L. Mason	Present
Scott R. Nicholls	Present*

Staff Attendance

Lisa Daglian (Executive Director)	Present
Brian Fritsch (Associate Director)	Present
Kara Gurl (Planning & Adv. Manager)	Present
Jack Connors (Research & Comm. Associate)	Present
Jessica Spezio (Administrative Assistant)	Present

Non-member Attendance

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Charlie Zhen	MTA
Cate Contino	MTA GCR
Carl Perrera	Concerned Citizen
Debra Greif	Concerned Citizen
William Stanford Jr.	Concerned Citizen

Andrew Kurzweil
Matty Buchys Hyland

Concerned Citizen
Concerned Citizen

Approval of January 30, 2025 Agenda
Approval of November 21, 2024 Agenda

Approval of October 31, 2024 Minutes

Chair/ Board Report: by Andrew Albert

- Congestion Pricing

Congestion pricing is proving effective, even according to some former opponents. Drivers report faster, easier trips, supported by statistics showing about 13,000 fewer vehicles in the congestion zone every day. Traffic reports indicate reduced delays at key tunnels and smoother travel on bridges, while express buses are also making better time.

Scott mentioned that traffic is backed up on the Gowanus Expressway as people scramble for alternate options in Brooklyn instead of driving into the city.

Stuart inquired about traffic patterns on the rise in other areas outside of the CBD, specifically downtown Brooklyn.

Scott raised that toll evasion needs to be addressed.

- Ridership Report

Subway ridership has increased by 7.3% on weekdays and 12.2% on weekends, with similar rises on Long Island Rail Road, Metro-North, and New Jersey Transit. This shift to mass transit is improving air quality and easing traffic for those who must drive.

- Reduction in Trip Times

Travel times on the East River bridges are much smoother. Express buses coming through the Battery Tunnel and other tunnels, including from New Jersey, are making much better time.

- 2025-2029 Capital Program

The Capital Program Review Board declined to approve the current capital plan because of a \$33 billion funding gap.

Lisa added that the PCAC is working to identify and advocate for various funding options and sources to fill the \$33 billion gap in the upcoming capital plan. This includes exploring things like adding a line item in the state budget, tax credits, and other potential revenue streams.

- Crosstown Buses: Speedier!

The MTA is seeing improved bus speeds across many routes, including those using the river crossings into the congestion zone.

- Emergency Vehicles

Congestion pricing has allowed emergency vehicles like ambulances to reach their destinations much faster.

The overall reductions in trip times, ranging from 10-48%, are expected to benefit emergency vehicle travel as well.

- Change in rush hour travel

Drivers are adjusting their travel times to avoid peak toll periods, with more entering before 5 am and after 9 pm.

This dispersal of traffic throughout the day, rather than concentrated in the traditional rush hours, is helping to reduce overall congestion levels.

Presentation: Charlie Zhen, Manager, Community Engagement:
Congestion Pricing update

View presentation and Q & A: https://youtu.be/gi_qupEbl10?t=738

Reduced Vehicle Entries: Fewer vehicles are entering the congestion zone, with a noticeable drop in January.

Improved Travel Times: Traffic speeds have increased, reducing travel times and improving bus efficiency.

Increased Transit Ridership: More people are using subways, commuter rails, and express buses, especially on weekends.

Driver Behavior Changes: Drivers are shifting travel times to avoid peak tolls, spreading traffic more evenly throughout the day.

Vehicle Class Data: 57% of vehicles are passenger cars, 36% are taxis, and 7% are trucks, buses, or motorcycles.

Data Transparency: The MTA is publicly sharing vehicle data and addressing customer inquiries on discounts and exemptions.

Mitigation Efforts: \$330 million has been allocated for initiatives like clean trucks and overnight deliveries.

Stuart asked if they are seeing new traffic patterns or heavy traffic in areas just outside of the CBD. He also mentioned people being charged the improper toll rates, exemptions not being applied and multiple charges throughout the day. Charlie responded by saying they have not yet noticed new patterns in traffic outside of the CBD. He also advised that EZ Pass cross references license plates and can take up to 3 days to show up on the bill or for the credits to show.

Scott also mentioned increased traffic on the BQE/Gowanus due to drivers scrambling to find other alternatives to get into the city.

Cicely asked if air quality will be monitored uptown and in other boroughs, and Charlie responded that the city will be monitoring air quality, but a longer data collection period is necessary.

Executive Director: Lisa Daglian

Lisa discussed the PCAC's plans to testify at the upcoming joint legislative budget hearing. The PCAC will advocate for their fare proposals and support the MTA's capital program.

Rider-First Fare Agenda: Lisa outlined the PCAC's five key fare proposals, including:

- Extending senior/disabled/Medicare discounts to A.M. peak hours on commuter rails
- Expanding family fare on commuter rails to cover ages 12-17
- Expanding Fair Fares to 200% of the federal poverty level
- Expanding Fair Fares to the LIRR and Metro-North within NYC
- Creating a Weekly CityTicket with transfers between commuter rails and NYC Transit

Capital Program Funding Gap: Lisa mentioned the \$33 billion funding gap in the MTA's upcoming capital program. The PCAC is working to identify various funding options and sources to help fill this gap. This includes exploring options like line items in the state budget and tax adjustments.

Rider Representation Act: Lisa discussed the PCAC's support for the Rider Representation Act, which would give riders votes on the MTA Board.

Coordination with Elected Officials: She mentioned the PCAC's ongoing work and outreach to the legislators in Albany, the NYC Council Speaker's office, and the governor's office on their fare proposals and more.

Old Business:

Trudy mentioned the urgency of curbing buses and how the drivers don't always do so.

NYCTRC MINUTES

5

New Business:

NONE

Action Items:

NONE

Adjourned

Video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gi_qupEb110

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.
Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Daglian
Executive Director