

**New York City Transit Riders Council  
President's Forum  
April 16, 2008**

**Summary of Proceedings**

The 2008 NYC Transit President's Forum was held at 2 Broadway, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room. NYCTRC Chair, Andrew Albert, introduced NYC Transit President, Howard Roberts. Joining President Roberts at the dais was Peter Cafiero, Chief – Operations Planning; Michael Chubak, Executive Vice President; Steven Feil, Senior Vice President – Subways; Cosema Crawford, Senior Vice President, Capital Construction; and, Chief James Hall, NYPD Transit Bureau.

<b>SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES EXPRESSED BY RIDERS</b>
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**Customer Service Relations/Communications**

1. Could subway service change posters be posted in Metro-North stations?

***RESPONSE:** President Roberts responded that Transit would look at the signage, but signs can be overwhelming. He suggested that the website is the most effective way of conveying this information.*

2. Some bus transfer information is out of date. The Bx24 bus is no longer running from Fordham station.

***RESPONSE:** Transit will check the signage in question.*

3. Clerks do not have information on lines of service.
4. It was noted that MTA managers are not as accessible as they should be, co-opting the community relations department to deal with the public.

**Service Issues**

1. AM service on the F at Roosevelt Island is overloaded and passengers must let several trains go by before boarding. Increased development on the island should exacerbate the situation. Red Bus service is insufficient to resolve this issue. It is proposed that the Metrocard be applicable to tram service.

**RESPONSE:** Peter Cafiero responded that Transit can't run more trains as the current levels are, on average, within guidelines. There may be some adjustment needed and they will look at possible solutions. President Roberts added that NYCT will come up with the most comprehensive solution possible.

2. The 5 line is confusing as to where in the Bronx they are going.

**RESPONSE:** Peter Cafiero responded the R142's running on the 5 line have electronic signage to indicate their destinations. For most customers, all 5 trains are the same. Similar to the split on the A line in the Rockaways, there isn't enough of a difference to justify separate lines.

3. Service on the M line seems irrational. Why does service extend from Nassau Street to the Williamsburg Bridge? The M should be combined with the V with the J running as it presently does along with expanded Z service.

**RESPONSE:** Peter Cafiero replied using a Nassau Street cut-off would preclude V service to Brooklyn.

4. The changing characteristics of the Lower East Side call for full-week operation on the V line. The service on the F line alone is insufficient.

**RESPONSE:** President Roberts acknowledged the increase in ridership without an increase in service; Peter Cafiero added that many lines are seeing an increase in weekend ridership but there is a limit to how much weekend service can be provided; Andrew Albert noted that the NYCTRC has recommended V line service on weekends.

5. The bus service instituted between LaGuardia Airport and Manhattan was complimented and it was requested that it be extended to 96<sup>th</sup> Street.
6. What happened to the connection between the 1 train and the 3 train at 96<sup>th</sup> Street?

**RESPONSE:** Peter Cafiero explained that such a connection only existed in 1997 or 1998 when a major construction project was underway that changed service.

7. How long will it take for the elevator at the Chambers Street station on the E line to be back in operation?

**RESPONSE:** Howard Robert replied that the elevator is the Port Authority's property. It is being disassembled. Transit has talked to the PA about relocating the elevator but that will take 6–12 months.

8. Better service on the M line into Queens is needed.

9. A petition signed by 1,200 people was submitted requesting more service on the M line. There is often a 10–15 minute wait for M trains in the morning because there are fewer trains than on the J or Z lines.

**RESPONSE:** *Peter Cafiero responded that Transit will take another look at J ridership and possibly revise the service plan.*

10. A complaint was made about B express service late at night.

**RESPONSE:** *Peter Cafiero replied that people are generally happy with the service plan.*

11. There was complaint about the decision to run the G on weekends.

**RESPONSE:** *Peter Cafiero noted that there is more service now on the weekends with headways down to 5 minutes from 12 minutes in the past.*

12. Expanded southbound service on the J/M/Z lines was requested.

**RESPONSE:** *Peter Cafiero responded that the MTA has not committed yet to V service to Brooklyn. The MTA would like to expand service on the M if the money is available. Andrew Albert added that the NYCTRC has recommended the extension of V service to Brooklyn.*

13. Service on the L and the 7 was commended. The 7 makes the Times Square Shuttle redundant on nights and weekends.

14. The R line is not improving.

15. D line service should be extended to DeKalb.

**RESPONSE:** *The number of trains and weekend work is the issue. The D would have to squeeze in with the Q and the R and there isn't enough track capacity for that. It was recommended that riders instead transfer at Atlantic Avenue, which is not as difficult to do as it once was.*

16. C trains are too short.

**RESPONSE:** *Peter Cafiero responded that longer C trains were to be funded by Congestion Pricing.*

17. In Manhattan the E trains are not crowded but the A and C are.

**RESPONSE:** *The E level of service is determined by ridership and its high ridership is in Queens.*

## Station/Facility Conditions/Improvements

1. Graffiti is on the rise. There should be an increase in the graffiti and vandalism units, along with closer coordination.

**RESPONSE:** *President Roberts stated the MTA was not aware of an increase in graffiti but there are EAGLE teams supplementing the efforts of the NYPD. There has been a steady stream of arrests; Chief Hall responded: We are using spot checks, surveillance and MySpace monitoring to catch vandals. The effort is high but it is difficult to eradicate completely without the manpower.*

2. Elevator on the E line at Chambers is not working.

**RESPONSE:** *Elevator is out because of construction. The elevator is the Port Authority's and is being disassembled. Transit has talked with the PA about relocating the elevator but that would take at least six months to a year.*

3. Escalators, elevators and bathrooms need improvement and asbestos removal is too slow. Escalator at Zeckendorf Building has been non-working for a long time.

**RESPONSE:** *Transit has recently been assured by the Zeckendorf Building management that new escalators will be installed. There are several other examples like this and Transit is addressing these as well.*

4. Rider complained about garbage and rat issues at N line stations in Manhattan trains. The garbage bins are overflowing, attracting rats onto the platform. What is the program for garbage disposal and who is the manager?

**RESPONSE:** *President Roberts said that he would send the name of the program manager. Steve Feil added that there is a schedule for cleaning which Transit may have to re-evaluate. They supposed to be cleaned every night but are limited on pick-ups by track availability.*

## Capital Planning

1. The Second Avenue Subway needs better coordination between the location of its stations and existing bus routes. The 72<sup>nd</sup> Street station should be moved to somewhere between 68<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> Streets in order to be closer to the M66 bus line which runs on 67<sup>th</sup> and 68<sup>th</sup> Streets.
2. The interior design of trains has not improved over the last 20 years. Staggered doors prevent proper flow. Riders must contend with large open areas with no hand holds. Flip up seats should have pneumatic closure.

3. What is the possibility of the MTA implementing light-rail into the system a la the Hudson-Bergen system?

**RESPONSE:** *Howard Roberts noted that he has worked for New Jersey Transit and that Steve Feil ran HBLR. Lee Sander talked about new services in his State of the MTA speech.*

4. The R160 cars on the M line are mistakes.

## Other Comments/Suggestions

1. What is the emergency cord for?

**RESPONSE:** *Steve Feil responded that it is only to be used during extreme emergency such as when someone is being dragged down the platform.*

2. Has the MTA looked into health plan options to reduce staff health care costs, especially in light of the GHI/HIP merger?

**RESPONSE:** *Howard Roberts responded that generally mergers cut competition which could affect ability to cut costs. We are looking at the structure of our health care programs with Tom Webb.*

3. A desire for cost controls was communicated, focusing on personnel levels and retiree benefits.
4. It was noted that station cleaners have a heavy workload. They have to clean five stations per shift or four cleaners are responsible for 265 buses. It is difficult to adequately clean the stations and buses with that kind of disproportionate workload. Cleaners do not have enough time to clean and deal with rodents and graffiti.
5. Music being listened to by some riders on iPods can sometimes infringe upon the experiences of other passengers. Can the police play a role in addressing this issue?

**RESPONSE:** *Chief Hall replied that the MTA does not target iPod users; they mostly focus on boom boxes. iPod usage does not seem to be as big a problem.*

6. A rider has a business spotlighting subway performers and wants to work with NYCT on a documentation project.
7. A rider has concluded that service is tailored for younger riders.
8. Trips out to Coney Island should be promoted.

9. The Forum should be held quarterly.

10. At Mosholu Parkway station screeching of the trains is very loud and workers take up seats in the station.