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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
The Milton G. Bassin Performing Arts Center at York College
94-20 Guy R. Brewer Blvd, Jamaica, NY**

December 5, 2016

Good Evening. My name is William Henderson and I am 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 are not pleased with any fare increase for NYC Transit riders, 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 that have been presented by MTA management for consideration by this Board, and prefer the path that protects those riders who use the system on a regular basis over the path that maintains the base fare at its current level. 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 for a limited period of time.

Considering those parts of the fare proposals that are common to both Plan A and Plan B, as you have called them, we note that 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 burden of fare increases on the system's best customers.

In evaluating the divergent base fare and bonus portions of the two proposals, we favor the approach that results in a lower effective cost per ride for those receiving a fare

bonus. As a result, we favor Plan B. 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 25 cent increase per ride.

We do recognize that some individuals, and particularly some riders those paying cash for their rides, have low incomes and would be significantly affected by a base fare increase. 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 system is fully in place, efforts being made to expand the network of MetroCard merchants, make outreach to offer reduced fare for eligible persons, and expand NYC Transit's mobile sales operations must be intensified.

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