

MTA Staff Revises Metro Fare Restructuring Recommendation

There will be no change in Metro Bus and Metro Rail fares charged senior citizens, students and disabled persons, cash fares would drop and discount tokens would be continued if the MTA Board next week concurs with a revised staff recommendation on fare restructuring.

To offset potential operating deficits that could reach \$1.4 billion during the next 10 years, MTA staff is recommending that Metro fares be restructured. There has been no change in Metro fares in more than eight years despite rising costs for wages, fuel, equipment, security and other operating expenses. Today, MTA recovers only 29 percent of its operating expenses from the farebox. The rest is subsidized by taxpayers. By comparison, customers for most large transit properties in the United States pay about half the operating costs.

On May 22 the MTA Board will consider adopting a new fare structure that would be implemented Jan. 1, 2004.

Three options were presented at a public hearing April 12. After considering public comment, MTA staff now is recommending the following:

- Lower the current cash fare by a dime to \$1.25
- No change in fares charged seniors, students and disabled persons
- Keep discount tokens until universal fare system comes on line in two or three years. However, raise the price to \$1.10 (currently 90 cents)
- Offer new \$3 day pass/discontinue transfers
- Raise price of monthly pass to \$52 (current pass is \$42, same price charged in 1989 despite a 51 percent increase in inflation since then.)
- Raise price of semi-monthly pass to \$27 (currently \$21)
- Raise price of a weekly pass to \$14 (currently \$11)

The MTA Board will consider staff's recommendation on fares when it votes on adopting the FY04 MTA budget May 22. The meeting will start at 9:30 a.m. in the third floor Board room at MTA headquarters at Gateway Plaza next to Union Station in downtown Los Angeles.

MTA-072

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