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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.**

**Baruch College – Mason Hall
17 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY**

November 27, 2018

My name is Trudy L. Mason and I am the appointee of the Manhattan Borough President on the New York City Transit Riders Council (TRC) of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC), established by the New York State Legislature in 1981. The Council, which is the official voice of NYC Transit riders, consists of fifteen volunteer members appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of the Mayor, the Public Advocate and the five Borough Presidents.

We recognize this fare increase is necessary to keep our system functioning, and the TRC supports it as it has in the past, as long as there are no cuts to service. It is essential that the increase option selected offers the fairest deal for transit's best and most frequent customers – the New Yorkers who ride the subway system – both above and below ground – and buses every day.

The last few years have been very difficult for transit riders – including me – across the system. While we have started to see some incremental improvements that began under the Subway Action Plan, we have a long way to go to get consistently reliable service. The Fast Forward Plan, which goes even further, presents an opportunity to make significant improvements to the transit system. Its goals include improved performance, the station environment and accessibility. It focuses on the customer experience, including many more countdown clocks, trip planners, and mapping. This all requires \$40 to \$50 billion that the MTA just doesn't have. At the same time, it has also become clear that the MTA's Operating Budget is about \$1 billion short. Therefore, we understand the need for biennial fare increases as one part of a reliable, sustainable funding package. But it is also clear that new revenue streams are critical to achieving the system necessary to remain a globally competitive city.

Finding long-term, sustainable funding sources is vital to achieving President Byford's well-thought out roadmap for our mass transit system. While we believe that Congestion Pricing is an integral part of a sustainable funding package, we know it's only one tool – an important one – for a system that needs a large tool kit to address the significant budget shortfalls the MTA faces. Congestion Pricing is estimated to bring in \$1 to \$1.5 billion per year – which could be used to either close the 2020 Operating budget gap, or it could be applied toward the \$50 to \$60 billion five-year Capital Program. What we know is the MTA cannot dig its way out of this financial morass with a one-pronged garden rake.

We strongly support the battle to identify and secure sustainable MTA funding sources, in addition to a minimal fare increase. The system is the lifeblood of the city and must be appropriately funded. Thank you!