**Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC)**

**Jack Connors, Research and Communications Associate**

**Testimony for the Bronx Senate Delegation Budget Forum**

**February 21, 2024**

Good evening. I’m Jack Connors Research and Communications Associate at the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC, the staff to the New York City Transit Riders Council and Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council.

I’m testifying today in support of our [budget priorities](https://pcac.org/pcacs-fy2025-state-budget-priorities/) that we have been working closely with Senator Comrie to have included in your upcoming one-house budget resolution.

We’re asking that you amend TEDE Part B to enact our “Fare Budget” proposals.

First, it’s past time that fare discounts for seniors and individuals with disabilities be expanded to the AM peak, the only time of day when these discounts do not currently apply— sending a clear message to these New Yorkers that the majority conference values their contributions to the workforce and our communities.

Next, we ask that you use OBTA funds to fund a weekly CityTicket, including transfers to subways and buses, helping riders around the five boroughs afford faster commutes on the LIRR and Metro-North while better integrating commuter rail with New York City Transit.

Finally, it’s time for New York City to fund expanding Fair Fares to the commuter rails within the city. Expanding the 50% fare discount program for individuals making under 120% of the federal poverty level is critically important as we approach completion of Penn Access.

All Bronxites, regardless of income, should be able to access the transit option that makes the most sense for them. Too often, low-income New Yorkers are priced out of our commuter rail systems – spending hours commuting home on the slowest buses in America after a hard day’s work instead of spending quality time with family, helping out with homework, or catching up with friends. At the city-level, we also continue to advocate for expanding eligibility to 200% of the FPL.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.