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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Board Approves Fare And Toll Plan

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board today approved a financial plan by a unanimous vote that closes a projected two-year deficit with a menu of fare and toll increases tempered by additional multi-ride discounts.

After the proposal was passed, MTA Chairman Peter S. Kalikow said, "While making a decision to raise fares and tolls is never easy, I am proud to say that the plan we approved today, while perhaps imperfect, truly reflects the input we received from our riders and the general public."

Over the past three to four months, the MTA had undertaken an unprecedented outreach effort seeking input from the public on its financial plan, holding a series of ten regional public hearings, as well as receiving nearly 4,000 e-mails and hundreds of letters directly on a series of options put forth for public consideration in November.

"Today's plan addresses the overriding concerns our customers expressed in our public outreach effort. First, they were clear in terms of not wanting to see any service cuts. There are none," he said.

"The plan also addresses their concerns over losing the 'physical presence' that they believe station booths provide in term of safety and security. We reviewed the original list of 177 full and part-time booth closures and have taken roughly two-thirds of them off the table. Of the remaining closures, none will be full-time booths, and the reduction in part-time booth hours will be at rush hours, not during the non-rush hour periods when our customers' security concerns are greatest. We have also reviewed this plan carefully with the NYPD and FDNY to ensure safety and evacuation issues are fully addressed," he continued.

"Finally, the plan not only maintains, but enhances, a number of MetroCard based fare discounts that our customers told us are essential to their frequent use of the system," said Chairman Kalikow.

The specific elements of the plan are:

- An increase in NYCT subway and regular bus fares, Staten Island Railway and LI Bus regular fares, from \$1.50 to \$2.00 and NYCT Express Bus fares from \$3 to \$4.
- 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.
- The introduction of a new 7-day Express Bus pass, priced at \$33.
- 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. 6 rides for the price of 5, rather than the current 11 for 10.)
- An increase in Access-A-Ride fares from \$1.50 to \$2.00 and Able-Ride fares from \$3.00 to \$3.50.
- 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 in the form of a replacement card. (Anticipated implementation 9/03.)
- The phasing out of the token and the undertaking of a customer survey to ascertain the market for a new bi-weekly pass and to determine its feasibility and 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.
- 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 up to 62 part-time closings that serve low volume stations with other booths (74% of which are open 5 hrs. or less, Mon-Fri only; 19%, 7.5 hrs. or less Mon-Fri only, and; 6%, 11 hrs., Mon-Fri only.) 21 of those part-time, low-volume booths are in Manhattan, 23 in Brooklyn, 12 in Queens, and 6 in the Bronx.
- An increase in the average LIRR and MNR fares of 25%, with no service cuts.
- 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.
- Except as otherwise noted, the effective date for fare actions is 5/1/03 and tolls, on or about 5/18/03.

"Under this plan, while the base transit 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.

"As I said at the outset, no one at the MTA enjoys making difficult decisions that will have a financial impact on our customers. But it is worthy to note that we have been making very difficult internal decisions over the past few years to hold the line on fares, and, in fact, reduce them," he said.

"The reality is that we have just experienced the longest period in MTA history without fare and toll increases - eight straight years. That didn't happen by accident, it happened through tightly managing our operations and through the creative use of new technologies like MetroCard and E-ZPass. As such, our customers have enjoyed tangible reductions in the cost of their daily trips and have saved hundreds, if not thousands of dollars over that time period," said Chairman Kalikow.

"The Board's action today, while difficult, will ultimately ensure that the New York metropolitan region will continue to have the best transit system in the world," he concluded.