



## Metropolitan Transportation Authority

State of New York

October 27, 2017

Ms. Carmen Maldonado  
Audit Director  
The Office of the State Comptroller  
Division of State Government Accountability  
59 Maiden Lane, 21<sup>st</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10038

**Re: Final Report #2017-F-8 (Train On-Time Performance)**

Dear Ms. Maldonado:

This is in reply to your letter requesting a response to the above-referenced final report.

I have attached for your information the comments of Tim Mulligan, Acting President, MTA New York City Transit, which address this report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J Lhota" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Joseph J. Lhota

c: Veronique Hakim, MTA Managing Director  
Donna M. Evans, MTA Chief of Staff  
Michael J. Fucilli, Auditor General, MTA Audit Services

Attachments

# Memorandum



## New York City Transit

**Date** October 27, 2017

**To** Joseph Lhota, Chairman, MTA

**From** Tim Mulligan, Acting President, NYC Transit

**Re** New York State Comptroller Report #2017-F-08: Follow up of Report #2014-S-56 (Train On-Time Performance)

This information is being provided in response to the New York State Comptroller's audit report on terminal on-time performance. The purpose of the audit was to review the implementation of the recommendations contained in the prior OSC Audit Report #2014-S-56 issued August 12, 2015.

The report acknowledged the efforts made by Department of Subways to address the problems identified in their 2015 report, but noted that on-time performance continues to decline. While important for operational decisions, terminal on-time performance is a poor metric for representing the experience customers have in the subway system. The Subway Action Plan—to which the Comptroller's report makes only a passing reference—is aimed at addressing the causes of 79% of major incidents that cause delays in the subway system and at improving communications with customers.

As part of this effort, NYCT recently launched a performance dashboard that includes metrics that are more reflective of the customer experience, including the percent of scheduled trains delivered during peak hours, the causes of major incidents, and the added time customers spend waiting on the platform or on the train compared to scheduled wait or travel time. Several of these measures incorporate data based on actual customer usage. The dashboard is accessible to the public on our website.

Comptroller Recommendation 1: Identify the underlying causes of recurring train delays and develop corrective action plans to proactively address those causes. Such plans should address the effectiveness of workgroup efforts, to identify responsible parties, and require written feedback and measurable solutions.

NYCT Response: The NYCT has previously implemented policies and procedures in line with this recommendation.

The new online dashboard identifies the underlying causes of train delays, and the Action Plan initiatives are clearly linked to the main causes of delays, including signal, track, and power conditions. The dashboard is updated monthly and the public can track performance.

To address signal and track maintenance, the Subways Action Plan includes an expedited signal repair program targeting the most problematic signals, sealing water leaks, cleaning street grates to eliminate drain clogs, aggressively clean the entire underground subway network to remove debris and reduce fire hazards, and dispatching special teams to locations with the highest incident rate of track issues. These initiatives began in July 2017.

To improve car reliability, the Subways Action Plan expands the number of annual overhauls and prioritizes the inspection and repair of doors, which cause 40 percent of car breakdowns, and interior upgrades will be added to the regular maintenance cycle to improve customer experience. For in-service breakdowns, NYC Transit will dispatch repair teams at certain locations for quicker access to on-site repairs. These initiatives also began in July 2017.

Comptroller Recommendation #2: Require monthly feedback from Subways managers on the actions taken to address recurring categories of train delays.

NYCT Response: NYCT already complies with this recommendation. The Comptroller's Office was previously advised of the numerous meetings and calls where feedback is obtained from Subways managers regarding train terminal delays, and they were invited to participate. Department of Subways dispatched senior divisional representatives to specifically discuss the purpose and content of some of these activities with the Auditors. These specific efforts include monthly operational performance review meetings, weekly and bi-weekly service performance meetings, communications-based train control incident review task force meetings, and daily calls and monthly meetings related to delay causes.