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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  
Walt Whitman Theater at Brooklyn College  
2900 Campus Road, Brooklyn, NY**

**December 19, 2016**

Good Evening. I am Christopher D. Greif, a frequent transit rider, resident of Brooklyn, and member of 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.

While the NYCTRC understands that it is necessary for our transit system to receive the resources it needs to serve its riders, we are concerned with the impact of the proposed fare increases on riders who are most economically vulnerable. There are too many New Yorkers who struggle to afford even the current fares, and even though this proposal calls for the smallest fare increase since the current system of fare increases every other year, a fare increase will still harm some riders.

If fares are increased, our Council has examined the fare proposal and prefers the Plan B option. This is because we prefer the path that best protects those riders who regularly use the system; for these riders Plan B offers the better value. The base fare has decreased in importance as more and more riders take advantage of time based and bonus fares, and increasingly single rides and cash are used by those who use the system infrequently or are visiting the City.

Plan A and Plan B include the same increases for weekly and monthly MetroCards. These increases are held below the overall 4 percent proposed increase, with the smallest percentage increase on standard 7 day MetroCards. This is consistent with reducing the impact of the increase on those who ride the system regularly. There are some individuals, however, who will be burdened by even a small fare increase.

Some people are paying cash for their rides or paying for single-ride tickets because they do not have the financial resources to do otherwise, and these riders must be addressed. Many of these riders are eligible for reduced fare, and we are particularly concerned about the impact of any increases on those reduced fare riders on very tight budgets. We are disappointed that the MTA's materials outlining this fare increase did

not show the actual amount that reduced fares riders pay and provided limited information about how reduced fare riders could calculate the impact of the fare increased proposals on their finances. It is critical that reduced fare riders know the impact of these proposals, as in many cases they are low income riders for whom every dollar counts. We must ensure that reduced fare riders and low income persons are able to access all discounts and bonuses to which they are entitled and to pay the lowest applicable fare for their use of the system.

Until there is a new fare payment system, the MTA and New York City Transit must increase their efforts to provide riders with ready and convenient access to discounts and bonuses. This means that the MTA must continue to reach out to those eligible for reduced fare and register them for this discount. The network of MetroCard merchants, where riders can purchase bonus MetroCards even when they are not convenient to subway stations, should be expanded. NYC Transit's mobile sales operations that provide information and sell fares to allow riders to take advantage of discounts and bonuses should grow to reach even more riders. I work closely with NYC Transit's outreach and mobile sales efforts and know that they can be effective in helping financially strapped riders minimize their transit fares.

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