

**Statement of the New York City Transit Riders Council to the
Transportation Committee of the New York City Council
on Examining what the MTA is Doing to Improve
Service on the G Line**

April 8, 2008

My name is William Guild. I am the Chair of the Permanent Citizen's Advisory Committee (PCAC) to the MTA and a member of the New York City Transit Riders Council (NYCTRC). The Council was created by the state legislature in 1981 to represent the users of the New York City Transit system and consists of 15 volunteer members appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of the Mayor, the Public Advocate, and the five Borough Presidents. The PCAC is the coordinating body for the NYCTRC as well as two similar commuter rail riders' councils.

The NYCTRC welcomes the opportunity to discuss improvements to service on the G line. Over the last few years, the Council has heard from countless riders regarding their frustrations with service on the G line. Much of this frustration stems from the lack of consistent and reliable service on the line. Passengers often complain about having to endure long waits for service, and often discover that, due to work being done on the line, service is not available when it is scheduled to run.

The Council believes that with regard to the G line NYC Transit needs to make reliability its top priority and, at the same time, increase the frequency of service. The Council concurs with New York City Transit that the best way to improve reliability on the line is by establishing Court Square as the line's northern terminus and extending service southward in Brooklyn to the Church Avenue station.

The Transit Riders Council has long felt that with the completion of the 63rd Street tunnel in 2001, running full time G line service to 71st Avenue was an unrealistic goal. The Queens Boulevard line simply cannot adequately accommodate that many separate lines, especially with the introduction of V service, which was inaugurated with the opening of the 63rd Street line. An attempt to operate so many services along the busiest corridor in the entire subway system would inevitably result in compromises to the quality of one of these services. Today, ridership on the V line far exceeds that on the G, giving the V an obvious priority. Substantial necessary capital work must also be undertaken on this corridor in order to simply maintain its current level of service. It is customary New York City Transit policy to perform this type of work during evenings and weekends,

which are the very times that G service is scheduled to run along the Queens Boulevard portion of the route. The conflict means that more often than not G line passengers are arriving at G line stations expecting service to continue to 71st Avenue in Forest Hills, only to find a General Order poster stating that scheduled service is suspended beyond the Court Square station. Since weekend G line service to Forest Hills is in fact a comparatively rare occurrence, the Transit Riders Council supports NYC Transit's effort to terminate service at Court Square and to concentrate on what the line can do well.

While many Transit Advocates and riders have called for terminating service at Queens Plaza rather than Court Square in order to gain an opportunity to transfer to R service, the Council is not convinced that efficient operation of this route is possible with the current configuration of existing infrastructure. Nor is the Council convinced that a major capital project on the Queens Boulevard line could accommodate such an arrangement and still provide reliability on all lines involved.

The Transit Riders Council believes that the first step to increasing service frequency on the G line lies with extending service to the Church Avenue station in Brooklyn. The Council has never found the G line's terminus at the Smith-9 Streets station to be logical given that the station has neither a dispatcher nor a rail yard. The Church Avenue station offers both of these elements, making for an orderly line termination point.

In light of these issues the NYC Transit Riders Council makes the following recommendations:

- We support NYC Transit's effort to curtail G line service at Court Square.
- **We support NYC Transit's effort to extend G line service to Church Avenue as a much more efficient method for dispatching G trains especially with the upcoming 9th Street viaduct work.**
- want this to happen as soon as possible in order to improve frequency of service on the line.
- G line peak hour headways should decrease to provide for a train every 5 minutes.
- **NYC Transit should keep a close eye on G line ridership to insure that as it increases and approaches loading guidelines, the consist size of G trains is similarly increased to provide sufficient passenger capacity.**

- NYC Transit should act to ease passenger stress by indicating on G line station platforms where 4-car consists will be stopping so that passengers will know where to await their train.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.