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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Chairman Announces Financial Proposal for Board Consideration Tomorrow

MTA Chairman Peter S. Kalikow today (Wed.) unveiled the elements of a financial proposal that he will recommend to the full MTA Board at a special meeting being held tomorrow, March 6th at 9:30 at MTA Headquarters, 347 Madison Ave, NY, NY.

"New York City has the best transit system in the world and the MTA is dedicated to keeping it that way. Over the past three months the MTA Board has actively sought opinions from the New York riding public about ways to close our projected two year deficit. Thanks to the unprecedented input we received from ten public hearings throughout the region and more than 4,000 e-mails from customers throughout our ridership area, we have come up with a plan that addresses the concerns of our MTA customers," Mr. Kalikow said.

"First and foremost, our customers said that they did not want any service cuts. They also did not want to lose a physical presence in station booths, and lastly they felt the fare discounts must be maintained," Mr. Kalikow continued.

The plan that will be recommended to the Board tomorrow incorporates the following elements:

- An increase in NYCT subway and regular bus fares and LI Bus regular fares from \$1.50 to \$2.00 and NYCT Express Bus fares from \$3 to \$4, which means no service cuts or layoffs, allowing the MTA to maintain its current service levels and quality of service.
- No full-time token booth closings and no more than 62 part-time closings.
- An increase in the 7 day MetroCard pass from \$17 to \$21, the one day pass from \$4 to \$7, and the 30 day pass from \$63 to \$70.
- Lowering the threshold for receiving MetroCard bonuses from \$15 to \$10, with an increase in the bonus from 10% to 20%. Under this proposal, a person purchasing a \$10 card will now get a free ride. (i.e. Six rides for the price of five.)
- An increase in the average LIRR and MNR fares by 25%.
- An increase in tolls on MTA Bridges and Tunnels facilities by \$0.50 in each direction on major facilities and \$0.25 on minor facilities.
- The introduction of an "insurance program" for 30-day MetroCard pass users. (For a small fee, regular pass users would obtain protection in the event of a lost or stolen card - a replacement card would be issued. The plan is to put this in place by September 1.)
- The undertaking of a customer survey to ascertain the market for a new bi-weekly pass and to determine an appropriate price.
- The implementation of a pilot program to test the feasibility of the "City-Ticket" program that would allow intra-city travel on the two commuter railroads for \$0.50 more than the nominal subway fare.

"Under this staff proposal, while the fare may, in fact, rise from the current \$1.50 today to \$2, the average fare paid by our customers - \$1.04 - will only rise to \$1.30, a level that is still lower than the \$1.38 average subway and bus fare our customers paid in 1995, said Kalikow.

"The proposal recommends no service cuts or layoffs, allowing us to maintain the levels and quality of service that have supported the nearly 40% growth in ridership we've experienced on the system since 1996, he continued.

"With regard to the closing of station booths, we have responded to the concerns of our customers. As a direct result of their input, the Board and I asked the staff to revisit the original list of 49 full-time and 128 part-time station booth closures. The revised proposal now recommends that there be no full-time booth closures and less than half the original number of part-time booth closures. In terms of the part-time booths that remain on the list, they are usually open during rush hours, not during off-peak hours when our customers' concern for security is greatest."