**MTA Board Meeting Testimony**

**Fares Help Keep Transit – and Riders – Moving:**

**A Hike Is OK But Let’s Study a CityTicket Weekly**

**July 19, 2023**

Good morning, I’m Lisa Daglian, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC.

I was never so happy to see a bunch of zeros as I was on Monday. Who knew that an MTA balance sheet could be so beautiful? Thanks to Governor Hochul and the state legislature recognizing transit for the essential service it is, we’re seeing a funded system through 2027, with a budget that doesn’t rely on service cuts, exorbitant fare hikes or layoffs – the triad of pain that we are too used to facing year after year. The state funded most of the yawning gap, and the MTA is on the hook for finding efficiencies, as it should be. Riders are also being asked to contribute to the well-being of the transit system, with the resumption of planned four-percent fare increases to keep the lights on and the trains moving. To lessen the pain, we’ll see service *increases* on subway lines where there has been off peak growth.

The fare hikes you’ll vote on today will still cause pain for some riders. We’re disappointed that eligibility for Fair Fares wasn’t raised to 200-percent of the federal poverty level, but the modest increase to 120-percent and additional funding will help more people than before. To help even more, Fair Fares should also be expanded to the LIRR and Metro-North.

We are glad we’ll finally see 24/7 discounted travel within the city with CityTicket peak and off-peak tickets. We understand that part of the evolution of Atlantic Ticket is folding it in to help reduce confusion and rationalize ticket types. Both were born from PCAC and we love them dearly. But instead of the demise of the Atlantic Ticket weekly, which offers convenient travel, helps unify the MTA system and improves equity, we’d like to formally request a feasibility study, including a field study in 2024, to see how a weekly CityTicket with transfers to subways and buses could work, especially as we seek to increase ridership in advance of congestion pricing. Using one ticket to travel the system is key; we’d like to be part of that process.

Finally, we’re glad that West-of-Hudson riders will be held harmless. They deserve a break!

Thank you!