

Meeting Minutes of September 25, 2025

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, September 25, 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—virtual
Dante Arnwine	Present
Andrew Bennett	Absent
Stuart Goldstein	Present
Christopher D. Greif	Present
Marisol Halpern	Absent
Karen Hamilton	Present
Cicely Harris	Present—virtual
Gene Haynes	Absent
Khalia Hayslett	Present
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)	Present
Henry Mei (Intern)	Present

Non-member Attendance

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Chantel Cabrera	NYCT
Cate Contino	MTA GCR
Eric Wollman	Concerned Citizen
Andrew Kurzweil	Concerned Citizen

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Carl Perrera
Mr. X

Concerned Citizen
Concerned Citizen

Approval of September 25, 2025 Agenda Approval of July 31, 2025 Minutes

Chair/ Board Report: by Andrew Albert

- The Second Avenue Subway Phase Two is underway, with a \$1.972 billion project expanding service to new stations, though it will result in some resident and business relocations in Harlem. Efforts are being made to improve community communication and support for those affected or relocated.
- The Interborough Express project is starting its study and will soon begin construction. It will connect 17 subway lines and the Long Island Rail Road, requiring both state and significant federal funding.
- Congestion pricing is raising expected revenue and reducing traffic congestion; crashes are down and air quality has improved.
- OMNY will fully replace MetroCard by the end of the year. Riders can transfer funds, and info sessions are helping reduced fare riders to transition.
- Fare increases have been proposed: subway and bus fares are going up to \$3, with weekly caps and various changes to city and express bus fare structures. Expanded reduced fares for seniors and disabled riders to the AM peak on the railroads has been proposed, as PCAC has long advocated for.
- The MTA is focused on combating fare evasion, with nearly \$1 billion in losses reported.
- New turnstile technology and upgraded Staten Island Railway cars are being implemented.
- ACE cameras are being added to more bus lines to monitor service.
- Ridership is increasing, with subways hitting record numbers and the Long Island Rail Road reaching over 300,000 riders in a single day since the pandemic.
- Accessibility improvements are ongoing, with more stations getting elevators and upgrades.
- Ongoing maintenance projects (like track/switch repairs) are in progress, and new bus and rail services are being rolled out.

Presentation: The Dangers of Subway Surfing- How to Stay Safe by Chantel Cabrera, Assistant Vice President, Service Programs, NYCT

View presentation and Q & A: https://youtu.be/PDai_hlmFhw?t=452

- Campaign Development: Initiated in summer 2023, the campaign centers on peer-to-peer engagement to combat “subway surfing,” leveraging student-recorded audio and ongoing bi-weekly meetings with agency partners. Youth voice is emphasized to ensure messaging is relatable and impactful.

Issues Addressed:

- Subway surfing is defined as riding outside/train cars, an old but resurging trend, mainly driven by impulsivity, thrill-seeking, social media, and peer pressure.
- Differentiation between healthy (sports, learning new skills) and unhealthy (gambling, drugs, risky behaviors) risks, encouraging adults and mentors to guide youth toward positive choices.
- Social media’s glamorization of subway surfing is tackled, with MTA collaborating with platforms to take down dangerous content.
- Legal consequences of subway surfing include serious injury or death and potential criminal charges, especially for repeat or adult offenders; drones and home visits are part of enforcement.
- The demographic most involved is primarily Latino and Black male youth, with very few female participants.

Interventions & Recommendations:

- Encourage alternative adrenaline activities (e.g., sports, rock climbing) and present career pathways that offer excitement legally and safely (e.g., MTA roles, skilled trades).
- Equip adults/trusted mentors with tools for open, nonjudgmental conversations, role-playing refusal skills, and recognizing warning signs (such as unusual injuries or possession of train paraphernalia).
- Highlight the importance of community engagement, parental involvement, and collaboration across agencies and schools.

Challenges:

Scaling up the campaign and resources is a challenge, as is quantifying success; increase in student reporting and engagement is noted as a positive outcome.

Workforce Pathways:

- Push for efforts to connect high-risk youth to MTA internship and career opportunities, framing “thrill-seeking” energy in constructive directions.

Advocacy:

- There is a need for ongoing collaboration and feedback, openness to community ideas (e.g., involving former subway surfers or graffiti artists in outreach), and adapting based on evolving youth trends.

Q & A from the presentation

Effectiveness & Outreach

Q: Are students who see the presentations actually those engaging in risky behaviors?

A: While most at-risk students may not attend, the aim is to create safety ambassadors who influence peers; there's increased reporting by students as a result.

Q: How is the outreach to both students and community (parents/schools) conducted?

A: Presentations occur upon request, at school "hotspots," and via community partners; scaling efforts are constrained by resources and curriculum time.

Alternative Activities & Careers

Q: What alternatives to subway surfing are presented to youth?

A: Activities such as sports, rock climbing, and creative pursuits; exciting career paths (including MTA roles) are also discussed.

Q: How can youth prepare for MTA jobs?

A: Adding guidance about preparatory skills for such careers will be considered.

Legal & Safety Consequences

Q: What enforcement methods are being used?

A: NYPD uses drone surveillance, home visits, and video evidence to address subway surfing; legal consequences differ for minors and adults.

Q: What is the demographic profile of subway surfers?

A: Majority are Latino and Black boys; incidents happen after school, often due to idle time.

Q: What are the other dangers?

A: Physical harm, death, legal trouble, as well as risk to community and service delays.

Parental & Community Role

Q: How does the campaign engage parents?

A: While the current focus is student-centered, there's recognition that parental involvement and peer education are critical for prevention.

Q: Are Community Board presentations available?

A: Yes, the MTA is open to presenting at Community Boards.

Social Media & Influencers

Q: How does the MTA work with social media and influencers?

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A: The MTA flags dangerous content for removal; ongoing efforts to involve influencers with messaging, but care is needed not to glamorize risky behaviors.

Metrics & Substitution

Q: How is success tracked? What if behaviors just shift to other risks?

A: Measuring direct success is difficult; deaths from subway surfing are down, and no significant shift to other dangerous transit behaviors has been detected.

Engineering & Prevention

Q: Are there technical or engineering solutions?

A: Pilot projects like inter-car diaphragms, drone monitoring, and train retrofitting are underway, though cost and logistics are challenges.

Additional Intervention Ideas

Q: Has the MTA considered involving former subway surfers or graffiti artists in outreach?

A: The MTA will consider this.

Executive Director Report: By Lisa Daglian

- Lisa provided updates on system policy issues and passenger concerns.
- She addressed persistent operational complaints (like service disruptions and switch-track issues), encouraging the use of the MTA app for reporting problems.
- She highlighted privacy concerns related to the OMNY fare card, referencing outreach from privacy advocacy group STOP and related proposed legislation intended to restrict law enforcement's access to OMNY tracking data (requiring a warrant in potential criminal cases).
- Lisa emphasized the importance of continued community outreach, legislative advocacy, and working closely with partners to improve rider experience and protect privacy.
- She participated in discussions about the need for improved information access, inclusion, and customer support during the MetroCard-to-OMNY transition, reflecting ongoing engagement with affected rider populations.
- Throughout, Lisa supported increased stakeholder engagement, transparency, and responsiveness to rider feedback.

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Old Business:

- Members raised the need for better quality, more durable MTA student OMNY cards and voiced concerns about their material.

New Business:

none

Public input Q &A:

Adjourned

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

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

Lisa Daglian
Executive Director