

PATH Riders' Council Meeting Minutes - Wednesday, May 15, 2019 - 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Journal Square Transportation Center (JSTC)

Meeting Agenda:

- I. Welcome
- II. Acknowledgments to Stewart
- III. 2019/2020 WTC Weekend Closures Update
- IV. Station Platform Crowd Control
- V. Q&A – Replacement of Vertical Transportation Units
- VI. PRC Station Adoption Program
- VII. Next Steps/Adjournment

Attendees (PRC Members):

1. Lewis Battista
2. Dorothy Benson
3. Dave Ho
4. Anthony Lupena
5. Stewart Mader
6. Thomas Miller
7. Andrew Nathanson
8. Rahul Pathak
9. Tzara Peterson
10. Sridhar Shankar

Attendees (Staff):

1. Cheryl Ann Albiez (Senior Public Information Officer – Media Relations, PANYNJ)
2. Keith Armonaitis (Principal Business Systems Analyst – TEC, PANYNJ)
3. Stephen Bond (Contract Staff – Capital Programs, PATH)
4. John Burkhard (Superintendent – Way & Structures, PATH)
5. Ayanna Davis (Project Coordinator – Customer Relations & Marketing Programs, PATH)
6. Clarelle DeGraffe (Director/General Manager – PATH)
7. Linda Doss (Principal Marketing Analyst – Customer Relations & Marketing Programs, PATH)
8. Jawauna Greene (Director – Brand & Customer Partnerships, PANYNJ)
9. Michael Guthy (Senior Project Manager – Capital Programs, PATH)
10. Adrienne Holmes (Superintendent – Transportation, PATH)
11. Kevin Lejda (Superintendent – Transportation Construction & Operations Planning, PATH)
12. Jessica Mills (Manager – Customer Relations & Marketing Programs, PATH)
13. Philip Silvestro (Associate Customer Service Rep. – Customer Relations & Marketing Programs, PATH)
14. Kathryn Winfree (Senior External Relations Rep. – Government and Community Relations, PANYNJ)

I. Welcome

- **Jessica Mills** welcomed the attendees, and announced that this will be **Stewart Mader's** last PRC meeting. He is voluntarily stepping down as PRC Chair, having been recently appointed as New Jersey Transit's (NJT) first Chief Customer Experience Officer and Customer Advocate. Jessica and **Philip Silvestro** presented Stewart with a plaque commemorating his service on the PATH Riders' Council (PRC). Stewart acknowledged the PRC's work and achievements over the past several years, as well as PATH's commitment to the group. He further identified ways the PRC and PATH can continue to work together and improve the customer experience. Stewart is looking forward to what's coming next from the PRC.
- **Linda Doss** spoke about the Interim Chair process. Stewart nominated Vice Chair of Scheduling, **Sridhar Shankar**, for Interim Chair, and called for the PRC to vote. Sridhar was unanimously elected to the Interim Chair position and accepted.
- **Jessica Mills** explained that the members who have served since 2015 will be leaving, and new members will be on-boarded in the fall. Following the selection of new members, there will be an election for the new Chair. In the meantime, Sridhar will serve as the Interim Chair. Solicitation for new PRC member applications will begin in September, and the next PRC year will start in November. Stewart reminded newer PRC members that they should consider running for Vice Chair of Messaging, Scheduling, and Access. The council also discussed a heavier focus on accessibility issues.

II. Acknowledgements to Stewart

- **Clarelle DeGraffe** began the acknowledgments by thanking Stewart for all his work with the PRC and PATH. She thanked him for being a great partner, commended him for his dedication to improving the transit customer experience, and wished him the very best in his new position and all his future endeavors.
- **Stewart Mader** addressed the attendees, and began by explaining that he voluntarily stepped down as Chairman of the PRC to pursue a career in an industry that has interested him since he was a child. It was his time with the PRC that helped him realize how passionate he truly is about transit, the movement of our region, and improving the rider experience. Stewart was appointed in April as NJT's first Chief Customer Experience Officer and Customer Advocate. He explained that as a customer advocate, his job will be to improve the NJT customer experience, which is nothing new to him after leading the PRC, living the rider experience himself, and advocating for those who depend on transit services. Stewart expressed that his last meeting is bittersweet; however, he plans to strengthen NJT's communication with PATH, and carry forth the incredible momentum he has built through he and the PRC's collaborative efforts with PATH.

III. 2019/2020 WTC Weekend Closures Update

- **Kevin Lejda** explained that PATH has made schedule changes to benefit customers. PATH has been running analyses on MetroCard and SmartLink card turnstile entries to gain a better understanding of how people move around the system. A new data organization system has been implemented to demonstrate train capacity along the lines at each station. PATH will use this tool to plot where additional trains should be targeted for service optimization. Through this tool, Kevin demonstrated exactly how an added train impacts capacity during the rush. These are very useful metrics, with extra trains able to run because of Communications-Based Train Control (CBTC). Kevin concluded by explaining how Positive Train Control (PTC) maintains strict train speed control, generally resulting in one-minute transit time increases, but also in better safety and less wear on the tracks.
- **PRC Members** commented on noticing trains running closer together.

IV. Station Platform Crowd Control

- **Adrienne Holmes** spoke about the Platform Monitoring Program, which has covered Grove St., Newport, Exchange Place, Hoboken, and Harrison PATH stations for crowding mitigation. It is one of several initiatives to manage PATH ridership growth proactively. After a period of extraordinary growth, current ridership is almost 300,000 customers per day. PATH is planning for full time employees to be dedicated to platform monitoring. These employees would provide a highly visible and engaging presence to riders, coordinate responses to issues, monitor crowding, take action to mitigate the buildup of passengers, and improve dwell time by encouraging customers to move to the center of the car and step aside to let other riders off. Further, they would assist customers with belongings, encourage riders to stand behind the yellow line for safety, forward concerns and observations, provide customer engagement and an Attitude of Service, and initiate local platform announcements.
- This program also includes the launch of the crowding blue line (painted on select station platforms) to monitor crowding conditions. **PRC Members** discussed the blue line to indicate crowding conditions, as well as conditions before and after Red Bull games in Harrison.
- Before transitioning to the next agenda topic, **Keith Armonaitis** provided a quick RidePATH app update. He informed the attendees that RidePATH has amassed 125,000 downloads, and asked the PRC to visit their mobile operating system app store and leave an honest review for the team. Keith explained that the app team is in the process of changing the architecture and technology of the app to promote new user interface features and real time updates. The new version of RidePATH is planned to be faster at connecting with real time data for scaling up to millions of users. Further, additional security features associated with real time are planned to be included, and more feature and functionality updates are in the current development pipeline. Keith encouraged the attendees to reach out to him with any suggestions they may have for RidePATH.

V. Q&A – Replacement of Vertical Transportation Units

- **Stephen Bond** provided an update regarding the replacement of vertical transportation units (elevators and escalators) at Exchange Place, Newport, and Grove Street PATH stations. The projects are moving forward and the construction barricades have already been erected at Exchange Place. The onsite construction barriers include graphics with information about the projects. Construction on the elevator replacement at Exchange Place is scheduled for July, with escalators scheduled to be replaced one at a time. Stephen also reviewed the shuttle bus service that will be offered, and the route that will be implemented once the phased work on the elevators begins.

VI. PRC Station Adoption Program

- **Jawauna Greene** briefly reviewed a proposal for a PRC Station Ambassador pilot program. It would be designed to provide first-hand feedback from a dedicated community of transit riders. Ambassadors would be equipped with a template form to make notes related to the stations, trains, and general observations at a particular point in time. Jawauna asked the council to provide feedback for further discussion during the next PRC meeting.

VII. Adjournment

- **Stewart Mader** adjourned the meeting at 8:00 PM, recognizing the value of everyone's hard work and collaboration. **Sridhar Shankar** thanked Stewart and informed the attendees that he is looking forward to working with them all.