

# STATEMENT ON MTA FARE HIKE OPTIONS

(Monday, October 15, 2012)

Enough already!

If there's a fare hike in 2013, this will be the fourth subway, bus and commuter rail fare increase in five years.

"By 2015 MTA fares and tolls will have increased by 35% since 2007," according to a recent report on MTA finances by State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli. The last two planned hikes would be at "almost three times the projected rate of inflation." His view: "more needs to be done to lessen the burden on riders."

The MTA fare options would hit the riders hard: In one, the base fare would go from \$2.25 to \$2.50 and the 7% bonus would be eliminated. That could add up to \$200 more a year for a regular commuter. In another, the unlimited-ride 30-day MetroCard would go up 20%, from the current \$104 to \$125. That could come to an additional \$252 a year.

New York City Transit already has the highest fare box operating ratio in the nation at 53%. That is the share of operating costs covered by fares. MTA Chairman Joseph Lhota said in September that "when you compare the public support given to mass transit agencies nationwide on a per customer basis, New York ranks at the very bottom."

In comparison to New York City Transit's 53% ratio, the average for large systems nation-wide that operate both buses and subways was 38% in 2011. That's according to the Federal Transit Administration in 2011, its most recent figures. Looking at big cities that run both subways and buses, the farebox operating ratio in Boston was 38%, Chicago 44%, Los Angeles 27%, Philadelphia 37%, and Washington, D.C. 42%.

Blocking or reducing the fare increase is possible, if we get more help from Albany. One promising plan is to generate new revenue by both raising and lowering tolls on city bridges and tunnels in line with where there is the most and least congestion. Under this plan – developed by a former New York City traffic commissioner Sam Schwartz, known as Gridlock Sam – tolls would go down on some facilities (like the Throgs Neck and Verrazano-Narrow Bridges) and be instituted on others (Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges.) The State would need to authorize some of tolls. For more information on the plan, go to: <http://www.goo.gl/ynmS9>

— 30 —

-----  
Gene Russianoff  
office: [212-349-6460](tel:212-349-6460)  
cell: [917-575-9434](tel:917-575-9434)