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PCAC Testimony Presented at Eastern Queens Congestion Pricing Town Hall Held by NY State Senators John C. Liu and Leroy Comrie March 21, 2019

Good evening, my name is Bradley Brashears, Planning Manager at the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC). The PCAC and its three councils represent and advocate for MTA region riders. I am also a Queens resident who travels the MTA network and understands the dire need to sustainably fund the system. Congestion pricing is key to funding the system, as it will produce approximately 40% of the needed funding for the New York State and City portion of the MTA's Capital Program.

The Governor has proposed congestion pricing as the "reliable funding stream", and we agree that it's necessary to help fund the capital plan and reduce congestion. It's an idea whose time has finally come. The \$15 billion that it is estimated to net through bonding would go to the MTA's 2020 -24 capital plan. The city and state stepped up to fund NYC Transit's Subway Action Plan, but the MTA's capital program goes much further and will require vastly more funding to fully modernize the system.

At the PCAC, we have been hard at work.

Our Freedom Ticket/Atlantic Ticket pilot program has gained substantial traction from various stakeholders in the outer-boroughs. Providing cheaper access to the region's commuter railroads is crucial in neighborhoods that have limited access to public transportation – providing outer-borough residents the same conveniences as inner-city residents. Not only is it saving commuters some serious dough, it is also reducing one-way travel times from two hours down to just 45 minutes. Just think of the economic and quality-of-life benefits this program can bring to the region once fully implemented.

Most recently, we released an in-depth report entitled, "100 Days and 100 Nights: From Astoria to Lower Manhattan and Back." The report details a daily rider's commute including total travel times, station and onboard crowding, track speeds, and more to better articulate the actual rider experience. The report also details the incremental successes of the Subway Action Plan – since its inception it has reduced 4/5 line major delays by 38%. This is a step in the right direction and must continue to benefit all lines. The report's recommendations align with NYC Transit's Fast Forward plan addressing the needs to *upgrade critical infrastructure; review potential route changes to reduce reliance on critical interlockings; revitalize the station experience; accelerate accessibility; and give buses greater priority in the face of traffic.*

The PCAC has also developed an interactive tool designed to show the various funding mechanisms for the MTA's Capital Program. We know that no single method will meet all the needs of the system, and therefore include a variety of options that have been mentioned, including congestion pricing. We

assume that upwards of \$50 billion will be needed over five years, based on the needs outlined by NYC Transit, LIRR, and MNR.

All of these initiatives can be supported by passing congestion pricing. Addressing the needs of the system after decades of insufficient funding lies in finding sustainable funding sources including, but not limited to, congestion pricing. We strongly urge Governor Cuomo and the State Legislature to pass congestion pricing to benefit all New Yorkers and our economic vitality.

Thank you,
Bradley Brashears
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