

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 on Thursday, June 27, 2024. Members of the public and Council members unable to attend were present via Zoom.

## Member Attendance

Andrew Albert (Chair)	Present – in person
Burton M. Strauss Jr. (Vice Chair)	Present – virtual
Stuart Goldstein	Present – in person
Christopher D. Greif	Present – in person
Marisol Halpern	Present – virtual
Sharon King Hoge	Present – virtual
Karen Hamilton	Present – in person
Cicely Harris	Absent
Trudy L. Mason	Present – in person
Scott R. Nicholls	Absent

## 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

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Affiliation</u></b>
Quemuel Arroyo	MTA Chief Accessibility Officer
Cate Contino	MTA
Jesse Figueroa	Concerned Citizen
Matty Buchys–Hyland	Concerned Citizen
Jason Anthony	Concerned Citizen
David Kupferberg	Concerned Citizen
E. Hodgson	Concerned Citizen
Carl Perrera	Concerned Citizen

***Approval of Agenda for June 27, 2024 meeting.  
Approval of Minutes for May 23, 2024 meeting.***

**Chair/ Board Report:**

- **Effects of Governor Hochul's "pause" on congestion pricing**

Due to the lack of funding for the capital program, several key projects for New York City's transit system have been put on hold:

- **New Subway Cars:** The planned acquisition of new cars for the A Division, meant to replace older models on the Lexington and Seventh Avenue lines, is postponed.
- **Second Avenue Subway Phase Two:** The extension to 125th Street is not happening.
- **Station Accessibility:** Plans to make 23 subway stations accessible are paused. This is a setback considering only 150 out of 472 stations are currently accessible.
- **Electric Buses:** The purchase of 250 fewer electric buses is expected. This may delay the overall goal of having cleaner, greener buses.
- **Verrazzano Bridge Improvements:** Planned updates to improve resilience against storms are delayed.
- **Track Intrusion Initiatives:** Safety improvements to prevent accidents and unauthorized access to tracks are on hold.
- **Brewster Yard Upgrade:** Improvements for Metro-North in Westchester County are delayed.
- **Signal Upgrades:** Critical signal upgrades, which would have improved service frequency and reliability on several lines, are postponed.

These delays affect not only the immediate improvements but may also result in the city falling behind other cities in terms of transit advancements.

Stuart asked if, since the pause is indefinite, PCAC should look at other feasible funding options for the Capital Plan including Joe Lhota's proposal for a modest increase in the sales tax and other reliable, sustainable funding sources.

Lisa mentioned that PCAC had previously developed a funding thermometer to explore different funding possibilities, which is being updated. There's a significant shortfall of \$16-\$17 billion in the current capital program, which also impacts addressing congestion, air quality, and environmental justice issues, so potential replacements for congestion pricing need to accomplish those goals as well.

- **Crime update**

Crime for May was down 6% and so far in June, it's down 10%.

- **R211 cars for Staten Island Railway**

Staten Island will finally get some new train cars made by Kawasaki, the MTA's primary manufacturer, which will be tested on the railway starting in mid-August if everything goes according to plan. Out of the MTA's 400 R211 orders, 75 are going to the Staten Island Railway.

- **Major summer work on the G line**

The G train will be undergoing work, and shuttle buses will replace the suspended train service. The status and location of these shuttle buses will be available on the MTA app, helping riders plan their trips more effectively. The first phase of this work, from Court Square to Nassau Avenue, starts this weekend. Subsequent phases will run from July 5 to August 12 (Court Square to Bedford-Nostrand) and from August 12 to September 3 (Bedford-Nostrand to Church Avenue). South of Hoyt-Schermerhorn, riders can use the F train.

Shuttle bus tracking on the MTA app is a positive step, as current apps do not always provide accurate information on shuttle buses during service diversions.

- **Ridership update**

Our average daily ridership is steady at 4.1 to 4.2 million riders daily.

**Presentation:** *MTA's Accessibility Program and Plans*- MTA Chief Accessibility Officer Quemuel Arroyo

View the presentation along with the Q&A: <https://youtu.be/D3ciTCoNTtl?t=4731>

Quemuel expressed appreciation for the advocacy work of the PCAC and highlighted his commitment to improving accessibility in the transit system.

Despite funding challenges from the indefinite pause on Congestion Pricing, the governor has reassured the MTA that there will be no cuts to the capital plan and has expressed full commitment to the upcoming 2025-2029 capital plan. This future plan will likely be historically large, potentially exceeding \$75 billion. The MTA is preparing by identifying 50 to 70 candidate stations for accessibility improvements in the next capital plan, including a possible rollover of 20 to 23 stations from the current plan.

Currently, 24 new stations have been identified, and combined with the rollover stations, there are over 45 stations targeted for accessibility improvements. The selection of these stations is based on geographic coverage, ridership levels, equity considerations, and coverage gaps. Quemuel reassured the Council that even with the challenges posed by the Congestion Pricing delay, the MTA's commitment to achieving its accessibility goals remains strong.

### **Executive Director- Lisa Daglian**

The PCAC staff has been actively engaged in discussions about Congestion Pricing and the future Capital Plan. The MTA is working to address the current funding gaps.

Recently, we worked with four borough presidents to send a letter to Mayor Adams urging an increase in Fair Fares eligibility to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, which would benefit 650,000 more New Yorkers, including Staten Islanders. PCAC has collaborated with various stakeholders, and the Council Speaker's office, to advocate for this change. Brian has been working with the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation on an op-ed for Crain's Business to support the Fair Fares expansion.

David Jones, head of the Community Service Society and also on the MTA Board, has been a strong advocate for Fair Fares and has been involved in efforts to expand the program. Despite budget uncertainties, PCAC continues to push for the expansion of Fair Fares to include the commuter rails, emphasizing the importance of reaching minimum wage workers by setting the eligibility at 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Karen suggested that Fair Fares should be available on Express Buses as well.

Stuart asked if initial data on Congestion Pricing from the toll readers can be collected and released. Lisa shared that we have asked for this as well.

### **Old Business:**

Trudy mentioned the M15 bus stop on the Northwest corner of 86<sup>th</sup> street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave, where the SBS and the regular bus stop should stop at the same bus stop, but the stops are in two different places on the block.

Karen shared that she has noticed that the bus drivers are not always checking to see where the doors are opening up, and sometimes there is construction, and it's very hard for people to get off. They're also not always opening up ramps for people or curbing the buses. She also asked about the status of new members joining the council.

## *NYCTRC MINUTES*

5

Lisa advised that we have submitted requests and are awaiting to hear back on the appointees.

### **New Business:**

Stuart shared issues of heavy graffiti at the Smith/ 9<sup>th</sup> Street station (Manhattan-bound). The W 4th Street station is not being well maintained on all levels.

Chris agreed and shared that the Bay Parkway station elevators need cleaning.

### **Action Items:**

- Sign Trudy up for the weekender newsletter —PCAC staff completed.

### **Adjourned**

Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3ciTCoNTtI>

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

Lisa Daglian  
Executive Director

*NYCTRC MINUTES*

6