

# New York City Transit Riders Council

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**Testimony of the New York City Transit Riders Council  
to the Board of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
on Proposed Fare Increases  
Hostos Community College Center for the Arts and Culture  
Bronx, NY  
December 1, 2014**

Good evening. I am Christopher D. Greif, the Brooklyn Borough President's representative on the New York City Transit Riders Council (NYCTRC). I reside in Brooklyn and travel on just about all of the subway lines and many bus lines. The NYCTRC is one of three New York State legislatively mandated councils that make up the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC).

The NYCTRC met to discuss the fare proposals and the following reflects our thinking:

We are appreciative that these fare proposals contain smaller increases than were proposed over the past several years. While fares will likely increase as the cost of providing service rises, we strongly believe that funding the MTA and New York City Transit must be accomplished in a way that is fair to riders and takes into account those who are most heavily burdened by fare increases.

Our main principle on funding the MTA is that those who benefit from the system should share in paying for its operation and upkeep. This includes riders, but also includes motorists, business, real property owners, and all who rely on our region's economy, which is vibrant and healthy only because we have an extensive and efficient public transportation system.

However, we are concerned that these fare increase proposals, only affect riders and will continue to shift the burden of funding the MTA onto the system's users. This strikes us as being patently unfair because there are no commitments of increased funding from other stakeholders and is out of step with the national mainstream.

Riders have kept their commitments to financially support the MTA system. However, this structure which supports the MTA is constantly eroded by continuing threats to MTA funding streams, such as the use of what is supposed to be "dedicated transit funds" to meet New York State's general obligations.

MTA riders already pay the highest percentage of operating expenditures of any public transit users in the nation. In 2012, the last year for which national data were available, this figure was 53.2%, compared with 33.2% for systems nationally. Subway and bus riders pay 52.6 % of operating expenditures, while subway riders alone pay a stunning 73.2%. The MTA's proposals presented here reinforce an increase in the proportion of the cost that is borne by riders.

Since we have to choose only between the specific proposals before this Board, we believe that regular users of the system should be less disadvantaged by a fare increase. It is for this reason that we prefer Proposal 1, where the base fare increases from \$2.50 to 2.75, and keeps the bonus concept, rather than Proposal 2, in which the base fare stays at \$2.50, but all bonuses are killed.

While there is no difference in the cost of time-based MetroCards between the Proposals, the roughly one-half of MTA riders who benefit from the MetroCard bonus, especially low income persons who have difficulty paying for weekly or monthly cards, would be harmed by Proposal 2. Those who would seem to benefit most from Proposal 2 would be mostly casual users including tourists, other visitors, and those who only occasionally ride subways and buses.

We strongly urge this Board to consider the interests of its best customers and preserve and expand the bonus incentives that are provided to encourage riders to use the system. Therefore, we clearly support Proposal 1.

Thank you for your attention to the views of the New York City Transit Riders Council.