

PATH Riders' Council Meeting Minutes - Wednesday, March 20, 2019 - 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Journal Square Transportation Center (JSTC)

Meeting Agenda:

- I. Welcome
- II. 2019/2020 WTC Weekend Closures Update
- III. PATH "Nudge" Campaign
- IV. RidePATH 2019 Roadmap & Real-Time Train Info – PRC Feedback
- V. New Partnership Deals & Earth Day Activities
- VI. Media Training
- VII. Next Steps/Adjournment

Attendees (PRC Members):

1. Lewis Battista
2. Dorothy Benson
3. Anthony Lupena
4. Stewart Mader
5. Thomas Miller
6. Andrew Nathanson
7. Rahul Pathak
8. Tzara Peterson
9. Maribel Ruiz
10. Gaurang Saini

Attendees (Staff):

1. Cheryl Ann Albiez (Senior Public Information Officer – Media Relations, PANYNJ)
2. Patrick Carolan (Supervising Marketing Analyst – Marketing, PANYNJ)
3. Ayanna Davis (Project Coordinator – Customer Relations & Marketing Programs, PATH)
4. Clarelle DeGraffe (Deputy Director – PATH)
5. Linda Doss (Principal Marketing Analyst – Customer Relations & Marketing Programs, PATH)
6. Christopher Eshleman (Mgr. Regional Transp. Planning – Planning & Regional Development, PANYNJ)
7. Jessica Mills (Manager – Customer Relations & Marketing Programs, PATH)
8. Joseph Monte (Employee Communications Specialist – Marketing, PANYNJ)
9. Mary K Murphy (Director – Planning & Regional Development, PANYNJ)
10. Michael Phelan (Contract Staff – WTC Construction, PANYNJ)
11. Raquel Pinto (Leadership Fellow – Customer Relations & Marketing Programs, PANYNJ)
12. Philip Silvestro (Associate Customer Service Rep. – Customer Relations & Marketing Programs, PATH)
13. Geoffrey Walano (IT Project Manager – Technology, Business Relationship Management, PANYNJ)
14. William Wang (Intern – Office of CSO, Security Business Resource Management, PANYNJ)

15. Kathryn Winfree (Senior External Relations Rep. – Government and Community Relations, PANYNJ)

I. Welcome

- The meeting began with **Jessica Mills** informing the council that Mike Marino’s successor has been chosen, and with it being Women’s History Month, it could not be a more appropriate time to introduce – effective Monday, March 25th – PATH’s new, first-ever female Director/General Manager, **Clarelle DeGraffe**.
- **Clarelle** introduced herself to the newer PRC members who may not know her, and provided a brief overview of her work experience with the Port Authority (PA). She expressed her gratitude to the PA and PATH for the opportunity to take the reins and lead PATH forward, in addition to the gratitude she shares with Mr. Marino for all the PRC’s efforts. **Clarelle** mentioned how her 29 years of experience managing major capital projects/programs, combined with her 4 years serving as Deputy Director, primed her for her new role. It means a great deal to her being the first woman to hold the position of Director/General Manager in the entire history of PATH, and **Clarelle** assured all attendees that she intends to continue building upon the momentum of PATH’s recent accomplishments. She acknowledged the completion of PTC before the December 2018 federal deadline, countdown clocks, cell service in all stations, and the RidePATH app.
- **Clarelle** is proud of what PATH has achieved; however, she expressed her understanding of PATH’s system capacity and the major work to be completed, especially being in the thick of the 2019-2020 WTC weekend closures for permanent Superstorm Sandy infrastructural repairs. She closed the welcome by kindly asking for the continuous feedback and collaboration the PRC has so enthusiastically provided, and as she acknowledged the unwavering support and hard work of the staff in attendance, **Clarelle** encouraged everyone to work together, make a world-class customer experience a reality, and continue driving home the mission to keep PATH moving forward.
- Before moving on to the next topic, **Jessica Mills** informed the attendees that in honor of Women’s History Month, PATH will be conducting its first Women of PATH event on March 26th. She explained that the program aims to spotlight the women who work at PATH – celebrating all of their accomplishments and thanking them for their service.

II. 2019/2020 WTC Weekend Closures Update

- **Clarelle DeGraffe** informed the PRC of the work plan for the weekend following the meeting (3/23 & 3/24). She used a system map with graphical identifiers to visually demonstrate the work to be done, and the work vehicle movements and their use in the tunnels between Exchange Place and WTC. **Clarelle** provided more details into the specific work planned, fielded questions from PRC members, and in conjunction with PATH staff, briefed the council on the handheld credit card devices that will be available for riders travelling between Exchange Place and WTC during the weekend closures.

- **Staff** explained that SmartLink card holders will be able to show the ferry operator their card and pay for their round-trip ferry transfer ticket with a credit or debit card at both Harborside or Brookfield Place ferry terminals for \$2.75. **Staff** stressed that this is a temporary measure that will be in place until the launch of the handheld SmartLink readers.

III. PATH “Nudge” Campaign

- **Christopher Eshleman** presented on the PATH “nudge” campaign/travel demand management pilot program that aims to encourage riders to consider traveling during the hours outside of the core of the AM peak. He provided an overview of the program, and highlighted how rider surveys, crowding data, signage, PATHAlerts, and marketing/branding efforts will help support it. **Christopher** provided ridership data showing the most congested times and points for the system, in addition to ridership survey results that exhibited a positive perception of PATHAlerts that could identify the most crowded times at a station, and thus influence a consideration for off-peak travel.
- **Christopher** delved into more specific AM peak train times on the Newark-WTC line, with a particular emphasis on Journal Square and Grove St. stations. After showing examples of visual communication efforts established by other transportation agencies around the world, PRC members weighed in with a variety of feedback regarding visuals with the most potential for effectiveness with PATH ridership. He continued with drafted PATHAlerts, which garnered additional PRC feedback, and in conjunction with **Patrick Carolan**, discussed possible delivery approaches, including: flyers, letters to employers, web, ads, social, and RidePATH app integration. **Christopher** concluded that the evaluation of this program is data driven and opened the floor for any questions, thoughts, or suggestions from the PRC.

IV. RidePATH 2019 Roadmap & Real-Time Train Info – PRC Feedback

- **Geoffrey Walano** began by informing all attendees that the RidePATH app has amassed 107,000 downloads to date. In addition, real-time train information – one of the latest and most significant features to be implemented into the app since its inception – was made available to users in early February. He emphasized that RidePATH has seen 27,000 active users over the past 30 days, and that the next release is scheduled for Q2 2019. **Geoffrey** concluded by garnering feedback from the PRC, specifically pertaining to how often they’re using the real-time feature, how the interface can be improved, what information is most important, what to be notified about, what’s not working, and what improvements can be made.

V. New Partnership Deals & Earth Day Activities

- **Joseph Monte** presented on the 2019 PATH customer programs implemented thus far. He began by discussing the PATH weekend discounts at the WTC Oculus that started with the 2018 holiday promotion, and how the current ones continue the Port Authority's partnership with Westfield WTC. He explained that nearly 50 retailers will offer SmartLink users discounts and other deals, with the promotion running through the summer. The program will be promoted across the PATH system, on social media, and through networks within local communities.
- **Joseph** continued with a discussion about a potential coffee store promotion. With this new partnership, PA/PATH will offer coupons for a free cup of coffee to PATH riders (redeemable at select locations; available while supplies last). The program will run for several weekends as part of the PA/PATH commitment to enhancing partnerships with local businesses in our host communities.
- **Joseph** concluded by highlighting special edition SmartLink cards with customer perks coming Q2-Q3 2019. Lastly, he announced the PATH Earth Month Fair on the Journal Square Transportation Center plaza the week of Earth Day, April 22nd, with the exact date and time to be determined. He emphasized that the goal is "sustainability moves us forward," and encouraged everyone to stop by Journal Square to learn how PATH and its business partners are going green.
- Before moving on to the next topic, **Linda Doss** informed the attendees of the new PATH Performs! Art in Transit Program, presented by PATH and the Hudson County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs/Tourism Development. She explained that performances will be held in select PATH stations throughout Hudson County from June through October, and applications for auditions are currently being submitted. Auditions will take place the last week of March.

VI. Media Training

- **Cheryl Ann Albiez** was joined by **Stewart Mader** to present on the topic of Media Training. **Cheryl** began by explaining how the Port Authority's Public Affairs Department is comprised of three units: Marketing, Government & Community Affairs (GOCOR), and the Office of Media Relations. These units work together to disseminate information on social, PATHAlerts, and printed materials. Further, they update elected officials, provide the public with timely, accurate information, and build/promote brand awareness.
- **Cheryl** went into more detail regarding Media Relations, explaining how they handle breaking news, media inquiries, promotion of featured stories, announcements (service, new amenities, etc.), travel advisories (schedule or service changes/outages), inter-agency communications, and blogs. In addition to blogs, further modes include: press releases, statements, and responses that disseminate information to local, state, national, or international media, as required.

- **Stewart** shared his experience with reporters and media outlets, and explained how with PRC involvement, there's potential for an effort to help shape the media coverage from reporters covering PATH. **Cheryl** and **Stewart** ran a Q&A and discussed how educating reporters can help convey accurate information to simultaneously educate and inform PATH riders. In addition to their questions and feedback, **PRC members** recommended that the Port Authority pitch a story about the accomplishments of the PRC.
- Before the adjournment, **Jessica Mills** briefly pitched the idea of PRC station ambassadors/an "Adopt A Station" program. Originally brought forth by the PA's Director of Brand & Customer Partnerships, Jawauna Greene, each PRC member can become an ambassador for a station and provide a monthly report card on their findings. The pitch was met with generally favorable feedback from the PRC, and planned as a potential agenda topic for the next meeting in May.

VII. Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.