

MEETING MINUTES

To: PAC Alternatives Development/Alternative Routes Subcommittee

Date: 9/23/98

From: George Haikalis

Meeting Location: BPCA,
1 World Financial Ctr.
24th Floor Conf. Rm.

Re: MTA Contract No. 1-01-97054-0-0
LSTS Project # 4351
Meeting Title: Subcommittee Meeting #1

Attendees:

Name	Organization
Stephanie Gelb	Battery Pk. City Auth.
Florence Daniels	Public Member, Man. C. B. #1
Nancy Danzig	FTA
Coco Gordon	Coalition for Better Transit
William K. Guild	Coalition for Better Transit
Michael J. Follo	Interested Citizen
George Haikalis	IRUM
Peter McCourt	Battery Park City Authority
Robert A. Olmsted	
Albert L. Papp, Jr.	NJ Association of Railroad Passengers

Name	Organization
John Rozankowski	FBCC
Stanley Rosanoff	NYC Comptroller
Robert Schumacher	PCAC, MTA
Louis Sepersky	MetroEast
Steven Weber	RPA
Jack Dean	MTA
Ruby Siegel	LSTS
Nicole Bucich	LSTS
Alexandra Zetlin	ZSC
Ruth Renner	ZSC
Andrea Weiss	ZSC

Highlights:

I. Introduction/Organizational Issues

Jack Dean thanked the members of the *Alternative Development/Alternative Routes Subcommittee* for their participation in the *Lower Manhattan Access Alternatives Study*. Mr. Dean provided an overview of the committee goals, and stated that the study had developed a long list of alternatives from a variety of sources that captured as many reasonable options as possible, and was now seeking to move from that to a shorter list of long term alternatives. The TAC and PAC subcommittees will assist the MTA in arriving at a shorter list of alternatives. The subcommittees are run by PAC members, and it was recommended that they select a Chair and Recording Secretary and establish a meeting schedule. The committee selected Louis Sepersky, MetroEast as committee chairperson, and George Haikalis, IRUM as recording secretary. Mr. Sepersky noted for the record that he is an advocate for the MetroEast proposal.

A joint TAC/PAC Alternatives Subcommittee meeting is planned for October. Members agreed that an additional PAC Subcommittee meeting was necessary prior to the joint meeting and it was scheduled for 2:00 PM Friday, October 2, 1998, at a location to be determined (later confirmed for St. Margaret's House Library, 49 Fulton St.)

II. Brainstorming Session-"Study Area Needs"

Nicole Bucich presented the Problem/Need Themes hand-out diagram to provide examples of how to define study area problems and needs.

Robert Schumacher thought that the "Too Few Subway Trains" on the Problem/Need Themes hand-out was not accurate. He pointed out that the #6 Lexington Ave. train runs every two minutes. Ms. Daniels responded that this frequency of trains only exists for a short period of time (during peak hours) and the #6 should offer that frequency of service throughout the day.

Mr. Sepersky suggested that the word "capacity" was missing from the Problems/Needs chart in the first column down where it states "Too Few Subway Trains, Platform/Train Crowding, and Lack of Good Alternative Routes". Mr. Haikalis said that "Too Few Subway Trains" implies that the transit authority is not scheduling enough trains, but in reality it is a capacity problem.

Albert Papp stated that the commuter rail experience is viewed as less onerous than the subway or PATH experience. It is far less stressful to get on one train and then get off without transferring. He agreed that the commuting experience is highly qualitative. Mr. Haikalis suggested that it would also be useful to exchange information with the demand modeling subcommittee. Steven Weber stated that the forecasting model gives the transfer from rail to subway three penalties: 1) the time it takes to walk from the train to the subway platform, 2) the transfer penalty in time and anxiety, and 3) the less comfortable conditions of the subway compared to the commuter rail ride. Mr. Papp suggested that a one seat ride on Metro North from Grand Central Station to downtown Manhattan, to Atlantic Avenue, and then to New Jersey would free up capacity on the Lexington Avenue subway line.

Florence Daniels suggested that the New York City Department of City Planning should have information available regarding forecasts for residential and commercial growth in the Lower Manhattan area. Mr. Dean stated that information was included in the Socio-Economic Report, the draft of which was currently being reviewed by agencies whose data was used in the report. Ms. Danzig suggested that the subcommittee receive a copy of the report's Executive Summary. This will be made available at the subcommittee's next meeting.

Ms. Daniels suggested that the subcommittee should work on short-term issues that can be easily implemented, and then focus on long-term improvements. For example, the Transit Authority has again cut M15 bus service in Lower Manhattan, despite the fact that more and more people live in this area. She suggested implementing realistic short-term improvements that can be implemented immediately and Mr. Sepersky recommended a letter on this issue be sent from the subcommittee to New York City Transit. Mr. Haikalis suggested creating a subgroup to focus on short-term immediate issues, such as bus service. Mr. Sepersky stated that the committee needs to decide whether we want to get involved in the issue of service delivery. Committee members agreed to look into service delivery issues. Florence Daniels, William Guild, John Rozankowski, and George Haikalis volunteered to form a sub-group to focus on immediate service delivery items, such as the M15 bus issue. Mr. Sepersky suggested the subcommittee should also establish ties with Community Board #1 and the Alliance for Downtown New York on these issues.

III. Review of Preliminary Long List Alternatives

Mr. Dean presented the *Alternative Development Process* hand-out and explained the five step process of eliminating entries until the final alternatives are decided upon. In response to a question, he explained the difference between TSM's and Build Alternatives. TSM alternatives are transportation improvements that make more efficient use of existing facilities and do not entail major capital alterations to the existing infrastructure. He suggested that TSM's be kept discrete. Mr. Dean asked that the subcommittee begin to condense the long lists of short-term and long-term initiatives, concentrating on long-term initiatives. He asked subcommittee members to review, discuss and provide the MTA feedback on the alternatives.

George Haikalis asked why a light rail alternative suggestion does not exist on the long list. He suggested departing from the traditional alternative screening approach of shrinking. He thought that shrinking alternatives too quickly could eliminate suggestions that will be useful later in the study. Mr. Dean said that many of the alternatives are repetitive. He proposed creating a top ten list of the major themes that are addressed in the long list of alternatives. The MTA would like to have the subcommittee's top ten list in time for a mid-October joint meeting of PAC/TAC alternative development subcommittees. At that meeting, the two subcommittees would share their lists, find areas of agreement and, if there are differences, work through those.

John Rozankowski suggested sorting alternatives by subway issues, highway issues, and commuter rail. Ms. Bucich will provide the list sorted by short-term, long-term and then by mode. Mr. Rozankowski offered to take the subway categories and organize them by mode.

Mr. Sepersky asked subcommittee members to suggest alternatives, at this stage unconstrained by fiscal or technical considerations.

Mr. Weber reviewed the MetroEast proposal that would offer Metro-North service both to the east and west sides of Manhattan and the capability of extending to Queens and JFK Airport. Mr. Papp suggested an extension of Metro-North from Grand Central Terminal downtown and then Atlantic Avenue terminal. He pointed out that a one seat ride would free up capacity on the Lexington Avenue line and pointed to New Jersey Transit's Midtown Direct service as an example. Mr. Rozankowski suggested the 2nd Avenue subway with a four track line from the Bronx to Brooklyn.

Ms. Gelb suggested that the subcommittee consider both big and small options, and stated that ferry service be included in the mix of alternatives. She agreed that improved bus service, the Second Avenue subway, and extension of commuter rail to Lower Manhattan were alternatives to consider. Ms. Daniels suggested rerouting the M15 bus around South Ferry to Battery Park City. She pointed out that the express and tour buses who layover in Lower Manhattan cause congestion on local streets in Lower Manhattan and degrade the environment. Mr. Sepersky agreed with Ms. Daniels and suggested exploring clean air technologies and arranging for bus layover/storage that is not obtrusive to local street traffic flows and the community.

Ms. Danzig suggested examining A and C subway service into Lower Manhattan for possible short term service improvements.

Mr. Sepersky recommended the MetroEast proposal be fully explored. Mr. Weber indicated that a new tunnel from Brooklyn to Downtown is needed. Mr. Papp recommended that improvements be flexible.

IV. Goals for the Next Meeting

Mr. Sepersky requested a follow-up meeting for a review of alternatives before the joint PAC/TAC meeting. Committee members agreed on Friday, October 2, 1998 at 2:30 PM for the next meeting, various locations were suggested. (NOTE: The next PAC Alternatives Subcommittee meeting will on October 22, 1998 at St. Margaret's House Library, 49 Fulton St. at 2:30 PM.) Mr. Sepersky stated that the next meeting would focus on the preliminary long list. He asked members to read the list and mark their copies.

Possible dates for the joint TAC/PAC Alternatives Development Subcommittees meeting were suggested (NOTE: the joint meeting has been arranged for Thursday, October 22, 1998 at 2:30 PM at NYMTC offices, 1 World Trade Center, 65th Floor.

Mr. Weber asked about criteria for screening alternatives. Alexandra Zetlin suggested referring to the chart on screening guidance.

Ms. Bucich asked committee members to think about the wording of the list of alternatives and to contribute their comments at the next meeting.

The service improvement sub-group will submit a draft letter on suggested bus route changes.

The meeting ended at 12 Noon.