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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

### MTA and Legislators Announce Railroad Discount Pilot for Reduced Fares for LIRR and Metro-North Travel Within New York City

#### *Pilot to Begin This Spring Enabled by Outer Borough Transportation Account*

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and members of the New York State Legislature today announced that starting this spring, full-price fares for most travel within the City of New York on MTA Metro-North Railroad and MTA Long Island Rail Road will be reduced thanks to funding from the Outer Borough Transportation Account.

- Full-price fares reduced by 10% for Metro-North travel entirely within the Bronx and Manhattan will be available for monthly, weekly, one-way, round-trip and 10-trip tickets, during peak and off-peak times.
- Full-price fares reduced by 10% for LIRR travel entirely within Queens, Brooklyn and Manhattan will be available for weekly, one-way, round-trip and 10-trip tickets, during peak and off-peak times.
- Full-price fares reduced by 20% for LIRR travel entirely within Queens, Brooklyn and Manhattan will be available for monthly tickets.

The discounts will not be available for tickets that are already discounted, nor for special events tickets. All existing fares and tickets will continue to be offered. Eligible discounted tickets will be available on all modes of purchase including on board, through eTix, and from ticket windows and ticket vending machines (where available) at LIRR and Metro North stations within New York City.

Continuation of the discounts after the conclusion of the pilot requires continued availability of funds. The funds for the pilot have been made available through the Outer Borough Transportation Account, which is controlled at the discretion of the New York State Legislature. The account was established as part of the surcharge on for-hire vehicles passed in 2018 to provide additional resources for transit improvements in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island.

"I am pleased that we will be able to leverage the MTA's existing railroad operations to increase transit options and access within the City of New York for our millions of customers," **said MTA Chairman and CEO Patrick Foye**. "I commend the Legislature for dedicating a portion of the Outer Borough Transportation Account for this important effort to improve the mobility of New Yorkers in an environmentally friendly way."

The fare discounts come as the MTA is building four new Metro-North Stations in the Bronx and has committed to bringing accessibility to nine commuter rail stations in New York City. In Queens: Forest Hills, Hollis, Hunterspoint Avenue, Locust Manor, Mets-Willets Point, and St. Albans. In the Bronx: Wakefield, Williams Bridge and Woodlawn.

The fare changes also compliment recent Metro-North upgrades to stations and service in the Bronx, recent upgrades to LIRR stations and service in Queens and Brooklyn.

The LIRR has recently completed renewed and enhancements at the Flushing-Main Street station in Queens and the Nostrand Avenue station in Brooklyn, and recently lengthened the platforms at Forest Hills and Kew Gardens by 50%.

Metro-North doubled the frequency of service between Fordham and Manhattan, effective April 14, 2019. In 2016 it greatly expanded the level of service to Melrose and Tremont stations. It recently renewed and enhanced the Fordham station, the borough's busiest Metro-North station, and is currently renewing and enhancing its Harlem-125th Street station.

Metro-North has 13 stations in the west and central Bronx and the Marble Hill neighborhood of Manhattan, and is building four more stations in the east Bronx as part of the railroad's future connection of the New Haven Line to Penn Station.

**Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie said:** "Every day, countless New Yorkers rely on our rail systems – which are so vital to our economy – to keep our region moving. Our Assembly Majority members are keenly aware of the need to provide an efficient and cost-effective transportation system in New York. This discount program will save hardworking New Yorkers money and incentivize the use of public transportation."

**Senator Leroy Comrie said:** "Improving transit access by lowering commuter rail fares for New York City riders has long been a priority for me. We worked diligently with the MTA on the Atlantic Ticket pilot program, and I am pleased to see this fare reduction program announced ahead of the congestion pricing rollout. Providing commuters quality, affordable alternatives to driving is a desirable policy goal, so I look forward to continuing our work with the MTA to identify needed improvements for outer borough commuters."

**Assembly Member Michael Benedetto said:** "This is exciting news for my constituents on the east side of the Bronx who currently do not have a Metro-North station in their neighborhoods but will be able to travel by Metro-North at a lower rate than today. I am very pleased we will be offering this

discount”

**Assembly Member Edward C. Braunstein said:** “These significant fare reductions that Assemblywoman Rozic and I secured as part of the 2019 budget are great news for LIRR riders in Northeast Queens. I want to thank Assembly Speaker Heastie, Governor Cuomo, MTA Chairman Foye, and our partners in the New York State Senate for working together to provide this much needed financial relief for NYC residents who rely upon our commuter rail system.”

**Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz said:** “Metro-North is an essential mode of transit for many people in my district, whether they are going to the courthouse or to Yankee Stadium or to Midtown Manhattan. I am very excited about the launch of this 10% intra-city discount, which will make it easier for people to get out of their cars and into mass transit. Thank you to the MTA Board for approving this wonderful program, and I look forward to its widespread utilization among my constituents and all Bronxites.”

**Assembly Member Nathalia Fernandez said:** “Making public transportation more affordable and seamless for working class New Yorkers is a top priority of the State Legislature. Allocating funds from the Outer Borough Transportation Account to reduce Metro-North fares for all Bronxites is a vital step in that direction. Using our existing infrastructure – as well as the Penn Station Access line that is slated to be built – will provide more options for our constituents and alleviate some of our other overburdened MTA lines.”

**Assembly Member Nily Rozic said:** “As part of last year’s state budget, it was critical for us to ensure that the needs of our communities were not neglected. Relief in the outer boroughs where commuters are far too familiar with increasing fares and travel times is long overdue and I look forward to seeing these improvements through for Northeast Queens transit riders.”

**Lisa Daglian Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, said:** “We appreciate that local elected leaders obtained these benefits for their constituents and hope more people will get out of their cars and onto transit. We also hope that any increases in ridership will result in increases in service, especially as East Side Access, Penn Access and the Empire Complex come online.”

**Liam Blank of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign said:** “As New York City prepares to implement congestion pricing, the MTA has to provide more options in the outer boroughs so that public transit can be a reasonable alternative to driving. Reducing commuter rail fares within the City at a reasonable cost is a step in the right direction.”

**Danny Pearlstein, Policy and Communications Director for the Riders Alliance, said:** “New York’s commuter rail lines are an untapped resource in too many neighborhoods. High fares put the Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North out of reach of working families with punishingly long commutes. The new fare discounts will save New Yorkers valuable time and increase access to opportunity. With congestion pricing coming, the fare discount program will afford more options to the New Yorkers who need them most.”