



2 BROADWAY, 16TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10004
(212) 878-7087 • mail@pcac.org

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**Statement by Ellyn Shannon, PCAC Associate Director
at the MTA Hearing on the Bronx Bus Network Redesign Plans Final Comments
Bronx Museum of Art, 1040 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY
Thursday, February 20th, 2020
Hearing Begins at 6PM**

Good evening, I'm Ellyn Shannon, Associate Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC. I am speaking on behalf of the New York City Transit Riders Council. Thank you for holding this public hearing tonight and the Council thanks and applauds NYCT's and DOT's tireless effort that went into creating a remarkably improved Bronx bus plan that will be better for riders and the borough.

Now, the Bronx resurgence has been well underway for a decade, and it is high time the borough gets an effective transportation system to support its thriving economy. We believe this plan does that. The Transit Riders Council wanted to see a plan focused on five key areas: faster bus speeds, improved reliability, increased frequencies, increased connectivity, and an alignment with Bronx growth areas.

The Council offers the following support and recommendations to achieve the greatest success in these areas:

Bronx Bus Speeds are frequently only 5 mph, slower than the average chicken can run! The Council strongly supports the plan's focus on increasing speeds by increasing bus stop spacing: each stop takes a minimum of 20 seconds – that adds up. We're glad the stop reviews were not formulaic, but based on rider input.

The Council strongly supports the effort to reduce the time buses are stuck in traffic with its 10 proposed bus priority corridors and we recommend fast-tracking their implementation. The Council also recommends fast-tracking the OMNY program to speed up dwell times.

And to even further reduce congestion, the Council recommends the City digitize parking facilities to let drivers know before they go – if a garage is full and where to find available parking.

Regarding reliability the Council supports the plan's focus on creating direct routes, reducing bus turn-around times, and shortening bus routes in congestion hot spots. Taken together, the results should reduce bus bunching and keep service more consistent.

Bus Frequencies remain a Council concern. While some frequencies increased, others have 30-minute + headways. We understand that limited MTA resources require a bus frequency methodology based on ridership. To address the problem, we propose Transit publicly monetize the incremental cost of adding service to each route, which may result in new revenue opportunities – including from the Outer Borough Transit Fund.

We also recommend a campaign to explain the cost of a heavily congested bus route on frequency, highlighting the service that could be added at no cost by eliminating congestion.

We appreciate that Bronx growth areas are included, and hope that will translate to adapting to the ridership changes that will occur when Penn Access comes online. We were glad to see the strong transit connectivity.

It's a well-done plan with many lessons learned, now it's time to move to the implementation phase! Thank you.