



Queens Civic Congress

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Testimony to MTA Queens Public Hearing

November 7, 2007

Presented by Phil Konisberg (Bay Terrace Community Alliance)
for Jim Trent, Treasurer and Chair, Transportation Committee (Creedmoor Civic)

The Queens Civic Congress, a coalition of over 100 civic, community, cooperative, tenant and community organizations in the borough of Queens, thanks the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) for this hearing and the opportunity to make clear NO need exists to raise any fare on our buses and subways, and existing service levels must be maintained and IMPROVED. The MTA failed to make the case for any fare increase. Unfortunately too many both at this public authority and in higher office, as well as some pundits and commentators gloss over changes in finances made over the last decade that further shift the burden of funding many initiatives always funded by state, federal and city tax levy on those who use the system. At a time when one of our brightest local lights chairs the House Ways and Means Committee and many other Members hold other senior posts in Congress and the U.S. Senate the lack of any plan to capture appropriate federal aid and relief staggers the mind. And the State and City should do their part. Today's Daily News [article](#) highlighting how the City provides but 4% of NYC Transit's \$5.7 billion operating budget -- \$250 million a year -- not even one-half of one percent of the entire city budget, makes clear the Fare Hike gets on the table as a tax -- no ifs, ands or buts. Frankly, fares should be reduced and service increased to get induce more people to eschew any reliance on cars -- something very hard to do living in Queens.

The Congress finds the financing the City's transit system by both the MTA and the state grossly unfair to residents of the City. Frankly, this funding scheme discriminates. It disproportionately calls on New York City residents and commuters to pay more than non-city residents. Under the current financing scheme for mass transit, a fare hike represents nothing less than a very regressive tax hike in excess of \$750 on many New Yorkers who struggle to make ends meet. At the Queens hearing of the NYC Traffic Congestion Mitigation Commission, attended by the MTA's CEO, Queens Civic Congress also offered [revenue](#) measures to support mass transit. [Note: this testimony with hyperlinks will be emailed to MTA staff.]

In [past testimonies](#), the Queens Civic Congress and others noted the discordant variance in funding for mass transit when the City accounts nearly seven out of every eight state riders moved by some form of mass transit. The ridership continues to increase without a concomitant investment by government at ALL levels. This has to change.

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End the shifting in financing, particularly a greater reliance on MTA consumers to pay for projects previously funded by the state (and city). This raises a real question about the role of the MTA. The role ought not to be to take the elected Governor (and State Legislature) off the hook for funding mass transit projects. In fact, the prior leadership of MTA had done just that. The fare box increasingly pays for debt service; this must. No fare revenue should be used for debt service.

An investment in New York City mass transit means more than repairs, new cars and buses and routes; it means a stable, affordable fare that encourages mass transit and provides an affordable means for workers and visitors to get around. New Yorkers look to our Governor and Mayor who make the appointments to the MTA board and the MTA board members -- to show leadership and a commitment – NOW! – to hold the line of transit fares.

The Queens Civic Congress also uses this occasion to urge the MTA to reconsider its opposition to authorizing Access-A-Ride to take Queens riders across the city line to their medical appointment. The MTA position no doubt influenced the Governor's veto; Queens Civic Congress plans to step up its efforts to get this law passed when legislators return next year.

The Queens Civic Congress questions any need for a fare hike when this agency effectively controlled by the Governor runs a surplus and the agency and the state continues to discriminate in favor of wealthier suburban commuters in the apportionment of fare subsidies and transit and transportation revenues.

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Queens Civic Congress Members

Association of Old Forest Hills ♦ Auburndale Improvement Association ♦ Bayside Civic Database ♦ Bayside Clear-Spring Council ♦ Bayside Hills Civic Association ♦ Bayswater Civic Association ♦ Bay Terrace Community Alliance, Inc. ♦ Bellaire-BellVill Civic Association ♦ Belle Harbor Property Owners Association ♦ Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association ♦ Bellerose Hillside Civic Association ♦ Bell Park Manor Terrace Community Council ♦ Bowne Park Civic Association ♦ Briarwood Community Association ♦ Cambria Heights Civic Association ♦ Civic Association of Utopia Estates ♦ C.O.M.E.T. (Communities of Maspeth-Elmhurst Together) ♦ Concerned Citizens of Laurelton ♦ Cornucopia Society ♦ Creedmoor Civic Association ♦ Deerfield Area Association ♦ Doug-Bay Manor Civic Association ♦ Douglas Manor Association ♦ Douglaston Civic Association ♦ Dutch Kills Civic Assn. of Long Island City ♦ East Flushing Civic Association ♦ Federated Block Associations of Laurelton ♦ Federation of Civic Associations of Southeast Queens ♦ Floral Park Community Council ♦ Flushing Heights Civic Association ♦ Flushing on the Hill Taxpayers Association ♦ Forest Hills Chamber of Commerce ♦ Forest Hills Crescents Association ♦ Forest Hills-Van Court Association ♦ Fresh Meadows Homeowners Association ♦ Georgetown Mews ♦ Glendale Civic Association of Queens ♦ Glen Oaks Village Owners, Inc. ♦ Greater Astoria Historical Society ♦ Greater Whitestone Taxpayers Civic Association ♦ Harding Heights Civic Association ♦ Hillcrest Estates Civic Association ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #1 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #2 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #3 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #4 ♦ Hollis 11423 Block Association ♦ Hollis Hills Civic Association ♦ Holliswood Civic Association ♦ Hollis Park Gardens Civic Association ♦ Holly Civic Association ♦ Hyde Park Gardens Cooperative ♦ Jackson Heights Beautification Group ♦ Jamaica Estates Association ♦ Jamaica Hill Community Association ♦ Juniper Park Civic Association ♦ Kew Gardens Civic Association ♦ Kew Gardens Hills Homeowners Association ♦ Kissena Park Civic Association ♦ Little Neck Bay Civic Association ♦ Little Neck Pines ♦ Long Island City Alliance ♦ Malba Civic Association ♦ Meadowlark Gardens Owners ♦ Middle Village Property Owners Association ♦ Mitchell Linden Civic Association ♦ Neponsit Property Owners Association ♦ Newtown Civic Association ♦ North Bellerose Civic Association ♦ North Flushing Civic Association ♦ North Hills Estates Civic Association ♦ Northwest Clearview Homeowners Association ♦ Norwood Civic Association ♦ Oakland Terrace/ Gardens Community Council ♦ Off Broadway Homeowners Association ♦ Our Neighborhood Improvement Association ♦ Parkway Village Historical Society ♦ Queensboro Hill Neighborhood Association ♦ Queens Colony Civic Association ♦ Queens Community Civic Corp. ♦ Queens Village Civic Association ♦ Ramblersville-Hawtree Civic Association ♦ Richmond Hill Historical Society ♦ Ridgewood Property Owners and Civic Association ♦ Rockaway Park Homeowners/ Residents ♦ Rocky Hill Civic Association ♦ Rosedale Civic Association ♦ Royal Ranch Association. ♦ Southeast Queens Concerned Neighbors ♦ South Ozone Park West Civic Association ♦ Springfield/Rosedale Community Action Association ♦ Station Road Civic Assoc. of Auburndale ♦ Sunnyside Gardens/Harrison Place Homeowners ♦ Surrey Estates Civic Association ♦ Union Turnpike Merchants Association ♦ United Forties Civic Association ♦ United Neighbors Civic Association ♦ Waldheim Neighborhood Association ♦ Wayanda Civic Association ♦ West Cunningham Park Civic Association ♦ Westmoreland Association ♦ Woodside Community Council