

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D. C.

ORDER NO. 1202

IN THE MATTER OF:

Served February 24, 1972

Establishment of Reduced)
Fares on D. C. Transit)
System, Inc., for Senior)
Citizens.)

Docket No. 237

In Order No. 1129, issued April 2, 1971, we directed D. C. Transit System, Inc. (Transit) to institute an experimental, off-peak reduced fare program for senior citizens. The initial period of the experiment was 90 days. Subsequently, in Order No. 1158, issued July 27, 1971, and in Order No. 1175, issued November 3, 1971, we extended the experiment by 90 days and 120 days, respectively. The current expiration date for the experiment is March 3, 1972.

Throughout the nearly ten months of the reduced fare program, the staff, with the assistance of the company and its bus operators, has compiled data to determine the extent of new ridership generated by the reduced fare as well as other information pertinent to an assessment of the reduced fare program. In three reports to the Commission, evaluating the results of the three periods of the experiment, the staff has presented the data and suggested conclusions that could be drawn from them. The staff reports have also included recommendations as to improvements in the mechanics of the program to increase its effectiveness.

The first staff report, based on the first forty-five days of the program, reported that surveys showed a significant increase in senior citizen ridership. Considering the income levels of the senior citizens using the reduced fare, and the level of increased ridership, the staff concluded, and we agreed, that the reduced fare has the effect of significantly increasing the mobility of elderly citizens on low, fixed incomes.

In order to measure the cost of the program, daily ridership counts were to be made for comparison with ridership before the reduced fare was instituted. Unfortunately, these counts have not produced totally reliable data and the degree of their

unreliability is difficult to measure. In any case, to the extent the data are inaccurate, it is clear that the inaccuracy is in the direction of indicating fewer riders than actual. And, using those conservative data, the staff concludes, in its most recent report, that the revenue loss is in the neighborhood of only \$100 a day.

We will direct that an off-peak reduced fare for senior citizens be included as a permanent feature of the rate structure of D. C. Transit System, Inc. A large number of other cities have such a reduced fare, including cities with both privately and publicly owned systems. The social desirability of the reduced fare is indisputable. The cost appears minimal. We are in the midst of a D. C. Transit rate case and are thus able to make any adjustments appropriate to take proper account of the senior citizen reduced fare.

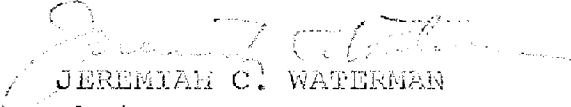
THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED:

1. That the fifteen-cent (15¢) reduction on all regular route fares of forty cents (40¢) or more, for anyone 65 years of age or older, during the off-peak hours from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and again from 7:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. weekdays (Monday through Friday), and all day Sunday, on the buses of D. C. Transit System, Inc., to be valid upon presentation of a special identification card issued by Transit or a Medicare card be, and it is hereby, continued until further order of this Commission.

2. That D. C. Transit System, Inc., shall issue senior citizen cards at its four division offices and through its mobile token sales outlet and any additional mobile units established in the future.

3. That staff shall continue to maintain, to the extent volunteers are available, registration outlets in locations and numbers sufficient to provide convenient registration centers for those who are not able to use the Medicare card.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMISSION:


JEREMIAH C. WATERMAN
Chairman

HOOVER, Commissioner, not participating.