



NYCTRC

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
College of Staten Island Center for the Arts, Williamson Theater
2800 Victory Boulevard, Staten Island, NY**

December 6, 2016

Good Evening. I am William Henderson, a resident of Staten Island and the Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA. I am representing the New York City Transit Riders Council (NYCTRC), the legislatively mandated representatives of the New York City Transit riders. The NYCTRC was established in 1981 by the State Legislature and our volunteer members are recommended by Mayor, Public Advocate, and five Borough Presidents and appointed by the Governor.

We cannot be pleased with any fare increase for NYC Transit, as there are too many New Yorkers who struggle to afford even the current cost of bus and subway transportation. It is positive that the MTA is proposing the smallest fare increase since the current pattern of biennial fare increases began, and we hope that this trend continues.

Our Council has examined the two fare increase proposals under consideration, and we prefer Plan B. The reason for this preference is that we believe that fare changes should give greater consideration to those riders who use the system on a regular basis rather than occasional riders. The fare bonus increases in Plan B have this effect. We believe that the base fare has decreased in importance as more and more riders take advantage of time based and bonus fares, while increasingly single rides and cash are used by those who use the system infrequently or are visiting for a limited period of time.

Considering those parts of the fare proposals that are common to both Plan A and Plan B, we see a further effort to accommodate more frequent riders. The increase on time based weekly and 30 day MetroCards are held below the overall 4 percent proposed increase. Further, the percentage increase for local bus and subway weekly cards, which are sometimes purchased by those lacking the resources to buy a 30 day card, is lower than that for the 30 day card. The percentage increase on 7 day express bus cards is higher, but still below 4 percent. We believe that this is the correct approach, as it marginally lessens the fare increase burden on the system's best customers.

In evaluating the differing base fare and bonus portions of the two proposals, Plan B results in a lower effective cost per ride for those receiving a fare bonus, and as a result we favor it over Plan A. In general, we believe that occasional and short term users who do not take advantage of fare bonuses will not be significantly burdened by a twenty five cent increase per ride.

We do recognize that some individuals, especially including some riders those paying cash for their rides, have low incomes and would be significantly affected by a base fare increase. On Staten Island, these riders do not have the ready access to reload reduced fare cards and purchase or reload MetroCards to receive bonuses. For these riders, we call on the MTA and New York City Transit to redouble their efforts to ensure that all riders who wish to receive a fare bonus have ready and convenient access to these discounts. Practically, this means until a new fare payment system is fully in place, NYC Transit must increase efforts to expand the network of MetroCard merchants, provide more outreach to offer reduced fare for eligible persons, and intensify NYC Transit's mobile sales operations.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to present the views of the NYCTRC on these fare proposals.