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Res. No. 369

Resolution calling on the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to ensure equitable distribution of OMNY vending machines in the five boroughs, including implementing such machines in at least 30 high-traffic areas in each borough.

By Council Members Hanks, Louis, Riley and Farías

Whereas, In 2019, the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) launched a pilot program for a contactless fare payment system called One Metro New York, or OMNY, on the New York City Transit Lexington Avenue subway line and buses on Staten Island; and

Whereas, Since then, the MTA has expanded OMNY to all subway stations and buses throughout New York City (NYC), supporting a full-fare, pay-per-ride system, including free transfers, with plans to continue rollout for paratransit services, the Long Island Rail Road, and the Metro-North Railroad; and

Whereas, OMNY works by allowing mass transit riders in NYC to pay their fares at subway turnstiles, AutoGates, and onboard buses by tapping their own contactless credit or debit card, smart device, or OMNY card onto the OMNY reader; and

Whereas, OMNY caps weekly fares at $34 when the same card or device is tapped for rides, effectively providing customers with the benefits of a 7-Day Unlimited MetroCard without paying in advance; and

Whereas, In July of 2023, New York State Governor Kathy Hochul announced that MTA customers had utilized OMNY more than one billion times at all 472 subway stations, 204 local bus routes, and 31 express buses, with nearly half of all subway riders using OMNY, and two million riders using it every day; and

Whereas, Although utilized millions of times per day, there may be gaps in the MTA's future implementation of OMNY vending machines; and

Whereas, In the Fall of 2023, the MTA, after previous delays, began to roll out OMNY vending machines in a pilot program at 6 subway stations, with promises to be available at all 472 subway stations; and

Whereas, Despite these promises, there are concerns that a majority of Staten Island Railway's stations may not receive an OMNY vending machine, as the MTA has implemented a very small number of MetroCard vending machines throughout these stations in the past; and

Whereas, In the Staten Island Railway system, MetroCards can be purchased at only 3 locations: St. George Ferry Terminal, Tomkinsville Station, and Eltingville Transit Center, otherwise MetroCards must be purchased at select retail locations in the borough; and

Whereas, A low number of OMNY vending machines in Staten Island Railway's stations may result in a disincentive and an added inconvenience for Staten Islanders to utilize mass transit to travel throughout the City, particularly for those who do not have contactless credit or debit cards or smart devices to utilize at OMNY readers; and

Whereas, The MTA should equitably distribute OMNY vending machines throughout the City, especially focusing on areas in each borough with high traffic and Staten Island, where there is a historical lack of MetroCard machines; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to ensure equitable distribution of OMNY vending machines in the five boroughs, including implementing such machines in at least 30 high-traffic areas in each borough.

KK
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