



# NEWS

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## MTA BOARD APPROVES NEW 75-CENT DISCOUNT CASH FARE ON LATE NIGHT, EARLY MORNING METRO BUS SERVICE

The MTA Board of Directors today approved a new cash discount fare on all MTA buses operating at night, between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m., effective September, 6, 1997.

"Today's action fulfills the MTA Board's commitment to develop an expanded off-peak reduced cash fare program," said MTA Chairman Richard Riordan. "The goal is to make MTA bus services more accessible to thousands of low-income, transit dependent riders who rely on buses to get to work, school, medical appointments and other destinations."

The discount cash fare will become 75 cents for regular patrons, and 35 cents for the elderly and disabled during the 8-hour period. The MTA Board of Directors also approved continuation of a discount cash fare program on Line 40/42. That discount is offered between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

MTA staff reviewed a number of discount fare options in the wake of a recent federal consent decree which called, in part, for implementation of a discounted fare program at the discretion of the MTA.

The program approved by the Board is expected to target a greater proportion of transit dependent riders than would occur in other time periods.

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The discount fare program is expected to benefit as many as 2.8 million cash-paying riders who use the MTA's late night and early morning service. An estimated 14.8 million boardings are recorded on the bus system annually during this same time period.

The program also is expected to reduce fare revenues by \$1.5 million through the balance of the year, monies already programmed into the Authority's FY 98 budget.

Prior to today's board action, MTA has initiated several other programs and services to meet terms of the consent decree. In an effort to reduce the number of standees on Metro buses, MTA added 53 buses into service during peak hours beginning in December 1996 and an additional 53 buses beginning in June 1997. In April 1997 MTA issued a long-term plan to further reduce the number of standees on Metro buses during peak hours.

In conjunction with the Bus Riders Union, MTA has developed a demonstration program which will include an initial implementation of new and modified services to improve access to places of employment, schools and medical facilities. As a result of a series of joint community meetings which began in June, MTA has identified 18 additional bus routes for possible inclusion in the program. The additions would include new express service, new shuttle service, modification or increase of existing service, or extensions of existing routes.

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