



NEWS

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QUARTERLY REPORT TO FEDERAL COURT SPECIAL MASTER SHOWS MTA'S METRO BUS SERVICE IS IMPROVING

MTA has submitted to the Special Master overseeing implementation of the Federal Consent Decree to improve Metro Bus service a quarterly report that charts improvements in Metro Bus service. It shows that the MTA is making dramatic improvements and is meeting its Consent Decree targets to reduce overcrowding.

"Anyone who thinks the MTA is not living up to the Consent Decree should read this report," said MTA Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky. "The compliance report includes statistical tables showing how the MTA has reduced overcrowding, retired overage buses and improved service quality."

The report for a three month period ending August 31, 1999, shows "dramatic reductions" in the number of times buses were recorded as overcrowded. On the 20 busiest lines, buses were in compliance with load factors, having no more than 15 people standing on the bus, 99.25 percent of the time. From July through September of this year there were only 58 instances of overcrowding in 7,725 fixed 20-minute time periods monitored. Using the 20-minute sliding window method, load factors were exceeded only 191 times on these lines.

"The report also shows that schedule adherence has significantly improved this year and better on-time performance is primarily a result of fewer buses running ahead of schedule," said Lipsky. "We've also instituted three "tiger teams" of transit operations supervisors to monitor service to ensure on-time performance of our buses."

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Bus purchases and deliveries were generally on schedule during the reporting period. As of September 1, 1999, 455 new buses and 175 converted ethanol buses had been placed into service. Although the bus procurement program is only 22 percent complete, MTA operating divisions now have adequate operational spares to back up daily service requirements, the report said.

Lipsky noted that the MTA Board of Directors recently approved the purchase of 297 buses in addition to the 2,095 buses the authority already had planned to purchase by 2004. MTA will add 160 buses into service by the end of this year and is working toward placing 88 additional buses into service by the federal court's new deadline of Jan. 3, 2000. MTA also is trying to find the \$97 million needed to operate the extra 88 buses for the next five years.

The quarterly report shows that buses that pull out late from the operating divisions and trip cancellations due to a lack of a bus operator were reduced to a point that only 50 trips out of 65,346 pullouts in August were affected. Missed trips also have been all but eliminated. During August, only 14 bus trips were missed.

Miles between mechanical failures that cause service disruptions of 10 minutes or more has improved dramatically over last year, increasing from 3,987 miles in August 1998 to 5,130 miles between road calls in August 1999. The more miles the buses travel without experiencing a road call means more reliable service for MTA bus patrons.

"We can still do better," said Lipsky, "But we are proud of all we have accomplished so far in improving Metro Bus service."

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