



PCAC

PERMANENT CITIZENS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MTA

2 Broadway, 16th Floor, New York, NY 10004
(212) 878-7087 mail@pcac.org

GERARD BRINGMANN CHAIR · MTA BOARD MEMBER · LIRRCC CHAIR
ANDREW ALBERT NYCTRC CHAIR · MTA BOARD MEMBER
RANDOLPH GLUCKSMAN MNRCC CHAIR · MTA BOARD MEMBER

LISA DAGLIAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
BRIAN FRITSCH ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
KARA GURL PLANNING & ADVOCACY MANAGER
JACK CONNORS RESEARCH & COMM. ASSOCIATE
JESSICA SPEZIO ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC)

Lisa Daglian, Executive Director

Testimony for the Joint Legislative Hearing on Transportation

February 6, 2025

Good afternoon, I'm Lisa Daglian, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC. Created by the legislature in 1981 to represent riders on the MTA's Long Island Rail Road, Metro-North Railroad and New York City's subways, buses and Staten Island Railway, our role is to advocate on behalf of riders and advise the MTA on operational performance and capital projects through reports and policy recommendations. Thank you for holding this hearing today and all you do to improve transit for millions of New Yorkers.

Making Transit More Affordable

Affordability is a key priority for all New Yorkers. That's why expanding fare discounts and options around the MTA system is critical. PCAC is proud to champion the [Rider-First Fare Agenda](#) in partnership with Senator Comrie to ensure that all riders have equitable access to affordable transit, particularly with congestion pricing and upcoming fare changes on the table.

- We're calling for a **Weekly CityTicket with the option to transfer** to subways and buses, which will further integrate our transit network, fill gaps in demand in subway deserts, and fill the hole left by the elimination of Atlantic Ticket Weekly during the last fare changes. We believe the Outer Borough Transit Account is well-suited to fund this expansion.
 - We're also calling for the **senior and disabled/Medicare half-fare discount** to be extended to the morning peak on the LIRR and Metro-North — currently, the only time this discount does not apply. It's time to send a clear message that New York values these groups' contributions to the workforce and their communities.
 - We'd like to see a new Family Fare option that allows 12- to 17-year-olds to ride for less on the LIRR and Metro-North. Currently, the \$1 Family Fare add-on only applies to children ages 5 to 11, making the railroads prohibitively expensive for families with older children. The current Winter Weekend Discount ticket \$1 add-on for Monthly pass holders is a great start—giving riders more affordable options to choose transit is essential. But it only applies to monthly ticket holders and only on weekends. Introducing more robust, year-round options will help make the railroads more attractive – and affordable – than driving.

- We're advocating for city-funded **expansion of Fair Fares to the LIRR and Metro-North within New York City** — so that low-income New Yorkers can afford to ride on the rail infrastructure that runs through their backyards.
- Riders also need **Fair Fares expanded to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level**, which should also be funded by the city. With current eligibility at 145% of the Federal Poverty Level, too many riders — including most minimum wage workers — cannot qualify for half-priced rides on subways and buses, forcing many to choose between a swipe or tap and a meal. 200% of the Federal Poverty Level would better match the high cost of living in New York City and put us on par with peer cities around the country who are currently all more generous than us.

In advance of the Executive Budget release, we sent a letter to the Governor detailing these priorities, and appreciate the support of the many of you who signed on – and look forward to garnering the support of you who we weren't able to reach.

Funding the Capital Plan

- Riders received coal in our stockings when the Capital Program Review Board chose to reject the MTA's Capital Plan. The 2025-29 Capital Plan is made up almost entirely of essential State-of-Good-Repair work; new rolling stock and fare entry gates; signaling, resiliency and accessibility projects; and other critical upgrades around the region. There isn't really wiggle room to cut: it's pretty much bone. We ask that you also support fully funding the Plan, which was based on a thorough 20-Year Needs Assessment. Riders – and our regional economy – can't afford to wait for another "Summer of Hell" with endless delays, or another storm that brings catastrophic flooding to our transit system. We're counting on you, our legislators, to work with Governor Hochul to find ways to fully fund the MTA's 2025-29 Capital Plan.
- The good news is that PCAC has done some of the homework for you: our new report details two dozen funding options to pick from, although some sources are clearly more equitable than others. We encourage you to consider options that have positive equity and climate impacts, though funding the program with long-term, recurring, bondable sources is priority number one. Learn more at pcac.org/reports.
- We're thankful that Governor Hochul has proposed that the state and city each fund \$3 billion of the Plan, but it's important to note that this is \$1 billion less than anticipated from each. Federal government funding is also key, though we are in a precarious place with the new administration.

Rider Representation

- We strongly support the Rider Representation Act, [S.1148/A.1162](https://legislation.nyc.gov/details.do?id=S.1148/A.1162) (Gounardes/Dinowitz), which would provide the representatives of the New York City Transit Riders Council, Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council, and Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council on the MTA Board with voting membership along with a new voting board member recommended by the Mayor's Office of People with Disabilities in consultation with disability advocates. Currently, riders have a voice on the MTA Board — but don't have a vote. It's time to change that this year by ensuring riders have official voting seats on the board. Our non-voting members would be in an excellent position to propose changes to the MTA's fares, except they can't even make the motions to do so.

Giving rider representatives a voice will also help make the MTA Board and Committee meetings more efficient— rider representatives do not count towards a quorum, making it difficult to reach a quorum and conduct official business.

PCAC supports the following aspects of Governor Hochul’s Executive Budget:

- **Statewide Mass Transportation Operating Assistance (STOA): Increase in state operating funds for the MTA**
 - **TEDE Part I: Extend the Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s Tax Increment Financing**
 - **TEDE Part K: Extend the Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s Property Valuation Agreement**
 - **TEDE Part L: Make Permanent the Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s current Paratransit Reimbursement**
 - **TEDE Part O: Automated Camera Enforcement for “Blocking the Box”**
 - **TEDE Part R: Expanding Second Degree Assault Penalty Enhancer to Additional Transportation Workers**
- and
- **PPGG Part N: Enhance the Transit Ban**

Protecting transit workers and riders through strengthening legislation, with exceptions for situations requiring public transportation. We continue to support harsher penalties for people convicted of assaulting transit workers and passengers, and expanding ways repeat offenders can be penalized.

Thank you for holding this hearing, inviting us to submit testimony, and continuing to prioritize the needs of MTA riders this budget season.