

## **Quarterly Report to Special Master Shows Metro Bus Service is Improving**

(October 12) The MTA has submitted to the Special Master overseeing implementation of the Consent Decree a quarterly report charting improvements in Metro Bus service that show the MTA is meeting its Consent Decree targets.

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

The report for the period ending Aug. 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 99.25 percent of the time, with only 58 instances of overcrowding in 7,725 fixed 20-minute time periods. Using the 20-minute sliding window method, load factors were exceeded only 191 times on these lines.

Schedule adherence also has shown significant improvement thus far this year, according to the report. Better on-time performance is primarily a result of fewer buses running ahead of schedule. Three "tiger teams" of transit operations supervisors are monitoring service to ensure on-time performance.

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

Lipsky noted that the MTA Board recently approved the purchase of 297 buses in addition to the 2,095 the agency already had planned to buy by 2004. The MTA will add 160 buses into service by the end of 1999 and is working toward placing 88 of the additional buses into service by the federal court's new deadline of Jan. 3, 2000. The agency 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 outlates and trip cancellations due to 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 trips were missed.

Although on-time performance has improved greatly, the number of miles between road calls remains a problem. The current average stands at about 1,200 miles between calls, with 2,000 miles between calls as the target. The most frequent cause of road calls - engine failures - has decreased, while the number of unexplained road calls has increased. The MTA will continue to look for the source of these problems.

"We can still do better," Lipsky said, "but we are proud of all we have accomplished so far."

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