



PCAC

PERMANENT CITIZENS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MTA

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January 16, 2024

Dear Governor Hochul:

As our state grapples with a cost-of-living crisis, public transit – especially New York’s subways, buses and commuter rail lines – remain a lifeline of affordability. With the recent launch of congestion pricing and the MTA’s planned fare increases going into effect later next year, the need for “carrots” – fare incentives – to keep costs down for New Yorkers has never been greater.

Ensuring equitable access to affordable transit is a goal we all share, and there are several relatively low-cost fixes to address them. For instance, today, senior, disabled, and Medicare-eligible New Yorkers are unable to use their half-fare discount on Metro-North and the Long Island Rail Road during the A.M. peak period, forcing them to schedule work, social engagements and medical appointments around this arbitrary window of ineligibility; there are far too many New York City residents who are priced out of commuter rail that may run directly through their neighborhood – even when it is by far the fastest way to travel; there is a dearth of fare incentives for families, making rail travel to the city by the LIRR and Metro-North cost prohibitive, and driving a less expensive alternative; and New York City’s income-based fare discount leaves minimum wage workers behind.

The FY 2025 New York State Budget poses the opportunity to correct these glaring inequities.

With that in mind, we, the undersigned elected officials and advocates, respectfully request that the following items detailed in the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA’s [“Rider-First Fare Agenda”](#) be included as fiscal and policy items in your forthcoming FY 2025 Executive Budget:

1. Introduce A.M. peak discounts on the LIRR and Metro-North for senior, disabled, and Medicare-eligible riders (proposed funding source: TBD)
2. Close the ‘mid-kid’ gap on Family Fare for the LIRR and Metro-North by providing discounts for twelve- to seventeen-year-olds traveling with an adult (proposed funding source: TBD)
3. Create a weekly CityTicket with transfers to New York City Transit (proposed funding source: OBTA)
4. Expand Fair Fares to the commuter railroads within New York City (proposed funding source: city-funded)
5. Expand Fair Fares to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (proposed funding source: city-funded)

Beyond New York City Transit and the railroads, we encourage the legislature to examine ways to continue to improve Access-A-Ride service, including fare capping and unlimited cards for Access-A-Ride users who currently do not have the benefits afforded to riders of the other MTA services or potentially expanding to the Fair Fares program to Access-A-Ride users.

Not only do these policies complement your goal of making the city and state more affordable, they help advance our climate goals by making the best case for New Yorkers to get onto, or back onto transit, and put time and money back into people's pockets by ensuring that cost is not a barrier to transit riders accessing the fastest, most convenient mode of transit available to them. The good news is that there are a variety of available funding sources that could be used to pay for these discounted fare options.

We would be more than willing to discuss these policies and potential costs and funding sources with you or your staff at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your consideration.

Signed,

Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA

Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council
Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council
New York City Transit Riders Council

U.S. Representative Jerry Nadler

Senator Leroy Comrie, Chair, Committee on Corporations, Authorities, and Commissions
Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal
Senator Cordell Cleare
Senator Jessica Ramos
Senator Julia Salazar
Senator Kristen Gonzalez
Senator Luis Sepulveda
Senator Pete Harckham
Senator Robert Jackson
Senator Roxanne Persaud

Assembly Member Al Taylor
Assembly Member Amy Paulin
Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi
Assembly Member Charles Lavine
Assembly Member Emérita Torres
Assembly Member Jessica González-Rojas
Assembly Member Khaleel Anderson
Assembly Member Landon Dais
Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal
Assembly Member MaryJane Shimsky
Assembly Member Michaelle Solages
Assembly Member Phara Souffrant-Forest
Assembly Member Tony Simone

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Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.

Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York
Community Service Society
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI)
New York League of Conservation Voters
New York Public Interest Research Group- Straphangers Campaign
Open Plans
Queens Chamber of Commerce
Regional Plan Association
Reinvent Albany
Riders Alliance
Rise and Resist Elevator Action Group
StreetsPAC
Transportation Alternatives
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