

## MTA Board Remarks 072413

Good morning. I want to make several comments on matters before the Board today. We believe that returning the Board schedule to eleven meetings per year is the correct call. We recognize the investment of time that these meetings require, but also believe that a monthly meeting schedule, with a break in August is appropriate for an organization as vast and complex as the MTA. With meetings occurring at various times of the month, reporting on operating agency performance became less effective and this harmed the transparency of the organization. We welcome a return to a more regular meeting schedule.

As part of the proposal on meeting schedules, the MTA and its agencies would schedule President's forums in lieu of the Chairman's forums that were to be held under the current system of meetings. We applaud this effort, as our Councils have for many years held Presidents' forums in cooperation with the MTA's operating agencies. We have also become increasingly aware of the limitations of an in-person format for these meetings and would welcome the opportunity to discuss alternatives that could expand the reach of these events and make them more accessible to riders. We would be pleased to provide whatever assistance we can as the Presidents' forums are planned and held.

Finally, I want to thank the members of this Board for maintaining a focus on service, an effort that culminated in the service enhancements that were presented earlier this week. The enhancements aren't everything that the riders' need, but they are a start. In discussing these enhancements, the point has been made several times that the changes must be sustainable, and we agree. But a substantial part of ensuring that these changes are sustainable is ensuring that the MTA and its operating agencies have access to stable, reliable funding that allows them to meet existing and emerging rider demands. As I commented at the Finance Committee we continue to be concerned about the future funding of the MTA and the impact of capital needs and the associated debt issued to meet these needs on the long term financial health of the MTA. Now is the time to have a wide ranging conversation with our elected leaders and establish a rational funding system that can maintain the MTA through good times and bad.