PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF THE CITY'S RESPONSE TO THE DECEMBER 2010 BLIZZARD

Report and Recommendations to Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg

Elizabeth Weinstein, Director, Mayor's Office of Operations Skip Funk, Director, Mayor's Office of Citywide Emergency Communications



To:

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg

From:

Elizabeth Weinstein, Director, Mayor's Office of Operations Skip Funk, Director, Mayor's Office of Citywide Emergency

Communications

Subject:

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DECEMBER 2010 BLIZZARD

Date:

January 10, 2011

Introduction

On December 26, 2010, a blizzard struck New York City and surrounding areas. Though earlier forecasts had called for only a light to moderate snow falls, the National Weather Service issued a blizzard warning at 3:55 PM on December 25th. At that time, between 11 and 16 inches of snow were predicted, along with high winds and low visibility. Even this forecast underestimated the storm's ferocity. Snow fell steadily from the morning of Sunday, December 26th through the following morning, accumulating up to 20 inches in Central Park and far more in parts of Brooklyn and Staten Island.

The City's response to the snowfall failed in many ways, as became apparent when many streets across the city remained unplowed and impassable hours and even days after the snowfall had stopped. Many factors, both within and outside of the City's control, combined to make effectively responding to the blizzard particularly challenging, and the challenges the City faced or failures in its response are described in details below. Nevertheless, it is important to note that a couple of natural factors significantly exacerbated the City's ability to address the challenges presented by the storm. First, the weather forecasts predicted low accumulations up until 18 hours prior to the storm, which fell on a holiday weekend. Second, the snow fell at an unusually fast rate of over 2" per hour or more. Finally, because the storm fell on a holiday weekend, more vehicles were on the roads than would typically be driving during snow events, as New Yorkers were returning from or embarking on holiday travels.

Problems Identified

The preliminary results of the review conducted by the Mayor's Office of Operations and the Office of Citywide Emergency Communications found problems in six areas: (1) the decision not to declare a snow emergency; (2) insufficient accountability tools that led to a lack of real-time information on street conditions; (3) insufficient and delayed deployment of City assets that could have assisted with snow removal operations; (4) failure to procure and preposition private resources; (5) insufficient communication within City

government and to the public; and (6) problems with emergency communications and response.

1. Decision not to declare a snow emergency. On Saturday, December 25, City officials decided not to declare a "snow emergency", which by law would require private vehicles not to utilize certain designated snow routes unless they are equipped with snow tires or chains, as well as ban parking on these streets. Later, during the night of Sunday December 26 and the morning of Monday, December 27, discussions regarding declaring a "snow emergency" or a "state of emergency" were not marked by a clear understanding of who could issue either declaration, what powers and actions such declarations would enable amongst City agencies and other entities, and how the public would be required to act as a result.

Declaring a snow emergency would not have kept cars from being snowed in or stuck on smaller avenues and streets in the city, which became a major problem in and following this storm. The utility of having citizens try to move parked cars off of major avenues as the storm approached was properly deemed to be very low. However, based on the review over the past two weeks, we have determined that the decision to declare a general emergency could have provided a triggering event for those City agencies and other entities that utilize such a declaration as a catalyst for action, and by the public, which potentially might have heard the word "emergency" and ceased driving to the extent practicable.

- 2. Insufficient accountability tools. Throughout the storm and particularly in its aftermath, City agencies were deluged with calls and emails regarding streets that had not been plowed, or had been insufficiently cleared. In some instances, City officials believed the streets had already been cleared, but learned this was not the case, or that the street remained impassable. The lack of real-time information on street conditions inhibited effective deployment of resources or effective quality control. The Department of Sanitation currently lacks the capability to track data on street conditions in an automated or real-time fashion. DSNY reports on completed routes after a shift ends every 12 hours, and only once snowfall stops. As a result, the status of a street may be significantly different once the report is received. In addition, plowing progress is tracked based on routes, so it is difficult to know the status of a particular City street at any given time. The lack of real-time data led to an inability to make speedy management decisions, redistribute resources as needed, and communicate an accurate status to the public and elected officials.
- **3.** Insufficient and delayed deployment of City assets. The weather forecast for the storm got significantly worse rather quickly, culminating in a blizzard warning issued at 3:55pm on Christmas Day. Due to the late change in the forecast, as well as the fact that DSNY has adeptly handled large snowfalls so

many times previously without assistance, agencies that are not typically involved in snow removal—such as the Taxi and Limousine Commission—were not mobilized expeditiously. Streets that DSNY could not plow immediately could have been tackled sooner by other City personnel and equipment, including the use of tow trucks, as countless stuck vehicles—private cars, ambulances and buses—slowed DSNY's plowing operation. In addition, other City workforces could have been leveraged to clear crosswalks and bus stops, tasks that do not require heavy equipment yet did not begin until many days after the storm ended. Additional areas that could have been cleared for the safety and convenience of pedestrians remained impassable for several days.

4. Failure to procure and preposition private resources. For the overwhelming majority of snow storms, the City has the in-house resources — both in terms of personnel and equipment—necessary to clear the streets with alacrity. However, for storms of the magnitude of the December 26 blizzard, additional resources from the private sector or other entities need to be utilized. Prior to the storm and the winter season, the City did not make a comprehensive effort to ensure sufficient private contractors were on call to assist with plowing or towing during any storm. Many private contractors with heavy equipment could not be reached and those that were reached were presented with lengthy contracts while critical snow clearing operations waited. DSNY has a list of potential contractors, but it was not extensive enough to yield the needed help.

In addition, though DSNY recruits potential snow laborers each fall, the Department did not recognize the size of the manpower need and beef up its solicitations to the public for hired labor prior to this storm. Although day laborers could proactively call 311 looking for work, a 311 message for potential snow removal workers stated that the Department was not registering new applicants and that payment can take between 6-12 weeks, which dissuaded prospective applicants from signing up since when other similar work was readily available. As a result, additional snow removal tasks that do not required only a shovel were not undertaken and completed nearly as quickly as it could have been had the workforce been recruited and the impediments to expeditious payment eliminated.

5. Insufficient internal and external communications. Approximately 50% of the Department of Sanitation's trucks currently lack radios; for those that do have radios, one channel serves all of the vehicles in a borough command. As a result, the channels became over-saturated with radio traffic during the height of the response, when drivers faced numerous plowing impediments. Route completion could not always be quickly communicated and issues that arose during a shift—such as a disabled vehicle blocking a route—could not be immediately escalated and slowed operations.

In addition, the public lacked information regarding the three-tiered (primary, secondary and tertiary) system by which DSNY prioritizes snow clearance on streets, and the classification of their own street. Thousands of residents called 311 but could not get information about when their streets would be plowed, or if it had reportedly been already.

6. Problems with emergency communications and response. During the emergency, the 911 system—and specifically the EMS portion of the system—became overburdened with calls. Though steps were taken to increase call-taker staffing, the backlog continued to grow. By the night of December 26, over 1000 calls were in the queue, waiting for a response. These problems were exacerbated by the fact that well over 100 ambulances became stuck in the snowy conditions, thereby further depleting EMS's ability to respond to medical emergencies. The Police and Fire Departments increased the number and types of emergencies they responded to, but response times climbed in the wintry conditions.

Action Plan

The recommendations outlined below are meant to address the problems identified above. The City will work to implement this plan as quickly as possible. This is not an exhaustive list of the work the City will do to improve its operations, but a starting point as we continue to consider and analyze our performance during December's storm.

I. Declaration of Emergencies

- 1. Amend the process for declaring emergencies. The City will establish a more formal process for considering emergency declarations in all circumstances and in particular in severe weather events. During this past storm and in others officials face difficult judgment calls about whether to disrupt the lives of the public in anticipation of an event the severity of which is often uncertain. To ensure that the merits and consequences of any emergency declaration are fully evaluated during a significant weather event, specific protocols for decision-making will be developed that outline the roles of all parties.
- 2. Provide a broader range of options that could be part of an emergency declaration and make them clear and understandable to New Yorkers. Because a declaration requiring the public to use snow tires and chains on certain snow emergency routes, and forbidding parking on those streets is not the best or only possible solution to reduce vehicular traffic or muster resources in inclement weather, the City will establish a menu of options for emergency managers that expand the choices of decision-makers and take into account the actions that other entities will undertake based on the declaration.

These options will be designed in advance and communicated in plain

language, so their meanings and the actions required are clear to the public. For instance, driving could be restricted, but the City might not require motorists to move their cars off of primary roads.

II. Accountability Tools

- 3. Equip every Department of Sanitation truck with a GPS device enabled with two-way communication. The City will now equip collection trucks that are used for plowing with GPS-enabled phones with two-way communication. Field workers and supervisors will be trained on these mobile devices to share real-time progress reports with supervisors, assist supervisors in measuring performance, and enhancing the safety of field workers. This will enable more frequent productivity reporting to improve public transparency, and assist in assessing resource deployment. During the snow event on January 7th a test of 50 devices was performed successfully in one Sanitation District in Brooklyn.
- 4. Improve accountability tools and plowing definitions used by Sanitation for street conditions. To address the issues of reporting delays and inadequate measurements of street conditions, DSNY will create new definitions and reporting standards so their data accurately matches the reality on the street. The Department of Transportation's evaluation system for the bridges and other thoroughfares it maintains provides a potential citywide model.
- 5. Use live monitors (SCOUT) to stream video of trouble spots. In August 2007, the City launched the Street Conditions Observation Unit (SCOUT), teams a group of inspectors whose mission is to drive every city street once a month and report conditions that negatively impact quality of life. During an average workday, the City uses 15 SCOUTs, largely in 3-wheel vehicles or electric Mini Coopers. During snow emergencies the City will deploy some of those SCOUTs in four wheel drive vehicles equipped with digital video technology that can stream back to a command center real time pictures of critical or sensitive areas. This initiative to provide DSNY, OEM and the Mayor's Office independent quality assurance was successfully piloted during the January 7 snow event.

III. Rapid Deployment of All Possible City Assets

6. Enhance immediate availability of critical equipment. OEM will update the asset inventory it maintains of city equipment to ensure it can identify and deploy resources effectively during an emergency. To facilitate the use of this equipment, OEM will work with the agencies to designate an on-call person who can deploy equipment and operators from their agency as needed. Potential agency assignments will be pre-determined so that when a need arises, agency equipment can be most effectively deployed.

- 7. Enhance ability to deploy City labor from other departments. OEM will conduct a survey of all areas where City employees can be called out to provide additional labor in an emergency, whether it is snow, flood or another event. The City has large numbers of committed employees willing to do work in response to emergency events. Where necessary or appropriate, OEM will work with agencies to train staff in functions critical to emergency response so that when a need arises, City employees are ready to help.
- 8. Enhance the Emergency Operations Center as the center of resource coordination. OEM, as the City's coordinator of resource deployment, sets up the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to serve as the City's operational hub. OEM and City agencies will reassess their protocols for deploying agency representation to the EOC to ensure that representatives are agency decision-makers, have up to date agency data about in-progress operations, and are familiar with key agency assets and operations (e.g. staff and equipment).
- 9. Improve tow truck deployment. Through a centralized coordinator, the City will better incorporate the full citywide towing resources into its snow planning and ensure that all agencies prepare these resources for deployment prior to a significant storm. Specific processes that outline the timing of tow truck deployment and the authority of City tow trucks to tow private vehicles will also be developed and better communicated.

IV. Better Prepositioning of Private Resources

- 10. Secure and expeditiously deploy private contractors for assistance. The City will identify organizations that can produce needed assets to be assigned to specific tasks immediately upon request in an emergency. Assignments will include but not be limited to towing, plowing and hauling. Procurement of these resources must be streamlined and organized in advance to the fullest extent possible. The contracting process and the contracts themselves must be competitive with what other potential employers are paying, so that when contractors are needed, they will not choose other opportunities over City work. DSNY and OEM should utilize all contracting vehicles available to them, including the use of agency procurement cards.
- 11. Improve the process of hiring additional laborers. To ensure that the City can recruit the external workers it needs, it must be able to compete with other potential employers. While the City cannot pay in cash or engage employees without checking certain Federal work requirements, it can and will identify workforce and staffing partners who can be organized to respond when necessary and will revise procurement and payment processes accordingly. Contracts will be structured to ensure that service is provided within critical timeframes and that work is pre-assigned to workers who can appropriately fulfill their given assignments.

V. Communications

- 12. Improve two-way communications through real time portal. To enhance transparency and improve accountability, the City will create a dedicated site on NYC.gov for winter weather events that includes maps, news and announcements, as well as a community forum. The website will serve as a public reporting and accountability portal through which New Yorkers can support the City's quality assurance efforts by providing real-time reports, including photos and video, of the status of streets. NYC City Map will be updated to show which streets are designated as primary, secondary and tertiary for snow removal.
- 13. Provide better methods for citizens to request help. The 311 call center experienced high call volume during and after the storm that included a high number of non-critical informational requests that clogged the system. 311 has enhanced web reporting options that can handle most types of service requests. We will encourage more New Yorkers to sign-up for Notify NYC and move quickly to enhance 311 social networking options that will allow citizens to more easily register in advance for information to be pushed to them on critical and non critical actions like trash pickup and parking. 311 will also move quickly to add texting options to the call center in order to provide efficient responses to short questions and eventually as another channel for reporting requests for service.

VI. Emergency Communications

- 14. Reform dispatch protocols in extreme and high volume events. The 911 system can improve the way it responds to high call volume events by creating escalation protocols that focus on expected problem areas and improve the ability to bring in new staff. The City will also conduct a comprehensive review of its 911 call handling during large scale emergencies. Procedures given to supervisors for monitoring calls in backlog during heavy volume will also be reviewed. Protocols for which type of FDNY, EMS or NYPD resource is sent to specific types of events in these extreme situations will also be reviewed. In addition, the City will improve its ability to bring in additional staff during high call volume events.
- 15. Accelerate PSAC integration and implementation. Over the upcoming months, the integration of the City's dispatch and telephony systems will be improved through the Emergency Communications Transformation Program. In the near-term, operational procedures will be reviewed and the best practices applied where necessary. Technology systems will be employed and tailored to meet the operational needs of NYPD and FDNY. Co-location of NYPD and

FDNY will enhance the effectiveness of emergency response citywide. The Emergency Communications Transformation Program will continue to transform a 30-40 year old system by implementing state-of-the-art technologies.

Compliments of

Council Member Inez E. Dickens

Assistant Deputy Majority Leader

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The City's response to the snowfall failed in many ways, as became apparent when many streets across the city remained unplowed and impassable hours and even days after the snowfall had stopped. Many factors, both within and outside of the City's control, combined to make effectively responding to the blizzard particularly challenging, and the challenges the City faced or failures in its response are described in details below. Nevertheless, it is important to note that a couple of natural factors significantly exacerbated the City's ability to address the challenges presented by the storm. First, the weather forecasts predicted low accumulations up until 18 hours prior to the storm, which fell on a holiday weekend. Second, the snow fell at an unusually fast rate of over 2" per hour or more. Finally, because the storm fell on a holiday weekend, more vehicles were on the roads than would typically be driving during snow events, as New Yorkers were returning from or embarking on holiday travels.

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blizzard warning issued at 3:55pm on Christmas Day. Due to the late change in the forecast, as well as the fact that DSNY has adeptly handled large snowfalls so many times previously without assistance, agencies that are not typically involved in snow removal—such as the Taxi and Limousine Commission—were not mobilized expeditiously. Streets that DSNY could not plow immediately could have been tackled sooner by other City personnel and equipment, including the use of tow trucks, as countless stuck vehicles—private cars, ambulances and buses—slowed DSNY's plowing operation. In addition, other City workforces could have been leveraged to clear crosswalks and bus stops, tasks that do not require heavy equipment yet did not begin until many days after the storm ended. Additional areas that could have been cleared for the safety and convenience of pedestrians remained impassable for several days.

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15. Accelerate PSAC integration and implementation. Over the upcoming months, the integration of the City's dispatch and telephony systems will be improved through the Emergency Communications Transformation Program. In the near-term, operational procedures will be reviewed and the best practices applied where necessary. Technology systems will be employed and tailored to meet the operational needs of NYPD and FDNY. Co-location of NYPD and FDNY will enhance the effectiveness of emergency response citywide. The Emergency Communications Transformation Program will continue to transform a 30-40 year old system by implementing state-of-the-art technologies.



SCOTT M. STRINGER BOROUGH PRESIDENT

Testimony of Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer before the New York City Council Joint Hearing of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management, Committee on Fire and Criminal Justice Services, Committee on Oversight and Investigations and Committee on Public Safety on the City's Response to the Blizzard of 2010

January 20, 2011

Thank you, Chairs Crowley, James, Vallone and Williams for the opportunity to testify at this important oversight hearing.

The City's response to the blizzard of December 2010 left many New Yorkers frustrated and looking for answers. For hours, many New Yorkers were unable to access 311 and 911 – the City's information and emergency hotlines – as call backlogs exceeded a thousand. Over 200 ambulances and 1,000 buses were reported stuck on unplowed streets or blocked by abandoned cars. Overall, these dangerous conditions may have contributed to at least three deaths and several near fatal incidents.

We're now receiving reports that another heavy storm is expected to hit the City tomorrow evening and bring up to a foot of snow. As we prepare for further potentially severe snow storms this season, it is crucial that we learn from the experience of last month's storm and avoid the multitude of mistakes that were made. That analysis begins at the top. With the Deputy Mayor outside of the City at the time of storm, what was the chain of command? Was sufficient executive management present to make the necessary decisions – or were we caught off guard?

The decision to not call a snow emergency loomed over the storm, particularly in the aftermath as we learned how such a declaration could have benefited the City's response. As early as 4:45 a.m. on Saturday morning, OEM alerts forecasted between 6-8 inches of snowfall for the City and "hazardous" travel conditions. By 4:00 p.m., the National Weather service issued a "blizzard warning" for the City and forecasted at least 11-16 inches. Jerone Hauer, Emergency Management Coordinator under former mayor Giuliani, recently stated that snow emergency declarations should be considered anytime snowfall predictions are over 7 inches and that a blizzard warning is a "no-brainer".

With just under a day before the snowfall began, we had every indication that this would be a significant storm. This was the time to take action.

Declaring a snow emergency would have allowed for clearing vehicles from the streets and would have given plows the best chance to move through rapidly, keeping emergency service routes open and allowing the plows to move onto secondary streets. It also would have clarified to the public any conflicting messages heard through the media.

During the storm, the City experienced an unacceptable breakdown in public communication. Backlogs at 311 and 911 call centers meant thousands of New Yorkers were cut off from critical services. On Monday alone, nearly 50,000 emergency calls were placed. As the City prepares for future snow storms this season, we need a plan for ensuring that New Yorkers always have access to these services.

Lastly, while I am appreciative for this hearing and an opportunity to weigh in on this most important issue -- the care and safety of our communities -- this conversation needs to happen much earlier and when it matters most - during the budget review period in spring. When weighing the costs of budgets cuts, the City must do a better job of analyzing the real life impacts on public safety and the necessary resources for emergency responses. These are the times to take a hard look at our budget priorities so that New Yorkers can count on their government to be there when they are needed the most.

Since last spring, sanitation workers have been sounding the alarm that reductions in staff have compromised the City's ability to expeditiously respond to a major snow storm. From 2008 to 2010, the City has gone from having 6,473 sanitation workers to fewer than 5,800. As we plan for our City's budget and allocate our resources, we must consider the impact that such reductions in workforce will have on our emergency preparedness.

As the Manhattan Borough President, I recognize that while our borough was hit hard, other boroughs fared comparatively worse. When certain neighborhoods fare better than others, we stop being *one* City. It is imperative that we work together to address the needs and concerns of *all* of our city's communities, and its visitors.

New Yorkers deserve, and have come to expect, a government that is doing all it can to ensure their safety. We must and can do better.

Thank you.

My name is Diane Futrell and I am an employee of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection assigned to the Pennsylvania Avenue Landfill located on Jamaica Bay off the Belt Parkway in East New York, Brooklyn. I reside in the 9th Council District here in Harlem, which represented by the Honorable Inez E. Dickens. On December 27th and 28th, I was unable to report to work which is 20 miles away due to the lack of public transportation operating in the Carnarsie/East New York area. According to the media reports there were no L trains running and the other trains which are located a distance away had shut downs. In addition, due to the lack of plowing, the connecting buses were also unable to operate. Therefore, it was impossible for me to get to work. As a result, I have been forced to use two days of vacation time to cover this absence or go without pay. This has happened to many other city employees and it is absolutely unfair. This city is very large and many employees were not able to report to other boroughs.

Although the conditions in the East New York area were horrendous, Harlem was not much better. I reside on 132nd Street, which is the home of the Honorable David Paterson, who was serving as Governor on these dates. Despite, a Sanitation facility located only 3 blocks away, the city barely plowed our street.

In addition, to the Mayor refusing to order the restoral of time to those employees that were forced to stay home, I want to know why the city unions have failed to speak out or file grievances on behalf of their employees affected by the shutdown of services. While the unions have been quite outspoken against the Mayor in general on the handling of the storm, at no time have I heard them speaking up for their employees that actually suffered losses as a result of this storm. I want to know why they are strangely silent on this issue.

In the future, I would recommend that all city agencies set up contingency plans for employees in the event of any type of weather emergency, natural disaster, terrorist event, etc. Many employees work in other boroughs and in the case of emergency, where it is impossible to reach other boroughs, employees should be able to report to locations close to home, if the city is not going to close it services for the day. These temporary location assignments should be in place prior to any emergency. No employee should ever be forced to go without pay or give up their vacation time due to no fault of their own.

Respectfully Submitted

Diane Futrell 45 West 132nd Street, Apt 10F New York, N.Y. 10037

TWU LOCAL 100 WHITE PAPER: STITT RESIDENCE TO THE



Executive Summary

A blizzard post-mortem analysis in the New York Times on December 29 by Russ Buettner, Michael M. Grynbaum and Serge F. Kovaleski gives an authoritative account of what went wrong with both the City and the MTA's failed response to the Christmas Weekend blizzard of 2010. The analysis shows that the Mayor's top deputies in charge of storm response, DOT Commissioner Sadik-Khan and Sanitation Commissioner Doherty, made the wrong call on Christmas Day when, faced with a National Weather Service forecast of blizzard conditions and 11 to 16 inches of snowfall, they opted not to ask the Mayor to declare a citywide snow emergency.

The MTA did a similar thing. MTA Managers, meeting on Friday, December 24, declared a Plan 1 emergency, which is automatic anyway whenever the temperature goes below 30 Degrees F in any case. A high level meeting that day presented MTA Chairman Jay Walder with recommendations which included declaring a Plan 4 emergency because of the oncoming blizzard. He did not take the advice of senior managers and allowed a Plan 1 condition to remain in effect.

Mr. Walder apparently does not grasp that a transit response of this magnitude is similar to a military operation, with the equivalent of setting up a supply line which must be mobilized and supported.

The MTA took no significant action on Christmas Day, even after having received a direct notification from the Office of Emergency Management (Attachment 1). The MTA did not raise the emergency condition to Plan 4 until the 26th, well into the blizzard.

In the Times article, the MTA's practice of not modifying an emergency Plan declared on Friday until the following Monday is called a "quirk." Clearly this is an unacceptable explanation for the failure to promptly modify emergency plans when the MTA still had the flexibility to do so.

Once Plan 4 is not declared and a heavy snowfall begins, a domino effect ensues. Since reduced transit schedules (Sunday and holiday schedules) were in effect Saturday, Christmas Day, and the following Sunday, steps to shelter trains from snow in underground tunnels, to de-ice tracks, and make sure that signals and switches would be protected from weather-related damage would have been difficult to implement because of the reduced workforce then working. Additional key steps, such as preparing "rescue trains" including two diesel cars and four passenger cars – which would have enabled a more rapid response to stalled trains – could not have been taken with the smaller workforce then on duty. This meant that prompt action was critical on Friday or certainly by early Saturday. But because rail crews were not called in to protect trains and tracks, and bus maintainers were not called in to place chains on buses to allow them to operate in the snow, the system was seriously compromised. Bus lines throughout the outer boroughs were paralyzed. Train services in South Brooklyn were halted. These factors then resulted in transit workers not being able to report to assigned locations as the dominos kept on falling.

The MTA put out a press release on December 26 indicating that Plan 4 plans had been implemented "at the beginning of the weekend" when this was clearly not the case. This press release is examined in this White Paper and we point out the complete press whitewash it represents.

Certain steps to shelter trains and clear tracks were taken on Christmas Day – Plan 4 measures even though a Plan 4 emergency was not declared — at the direction of NYCT President Thomas Prendergast, but Local 100 believes they were too little and too late.

Subways personnel prepared de-icers, snow throwers and additional track sweepers for deployment against what could amount to 16 inches of snowfall and wind-driven drifts of several feet. Maintenance workers have been assigned to 12-hour shifts and managers called in from vacation to deal with the first significant snowfall of the season.

To insure that the fleet is available and ready for rush-hour service on Monday morning, the process of moving trains usually parked out doors to underground locations began on Saturday continued through today. In some locations trains that normally operate express have to run on local tracks instead.

Snow throwers are in place in vulnerable portions of the system such as the Bronx' Dyre Avenue Line, the Rockaways in Queens and the Sea Beach in Brooklyn. They will begin their work once accumulations have reached four inches or more. Additionally, there will be strong focus on keeping station staircases and outdoor platforms cleared and salted.

A portion of the subway fleet on lines that travel outdoors and all Staten Island Railway trains are operating with scraper shoes to help prevent ice build up on the electrified third rail which can cause an interruption of electrical power resulting in stalled trains. To power work equipment, diesel locomotives are fueled and ready for service.

LOCAL 100's Rebuttal

"Salt Truck crews are scheduled".

Many salt truck were left in bus depots un-manned

"NYC Transit is working with the Department of Sanitation to assist in deployment of snow removal forces to problem areas."

How then did the NYCT continue to send chain-less buses out blocking the street, if DOS knew it would have asked the NYCT to stop blocking roads

"Subways personnel prepared de-icers, snow throwers and additional track sweepers for deployment against what could amount to 16 inches of snowfall and wind-driven drifts of several feet".

But most were not sent out as by the time they were told to move they were snowed in, also the personnel who give out their assignments did not come in and no one gave assignments.

"To insure that the fleet is available and ready for rush-hour service on Monday morning, the process of moving trains usually parked out doors to underground locations began on Saturday continued through today."

It is clear this did not happen as lines which store their trains normally underground such as the 3 and the 4 lines ran and those which store outside and needed to be put underground according to Plan 4 did not run as the trains were frozen in the yards.

"Snow throwers are in place in vulnerable portions of the system such as the Bronx' Dyre Avenue Line, the Rockaways in Queens and the Sea Beach in Brooklyn".

New York Fails to Implement Plan 4; Other Northeastern Cities Had Adequate Plans

Based upon what can be clearly seen by the public and transit workers the MTA failed to plan for the full extent of the snow. While Boston's MBTA ran empty trains to keep tracks warm and free from the snow, the MTA left trains snow bound and frozen in outside yards. The MTA did not call in snow emergency workers until roads in the city were nearly impassable and the Transit System itself began to freeze to a halt, and the authority was therefore not ready to respond to a blizzard of this magnitude.

Based upon information TWU and other City Transit Union officials have received from MTA management the MTA's highest officer refused to implement snow emergency plans in order to save money at a meeting on Friday December 24th. While Boston and Philadelphia transit systems ran without significant incident, New York City's Transit System experienced a system wide failure that had lasting effects for almost a week.

The scope of the MTA's failure stemmed directly from cuts MTA Chairman Jay Walder ordered and from his instructing subordinates to avoid paying overtime. Supervisors and managers with operational experience know what they must do to prepare for and respond to a snowstorm. They were prevented from doing so because of the policies handed down from the top of their organization.

This resulted in buses clogging the streets because they were sent out unprepared and with inferior snow chains. Further, the MTA did not implement plans to prevent rails and third rail power sources from freezing, resulting in the temporary shutdown of all outside subway lines. MTA managers also failed to place emergency trains in strategic locations, as specified in their own plans, causing those trains that became stuck by frozen third rail power sources to be stranded without any hope of quick relief as no relief trains were in place to conduct those rescues.

Trains for service and clearing the rails were unavailable when they became snowbound and frozen. This resulted in no service on Monday morning as frozen trains remained stored in outside rail yards and third rails were covered in snow and ice.

This citywide transit failure not only prevented transit workers from getting to their workplaces but also curtailed operations by emergency workers throughout the city. Because these emergency workers could not get their vehicles through the streets, EMT's, Paramedics, Firemen and Police officers could not do their jobs. Ill-prepared NYCTA buses added to the problem by blocking city streets.

The chaos and loss of life in the snow storm were all caused by a refusal to act before the storm made it impossible to act. The actions the MTA needed to take are all part of their 300-page "Cold Weather Plan." These actions were not implemented by MTA managers because they were told not to go forward by their highest officer. All over the system, transit workers are being told by their bosses of being ordered not to implement Cold Weather Plans. A look at how New York City handled such crises in the past – as recently as the blizzards of February 10 and 24, 2010, will quickly illuminate the recent failure to act.

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The NYCTA was still on Plan 1 and none of the emergency measures required by the weather forecast could be implemented, nor could crews be called in for the emergency. If they had gone to Plan 4 all of this would have started. Yet by late Saturday night on Christmas Day, it was already too late to do much of what was needed to meet the storm and also too late to tell the crews that had left on Friday to report early on Sunday and Monday. The MTA would have had to have implemented Plan 4, a step which would have helped even as late as Saturday afternoon. An upgrading to Plan 4 would have kicked into operation the deployment of equipment, the deployment of personnel, including maintenance crews to place chains on buses, and the placement of rescue train and de-icer equipment. Yet the MTA should have called Plan 4 much earlier – on Friday – which would have protected service into Monday.

SUNDAY 12/26/10

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority didn't declare its highest-level Winter Operations Plan 4 in effect until Sunday at 11 AM after conference calls between managers and Jay Walder. By now, the storm was well underway, with several inches accumulated by the afternoon.

The teleconference revealed that managers knew that service would be lost on most of the subway lines which utilized open trenches "cuts" in Brooklyn and that other lines, such as the Dyre Ave. #5 Line, would be lost North of East 180th Street where the line runs on ground level. They knew the extent of their miscalculations and that there would be no service in most of New York on Monday morning.

As the snow fell and deepened the first subway delays began in the early afternoon, starting on the A train in the Rockaways, and soon spread across the system. An A train carrying 500 riders was trapped near the Grant Avenue station for some seven hours.

Despite the paralyzing weather, ill-prepared city buses continued to run. This left 1025 buses stranded on the streets with their passengers and drivers blocking the thoroughfares to emergency vehicles. MTA bus tow trucks were often trapped in bus depots or unable to get to all of the buses. As the system began to close down fewer and fewer workers were able to get to work, further complicating the problems.

Plan 4 Too Late

On Sunday afternoon, the agency tried to institute its Plan 4 protocols, but by then, it was too late. Many workers were unable to get to work. Supervisors who would have called in more workers could not get to work either. Strong winds and high snow drifts at outside subway routes were covered by snow and third rails were frozen with ice. This what stranded the A train near Aqueduct Station in Queens. Many passengers were trapped on subway trains without heat or lights as third rail power sources froze. There were no rescue trains in place and they had to assembled from frozen rolling stock in distant rail yards.

By waiting so long to call a Plan 4, the MTA was unable to protect service. Some of the actions that had to have begun before the snow and freezing weather were:

- 1) Transit bosses did not order locomotives into storage or to be kept moving so they would not get snowed in at rail yards.
- 2) Transit did not have work trains to apply anti-freeze to third rails. Most of the work trains were not in emergency positions underground or running constantly as Plan 1 does not call for those actions.
- 3) Did not stop buses from leaving depots if they did not have chains on their tires, so they wouldn't get stuck in snowdrifts.

In Brooklyn:

There is no service on the B1, B2, B4, B6, B9, B11, B13, B31, B35, B36, B44, B49, B61, B64, B67, B68, B69, B70 and B74. All other buses are running with delays and all limited buses are making local stops.

Bronx Express buses:

Manhattan-bound Bx19 bus service terminates at Fredrick Douglas Blvd and 145th Street. Bx12 select bus service makes local stops. All other buses are running with delays and all limited buses are making local stops.

In Manhattan:

M4 bus service has resumed service into the Cloisters. M9 bus service downtown is detoured to 14th Street.

M11 bus service is not entering Riverbank Park. M50 bus service is running on 57th Street between 5th Avenue and 11th Avenue in both directions. All other buses are running with delays and all limited buses are making local stops.

In Queens:

Massive detours in Buses:

- Q60 bus terminates at Archer Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard.
- Q7, Q21 and Q41 buses terminate at Cross bay Boulevard and Pitkin Avenue.
- Q40 bus terminates at Rockaway Boulevard.
- 166th Street-bound Q15 bus from Roosevelt Avenue makes left turns on Union Street, right turns on Northern Boulevard, left turns on 150th Street, then regular route.
- Main Street-bound Q15 bus from 150th Street, makes right turns on Northern Boulevard, left turns on Union Street, right turns on Roosevelt Avenue.
- LGA-bound Q48 bus from Roosevelt Avenue, makes right turn on 126th Street, left turn on Northern Boulevard, right turn on 108th Street, then regular route.
- Main Street-bound Q48 bus from 108th Street makes left turn on Northern Boulevard, right turn on 126th Street, left turn onto Roosevelt Avenue, then regular route.
- Queens Plaza-bound Q67 bus regular route to Borden Avenue makes right turn onto Vandam Street, left turn onto Hunters Point Avenue, then regular route.
- Metropolitan Avenue-bound Q67 bus continues on Hunters Point Avenue, right onto Vandam Street, left onto Borden Avenue, then regular route.
- 60th Lane and Cooper Avenue-bound Q39 bus from Jackson Ave at Queens Boulevard, makes left turn at Thompson Ave to Queens Boulevard, right at 58th Street, then regular route.
- Queens Plaza-bound Q39 bus to 58th Street and Queens Boulevard, makes left onto Thompson Avenue, left at Jackson Avenue to 21st Street, right on 21st St to Queens Plaza South, right onto Queens Plaza, then regular route.

Reports from the Field: Buses

On Tuesday Dec 28, 2010, TWU Safety Inspector Tommy McNally went to Brooklyn to survey the bus routes and help drivers who were stuck in snow. Here is his report:

When I arrived at Ulmer Park there were no buses going out of the depot on local routes. Only express buses were running. Flatbush had only one local route operating and it seems like 95% of all bus routes in Brooklyn are not operating. The B-3 route was still not plowed by 86 Street on Tuesday afternoon with numerous cars parked in the street. The B-1 and B-36 and B-64 routes were not passable. I drove around and observed at least 10 buses stuck in snow banks with many of them unattended. Some bus operators had to babysit buses stuck in snow for up to 18 hours. Some didn't mind as they were paid over 30 hours for a long days work. Some reasons why buses were stuck:

- 1. In the 1970's I remember that all buses would have chains on the tires when a blizzard hit. Approximately 20% of the buses out of Ulmer Park had chains on them. Over the years the TA got away from using chains because they have to pay some of the mechanics overtime for this. It takes a half hour for 2 mechanics to put chains on one bus. [Former TA Surface Vice President] Bill Pelletier told me that John Hein wanted to cut down on overtime so less and less chains were used. At Ulmer Park there were boxes of chains just sitting in the depot.
- 2 Tires. The Transit Authority rents tires from Goodyear Corp. Over the years these tires that have been ordered more and more for treadwear and not for traction. The result is less traction in the snow and more hydroplaning. The tires they now rent have less treads and the water has less chance to channel out. New Jersey Transit buses have much better tires made more for traction.
- 3. More attention should be paid to routes which have hills and routes that operate on narrow streets. One snow fighter truck for each depot does not cut it. Extra dispatchers should be on duty in the event of a blizzard to coordinate buses around stuck vehicles and to respond in a timely fashion to operator questions.

On Wed. Dec 29th, 2010, TWU Safety Rep. Tommy McNally went to the Flatbush Bus Depot to inquire about issues that came up during the blizzard. Here is his report from that day:

I spoke with a Superintendent about the lack of chains on the buses. She told me that when the storm first started it was the Mayor's call to declare a snow emergency. She said if a snow emergency had been declared then all buses would have been brought in and chains would have been put on them. She stated that once the buses were on the road it was too late. She also said that only 30 buses had chains on them on Monday but that was all that was needed because they were only running two bus lines, the B-41 and a partial B-46. I observed about 10% of the buses at Flatbush had chains on them on Wednesday. The Superintendent also stated that once blacktop was showing they can't run chains. I also noticed that many buses had a large amount of snow on the roof. This is a violation of Federal and State law, in that vehicles are supposed to be cleaned of snow before they go on the road. If a sheet of ice flies off the roof and crashes through someone's windshield behind them, the bus operator could be held responsible.

At Jackie Gleason in Sunset Park, they still had 15 buses stuck in the snow on Wednesday morning. Many buses did not have mud guards which is also a violation of the law. I saw a large amount of chains on racks just laying around the depot. About 10% of the buses I observed at Gleason had chains on them. The yard also had a lot of ice where bus operators have to walk.

Jamaica yard: 1 diesel sweeper/plow train

Fresh Pond Yard: 1 diesel sweeper/plow train

38st Yard: 6 diesels - de-icer, rider, Jet snowblower, (4 trains); and a main lines problem areas and emergency train.

Coney Island Yard: 7 diesels rider car, Jet snowblower, de-icer (4 trains); and D,Q,F,N lines sweep, de-ice, and emergency trains

Stillwell Yard: 1 diesel sweeper/plow train.

Pitkin Yard: 5 diesels, de-icer, rider, Jet snowblower, snowthrower, (4 trains). Also an A line sweep, de-ice, and emergency train.

East NY Yard: 1 diesel sweeper/plow train

Canarsie: 1 diesel sweeper/plow train

Rockaway Park: 4 diesels sweeper, de-icer, Jet snowblower, rider (3 trains). Also an A line sweep, de-ice and emergency train.

The smallest amount of personnel needed for this work is 78 crew members and 36 T.S.S's. Transit rules state that these trains must be manned for cold weather plans and a supervisor (T.S.S) must be present on each one. The shifts are 12 hour shifts and you do not leave until you are relieved.

There are also supposed to be 5 storm emergency trains as well, consisting of 2 T/O's, 2 track maintainers, 2 signal maintainers and a T.S.S on each.

It's a well known fact that the crew office only tries to crew up the bare minimum where needed. It's not uncommon for places like Linden Yard, Fresh Pond, etc., to not have a diesel train at all and the local manager uses a road train or an extra board person or switchman to sweep the yard. The problem with this is if the snow is too high it could cause a derailment. Work trains are equipped with plow blades.

Normally, 12 hours before a major storm, these trains would be manned and at the ready. At the first sign of snowfall they would all be out there. This would slow down service but the end result would be to avoid a service suspension.

In our opinion supervisors are not asking for the proper manpower because they are being forced to cut expenses at all costs. We spoke with one Superintendent, and asked him what's the problem as it doesn't come out of his budget anyway – totally different budget line is used. He said his boss still looks at it at a part of total expenses being requested.



OEM EMERGENCY WEATHER NOTIFICATION

TO:

ALL AGENCIES. DEPARTMENTS & COMMANDS

FROM:

OEM WATCH COMMAND

DATE / TIME:

December 25, 2010 @ 1620 hours

NOTIFICATION #: 2010-12-05

SUBJECT:

BLIZZARD WARNING

THE NATL WEATHER SVC IN UPTON HAS ISSUED A BLIZZARD WARNING WHICH IS IN EFFECT FROM 6 AM SUN TO 6 PM EST MONDAY.

HAZARDS: HEAVY SNOW & STRONG WINDS WITH CONSIDERABLE BLOWING & DRIFTING OF SNOW & **NEAR ZERO VISIBILITY AT TIMES.**

ACCUMULATIONS: 11 TO 16 INCHES WITH LOCALLY HIGHER AMOUNTS POSSIBLE IN HEAVIER SNOW BANDS WHOSE EXACT LOCATION IS STILL TOO EARLY TO DETERMINE. SNOW MAY MIX WITH OR CHANGE TO RAIN AND SLEET AT THE HEIGHT OF THE STORM LATE SUN NIGHT ACROSS EASTERN LONG ISLAND & POSSIBLY ACROSS COASTAL SOUTHEAST CT WHICH COULD HOLD DOWN AMOUNTS THERE, BUT ONLY AFTER SIGNIFICANT ACCUMULATIONS HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE.

IMPACTS: EXTREMELY DANGEROUS TRAVEL CONDITIONS DEVELOPING DUE TO SIGNIFICANT SNOW ACCUMULATIONS & STRONG WINDS CAUSING CONSIDERABLE BLOWING & DRIFTING OF SNOW. VISIBILITIES WILL BE NEAR ZERO AT TIMES, WITH WHITEOUT CONDITIONS EXPECTED. STRONG WINDS MAY ALSO DOWN SOME POWER LINES, TREE LIMBS, AND CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS.

TIMING: LIGHT SNOW WILL LIKELY BEGIN DURING SUNDAY MORNING, THEN BECOME HEAVY AT TIMES FROM LATE SUN AFTERNOON INTO MUCH OF SUN NIGHT, LIGHT SNOWS WILL LIKELY LINGER INTO MON MORNING & POSSIBLY INTO MON AFTERNOON.

WINDS: DURING THE HEIGHT OF THE STORM SUN NIGHT, NORTH WINDS WILL INCREASE TO 20 TO 35 MPH WITH GUSTS 40 TO 55 MPH, HIGHEST ACROSS CNTL & EASTERN LONG ISLAND.

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS:

A BLIZZARD WARNING MEANS SEVERE WINTER WEATHER CONDITIONS ARE EXPECTED OR OCCURRING. FALLING & BLOWING SNOW WITH STRONG WINDS & POOR VISIBILITIES ARE LIKELY. THIS WILL LEAD TO WHITEOUT CONDITIONS, MAKING TRAVEL EXTREMELY DANGEROUS. DO NOT TRAVEL. IF YOU MUST TRAVEL, HAVE A WINTER SURVIVAL KIT WITH YOU. IF YOU GET STRANDED STAY WITH YOUR VEHICLE.

OEM WATCH COMMAND WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THIS WEATHER EVENT. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR UPDATES WILL BE FORWARDED TO ALL AGENCIES BY OEM WATCH COMMAND AS NECESSARY. QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS NOTIFICATION SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO OEM WATCH COMMAND AT (718) 422-8700 1/4/2011

Press Release

trains are fitted with special third rail scraper shoes to reduce ice buildup on the third rail. All Metro-North electric trains are fitted with special third rail shoes that have holes in them so snow does not stick to them and build up, which interferes with the contact. Metro-North trains with pantographs keep moving all night clearing catenary wires on the New Haven Line. Patrol trains move through the territory, dropping off and picking up employees to clean/salt/sand station platforms.

The gears in railroad switches, the moving pieces of track that allow trains to change from one track to another, are treated with ethylene/propylene glycol to keep them it free of ice. Switch heaters, like the wiring in a heating pad, are turned on, and switches are kept moving throughout the night to help keep them from freezing.

In addition to its fleet of 102 snow-fighting trucks, MTA Bridges and Tunnels uses a system of technologically-advanced weather sensors to help keep motorists safe. All seven MTA bridges use small, rocket-like atmospheric weather sensors that deliver highly-accurate weather information, including wind velocity, wind direction, humidity and precipitation, via wireless communication. Other sensors are embedded in the roadway and on the snow-fighting trucks to monitor icing conditions on the roadways.

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in favor in opposition
Date:
(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: 47 A Cath dra Parkual
Address
I represent:
Address:
A Plans complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

	Appearance Card		
	speak on Int. Noin favor in oppositi		No
Name: T20 Address: 201-A	Y SETHERS VEST 139 ST		
I represent: SMAU	- BUGNESS DWI	UFIRS	/TOWING
Address:	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	/	
	THE COUNCIL CITY OF NEW Y	ORK	
Ř	Appearance Card		
	speak on Int. Noin favor in oppositi	ionį	No
	(PLEASE PRINT)	1	-
Name: DRINE	, tutrell		
Address: 45 W	152 nd St.		
I represent:		<u></u>	
Address:			
THE	THE COUNCIL CITY OF NEW Y	ORK	
">	Appearance Card		
	speak on Int. No in favor	on	
	Date: (PLEASE PRINT)		
Name: MicHEILE Address: 844 P	MARKISM if the Ave StE / GEO TECHNOL. chrologies, US	0350	
I represent: NVC	1 GEO TECHNOL	ogies	
Address: 420 te	chnologies. US	-	
.	this card and return to the Se		4

7	Appearance Card		
I intend to appear and	speak on Int. Noin favor in opposit	Res. I	No
	Date: <	G020	2011
Name: Maur	(PLEASE PRINT)	•	
Address:	- Secretary	V Y	Deal
I represent:	Localisa		
Address:	Brahmay N	101 Np	
	THE COUNCIL		
THE	CITY OF NEW Y	ORK	
	Appearance Card		,
I intend to appear and	speak on Int. No.	Res N	
	in favor 🔲 in oppositi		
# <i>1</i>	Date:		<u> </u>
Name: BRANK	(PLEASE PRINT)		
Address: 34/03	EastchPStCR 1	BA BU	ONX 10469
I represent: T. 4.	1,4		
Address:			
en e	THE COUNCIL	The second of th	र के रागभामा <u>ग्राह्म</u> ा
THE	CITY OF NEW Y	ORK	
/	Appearance Card		
I intend to appear and	speak on Int. No	Res. N	lo. <u> </u>
	in favor 🔲 in oppositi	on	
	Date:	1 an 2	22/1
Na Kara	(PLEASE PRINT)	سبرها	
Name: Address:	Harrington Vy	- 516	o rept
			
Address: 1700 F	Stopping Nu	XIAE.	
A.	this card and return to the Se	rgeant-at-A	rms d

` Appearance Card
I intend to appear and speak on Int. No: Res. No
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition
Date:
(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: FSU/E WYC//
Address:
I represent: Mayor 6
Address: Ist Makey
Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms
THE CÔUNCIL
/ //
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Appearance Card
I intend to appear and speak on Int. No Res. No
(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: GEIRNG TORNES
Address: 27-63 MORCENEPSL.
I represent: TNU-60016 106
Address:
Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms