



2 BROADWAY, 16TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10004
(212) 878-7087 • mail@pcac.org

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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
Hostos Center for Arts and Culture, Main Theater
450 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY**

December 13, 2016

Good Evening. I am Edith M. Prentiss, a frequent rider of bus and subway lines serving the Bronx and a 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. Our volunteer members are recommended by Mayor, Public Advocate, and five Borough Presidents and appointed by the Governor.

Although this proposed fare increase is modest in relation to some that were imposed in the past, it will still impact riders negatively. Too many New Yorkers who struggle to afford even the current fares for buses and subways, and the fact that this is the lowest proposed increase since the current pattern of biennial fare increases began does not change this impact on the most vulnerable riders.

Before I address the merits of the proposals before this board, I would like to point out the absence of specific proposed fare amounts for reduced fare riders in the information that you have released to the public. While the proposed base fares and time based MetroCard costs allow those experienced with the system to calculate proposed reduced fares, the proposed costs of each fare should have been spelled out, just as they were for non-reduced fare riders.

Our Council has examined the two fare increase proposals being considered and we prefer Plan B. We base this on our interest in protecting riders who use the system on a regular basis rather than occasional users. The increases in base fares as well as in fare bonuses in Plan B result in a lower cost per ride than Plan A. Maintaining the base fare may have symbolic value, but the base fare has decreased in importance as more and more riders take advantage of time based and bonus fares. Increasingly single rides and cash are used by those who use the system infrequently or for a limited period of time.

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. As I noted, however, there are some individuals who will be burdened by even a small fare increase.

Some of the people who will be burdened 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 some of these persons cannot use parts of the subway system because it is not fully accessible, but they may not even be near a subway. In this case, they not only lack ready access to purchase and refill farecards, they are reliant on an increasingly strained and delay prone bus system. At a minimum, 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 near 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.

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