

'Doomsday' returns for MTA

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MTA employees, including Walder

• reduce by half the discounts on student MetroCards in 2010 and totally abolish them by 2011

But none of these measures would take place before late spring.

By law, the MTA must come up with a balanced budget.

"To present a balanced budget despite losing hundreds of millions of dollars in state funding over the past two weeks requires measures that are painful to the MTA, our employees and our customers," said MTA Chief Financial Officer Gary Dellaverson, who presented the proposed budget to the committee. "Given the ongoing

downturn in the broader economy and the resultant economic crisis facing the state, we have worked to balance the budget while maintaining our commitment to riders not to increase fares in 2010."

The proposal to cut free student MetroCards set off an immediate outcry and plans for protest rallies.

But Jeremy Soffin, MTA chief spokesman, said no other transit system in the United States pays for student transportation. The MTA said that prior to 1994, New York city and

state paid the entire cost of free or half-price student transit fares. A 1995 agreement split the cost, with city and state each paying \$45 million. This year the state paid \$6 million and

the city \$45 million.

"The MTA can no longer afford to subsidize this free service," Dellaverson said.

The Queens Civic Congress said that before cutting the core service of subways and buses, "the MTA must seize this opportunity to review how it contracts out, including for professional services."

"The MTA must also rethink the mega projects in the capital program before imposing any cuts to bus and subway service," the QCC said.

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W and G trains, 25 bus lines to be shut down as \$400M deficit looms

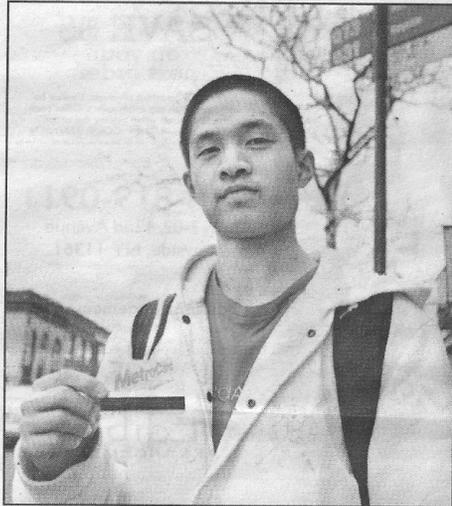
BY PHILIP NEWMAN

Transit officials, once again teetering on the edge of a financial abyss, said they will be forced to shut down the W and Z subway lines and 25 bus routes, carry out layoffs and pay cuts and take free MetroCards away from a half-million schoolchildren.

"I wish I could tell you that losing this amount of money will not bring painful consequences but, unfortunately, I can't," said Jay Walder, chairman of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority at an MTA Finance Committee meeting Monday.

Walder was referring to the \$383 million deficit the MTA now faces after disturbing financial tidings over the past week.

It was just over a year ago that the MTA's financial straits were so dire the agency drew up a 200-page "doomsday" plan, including subway and bus line shutdowns and service cutbacks. But the plan never became reality after the state Legislature voted for



Victor Ma, 16, waits for the bus in Bayside. A student at Stuyvesant High School in Manhattan, Ma takes the subway and a bus to and from school without paying a fare. Photo by Christina Santucci

could ill-afford.

The quick succession of bad news — "almost overnight," as Walder described it — left the MTA again in big trouble.

The MTA plans to do the following:

- eliminate the W to western Queens and the Z to Jamaica
- shorten the G subway line to Forest Hills and the M to Middle Village
- have longer waits for subways during early mornings and weekends
- shut down 25 low-ridership bus lines with curtailment of an unspecified number of other lines
- eliminate toll rebates for Rockaways residents on the Cross Bay Bridge
- cut Access-a-Ride paratransit service for the disabled and elderly
- reduce some service on the Long Island Rail Road's Babylon, Port Washington and West Hempstead branches
- lay off 700 New York City Transit Authority workers and give 10 percent pay cuts for 600 non-union

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a bailout and approved a payroll tax to provide transit revenue.

But Gov. David Paterson took back \$143 million from the state's contribution to the MTA as part of the recent budget accord

to stem the state's red ink. The payroll tax generated \$100 million less than anticipated and the MTA lost an appeal of arbitration that granted union workers a pay raise the MTA said would cost \$91 million if

Click [here](#) to view the MTA [cuts](#).

For more information on Queens Civic Congress efforts on mass transit, view the links below available at <http://queensciviccongress.org/Media>

[2009-12-15 Queens Civic Congress Questions MTA's Proposed Service Cuts](#)

[2009-06-22 Bus Rapid Transit - A good idea that City and MTA seek to implement badly](#)

[2009-01-20 Testimony to MTA Queens Public Hearing](#) by Queens Civic Congress Vice President and transportation co-chair Kathy Masi

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