**Testimony to the**

**Metropolitan Transportation Authority**

 **on Proposed Fare Increases**

**June 2023**

My name is Burt Strauss, I am a regular rider and am speaking on behalf of the New York City Transit Riders Council.

We appreciate the important actions that Governor Hochul and the state legislature took to stabilize the MTA’s finances and ensure that the fare increase is lower than it otherwise would have been. We thank them for recognizing transit as the essential service it is.

No one likes a fare hike, but the late Richard Ravitch showed us that smaller planned increases are critical to keeping the system in good financial health and maintaining— and improving— service. Funding in the budget even allows for more service on some more heavily traveled lines. Getting riders back on board is key to our ongoing recovery, and safe, frequent, affordable and reliable service is important to attracting people to transit. Improvements funded with congestion pricing money will make for a smoother ride. Adding more creative and flexible fare offerings will further encourage ridership.

We support the proposed change to OMNY weekly fare capping to a rolling seven-day period over the current fixed schedule, along with the introduction of a monthly fare capping pilot.

We support the lower $1 increase to the weekly that is most used by lower income riders.

We support rolling Atlantic Ticket into CityTicket, but the newly expanded CityTicket must include the option to purchase a weekly ticket that allows transfer to and from subways and buses. Removing the weekly takes away opportunity from people who need it most.

We support raising eligibility for Fair Fares to 200% of the federal poverty level and expanding Fair Fares discounts to commuter rail within New York City. We also support increasing outreach and lower barriers to applying to encourage more people to enroll in the program.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for considering our input.