

Text of Letter Sent by Theodore W. Kheel to All MTA Board Members on December 17, 2007

I am transmitting herewith some information that I urge you to consider before voting Wednesday on the fare hike that has been proposed as a part of the MTA's 2008 budget. Last Friday, I sent out a letter to the members of the Traffic Congestion Mitigation Commission asking them to consider the same information, as a part of their study on how to relieve traffic congestion in our city.

A little less than a year ago, my nonprofit commissioned a \$100,000 study relating to the mass transit fare in New York. That study-- which is nearing completion and is described in the enclosed summary-- shows that by a combination of measures, including a stiff cordon toll, sufficient funds could be generated to *completely eliminate the fare*.

Equally important, the study found that eliminating the fare would drastically reduce traffic in our city, bringing enormous savings in travel time to commuters.

I recognize that the agenda for your meeting on Wednesday will not ask you to consider the effect of a fare increase on traffic congestion in the city. Nor does the agenda for the Commission's meeting today ask them to consider how a fare increase might affect traffic.

The failure to link the two is one of the great failures of our transportation policy leaders. For in fact, the two are inextricably related, and it is counterproductive to consider them in isolation. The cost of traveling by car affects mass transit use, and the cost of traveling by mass transit affects car use, and both affect metropolitan transportation, which is the concern of the MTA, as its very name implies.

A broader view of the MTA's role, and a broader vision of the impact of a fare increase, is not just permitted, but required by law. The purposes of the MTA are described in N.Y. Laws Title 11, §1264 as: (1) the continuance, development and *improvement of commuter transportation* within the metropolitan commuter transportation district; (2) the development and implementation of a *unified mass transportation policy* for the district.

To accomplish those purposes, the MTA board has to consider the effect a fare increase will have on traffic congestion, and has to take seriously the data we have compiled. We ask you to do so.