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# Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee

to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority

## *JANUARY – MARCH 2002 QUARTERLY REPORT*

**Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee  
Long Island Rail Road Commuter's Council  
Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council  
New York City Transit Riders Council**

### **To Our Friends and Colleagues...**

PCAC mourns the loss of our friend, PCAC Executive Committee and New York City Transit Riders Council member Dr. Stephen Dobrow. Steve passed away suddenly in January. The sole remaining member of the original PCAC, Steve's loss is a tremendous one for the PCAC, NYCTRC, and for everyone involved in transportation. Many past and present PCAC members and staff attended the funeral services that were held in Forest Hills.

In January, Associate Director Michael Doyle left to take a position at the consulting firm of Edwards and Kelcey. Mr. Doyle had been with the PCAC for four years and helped bring the organization into the technological age. The PCAC wishes Mr. Doyle well in his new endeavor.

PCAC welcomed Katherine Brower as the Associate Director and Ellyn Shannon as the Transportation Planner. Ms. Brower's previous position was with Project for Public Spaces, Inc. where she worked on plans for improved pedestrian and transit access to railroad stations in conjunction with New Jersey Transit. Ms. Shannon worked as an archival researcher for NBC and ABC News and is currently working towards her Masters in Urban Planning at NYU's Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service.

## **PCAC**

### ***PCAC Welcomes New Members and Staff, Bids Farewell to LIRRCC Council Member***

The PCAC is pleased to welcome new members Toya Williford and Todd Scott Shapiro. Ms. Williford, manager – Community Planning Projects at the Regional Plan Association, joins the New York City Transit Riders Council. Mr. Shapiro, the founder of a Long Island public relations firm and a commuter from Ronkonkoma, joins the Long Island Rail Road Commuter's Council. Mr. Shapiro replaced former LIRRCC member Cesar Malaga.

### ***Council Member James McGovern Approved by Governor Pataki and State Senate to Join MTA Board***

Congratulations go to James McGovern, the LIRRCC's representative on the MTA Board. The PCAC received notification of Jim's confirmation by the New York State Senate on March 19<sup>th</sup>.

***MTA Chairman Peter Kalikow Guest at PCAC's Quarterly Meeting***

MTA Chairman Peter Kalikow spoke before the PCAC in March on the events of 9/11 and on current service and planning issues. Mr. Kalikow informed the PCAC of his efforts to work with the city, state and federal governments on funding issues, and of the news that New York City had received \$1.8 billion for transportation related improvements to lower Manhattan. Mr. Kalikow also emphasized the importance of rebuilding the South Ferry Station and his interest in finding alternative funding sources for the extension of the #7 line. He asked for the PCAC's support for the East Side Access and Second Avenue Subway projects and for the Committee's ongoing help in communicating the importance of funding these projects to elected officials in Washington D.C.

***Executive Director Beverly Dolinsky Appointed to Lower Manhattan Development Corporation Transportation and Commuters Advisory Council***

Executive Director Beverly Dolinsky was appointed to the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation's Transportation and Commuters Advisory Council. The Corporation is the lead organization for the rebuilding of lower Manhattan.

***PCAC Celebrates 25 Years of Advocating for Improvement in Public Transportation in the NYC Region***

To mark the event of PCAC's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the PCAC created a special retrospective report chronicling it's work and accomplishments over the past quarter century. Since 1977, PCAC has not wavered in its

commitment to the interests and needs of the users of MTA transportation services. The report, **Track Record: 25 Years of the PCAC**, can be downloaded directly from the PCAC website at [www.pcac.org](http://www.pcac.org).

***PCAC Staff Address Coro Fellows Program***

PCAC staff members gave a presentation to the Coro Fellows Program in Public Affairs convened for the Coro New York Leadership Center. Staff spoke about the role the PCAC plays in promoting change in MTA plans and policies as well as ways in which the LIRRCC, MNRCC, and NYCTRC represent commuter and transit rider concerns.

**LIRRCC**

***LIRRCC Bids Farewell to Council Members***

The LIRRCC said farewell to Council member Cesar Malaga. Appointed in 1994, Cesar's commitment to Long Island transportation and participation on the Council informed debates about riders' issues and enhanced the Council's ability to deal with them. The LIRRCC wishes Cesar well in his future endeavors.

***LIRRCC New Chair and Vice-Chair are Elected***

At the Council's February meeting Barbara Josepher, who has served as a member of the LIRRCC for the past nine years, was elected Council Chair until June. Gerard Bringmann was elected to serve as the Council's Vice-Chair.

### ***Council Pursues Safety Concerns at LIRR's Huntington Station***

Cars parked along the curve at the Huntington Station parking lot have become a safety concern. The Council raised the issue with Donald McKay, chief of staff - Town of Huntington. Mr. McKay said the issue was under the jurisdiction of the Huntington Public Safety Department. In addition, he stated that the Department would issue summonses to commuters who park there, but it could not tow illegally parked cars. The Council will continue to monitor the situation and report on any on-going violations.

### ***LIRRCC Talks to LIRR New Fleet Manager About M7 Cars***

David Elliott, LIRR general manager - New Fleet and Charles Kalkhof, LIRR chief mechanical officer - Equipment reported to the LIRRCC about the status of the new M7 cars. The first of seven M7 car pairs are to be delivered in April. The seven remaining pairs are due to arrive on Long Island by June 2002. It is expected that the new cars will be put into revenue service by the beginning of August.

### ***IssueWatch***

In March, the Council sent out its second issue of IssueWatch – a status report on Council actions, which included reports on the LIRR Presidents Forum, the Operation of LIRR escalators, LITP 2000, and the new Ticket Vending Machines. IssueWatch is geared directly to Long Island news media, but is available to all. To subscribe, contact the Council at [mail@lirrcc.org](mailto:mail@lirrcc.org).

### ***Annual President's Forum a Success***

The Council held its annual President's Forum on the evening of February 27.

LIRR President Kenneth Bauer talked about the performance of the railroad over his twenty-two month tenure, the railroad's major customer focus initiatives and key accomplishments. Some of the issues and concerns expressed by the public included the possibility of adding intra-island train service to the am and pm schedule along the Riverhead-Western Suffolk line; safety improvements such as a pedestrian bridge at the Bethpage Station; continuing problems with the new diesel trains; increasing frequency of service on the Babylon line; more frequent service, station maintenance, platform improvements at the Hollis Station; and the need for better monitoring of undesirable behavior at the Hicksville Station.

### ***Council Monitors Sporadic Operation of Platform Escalators at Penn***

The Council has been actively investigating recurring problems with reversed or shut-off escalators at tracks 13/14 and 15/16 from the Eighth Avenue side of the exit concourse during the evening rush hour. The Council has corresponded with LIRR regarding this issue, and the railroad has contacted the Amtrak Penn Station Terminal Manager. Stickers indicating that it is a police violation to shut off the escalators have been ordered. The Council will continue to monitor the escalators to ensure that proper, consistent operation results and is maintained.

### ***New Ticket Vending Machines Are on Schedule***

The installation of 136 new Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) with an improved array of options is being undertaken by LIRR in conjunction with Metro-North Railroad. Fifteen of the new machines have been installed in

Penn Station since December 21<sup>st</sup> and a total of 25 are to be operational in March. These full-service TVM's allow customers to purchase daily, 10-trip peak and off-peak, and monthly tickets as well as a range of MetroCard options. All 124 LIRR stations are scheduled to receive at least one full-service TVM. Express Machines, with a reduced range of options, are now in development. The new machines accept a range of payment options similar to those offered by the NYC Transit MetroCard TVMs.

### ***Council Clears Up Roundtrip Ticket Confusion***

The Council reported a recent incident regarding the incorrect processing of a roundtrip ticket purchased from a TVM to Fred Wedley, LIRR general manager - Automated Ticket Sales Technology. The train crew would not accept the ticket to be used for two trips heading in the same direction. Mr. Wedley subsequently investigated the issue and reported back that tickets of this type can, in fact, be used in this manner. A flyer instructing train crews about these tickets has been disseminated.

## **MNRCC**

### ***MNR President Peter Cannito Guest at Annual President's Forum***

In February, the Council held its annual President's Forum. MNR President Peter Cannito responded to questions and comments on extending Metro-North service on the New Haven Branch beyond New Haven, incorporating the ability to buy MetroCards as part of Metro-North ticketing, problems at the new White Plains Station, platform and staircase repairs at the Wakefield Station, bicycle prohibition on peak hour

holiday trains, and the need for additional service on the Danbury Branch. One commuter suggested building a new station at Yankee Stadium, creating better connections between the Marble Hill and 1/9-subway lines and providing more frequent service at the Fordham Station.

### ***Car Shortages on Harlem Line***

The recent car shortages experienced on the Harlem Line are the result of two events. First, in September, MNR instituted a new procedure aimed at reducing the amount of times a car is in the shop for repairs. The startup of this procedure had a temporary impact on the total number of available cars in service through April. Second, a federal mandate, issued on January 1, 2002, requires train car defects to be corrected within a shorter timeframe. These conditions are temporary in nature and MNR is working towards ensuring more consistent car availability. The Council recommended that MNR inform customers of the reason for the shortages.

### ***Council Concerned About Parking Availability at Harriman Train Station***

The Council wrote to Metro-North Railroad President Peter Cannito suggesting that an interim solution to the lack of parking at Harriman Station would be to expand the existing lot. President Cannito responded that Metro-North intends to expand the parking facility in the future. MNR is analyzing the space needs for the parking lot to ensure they are adequate. MNR is also looking at other parking options for the Harriman Station in conjunction with the EIS being undertaken for a station at Woodbury Commons. These alternatives include expanding parking on Metro-North

owned property and on adjacent private property.

***MTA Chief Program Executive Addresses Concerns Over LIRR Coming to Grand Central Terminal***

On January 17 Anthony Japha, MTA chief program executive – East Side Access and Pamela Burford, director-Planning and External Affairs presented to the Council the plans to incorporate Long Island Rail Road into GCT. The plan will require an additional track system for LIRR to be built below the existing terminal tracks to avoid conflict with Metro-North. The new Long Island Terminal will house eight tracks with four platforms and will be built far below the existing terminal. LIRR will also build a new tunnel adjacent to the existing Park Avenue tunnel. Some MNR track outages are expected during the construction of the new tunnel. The LIRR Terminal will house a concourse that will include passenger amenities, such as ticketing and information booths, waiting room seating, retail elements, and required administrative and operational support spaces. Passengers will take stairs or escalators to the mezzanine area, where there will be 14 to 20 escalators that will take passengers to the Concourse level and then on to the lower level of Grand Central Terminal. The proposal includes seven northern exits primarily along Madison Avenue to accommodate the LIRR and MNR passengers. The only tracks Metro-North will lose are the Madison Yard tracks that are East of Track 115. Metro-North is currently building a new facility at Highbridge in the Bronx to replace Madison Yard.

***MNR VP of Operations Addresses Concerns Over Condition of Seats on Trains***

In February, George Walker, MNR vice president – Operations, told MNRCC members about an eight year seat replacement program to replace all of the seats on all MNR trains. Council member James Blair and staff are scheduled to meet with William Duke, chief mechanical officer-Maintenance of Equipment and Peter DeCarlo, assistant director-Car Appearance to discuss seat replacement policies and to tour the seat upholstery shop in April.

**NYCTRC**

***Council Mourns the Loss of Stephen Dobrow***

Stephen Dobrow generously shared his deep understanding and encyclopedic knowledge of the transit system to improve the system for all transit riders. The NYCTRC will sorely miss Dr. Dobrow's knowledge and wit.

***NYCTRC Bids Farewell and Welcomes Council Members***

The NYCTRC bade farewell to Alice Paul, long-time council member from Brooklyn. Appointed in 1986, Alice provided valuable insight into Brooklyn service and communication issues. The Council thanks her for her years of service and wishes her well in her future endeavors. The Council welcomed new member Toya Williford, who was appointed to the Council by Governor Pataki on January 16<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Williford is manager of Community Planning Projects at the Regional Plan Association.

***Annual President's Forum a Success***

More than 100 people turned out for the Annual NYCTRC President's Forum on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. NYC Transit President Lawrence Reuter and his staff addressed issues and concerns from the public which included, dissatisfaction with the interim rerouting of the #1/#2 line service, the need to communicate the rationale for train service changes to the public, more frequent service on the #2 line after midnight to the Bronx and Brooklyn, the importance of retaining station agents, and consideration of the reopening of closed station entrance/exits. One commuter requested that NYC Transit consider the possibility of incorporating the Roosevelt Island Tram service into the subway and MetroCard system.

***NYCTRC Staff Testifies on Lower Manhattan Transportation***

On March 7, PCAC, Associate Director, Katherine Brower gave testimony at a hearing before the New York City Council's Committee on Transportation. The topic of the hearing was the Future of Transportation in Lower Manhattan. Ms. Brower testified on the importance of using the rebuild opportunity to connect the PATH and fourteen subway lines serving the area through an underground connection from the World Financial Center east to the Seventh Avenue IRT at William Street. Ms. Brower also spoke of the importance of the 1/9 South Ferry Station improvements, the need to create efficient bus movement through Lower Manhattan with better east-west connecting streets, and the need to improve pedestrian and bicycle mobility.

***63<sup>rd</sup> Street Connector Is Put Into Service***

The new 63<sup>rd</sup> Street Connector service was initiated with the new V line and rerouted F line service. In an interview with Good Day New York, Andrew Albert spoke of the need for Transit to rethink the weekend service plan since the V is a weekdays only service.

***Council Hears Back from NYCT President on HEET Report.***

Last quarter, the Council released a report suggesting that NYC Transit further explore options to reopen long-sealed subway entrances by installing unmanned High Entry/Exit Turnstiles (HEETs) and MetroCard Vending Machines (MVMs). NYCT President Larry Reuter has informed the Council that NYC Transit will review the locations the Council has proposed for reopening. The Police Department will also review the proposed locations and provide final judgment as to the safety of reopening these entrances.

***Response on Congestion at Penn Station Received***

New York City Transit President Lawrence Reuter, and LIRR President Kenneth Bauer responded to the joint NYCTRC and LIRRCC letter regarding congestion and queuing problems at Penn Station near LIRR's 34<sup>th</sup> Street escalator entrance and the adjacent West Side IRT fare control area. Messieurs Reuter and Bauer indicated that NYC Transit and the LIRR have had discussions about this issue and intend to work together to find an adequate solution to the problem. It was determined that NYC Transit will explore the feasibility of two options: relocating the station booth near the south wall along with additional vending machines or locating the existing MVMs to another

section of the fare control area. LIRR will also look at ways to encourage their customers to use the MEMs and MVMs for MetroCard transactions rather than the station booth.

### ***Concern Over Elimination of Control Area People***

Executive Director Beverly Dolinsky met with Anthony Giudice, NYCT chief station officer – Stations, regarding NYC Transit’s plan to eliminate “Control Area People”. Mr. Giudice stated that 40 agents/ customer assistance teams, known as “Control Area People” were placed in stations to help customers navigate the new MetroCard vending machines and to introduce the practice of agents interacting with customers in the stations. Unfortunately, these positions were eliminated in September 2001 because the Station’s Department was over quota. These teams will be re-instated for special events such as the St. Patrick’s Day parade and for large General Order Service Disruptions.

### ***Executive Director Beverly Dolinsky Meets with Public Advocate’s Office***

Executive Director Beverly Dolinsky met with Deputy Public Advocate Guillermo Linares to discuss appointments to the Transit Riders Council as well as NYC Public Advocate Gotbaum’s transportation priorities. Ms. Dolinsky was disappointed to learn that Ms. Gotbaum has no immediate plans for a transportation staff position. The Office of the Public Advocate has consistently maintained a transportation position since its inception in 1994 providing an important role in New York City transit advocacy.

### ***Manhattan Bridge Service Plan Continues to Be Monitored by Council***

The Council has written and repeatedly spoken to NYC Transit regarding the Grand Street shuttle bus. The Council believes the shuttle, which was implemented as part of the Manhattan Bridge service changes, should offer a three-legged transfer or a free ride. Currently, a ride on the shuttle from the Canal Street Station counts as a regular fare, requiring riders who begin their trip by bus in Brooklyn to pay two fares to reach Grand Street.

### ***Path Train to Accept MetroCard***

We are pleased to report that PATH is in the process of developing a fare collection system that will accommodate the MTA MetroCard and “smart card” technology. When the \$51 million project is complete, MetroCard holders will be able to add Path trains to the list of transit systems that accept their cards. The Council has repeatedly advocated for a region-wide fare system.

### ***Council Embarks on New Study of Subway Station Signage***

The Council has embarked on a new study of subway station directional signage. Given the recent multitude of service changes, this study provides an opportunity to update and revise the Council’s 1997 recommendations for signage improvements. The Council will survey a random sample of 107 subway stations.

### ***MTA Planning Staff Present Update on Second Avenue Subway to Council***

In January, the MTA Planning staff presented an update to the Council on the Second Avenue Subway Project.

The presentation reported on the preliminary work to date. The engineering consultant (DMJM Harris-Arup) is preparing to undertake test borings with NYCDOT in places along the alignment. Meetings have been held with all the affected Community Boards. The study team is in discussion with several Community Boards to resolve issues of concern. Work continues on the Supplemental DEIS to determine appropriate construction methods to be used along the alignment and locations for needed construction shaft sites. Issues related to the material excavated from the site include methods of transport by truck or by barge, the end locations for the material spoils removed from the construction site, potential uses for the spoil material, and impacts related to the surrounding communities and environment. Work to determine station entrance locations and means of station access is also underway. Public Advisory Council (PAC) and Technical Advisory Council (TAC) meetings were held throughout the quarter.

***Council Urges Bloomberg to Nominate Weinshall to MTA Board***  
NYCTRC signed on to a letter with a number of other advocacy groups,

urging Mayor Bloomberg to nominate NYCDOT Commissioner Iris Weinshall to the MTA Board.

***NYCT Updates Council on Station Rehabilitation Program***

On February 28, Seymour Portes, NYC Transit, station rehabilitation program manager- Capital Program Management, gave a slide presentation to update the Council on recent and planned station rehabilitations. Mr. Portes said the goal of the program is to bring all 468 stations to a state of good repair. The rehabilitation work includes new and enhanced lighting, new communication systems, new attractive entrances, and ADA accessible improvements to many stations. Mr. Portes reported that to date 135 stations have been completed through a teamwork approach. Thirty-seven stations are currently under construction and 33 are in design. In all 221 stations will be completed by 2004. One hundred stations have been designated as “Key” ADA stations and 14 are partially accessible. Thirty stations have been completed, 16 stations are under construction, 11 stations are in design and 22 more will be completed by 2009.

## About Us

The PCAC is the coordinating body and funding mechanism for the three riders councils created by the New York State Legislature in 1981: the Long Island Rail Road Commuter's Council (LIRRCC); the Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council (MNRCC); and the New York City Transit Riders Council (NYCTRC). The Councils were created to give users of MTA public transportation services a say in the formulation and implementation of MTA policy and to hold the MTA Board and management accountable to riders.

To learn more about us, or to download reports and documents, including our **Frequently Asked Questions** pamphlet and documents noted in this Quarterly Report, visit our homepage, [www.pcac.org](http://www.pcac.org).

### PCAC Executive Committee

James Blair  
*Chair*

Stephen F. Wilder  
*First Vice Chair*

Barbara Josepher  
*Second Vice Chair*

Andrew Albert

Richard Cataggio

William K. Guild

### Council Officers

Barbara Josepher  
*LIRRCC Chair*

Richard Cataggio  
*MNRCC Chair*

James Blair  
*MNRCC Vice Chair*

Andrew Albert  
*NYCTRC Chair*

William K. Guild  
*NYCTRC Vice Chair*

### Staff

Beverly Dolinsky  
*Executive Director*

Katherine Brower  
*Associate Director*

Ellyn Shannon  
*Transportation Planner*

Karyl Berger  
*Research Associate*

Mary Whaley  
*Administrative Assistant*

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