

PATH Riders' Council Meeting Minutes – March 18, 2015 – 6:00 PM

Journal Square Transportation Center

Meeting Agenda

- I. PATH – Welcome & Introductions
- II. PATH Communications Presentation – Transportation & Public Affairs
- III. Question & Answer Period
- IV. Presentation - PATH/MTA Subway Map
- V. PRC Internal Discussion
- VI. Adjournment

ATTENDEES (PRC MEMBERS):

1. Lewis Battista
2. Philip Burford
3. Anamitra Ghatak
4. Walter Heskes
5. Shi Wei Ho
6. Ralph Jimenez
7. Terry Karney
8. Jeff Lichtstein
9. Ya-Ting Liu (Chair)
10. Anthony Lupena
11. Stewart Mader (Vice Chair)
12. Thomas Miller
13. Asif Sandhu
14. Rudolph Scott

ATTENDEES (STAFF):

1. Cheryl Ann Albiez (Senior Public Information Officer, Media Relations, PANYNJ)
2. Linda Doss (Special Services Asst., Operations Support, PATH)
3. Adrienne Holmes (Superintendent, Transportation Division, PATH)
4. Russell Jordan (Social Media/Web Specialist, Marketing Communications, PANYNJ)
5. Kevin Lejda (Assistant Superintendent, Transportation Division, PATH)
6. Julie Lomba (Associate Customer Service Representative, Operations Support, PATH)
7. Audrey Mancher (Supporting Marketing Analyst, Marketing Communications, PANYNJ)
8. Michael Marino (Deputy Director, PATH)
9. Jessica Mills (Coord. Of Marketing and Customer Service Programs, Operations Support, PATH)
10. Bozena Nasce (Station Supervisor, Transportation Division, PATH)
11. Juan Carlos Rojas (Sr. External Relations Rep., Government and Community Relations, PANYNJ)
12. Timothy Ryan (Chief Maintenance Supervisor, BSTS, Way & Structures Division, PATH)
13. Edwin Sasportas (Manager, Operations Support, PATH)

I. PATH – Welcome & Introductions

- Mike Marino opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and introducing himself. He also provided his background of experience in the railroad industry. He talked about PATH in relation to the FRA and mentioned that PATH is regulated by the FRA. He also mentioned that, due to the effects of Hurricane Sandy, PATH is now working with both the FRA and the FTA.
- Tim Ryan addressed the group about issues related to recent concerns expressed by PRC members and the City of Jersey City regarding the condition of the sidewalks, staircases, and pedestrian thoroughfares leading into the Journal Square Transportation Center (JSTC). Tim explained that, in addition to maintenance and repair work that was prioritized after Hurricane Sandy, the JSTC facility was significantly impacted with many issues as a direct result of the extreme weather conditions this winter. These issues included the bursting of various frozen water pipes, increased leaks, and other challenges in the maintenance field. He mentioned that PATH is aware of the inconvenience of having to corral commuters into narrower walkways and has already taken preliminary measures to begin repairing damaged staircases and pedestrian surfaces. He further explained that PATH utilizes compounds that require certain sustained temperatures in order to set properly. He mentioned that PATH would be conducting follow-up meetings next week to address the complete rehabilitation of the sidewalk along JFK Boulevard. He also mentioned that the slate tile, used by Jersey City several years ago to rehabilitate the sidewalks, was too thin and not able to withstand the weight of the Farmer's Market vehicles that drive up and park on the surface. As a result, much of the slate tiles have fallen into disrepair. This condition is also worsened by the penetration of water and freezing temperatures. Tim further explained that PATH has reached out to the City of Jersey City in hopes of coordinating their efforts with the necessary repairs, but that PATH has not yet had much success in this endeavor. Coordination with the City of Jersey City is necessary because much of the surface that requires repairs belongs to them – not PATH. Tim Ryan stated that a temporary fix is now in place at JSTC.
- A PRC member asked about the steps PATH takes to ensure that they are using the best quality materials.
- The PRC Chairperson asked if it would be helpful to PATH if the PRC wrote a letter of support or issued a statement to the City of Jersey City requesting their cooperation with PATH in this matter.
 - Tim responded that PATH already receives assistance from the Government and Community Relations office in such matters and that there is already on-going communication to move forward with an open dialogue with the City of Jersey City.
- A PRC member inquired as to the current configuration of the World Trade Center (WTC) station and when will it change.

- Kevin Lejda explained that the current configuration of the WTC station should be changing some time this spring. He explained that the temporary station entrance will be closed down and dismantled and new entrances will be located at Vesey, Liberty, and Church Streets.
- Kevin also stated that North temporary access (current) would be closed to demolish and finish the WTC build-out, including the new North exit.

II. PATH Communications Presentation – Transportation & Public Affairs

- Bozena (Bo) Nasce presented to the group regarding her role and duties as they relate to PATH communications. She explained that the process of internal communication within PATH in the event of an emergency, service disruption, etc., begins with information provided by the Trainmaster to PATH regarding the situation. The information is then disseminated to passengers via several different modes, such as: on the public address system within the stations, on PATHVision monitors, through an updated message in the 1-800 general information number line, as well as through PATHAlerts. Passengers may also receive information by picking up the passenger assistance telephones in the stations. PATH also alerts the Media and Public Relations departments – who will send out tweets and, if necessary, an official media advisory and/or press release. Additionally, Bo mentioned that Passenger Information Agents (Red Coats) are also available in the stations to provide passengers with information as well.
- Jessica Mills mentioned that another mode of communication that PATH has with its passengers is through the PATH Community e-mails and PATHursdays.
- Russell Jordan explained the general responsibilities of the Marketing Department in relation to PATH, e.g., all printed material, all signs that are posted, or any form of digital communication that is seen throughout the PATH system, including posters, brochures, timetables, etc. Russell mentioned that he would specifically be addressing information that is created for website content, such as, PATHVision, PATHAlerts, and all social media platforms. He reiterated the process of how internal communication is transmitted from the Trainmaster to PATH and is then forwarded to the Port Authority’s Media Department and finally to PATH riders via their subscribed mediums -- two separate Port Authority (PA) Twitter accounts, which are monitored Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Additionally, the Twitter feeds are monitored, as necessary, beyond the regular hours of operation. Responses are turned around as quickly as possible. Russell also mentioned that the Twitter accounts are used, from a marketing standpoint, to get out supplemental information, such as customer service courtesy messages and other transportation-related information. Russell explained one issue being addressed internally and that is to ensure the uniformity of all messaging being sent out via all forms of communication. When an atypical event occurs, there are times when a custom message must be sent out and there is not enough time to standardize the information across different mediums. Russell informed PRC members that the PA and PATH are working on refining and improve messaging so that it is as uniform as possible based on

agreed upon language. Marketing is working to standardize messages to fit within 140 characters.

III. Question & Answer Period

- Marketing offices at 4 WTC handle PATH and TB&T (Tunnels, Bridges and Terminals)
 - Russell informed the group that the PA now has an Instagram account for the purposes of informing the public of what is going on at the PA and PATH. To get in touch with Russell on social media, his address is - DM@PATHtrain.
- PRC members asked questions related to frequently used language, such as, “Signal Problems”, “Track Conditions”, “Police Activity”, etc., and stated that many of these generalized categorical responses do not really address many of the concerns PATHRiders have -- concerns such as, “How long will the delay last?” or “At what station is the problem occurring?” and “Should I consider altering my travel plans?”
 - Russell agreed and said that Media is looking into updating and revising many of these categories.
- A PRC member asked if the development of any official PATH travel apps were in the works that passengers would be able to use, rather than having to go to the official website.
 - Russell responded that generally Google and all of the travel apps on the market work with the posted schedules and do not necessarily update when there is a delay or service interruption on the system. He also explained that, with the improvement of technology, PATH should be able to provide more real time information in the years to come with such enhancements as iBeacon technology. Android testing is taking place now, iOS next, and PRC members will beta test.
- A PRC member asked about the PATHVision crawl stating that the font should be larger and possibly display stationary messages on the screen, as well as make service information more prominent. NBC Universal’s contract is up for renewal in August, and this suggestion can be explored during the development of contract specifications.
- A PRC member asked how many Trainmasters PATH has on staff. The answer was 11, on a 24/7 basis.

IV. PATH / MTA Subway Map Presentation

Stewart Mader, the Vice-Chairperson of the PRC, gave a presentation on his thoughts and ideas of PATH being better represented on the MTA subway map (subwaynynj.com). He suggested that the MTA show the PATH system on its map, but as a dotted line, to show that it is a different fare. This would be a minor extension; the MTA map would be the same size.

He felt it would be beneficial if the map also displayed which subway lines are connected to the subway stations, and also stated that the PATH map should also connect to NJ Transit and the Hudson/Bergen Light Rail so that they are *all* connected. Stewart expressed that he did this presentation because he thinks it is a great idea and that it makes a strong economic development argument to help promote New Jersey businesses, real estate, etc.

V. PRC Internal Discussion

- Ya-Ting, the Chairperson, addressed the group regarding suggestions on how to make future meetings more efficient and as productive as possible, such as providing PATH with a list of questions agreed upon by the group so that answers can be provided in the following meeting. Additionally, she expressed that many of the ideas and requests members have expressed to PATH (such as real-time messaging on train service) cannot be accommodated until after the full implementation of the new signal system and subsequent complimentary technology.
- Ya-Ting further expressed that the PRC pilot year is now almost over and that the next meeting is the final meeting. She challenged members to think of ways to better achieve the group's long-term and short-term goals and create demonstrable results and achievements.
 - PRC members offered some suggestions, such as implementing roll calls, having members vote on issues to pass official resolutions, and creating a final set of recommendations to provide to PATH.
 - PRC members discussed their hopes that PATH would consider continuing the PRC after the first pilot year. PRC Members discussed numerous ideas they have on ways to change/adjust the format of future meetings.
 - PRC members expressed concern as to how in the future to avoid simply becoming a group that discusses issues but does not achieve any desired changes/results. One general consensus the group agreed upon was implementing a system of formal proposals and votes in order to live up to their fiduciary responsibilities to PATH riders as to what steps they are actually taking on their behalf as representative voices. Members generally expressed their desire for future meetings to be more of a “two-way street” rather than presentations by PATH staff.
- PRC would also like to discuss:
 - “Lessons learned” for PRC future meetings
 - Common themes – Signal System overhaul (CBTC), real time information
 - PRC feels it needs critical masses of Council members to remain for the next year for continuity
 - Meeting frequency suggestion (monthly, 1 hour or 90 minutes)

- How have PATH's expectations for PTC changed over this pilot year?
 - Working groups – Chairs to have direct line to PATH staff and then deliver updates at PRC meetings
 - Riders - PRC - PATH
 - Public role of PRC - Deliver messages that, by virtue of coming from the PRC, will be heard differently by the public than messages coming directly from PATH/PANYNJ
- Through the PRC and PATH working together, here are some of the areas of accomplishment:
 - Overnight shutdown - press strategy
 - iBeacon project - in beta
 - Communications improvements - social media, service updates, etc.
 - Extended **peak period** of 5-minute headways – Weekday evenings – JSQ/33rd to alleviate crowding.
 - Next Meeting – PRC Goals and Future Expectations
 - Formalize working groups and leadership
 - Should each working group have a chair? If so:
 - Chairs to have a designated contact in PATH
 - Chairs to work with PATH on advancing proposals, suggestions, punch lists, and report to the full PRC at meetings
 - PRC is looking for better ways to get rider feedback to PATH
 - Two-way communication
 - Meeting format/length
 - Onboarding materials - Intro to PATH, capital projects, maintenance of way, glossary of terms, contacts, etc.
 - Suggested a PATH Blog as a public comments channel for updates to riders

VI. Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.