



NYPIRG's

Straphangers Campaign

2010 MTA Transit Service Cuts

the facts

In May 2009, riders beat back a "doomsday" package of MTA transit service cuts. These awful cuts would have affected hundreds of thousands around the city, whether subway or bus riders or people with disabilities who use paratransit. There was a price, however. Fares went up in June.

Well, shockingly, many of these cuts are BACK!

The MTA has proposed these steps in response to bad financial news. In December, the MTA was hit with a \$143 million cut by the state Legislature; a new transit tax was projected to perform \$100 million below expectations; and a court decision upheld a labor arbitration award (\$91 million).

In January and February the State told the MTA its 2010 deficit was another \$400 million larger, even if the agency adopted the proposed service cuts and ended student MetroCards. Here the culprit was lower-than-expected estimates of what dedicated transit taxes would raise. This included proceeds from a new MTA-dedicated payroll tax.

The Straphangers Campaign understands that many riders view the MTA's finances and performance with great skepticism. And even the new MTA Chairman - Jay Walder - vows to "take this place apart" to find new savings. But, in our view, these bad financial events are not the MTA's fault.

The Straphangers Campaign and the City Council have proposed blunting the service and paratransit cuts, using \$121 million in available federal stimulus funds and \$50 million in operating funds the MTA has budgeted to pay for capital projects. As well, a coalition of environmental and transportation groups in New York – indeed, groups across the United States – are pressing Washington for a new Jobs Bill containing money to help keep the subways, buses and commuter rails running.

Among the cuts being seriously considered are to:

- end part or all of the G, M, and W lines, with more transfers and longer trips;
- increase waits and crowding at midday/weekends on more than half the subway lines;
- end weekday service on 11 bus routes, weekend service on 22 routes and overnight service on 18 routes;
- restructure or replace in part bus service on 41 weekday routes, 32 weekend routes and 9 overnight routes;
- eliminate ten express bus routes, consolidate four more;
- phase-out student MetroCards, which get 600,000 kids to school; and
- reduce paratransit (Access-A-Ride) service by \$40 million.

In March 2010, riders, parents and students get their chance to have a say. The MTA will hold hearings in each borough, as well as in the suburbs. Information about the hearings can be found at <http://bit.ly/MTAhearinginfo>.

TAKE ACTION NOW!

- Tell the MTA what you think about the cuts - www.straphangers.org/testify.
- Sign the City Council/Straphangers Campaign petition - <http://bit.ly/transitpetition>.
- Speak at the upcoming MTA Public Hearings - <http://bit.ly/MTAhearinginfo>.
- Call the MTA at (212) 878-7483. Urge them to find alternate ways to stop these cuts.

More information on the service and Access-A-Ride cuts are available at <http://bit.ly/2010servicecuts> and <http://bit.ly/2010aarcuts>.

Straphangers Campaign Staff Attorney Gene Russianoff gave this statement during the public speaking period at the start of the MTA New York City Transit Committee meeting on January 25, 2010:

The Straphangers Campaign appreciates the MTA's efforts to limit the impact of proposed service cuts. But the cuts still stink.

By the MTA's own admissions, the reductions would mean longer waits, more crowding, slower trips and extra transfers for hundreds of thousands of riders.

For example, the MTA plan less generous "loading guidelines," which it says now provides enough seats for 100% of the riders outside the rush.

On seven lines (1, 7, A, F, J, L, M), the guidelines would be changed to provide fewer trains, resulting in 10 to 18 standees during weekdays, evenings and on weekends. The agency admits this will result in longer waits for 160,000 riders weekday middays, for 150,000 riders on Saturdays and 130,000 riders on Sundays.

The M train would also be eliminated at 25 stops in southern Brooklyn and Manhattan. Morning rush-hour service would be halved by eliminating 16 M train runs. The northern end of the M would be replaced by the V train. The M platforms are shorter than the V (480 feet instead of 600 feet), so the new line would be composed of a smaller number of cars. The MTA materials admit there would be an increase in crowding, but doesn't describe how much.

As for bus service, go through your own 150-page list of cuts. Thousands of the MTA's bus riders will be forced to walk many minutes to a different bus line, make extra transfers, suffer longer waits or have to go out of their way to get to their destination. Take, for example, the S60 that goes to the top of Staten Island's Grymes Hill. Your accompanying text says that it will be eliminated and "customers would be required to walk 12 to 20 minutes" to a different route. It's worse in Eastern Queens where riders on the proposed-to-be-eliminated Q79 "would experience a travel time increase of 30 minutes..."

There is a way out. You can use the authority Congress gave you to spend 10% of federal stimulus funds to keep the subways and buses running. If you don't want to increase the misery of the riding public, you can act in their interest.

NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign
9 Murray Street, Floor 3
New York, NY 10007
212.349.6460 or straphangers@nypirg.org
www.straphangers.org



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

State of New York

March 1, 2010

Dear MTA Customer:

My fellow MTA Board Members and I would like to thank you for attending this public hearing. Your being here indicates how important the MTA's services are to you. We also understand that any change in service, no matter how lightly used, will impact someone's life.

Unfortunately the MTA has been hit hard by this economy, and like you, we cannot spend more than comes in. The taxes that support the MTA's services have dropped significantly. In December, we faced a \$383 million gap. Since then, the situation has only gotten worse. A new \$378 million gap has developed, again fueled by reductions in NYS tax revenues. All told, our projected revenues have declined by more than \$750 million since July.

With this rapidly changing financial picture, we have had no choice but to take difficult steps to reduce the MTA's expenses. It is our responsibility to show that we are spending every dollar wisely. We've looked first to reduce our administrative costs in a way that will not impact our customers and will eliminate over 600 administrative positions. We will also be reducing overtime, consolidating redundant functions and working with our suppliers to lower costs.

However, given that 90% of the MTA's budget goes to providing service, a hole of this size cannot be closed without making changes to service. We have provided our best thoughts on how to reduce our service, but we want to hear your suggestions for ways to accomplish the objective.

The phasing out of subway/local bus student discount program has received a great deal of attention. Students have ridden for free for many years, and we would like to continue that policy. Some have compared the MTA to the yellow school buses that carry children to school in cities and towns all across the state. Students do not pay to board the yellow school bus, but that service is paid for with state and local funding. Last year the State withdrew its support for the free school fare.

Even if these service reductions and student fare and toll changes are adopted, the MTA will still be struggling to close our budget gap. We will continue to work hard to find savings and to make sure that we spend every fare, toll and tax dollar wisely.

We appreciate the time you are taking out of your day to share your thoughts with us. All of your comments and emails will be provided to the MTA Board and agency staff for consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jay H. Walder". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

The agencies of the MTA

MTA New York City Transit
MTA Long Island Rail Road

MTA Long Island Bus
MTA Metro-North Railroad

MTA Bridges and Tunnels
MTA Capital Construction

MTA Bus Company

