

**Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the Metropolitan
Transportation Authority**

2006 ANNUAL REPORT

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

PCAC

Beverly Dolinsky Retires as Executive Director. After a distinguished career, Beverly Dolinsky retired as Executive Director on December 22, 2006. Beverly's tenure as Executive Director spanned more than twenty-five years, but her work to improve public transportation extended over thirty-four years. She began her public transportation career in 1973 as Associate Director of the Institute for Public Transportation. In 1977, she was nominated to serve on the newly created Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA. In 1981, the three riders' councils were created by the State Legislature and the PCAC was restructured. Before long, Beverly was named Executive Director of the PCAC and the councils.

In her twenty-five years as Executive Director, Beverly was a forceful advocate on behalf of public transportation and its riders. She was often featured in the local media and helped many reporters to understand the complex issues surrounding the MTA. Throughout her career Beverly was honored by organizations such as the New York Chapter of the American Planning Association, the New York State Legislature, and the NYU Rudin Center for Transportation Policy and Management. In 1998 New York 1 News honored Ms. Dolinsky with its New Yorker of the Year Award for her efforts on behalf of public transportation, including her successful advocacy of unlimited-use MetroCards.

More than these honors, however, it is the PCAC that is testimony to Beverly's achievements. To many, the PCAC and its Councils are synonymous with Beverly Dolinsky. The users of public transportation in the New York region, as well as all of the members, staff, and colleagues whose lives she has touched, truly owe her a debt of gratitude.

New Officer and Staff Changes. Gary Babyatzky resigned as PCAC Second Vice Chair in August. Ira Greenberg was elected to this position at the September PCAC meeting. The PCAC's Administrative Assistant, Melissa Narvaez, left the PCAC and Deborah Morrison joined the PCAC as Administrative Assistant in May. William Henderson, previously the PCAC's Associate Director, assumed the position of Executive Director upon Ms. Dolinsky's retirement.

Transit Oriented Development Study. In October, the PCAC released its research report on the potential for Transit Oriented Development in the MTA system, *Where is the Metropolitan Transportation Authority on Transit Oriented Development?* In the report the PCAC calls for a partnership among the MTA, its operating agencies, State and local governments, community organizations, and private developers to encourage Transit Oriented Development on appropriate sites.

Regional Transportation Planning. In June, Executive Director Beverly Dolinsky was the guest speaker at the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council's Program, Finance, and Administration Committee. Her presentation discussed the history of the PCAC and the need to improve public participation for transportation projects.

Lower Manhattan Redevelopment. The PCAC continued to monitor and advocate for the improvement of Lower Manhattan transportation projects. In June, staff testified before the MTA Capital Construction, Planning, and Real Estate Committee to urge that the MTA maintain the essential design of the Fulton Street Transit Center while balancing available resources and rising real estate costs. PCAC and MTA Board member Andrew Albert championed a connector between the E subway line and the Fulton Street Transit Center. Despite financial constraints, in December the MTA committed to including this element in the final project design. Staff also reviewed transit connections that may be affected by the Route 9A Redevelopment Project. The PCAC remains opposed to proposals for a direct rail link between Downtown and JFK Airport, as its benefits would not begin to approach the project's estimated cost.

MTA Asset Sales. The PCAC has long supported the sale of surplus MTA assets, provided fair market value is received in return. PCAC members and staff advanced this position in public meetings, private discussions, and interactions with the press. Members and staff addressed the MTA Board and committees on several occasions to urge the MTA to refuse to accept less than full value for development rights over the Caemmerer (West Side) rail yards. The PCAC's non-voting representatives on the MTA Board pressed for an equitable return from MTA assets both privately and in MTA Board and committee meetings.

Support for Transit Benefit Programs. In November, Associate Director William Henderson testified before the NYC Council Committee on Transportation on pre-tax transit benefit programs. The testimony supported efforts to make these programs available to workers and to raise the Federal cap on the value of these benefits to the maximum value of pre-tax benefits for parking.

LIRRCC

New Members and MTA Board Member Reappointment. In November, Ronald Breuer of Suffolk County joined the Council. In late December, the LIRRCC received notice from the Governor's Office that Maureen Michaels of Suffolk County has been appointed to the Council. In June, the New York State Senate confirmed the reappointment of James McGovern as a Non-Voting Member of the MTA Board.

Customer Service Issues. The Council addressed a number of issues with LIRR management, including station and on-board announcements, on-time performance, escalator maintenance, station and car condition, conductor performance, car cleanliness and bathroom servicing, and recycling and refuse disposal. Staff attended focus groups on passenger origin and destination information and the Rail Road's automated telephone information system. In June and July, members conducted a survey of customer courtesy on the trains, which revealed at least one instance of discourteous behavior on 43 percent of the trips surveyed. Survey findings were summarized in report form, and the members discussed strategies to increase customer courtesy with LIRR officials.

Passenger Safety Concerns. Dominating safety concerns in the past year was the platform gap-related fatality that occurred on August 5 at the Woodside station. The Council met with LIRR acting President Raymond Kenny regarding measures that the Rail Road is taking to narrow platform gaps and increase public awareness of gap hazards. The Council continued to press for the prompt improvement of life safety systems in the East River tunnels and raised with LIRR management concerns about personal security at Jamaica station, police bunching in Penn Station, and grade crossing safety.

Riders Voice Concerns. The LIRRCC held its annual President's Forum in February. LIRR customers discussed a number of topics including the Main Line Corridor Improvement Project, requests for additional service, concern about closed cars and the platform position of trains, and quality of life concerns such as scratchiti and passenger courtesy with regards to cell phones and electronic games. LIRR President James Dermody and his senior staff, who were on hand to hear and respond to customer comments, received a number of complements on the LIRR's service along with riders concerns.

System Capital Improvements. The Council maintains its strong support for the LIRR Main Line Corridor Improvement Project. The Council believes that the addition of a third track and a program of crossing improvements are necessary for the Rail Road to meet changing conditions and satisfy travel demand. The Council discussed possible improvements to LIRR facilities at Penn Station that may accompany the Moynihan Station project and will continue to be involved with planning for this facility.

MNRCC

New Members and MTA Board Member Reappointment. In October, Martin Polowy and Norman Werner, both of Westchester County, joined the MNRCC. In April, the New York State Senate confirmed the reappointment of James Blair as a Non-Voting Member of the MTA Board.

ADA Compliance. The Council addressed several issues related to accessibility of Metro-North stations and services, including handicapped access through Grand Central Terminal's Graybar Passage doors, the announcements of arrival tracks, and the positioning of accessible signage at platform entrances in Grand Central.

MNR Service. Members raised a number of issues with MNR management including defective on board public address systems, short train consists during fall leaf season, and homeless individuals loitering in stations. Members consulted with MNR market research personnel on the design of the Railroad's regular Customer Satisfaction Surveys, and staff observed several rider focus groups.

Participation in Planning Studies. In June, Council member Steven Lofthouse attended a summit meeting on the Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 project. Although much of the recent work on this project has not yet been made public, the Council continues to monitor the study's progress.

Passengers' Safety Concerns. Staff consulted with Metro-North officials regarding potential platform gap problems. The Railroad responded that while larger gaps exist in some locations and passengers must remain alert for their own safety, the Metro-North does not have a widespread problem with platform gaps. The Council also expressed its safety concerns related to the Park Avenue tunnel to MNR management.

Riders Voice Concerns. Riders raised a number of issues at the March President's Forum. Rider questions and concerns included the design of timetables, accessibility of stations, train capacity, the condition of existing rolling stock, features of new M8 cars, station facilities and crowding, cell phone policies, and ticketing policies.

Rolling Stock. Council staff attended several focus groups held to receive passenger input and opinions about the design of the M8 cars planned for the New Haven line.

West of Hudson. The Council discussed a number of issues with Metro-North management including the service agreement with New Jersey Transit, changes in connections and schedules necessitated by Northeast Corridor construction projects, the condition of rolling stock, the operation of paid parking lots, and maintenance issues at the Pearl River station.

NYCTRC

New Member, Reelected Officers, and MTA Board Member Reappointment. In February, Jon Schachter joined the Council. In June, the NYCTRC reelected Andrew Albert as Chair, Michael Sinansky as Vice Chair; and William K. Guild, Marisol Halpern, and Toya Williford as members of the Executive Committee. In April, the New York State Senate confirmed the reappointment of Andrew Albert as a Non-Voting Member of the MTA Board.

ADA Compliance. The Council discussed and raised with NYC Transit officials a number of Americans With Disabilities Act compliance issues. Issues addressed included variations in lists of accessible stations circulated by different organizations, elevator and escalator reliability, difficulties obtaining information on out-of- service elevators, signage concerns, and inadequate bus announcements. The Council investigated several

reports of deficiencies in NYC Transit's Access-A-Ride service and had as its guests in February managers of the NYC Transit paratransit program.

Bus Issues. Throughout the year the Council investigated reports of discourteous drivers, bus bunching, problems distinguishing local and limited stop buses, and inappropriate mixtures of limited stop and local buses. The Council communicated requests for additional service and specific concerns about bus routing to NYC Transit and the MTA Bus Company. Staff participated in the New York City Bus Rapid Transit Study process, which selected five corridors for the implementation of pilot projects and is scheduled to begin a portion of this service in the latter portion of 2007. In September and October Council members conducted a survey of bus signage and headways. The survey found that 5 percent of buses surveyed had incorrect or defective front destination signage and that the average waiting time between buses on average deviated from published schedules by a factor of 47 percent.

Riders Voice Concerns. The Council held a Bus Forum at Brooklyn Borough Hall in June. The Forum was well attended, and bus riders had a variety of comments, questions and complaints for NYC Transit and MTA Bus Company management. Their concerns included schedule adherence, bus bunching, bus crowding, unmet service needs, rolling stock design and condition, potential route and schedule changes, the condition of bus stops, operator conduct, and accessibility issues.

Staten Island Transportation Needs. In November, Associate Director William Henderson testified on Staten Island before the NYC Council Committee on Transportation regarding the borough's transportation needs. The testimony emphasized that although major capital investments in transit are critical in the long term, improved coordination, new technology, and expansion and restructuring of existing service is needed to meet current needs.

Subway Issues. The Council followed up on reports of malfunctioning turnstiles, problematic station and platform signage, inadequate station cleaning, inconsistent subway entrance light globe colors, malfunctioning elevators and escalators, confusing service diversion posters, and insufficient or misleading service information. Issues discussed with NYC Transit management included the acceptance of return trip coupons for reduced fare passengers, the operation of exit gate panic bars, station renovation schedules and impacts, procedures for real property acquisition, the repair and maintenance of station flooring, graffiti vandalism on trains, flooding and water in stations, and the Station Customer Assistant program.

Council efforts to improve communication in trains with locked end doors were rewarded with a commitment from the MTA to retrofit these cars with an intercom system. In addition, the Council expressed its concerns with the 7 Subway Line Extension Project on many occasions. The main areas of concern with the project are the MTA's responsibility for costs exceeding the project budget and plans to construct only an unfinished 10th Avenue/41st Street station as part of the initial project.

Reports and Documents

Where is the Metropolitan Transportation authority on Transit Oriented Development?
(October, PCAC)

Just a Friendly Reminder — Be Courteous While on the LIRR. Results of the 2006 Long Island Rail Road Commuter's Council Customer Courtesy Survey (September, LIRRCC)