



Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc.
Testimony at the New York State Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Transportation
January 24th, 2024

Thank you to Senator Krueger, Assemblymember Weinstein, Senator Kennedy, and Assemblymember Magnarelli for the opportunity to testify today. The mission of the Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc. (CPC) is to promote social and economic empowerment of Chinese American, immigrant, and low-income communities. CPC was founded in 1965 as a grassroots, community-based organization in response to the end of the Chinese Exclusion years and the passing of the Immigration Reform Act of 1965. Our services have expanded to include three key program areas: education, family support, and community and economic empowerment.

CPC is the largest Asian American social service organization in the U.S., providing vital resources to more than 80,000 people per year in all five boroughs through more than 50 programs at over 30 sites. CPC employs over 700 staff whose comprehensive services are linguistically accessible, culturally sensitive, and highly effective in reaching low-income and immigrant individuals and families. With the firm belief that social service can incite social change, CPC strives to empower our constituents as agents of social justice, with the overarching goal of advancing and transforming communities. Additionally, we serve over 300 low income children and families each year through our early childhood education programs.

To that end, we are grateful to testify about issues regarding transportation that greatly impact our communities. We were grateful to see the investments into the MTA last budget cycle. However, this is not a long-term solution in creating a more accessible and equitable public transportation system for all New Yorkers. Millions of New Yorkers rely on the MTA to get to work and to school to support their families and ultimately strive for economic mobility. Our transportation system is a lifeline and at the heart of our city and we need to ensure that there are critical investments.

We are part of Riders Alliance and we strongly endorse their Riders Agenda which calls on the State to meet the needs of riders, address inequality in transit access, and tackle the climate crisis. Firstly, the recent increase in the fare to \$2.90 has had adverse impacts on low-income, immigrant, and communities of color. In fact, [1.4 million New Yorkers](#) are currently living in poverty. Many have had to struggle between the idea of not affording their next meal and/or the potential of getting arrested by the NYPD. This is a dilemma that New Yorkers should not have to be facing in one of the wealthiest cities in the world. Increasing fare prices have and will continue to be mechanisms that criminalize poverty. Many of our young community members have expressed the difficulties in affordability especially when it comes to traveling to attend classes when the cost of tuition is astronomical and many are compounded with the issue of food insecurity. The future of our young people should not be reliant on whether they are able to afford a fare for the bus or the subway.

Despite the increase in fare prices, we have yet to see an improvement in services with delays and infrequent service that disproportionately impact communities of color. Not only does this impact the quality of life of New Yorkers but infrequent services negatively impact the City's economy. According to the [NYC Comptroller's office](#), they estimate that wait times of 5 minutes or more could cost the City up to \$398 million in economic activity annually. The State legislature and the Governor can address issues of affordability and accessibility by passing the [MTA Freeze Fares, Fund Frequency & Free Bus Act](#) (S4024/A4122). When there are

meaningful investments into our public transportation system, ridership will increase tremendously and we would be directly addressing the climate crisis.

Furthermore, it is critical that there be meaningful investment into our infrastructure in ensuring accessibility for all New Yorkers especially our seniors and populations with disabilities. Many of our seniors have expressed the difficulties and struggles in lifting their grocery carts up and down the stairs. This is a reflection of the very fact that many stations are not accessible and/or have elevators that are not functioning. In addition, the State legislature should work with City elected officials to address subway flooding and crumbling subway stations to ensure the safety of all New Yorkers. As we continue to face extreme weather conditions as a result of climate change, we need to push for infrastructure that is climate resilient. And if we continue to invest in public transportation, we are striving towards a more sustainable, greener, and more prosperous future.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify and we look forward to working with the State legislature and the Governor to create a more accessible, affordable, and reliable transit system for all New Yorkers.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Ashley Chen, Policy Analyst at achen9@cpc-nyc.org.