



PCAC

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**Remarks of PCAC Executive Director William Henderson
On the NYC Subway Action Plan
Before the MTA Board, MTA Headquarters, 2 Broadway, New York, NY**

July 26, 2017

I'm Bill Henderson, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA. The PCAC congratulates Chairman Lhota and New York City Transit on yesterday's release of the NYC Subway Action Plan. The Plan addresses some of the most important causes of increasing subway delays. We trust that implementing this Plan will include an ongoing dialogue, but wish to address several issues this morning.

Fixing the subways will require increased material and human resources as well as their better deployment, and the 2,700 additional employees provided for in the Plan are critical to addressing demands on the system that grew rapidly even as staffing stagnated or declined. The Plan's reemphasis on training is valuable. We also believe that the MTA must face the need for effective supervision and management. The MTA and its agencies have lost a wealth of experience and institutional knowledge over the past decade and stagnation of salaries in the supervisory ranks led qualified individuals to decline opportunities to move into leadership positions. We hope that management addresses these issues.

We are enthusiastic about the emphasis on communication in the Plan. You don't have to go any further than the countdown clocks to understand that better information makes for a better passenger experience. Our group applauds moving away from generic prerecorded on-board excuses toward more detailed information about what is actually happening on the subways. Riders would rather have the best available information than for conductors and announcers to remain silent or retreat to the safety of generic announcements.

The PCAC also looks forward to the development of a dashboard that will make relevant and understandable performance information available to all. Unfortunately, we believe that the metrics that are currently in use are not up to this task. Terminal on-time performance doesn't tell most riders what they think it does, and, while it is a strong internal analytical tool, most riders have no idea what to conclude from wait assessment statistics. We believe that more relevant indicators, such as interim on-time performance and excess travel time, can provide riders with meaningful information if presented in a dynamic dashboard that allows these indicators to be tracked over time periods and services of the users' choosing.

Finally, I want to address the cost of these initiatives. Chairman Lhota said yesterday that implementing this plan will immediately require over \$800 million in funding. This is no surprise, as more effort generally requires more money. Addressing additional costs up front is preferable to the all too familiar practice of shifting resources from other areas in the organization, only to find that the donor areas soon experience problems of their own. The State and City are being asked to make a substantial investment of resources, but we must consider the impact of not implementing this plan in costs to the riders. The deterioration of the subway system imposes costs on our City and State every day in the form of foregone wages, lost family time, missed appointments and meetings, additional child care costs, and the frustration and stress that result from subway delays. We urge the City and State to consider these costs and provide the resources necessary to stabilize and modernize the subway system.