



THE COUNCIL  
OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
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**June 26, 2023**  
**Testimony before the MTA**  
**Re: Proposed Changes to Fares and Tolls**

My name is Gale A. Brewer and I am the City Council Member for District 6, which encompasses most of the Upper West Side of Manhattan.

Subway ridership in my district is still at 76.7 percent of what it was before the pandemic. Subway and bus service needs to be safe, frequent, and reliable to encourage ridership.

The 4% hike on the base fare is higher than I would like to see, but lower than what was initially thought due to additional funding for the MTA in the state budget. Increases to weekly and monthly unlimited ride MetroCards are modest. Service is expanding, and revenue from congestion pricing will fund capital improvements such as greater accessibility for subway stations.

A small fare hike is better than service cuts. Fare discounts and deals reduce the burden of hikes and incentivize ridership. Most important is the Fair Fares program.

In the City Council, we have been pushing Mayor Adams to expand Fair Fares eligibility from 100% of the federal poverty level to 200%. The change would expand the number of city residents eligible for the program to 1.7 million, up from 932,000 who currently qualify, according to an analysis from the Community Service Society of New York. There are many more low-income individuals with limited resources who rely on public transit and are not eligible for the program.

I also support changing the fare cap to a rolling seven day period rather than the current fixed Monday through Sunday period. I would like to see a monthly OMNY fare cap, as well.

As an OMNY user, I totally support this program. However, as a frequent bus rider, there are many instances in which the OMNY reader is not functioning, so I ride for free. The MTA is losing revenue and needs to fix the OMNY technology on busses to ensure riders can pay.

I support a Peak CityTicket for railroad customers to travel within New York City on weekdays, as well as making it available to Far Rockaway riders.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.