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Riders Need a Fare Structure that Makes Sense and Saves Cents August 20, 2025

Good morning, I'm Jack Connors, Research & Communications Associate at the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC.

For the last two years, PCAC has pushed for our "Rider-First Fare Agenda," five proposals aimed at embracing the promise of OMNY to make the entire MTA network more affordable, equitable, and accessible.

Along the way, we've been grateful for the support of dozens of members of the State Legislature, in particular Senator Leroy Comrie, and advocates ranging from Riders Alliance to the New York League of Conservation Voters and the Business Council.

We're thrilled to see several of these policies in the proposed fare changes: ending the practice of charging senior, disabled, and Medicare-eligible LIRR and Metro-North riders the full-fare during the AM Peak and automatically charging city railroad riders the best fare available to them.

Still, more action is needed.

First, with city commuter rail stations topping pre-COVID ridership, the time is now to double down on this success and broaden ticket options with a weekly CityTicket that includes a free transfer to subways and buses. It's the equitable and best business-like thing to do.

Next, the proposed fare structure does little to make the railroads more affordable for families with older kids. A good start would be creating a discounted ticket option for 12-17-year-olds, just like the one that already exists for 5-11-year-olds.

Finally, clarity is needed on how day passes will work for riders traveling on both railroads in a single trip. Let's seize the opportunity to encourage more people to travel around our region on the LIRR and Metro-North, not force them into their cars. A unified City Zone would be a good place to start—right now a rider traveling from Far Rock to Yankee Stadium has to pay double the fare simply because they're switching railroads at Grand Central Madison. We spent billions putting the railroads under one roof, let's put them under one fare structure too.

Quirks like this keep riders off transit and money out of your pockets. *Please* deliver a fare structure that makes sense and saves cents, thank you.