

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, on Thursday, November 21, 2024. 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 – virtual
Dante Arnwine	Present
Andrew Bennett	Absent
Stuart Goldstein	Present
Christopher D. Greif	Present
Marisol Halpern	Present – virtual
Karen Hamilton	Present – virtual
Cicely Harris	Present*
Khalia Hayslett	Present – virtual
Sharon King Hoge	Present
Trudy L. Mason	Present
Scott R. Nicholls	Present – virtual

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)	Absent
Henry Mei (Intern)	Present

Non-member Attendance

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Juliette Michaelson	MTA
Cate Contino	MTA GCR
Carl Perrera	Concerned Citizen
Debra Greif	Concerned Citizen
Jason Anthony	Concerned Citizen

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William Stanford Jr.	Concerned Citizen
Andrew Kurzweil	Concerned Citizen
Eric Wollman	Concerned Citizen
Matty Buchys Hyland	Concerned Citizen
Mehraz Khaleghi	Concerned Citizen
Richard Tjoa	Prospective MNRCC Member

Approval of November 21, 2024 Agenda Approval of October 31, 2024 Minutes

Chair/ Board Report: by Andrew Albert

- Andrew reported that congestion pricing is unpaused and set to begin on January 5 at a lower rate of \$9, 40% lower than initially planned, which might affect project funding and toll credits.
- Pending lawsuits: There are nine lawsuits against congestion pricing, including those from the United Federation of Teachers, New Jersey, Lower East Side residents, and truckers. He also mentioned the potential for some lawsuits to be settled and the ongoing conference with truckers to determine future actions.

Lisa shared that there may be potential for a temporary injunction.

- Projects set to move forward: Andrew discussed the impact of congestion pricing on various transportation projects, including the Second Avenue Subway tunneling and CBTC on the Fulton Street A and C and Sixth Avenue B, D, F, and M lines.

Andrew and other members discussed the impact of the reduced toll rate on funding and the pledge from the Governor to fund the next Capital Plan.

- Operating Efficiencies: Andrew explained that the MTA is required to find hundreds of millions of dollars in operating efficiencies, and NYCT has found additional efficiencies to save money.

Stuart asked if the MTA is tracking fare evasion reductions in their savings from operating efficiencies.

Lisa discussed the need for reduction in fare evasion on buses and subways and the shift to OMNY cards.

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Andrew and Lisa discussed the impact of new fare gates on reducing fare evasion and the need for continued enforcement efforts.

- Car Cleaning: Andrew reported on the impact of the drought on car cleaning and the reduction of car cleaning frequency.
- R211s: Andrew mentioned the removal of the R211s on the Staten Island Railway because of technical issues and the need for new cars to improve service.

Presentation: *Juliette Michaelson, Deputy Chief, MTA External Relations* ***“Starting the Congestion Pricing Plan”***

View presentation and Q & A: <https://youtu.be/2pcrX5ZBxdk?t=1877>

- Congestion pricing will restart on January 5th, with an initial 40% lower toll rate compared to the original plan. This timeline is to allow for more public education and sign-ups for discounts/exemptions before the full pricing takes effect.
- The reduced toll structure will last 3 years, then increase to 80% for 3 years, before reaching the full 100% rate in 2031. This is to ease the transition and avoid reopening debates around exemptions.
- Juliette emphasized the need for a robust public education campaign in the next 7 weeks to ensure people understand the program and available discounts/exemptions. This includes webinars, postcards, and signage.
- The reduced initial revenue will impact the bonding schedule, but Juliette said the MTA is confident they can still move forward with critical capital projects by leveraging the fully funded 25-29 Capital Plan that the Governor has committed to.
- Signing up taxi/FHV companies for per-trip charges is another key priority in the coming weeks before launch.
- Overall, Juliette stressed the importance of advocates maintaining a positive drumbeat to support the successful implementation of congestion pricing, given the potential for continued opposition.

Executive Director: Lisa Daglian

- PCAC staff has been working on advancing fare discount proposals with a new report, which will be a follow-up to our previous OMNY report. The new proposals aim to ensure equitable access to affordable transit across the region.
- Lisa mentioned the recent Fair Fares press conference, where PCAC advocated for increasing the program’s eligibility to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, as well as expanding it to include commuter rail within the city.

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- She noted that the City Council has been slow to implement the Fair Fares expansion due to a technicality, resulting in hundreds of thousands being denied access to the discounted fares over the past several months. PCAC has been pushing for faster implementation.
- Regarding the MTA's upcoming budget, we expect the modest biannual fare increases to be included, rather than the 15-20% increases seen at other transit agencies. Lisa said PCAC will continue to advocate for fair and affordable fares.
- Overall, Lisa emphasized PCAC's ongoing work to develop comprehensive fare discount proposals and ensure equitable access to public transportation across the region.

Old Business:

- Stuart inquired about the station cleaning schedule.
- Sharon mentioned the issue of Jamaica escalator outages—repairs have been too slow.

New Business:

Action Items:

- [] Send a thank you note to David Jones for his leadership on fair fares.
- [] Send the PCAC's subway surfing testimony to the new NYC Schools Chancellor, along with a note acknowledging her focus on the issue.

Adjourned

Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pcrX5ZBxdk>

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

Lisa Daglian
Executive Director