

PATH Riders' Council Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, May 16, 2018 – 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Journal Square Transportation Center (JSTC)

Meeting Agenda:

- I. Welcome
- II. PTC Progress Update & 2018 Weekend Closures
- III. Introductions
- IV. Journal Square Area Development Activity & Related Issues
- V. Vertical Transportation Replacement Projects at Newport & Exchange Place Stations
- VI. Updates: New PATHAlerts Structure, Platform System Maps & Platform Stencil Message at Grove St.
- VII. Next Steps / Adjournment

Attendees (PRC Members):

1. Dorothy Benson
2. Margalit Edelman
3. Terry Karney
4. Anthony Lupena
5. Stewart Mader
6. Thomas Miller
7. Rahul Pathak
8. Tzara Peterson
9. Maribel Ruiz
10. Sridhar Shankar

Attendees (Staff):

1. Stephen Bond (Contracts – Capital Programs, PATH)
2. Rebecca Cassidy (Chief of Staff/Executive Advisor - Director's Office, PATH)
3. Winnie Chang (Project Manager – Capital Programs, PATH)
4. Linda Doss (Principal Marketing Analyst – Customer Relations & Mktg. Programs, PATH)
5. Mike Guthy (Sr. Program Manager – Capital Programs, PATH)
6. Adrienne Holmes (Superintendent – Transportation Division, PATH)
7. Dan Horner (Transportation Planner – Planning and Regional Development, PANYNJ)
8. Scott Ladd (Assistant Director – Media Relations, PANYNJ)
9. Kevin Lejda (Superintendent – Transportation Construction & Operations Planning, PATH)
10. Damian McShane (Program Director – Capital Programs, PATH)
11. Jessica Mills (Manager – Customer Relations and Marketing Programs, PATH)
12. Juan Carlos Rojas (Sr. External Relations – Government and Community Relations, PANYNJ)

13. Philip Silvestro (Associate Customer Service Representative - PATH)
14. Katie Winfree (Sr. External Relations - Government and Community Relations, PANYNJ)

I. Welcome

- **Adrienne Holmes** welcomed the group and thanked them for their continued service and dedication to the PRC. She encouraged them to please continue offering their thoughts, ideas, and feedback as we enter into the 2018 tunnel closures. Ms. Holmes emphasized the value of having a rider advisory board and how it can help improve communications, such as the newly-restructured PATHAlerts. She concluded with an eagerness to face the challenges ahead with the support of the PRC.

II. PTC Progress Update & 2018 Weekend Closures

- **Kevin Lejda** reviewed the schedule of the planned summer 2018 closures as well as the strategic planning of the schedule. He showed the actual tunnel closures planned testing by using the Communications Based Train Control (CBTC) track section map. He reported to the group that he plans to ask for additional crews to help service on the WTC line during peak periods. PATH's goal is to complete the testing by October in order to definitively meet the PTC mandate by the end of the year.
- **Sridhar Shankar** commented that October was not that far away and that there was a light at the end of the tunnel. He asked when there would be more cars.
- **Kevin Lejda** replied that PATH has authorization for 50 cars and that PATH is working with Kawasaki and the front office to increase that number.
- **Rebecca Cassidy** further explained that PATH is still negotiating with Kawasaki. Then PATH will be working to increase capacity incrementally. The older cars (8 years old) will be leaving the fleet to be overhauled in order to maximize their life span. Service improvements are expected as soon as January, followed by more gains over the next two years.
- **Jessica Mills** told the group that Metrocards will be distributed at the WTC station for when stations on the JSQ-33 via Hoboken line are closed. For the WTC and Exchange Place closures, the cards will be distributed at 33rd St. Travelers will be queued as they exit. Jessica acknowledged that the PRC's overwhelming support of the Metrocard mitigation really helped PATH advocate for it. Also, NJ Transit will cross honor on the Hudson Bergen Light Rail (HBLR) and increase their service to run 24 hours, which is not part of their normal operation. Jessica clarified that this mitigation demands a lot of staffing and coordination,

and that it's a heavy lift for PATH. During these earlier closures, PATH will be looking for PRC member feedback since there will be some time between this closure and the closures later in the summer to make adjustments.

III. Introductions

- The PRC was introduced to **Katie Winfree** (GOCOR), **Winnie Chang** (Capital), **Dan Horner** (Planning), **Stephen Bond** (Capital), **Mike Guthy** (Capital), and **Damian McShane** (Capital).

IV. Journal Square Area Development Activity & Related Issues

- **Winnie Chang** and **Dan Horner** presented to the group on development in Hudson County and potential impacts to PATH ridership. The PRC has had questions on this topic in the past, so Dan and Winnie presented information to address those questions. Dan gave an overview of population and housing trends in PATH catchment areas of Hudson County. Based on their projections, the number of people living walking distance from a PATH station could more than double in the next 20 years. Dan drilled down on the planned development in the JSQ neighborhood. He also compared the MTA's development tax/fee model to PATH's lack of any model.
- **Sridhar Shankar** asked if an additional station would make this problem worse.
- **Stewart Mader** responded that it probably would, because you're also adding a reason for someone to use the PATH (trip to the airport). There was general discussion about the number of trains and the headways during peak periods.
- **Rebecca Cassidy** explained to the group that the shoulders of the peak periods continue to expand. More trains can be added after PTC work is complete.
- **Margalit Edelman** advocated for increasing bus service or subsidizing ferries in order to relieve capacity pressure off of the PATH system.
- **Dan Horner** referenced former State Senator Bob Gordon's bill introduced last year which proposed some sort of funding mechanism for developers and/or municipalities to contribute funding to transit systems. The PA doesn't levy taxes, so any solution would have to come out of Trenton.
- **Rahul Pathak** asked if JSQ has the physical space for a platform expansion.

- **Dan Horner** and **Winnie Chang** explained that there are pinch points (Conrail North). The next step at JSQ is to identify ways to mitigate space issues in the future, like what PATH has already planned at Grove Street. These Grove Street plans were put together 10 years ago, so there would definitely need to be some modifications. Currently these plans are not funded in the 10-year Capital Plan.
- **Juan Carlos Rojas** pointed out that some stations have the ability to extend platforms, but the NY stations on the 33rd street line do not have anywhere to go.
- **Dan Horner** explained that it's really the downtown line that's growing. Travel patterns suggest that PATH doesn't have the same pressures on the uptown line, but the shoulders on all lines are still broadening.
- **Juan Carlos Rojas** asked about any projected growth in reverse commuting.
- **Dan Horner** explained that Newark will have to make a strategic decision about whether to be another bedroom community or an employment center. Some pressure would be relieved off of the PATH system if it becomes an employment center instead of a bedroom community. There was a brief discussion about express trains as a mitigation, but Dan and **Winnie Chang** clarified that there's no parallel express track available.
- **Jessica Mills** addressed **Stewart Mader** and suggested that this would be a great opportunity for the PRC to be vocal and advocate for a PATH issue.
- **Stewart Mader** said the group would have to brainstorm about the best venue to advocate through. He said it would likely be a legislative solution.
- **A PRC member** said it may be difficult to develop public support on this issue because of the PA's funding structure.
- **Thomas Miller** was surprised by the lack of interest in P3s to address these issues.
- **Dan Horner** explained that P3s (public-private partnerships) usually come out when it's a crisis, like when a developer is worried that they can't fill their building because of transit congestion issues. Dan and **Stewart Mader** provided examples of ways to raise funds for capital improvements to PATH in order to expand capacity, including congestion pricing.

V. Vertical Transportation Replacement Projects at Newport & Exchange Place Stations

- **Stephen Bond** reviewed the current status of ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) – Access Capital Planning at Exchange Place (one elevator) and Newport (two elevators). Work will be scheduled in 2019 so that the stations will not be closed at the same time in order to maintain access. Based on the data collected, the vast majority of the people using the elevators at the Exchange Place and Newport stations are not people covered by the ADA, but rather people with strollers. Stephen’s team is proposing an ADA-accessible mini-bus as mitigation for these elevator closures, similar to what NJ Transit utilizes. The bus would operate between Newport and Exchange Place. The next steps are to discuss with the Jersey City Traffic Department, review with NJ Transit, solicit bids, and award a contract in line with the construction schedule.
- **Jessica Mills** pointed out that this project is in the very early stages. The PRC’s early involvement, however, is important so that PATH can incorporate any helpful feedback they may have on the mitigation and its implementation.
- **Maribel Ruiz** expressed that this bus service should not be “first come, first serve.” For example, someone with a stroller or a bike should not have priority over an individual in a wheelchair. **Stephen Bond** agreed. There was discussion among the group about a possible bike rack on the vehicle, but it was clarified that is not the intent of this mitigation.

VI. Updates: New PATHAlerts Structure, Platform System Maps & Platform Stencil Message at Grove St.

- **Adrienne Holmes** gave the group an overview of the new PATHAlerts system. She gave examples of the new format and alerts that were recently issued. She encouraged the PRC members to share any more ideas that they may have regarding terminology to more effectively communicate to riders.
- **Jessica Mills** commented that there had not been much chatter on social media about the change to the PATHAlerts.
- **Stewart Mader** committed to further brainstorming with other members.
- **Maribel Ruiz** asked about the status of stenciled areas for conductors.
- **Jessica Mills** explained the it is difficult for riders to see the stencil when a car is particularly crowded, but that this issue did come up at a recent safety meeting. The discussion then moved to other courtesy campaigns.

- **Jessica Mills** encouraged the PRC members to complete both the Origin/Destination survey and the Customer Satisfaction survey, which PATH takes very seriously. She explained that there have been some issues with the “Step Aside Then Get Inside” stencils, because of the different sizes and varying orders of cars. As a result, the stencils do not always line up with the doors.
- **Stewart Mader** suggested a repeating message line across the platform instead.
- **Jessica Mills** said that they would draft a design.
- **Thomas Miller** wondered how effective the repeating message line would be and expressed his concern about visual clutter. **Stewart Mader** disagreed.
- **Jessica Mills** told the group that the placement of system maps on the platform level is moving forward, and that she would likely have another update for the group at the next PRC meeting. She explained that there are some internal discussions about how to change out the maps so that it's reflective of the actual weekend service map during the 2018 summer closures. The system map in the app will be updated as well.
- **Stewart Mader** suggested that it might make sense to just wait until October to roll out the maps in these new locations in order to minimize confusion among riders.

VII. Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM