



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1576-2000, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1576

Resolution calling upon the Metropolitan Transportation Authority New York City Transit to abandon its plans to adopt a new set of performance indicators until it has consulted with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority Inspector General, the New York City Transit Riders Council, the Comptroller, government legislative bodies, and invited greater public participation in the formulations of these indicators.

By Council Members Miller, Carrion, Freed, Henry, Koslowitz, Moskowitz, Perkins Quinn and the Public Advocate (Mr. Green); also Council Members Eldridge, Lasher, Leffler, Michels, O'Donovan and Rodriguez

Whereas, The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) New York City Transit (NYC Transit) announced this summer that "new measures" of agency performance "would soon replace current assessments;" and
Whereas, NYC Transit apparently was untroubled by the happy coincidence that the new measures would demonstrate a marked improvement in the on-time performance and regularity of buses and subways even though no widespread improvements in service were planned; and,
Whereas, Widespread skepticism greeted this announcement, prompting columnist Clyde Haberman of the New York Times to note on September 20, 2000 that New York City subway trains ran on schedule 80.7% of the time under the current measures but under the new performance measure the trains would be on time 89.5% and bus service reliability would "soar" from 56.4% to 76.7% while "nothing will change for the most important person of all - the rider;" and
Whereas, The New York Daily News in a September 16, 2000 editorial entitled "Transit Hocus-Pocus" denounced the change calling it "sleight of hand" to adopt new performance measures that changed the on-time performance of the No. 6 train on the crowded east-side subway from 69.5% to 92% "without any new service;" and
Whereas, According to the New York Times of October 4, 2000 in its article "When 3 Minutes Late Is on Time: New Standards Raise Fairness Questions" a 1994, report of the MTA Inspector General (IG) found New York City Transit's measure of on-time performance were "largely made up;" and
Whereas, In 1994 the IG warned that the misreporting of performance measures might cause the transit agency "to lose touch with the real level of service it is providing, creating an unwarranted sense of confidence;" and
Whereas, The negative reaction to the new standards is driven by the suspicion that New York City Transit is trying to relax standards because it faces special problems caused by dramatic increases in ridership; and
Whereas, The New York City Transit Rider Council in its August 2000 report "Timing is Everything: A Field Study of Subway Service Reliability" warns that "although ridership stands at a 30-year high, service levels do not;" and
Whereas, This study of the lapsed time between trains found that some lines were 100% reliable with trains arriving at scheduled frequencies, while other lines often missed scheduled intervals so that on some lines, riders might find themselves with long waits two days in a week; and
Whereas, Performance standards should reflect realistic goals including the impact of traffic congestion on bus schedules, or crowded platforms that delay riders leaving and entering subways and transit managers should be held accountable for strategies to address these issues; and
Whereas, Independent agencies including the New York City Transit Riders Council, the legislatively mandated representative of the ridership of the NYC Transit subway and buses, the Inspector General of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the Council and the Comptroller have a skilled staff including performance auditors that should be consulted by NYC Transit; and
Whereas, It was a series of studies and audits by the Riders Council, the IG and other transit riders groups that led to the decision by NYC Transit to adopt new performance standards, thus it behooves New York City Transit to include these agencies and others in the process of adopting new standards; now, therefore, be it
Resolved that the the Metropolitan Transportation Authority New York City Transit abandon its plans to adopt a new set of performance indicators until it has consulted with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority Inspector General, the New York City Transit Riders Council, the Comptroller, government legislative bodies, and invited greater public participation in the formulations of these indicators.

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