**MTA Joint LIRR and Metro-North Committee Testimony**

**More Unified Transit Starts with the Fare (and CityTicket Weekly)**

**June 26, 2023**

Good morning. I’m Kara Gurl, Planning and Advocacy Manager at the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC.

With the LIRR and Metro-North now under one roof, we have long advocated for more integration of the two railroads. Rethinking and expanding fare options can be a major step in the right direction, as we’ve seen with the new Combo Ticket. It’s great that riders can now transfer between the two at one station, on one ticket, and in one app. Clearly, more riders are starting to take advantage of the option, with 21,000 Combo Tickets sold so far.

We’ve mentioned before that Combo Ticket does not always make the most financial sense for riders traveling shorter distances on both railroads. For an off-peak rider within the city going from Fordham to Jamaica, it would currently be more affordable to purchase two separate $5 CityTickets instead of the Combo Ticket’s off-peak $7.25 Metro-North fare plus $8 for the second leg. Combo Ticket should offer a competitive price for riders regardless of their distance traveled, on one ticket. Riders should be automatically offered the best price available to them when buying a ticket on TrainTime or on a ticket machine, which would take a lot of the guesswork out of taking transit.

Speaking of TrainTime, it’s great that 88% of Combo Ticket sales so far have been through the TrainTime app. It goes to show the power of having the ticket available on the app—a luxury that has not been afforded to Atlantic Ticket. We’re willing to bet that Atlantic Ticket weekly sales would be exponentially higher if this critical option that includes the option to transfer to subways and buses had been made available on the app. Communicating these fare deals is key to ensuring that riders can take advantage of them.

Rolling Atlantic Ticket into CityTicket with its expansion to peak travel makes sense, and we appreciate that our Freedom Ticket vision is closer to reality. But the weekly option that includes transfers to NYC Transit must remain—and hopefully get expanded to all of CityTicket. At a minimum, we hope you will continue to give Southeast Queens and Brooklyn riders the freedom to take any mode they desire with a weekly ticket option. Thank you.