



# PCAC

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**Testimony to the MTA Board  
December 21, 2020  
Fare Hearing  
We are Doubling Down on Our Call for No Fare Increases!  
By Bradley Brashears  
Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, Planning Manager**

Good morning, my name is Bradley Brashears and I am the Planning Manager for the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC.

Over the last three weeks, dozens of elected officials and hundreds of riders across the MTA system – including from our three Councils – have testified in opposition to fare hikes. I am here to echo that sentiment. In light of the news of a stimulus package that includes \$4 billion for the MTA, we are doubling down on our call for no fare increases at this time.

We know that in any other cycle it would be time to consider fare increases. But this year is different. Many riders don't need to travel the same way, and it may be years before they do again – if ever. It isn't the time to give them an excuse to stay off trains and buses, but to encourage them to come back. Incentivize, not penalize.

On buses and subways, that means keeping the weekly and 30-day MetroCards to encourage more travel and support the regular users of the system.

For commuter rail, it means pursuing discounted pilot programs like Atlantic Ticket expansion or other studies to help commuters. Now is the time for creative thinking and ticketing that reflects the changing way we travel. We would support a discounted 20, 40 or 60 trip ticket with a longer expiration time – 6 months or a year – to replace the traditional monthly. We do not support the proposal for a flat fare: what would benefit riders from Montauk would hurt those from Mineola. Similarly, it's a much longer trip from Grand Central to Brewster than Bronxville, and we don't believe it should cost the same.

We know that the budget you passed last week includes a four percent yield fare increase. We urge you to reverse that and look at alternate ways to balance the budget and hold riders harmless, including a higher increase for tolls.

The infusion of federal funding should help ward the devastating service cuts we all feared off – but so too should it ward off fare increases. In any other year we'd reluctantly support the biennial fare increase, with the caveat of no cuts to service. But it's not a typical time and there should not be a typical approach to filling the budget hole.