

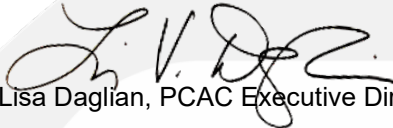


Rider-First Fare Agenda

Fare Policies for More Equitable Access to Affordable Transit

The congestion pricing pause made clear that moving the program forward is the best way to advance the goals – and statutory requirements – of improving air quality, reducing traffic, and raising critical funds for transit infrastructure. It's also led to clarity on the need for “**carrots**” – incentives to get people onto, or back onto, transit. Our upcoming report, “*Rider-First Fare Payment*,” includes fare recommendations that support more equitable access to affordable transit for more New Yorkers, particularly those in subway deserts.

We hope you'll consider them ahead of or in conjunction with congestion pricing's next steps.


Lisa Daglian, PCAC Executive Director

1. Use the Outer Borough Transportation Account to improve CityTicket

The CityTicket is a single-ride railroad ticket offered on LIRR and Metro-North Railroad trips within New York City. According to the MTA, 1.5 million CityTickets were sold in 2023. PCAC recommends investing Outer Borough Transportation Account (OBTA) funds to expand upon this success in the following ways:

- Introduce a weekly CityTicket that includes optional discounted transfers to New York City Transit subways and buses.

Funding Source: Outer Borough Transportation Account | Cost: \$20-\$25 million

- Create a monthly CityTicket with available transfers to New York City Transit subways and buses and standardize monthly City Zone fares on both railroads. The OBTA is currently used to support a 10% discount on monthly railroad tickets within the city zones, at different costs per zone depending on the railroad.

Funding Source: Outer Borough Transportation Account

2. Offer an Intra-City Combo Ticket fare

Today, CityTicket riders can travel on either the LIRR or Metro-North within New York City for \$5 off-peak and \$7 peak for a single ride. Suburban riders can transfer from one railroad to another at Grand Central for a flat Combo Ticket fare of \$8 on top of their LIRR or Metro-North fare, irrespective of their destination. Intra-city riders have no such incentive – they can pay the cost of both legs or take transit from the railroad station, if available, lengthening their trip. Developing a lower cost Intra-City Combo Ticket for transfers between LIRR and Metro-North for travel within the city will unlock more options for more New Yorkers.

Funding Source: New York State (MTA)

CONTACT: Jack Connors | jack.connors@mtahq.org | 802-230-6311

Established by the legislature in 1981, the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC, serves as the official voice for subway, bus, Staten Island Rail, LIRR, and Metro-North riders.



Rider-First Fare Agenda

Fare Policies for More Equitable Access to Affordable Transit

3. Introduce A.M. peak discounts for seniors, riders with disabilities, and Medicare-eligible riders

Seniors, disabled, and Medicare-eligible riders cannot use their discounts in the A.M. peak period on the LIRR and Metro-North, anywhere in the system. This makes no sense – particularly given that they can use the discount in the P.M. peak period. This creates unnecessary hurdles for transit-dependent groups and obstacles to employment and opportunity.

Funding Source: New York State (MTA) | Cost: \$5-\$10 million

4. Expand Fair Fares to the commuter railroads in New York City and to 200% of FPL

Fair Fares is an income-based half fare program for New York City residents at or below 145% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), but only on New York City Transit. Many eligible riders live in subway deserts but close to either the LIRR or Metro-North stations. [PCAC analysis](#) found that at 70% of the 39 railroad stations within NYC, more than 25% of residents are currently eligible for Fair Fares. New York City is one of two large cities not to offer income-based fares on its commuter rail, despite having the highest poverty rate of cities surveyed. Fair Fares on the railroads, when discounted from the price of a CityTicket, would increase access to opportunity for tens of thousands of New Yorkers.

Funding Source: New York City | Cost: \$5-\$10 million

Expansion to 200% of FPL would bring eligibility to as many as 400,000 more New Yorkers. The vast majority of minimum wage workers are ineligible at the current eligibility threshold of 145% of FPL.

Funding Source: New York City

5. Provide CUNY students with free New York City Transit cards

Unlike most colleges, the lion's share of CUNY students commute to their classes—and most of them take transit to do so. This poses a major cost burden on many students who come from households below the NYC poverty line yet earn too much to qualify for the Fair Fares program. 87% of CUNY students had free New York City Transit passes in high school; it's unjust that just as their education costs increase, they're left without a free transit pass option. Providing CUNY students with free transit passes would mean investing in the future leaders of New York City, while guaranteeing more paid ridership for the MTA.

Funding Source: New York State

CONTACT: Jack Connors | jack.connors@mtahq.org | 802-230-6311

Established by the legislature in 1981, the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC, serves as the official voice for subway, bus, Staten Island Rail, LIRR, and Metro-North riders.