

## NYPTA Ridership and Fuel Cost Survey May 2008

### Preliminary Results and Findings

On May 12, 2008 the New York Public Transit Association surveyed its membership regarding fuel price increases and ridership trends. The preliminary results are outlined below.

**1. Survey respondents:** Eighteen public transportation providers responded to the survey, ranging in size from MTA New York City Transit to small not-for-profit rural providers. The responding systems provide transit service in New York City and 26 of New York State's counties.

**2. Fuel Price Impacts:** The responding systems use a variety of fuels (diesel, gasoline, compressed natural gas) but the predominant fuel source is diesel. The table below underscores the rapidly escalating price of diesel and its impact on transit system budgets through the first five months of 2008.

System	1/07 Price	1/08 Price	5/08 Price	17 mo. % inc.	Annual gallons	Ann. Cost @ 1/08 Price	Ann. Cost @ 5/08 Price	5 month Change
Glens Falls	2.23	3.09	4.24	90.1				
Oneonta	2.14	3.11	3.91	82.6	86K	\$267,804	\$336,346	\$68,542
Rockland	2.32	3.20	3.28	41.4				
Oswego Opportunities	2.44	3.61	4.18	71.3	140K	505,400	585,200	79,800
MTA-NYCT	1.92	2.94	3.70	92.7	47M	138,180,000	173,900,000	35,720,000
Schoharie	2.11	3.09	3.93	86.3	45K	139,050	176,850	37,800
Broome	1.96	2.95	3.93	100.4	460K	1,360,680	1,808,628	447,948
Dutchess	1.91	2.93	3.61	88.7	234K	687,188	844,763	157,575
CDTA	2.65	2.95	2.97	12.1	2.2M	6,490,000	6,534,000	44,000
CNYRTA	2.11*		4.07*	93.0		3,970,000*	4,570,000*	600,000
NFTA	1.84	2.77	4.20	128.3	2.4M	6,648,000	10,080,000	3,432,000
Westchester	2.46	3.77	3.77	53.3	3.5M	13,195,000	13,195,000	0

\*Reported using different dates, but 5 month change consistent with other systems

Over the last seventeen months, diesel fuel prices have nearly doubled for many of the responding systems and more than doubled for two of them. With the exception of systems with long term pricing arrangements, most systems are seeing increases ranging from 71.3% to 128.3%. The budgetary impact of these increases ranges from manageable to disastrous.

**3. Ridership Trends:** Gasoline prices are generating significant ridership increases in all reporting systems. Annual ridership was up an average of 4.34% from 2006 to 2007. For the period January-April 2008, ridership is up an average of 8.9% compared with 2007. Systems reported year-to-year increases ranging from 4% to 17% for the first four months of the year.

**4. The Bottom Line:** High fuel prices are making public transit an attractive mobility alternative, as borne out by statewide ridership increases. But rising diesel prices could lead to fare increases as shown in the following table that applies the survey findings on ridership and fuel costs to a hypothetical 250 bus system. Now is the time to strengthen public transit's ability to maintain fares and add service. Policy options include added STOA to subsidize fuel costs and increased capital funding to aid fleet expansion, particularly with hybrid or alternate propulsion vehicles.

	Baseline January 2007	Current May 2008	Comment
Annual Passengers	13,000,000	14,300,000	10% increase (survey range 4-17%)
Annual Farebox Revenue	\$13,000,000	\$14,300,000	\$1 base fare assumed
Annual Diesel Fuel Used (gallons)	2,200,000	2,200,000	Assumes no major service changes
Price/Gallon	\$2.00	\$3.80	Average prices from NYPTA survey
Annual Fuel Cost	\$4,400,000	\$8,360,000	
Added Farebox Revenue (annual)	--	\$1,300,000	
Added Fuel Costs (annual)	--	\$3,960,000	
Budget Deficit (annual)	--	(\$2,660,000)	
Fare Increase to Cover Deficit		\$0.19	Assume \$0.25 or 25% increase