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## **Customer Complaints Dip to All-Time Low with Clean, Dependable Buses**

By GARY WOSK

(Sept. 20, 2001) The deployment of over 400 new buses and the introduction of Metro Rapid bus service in FY 2001 were among factors that contributed to the low rate of customer complaints received by the MTA in July.

The ratio of customer complaints declined from 6.37 complaints per 100,000 daily boardings in July 1997 to 3.15 complaints per 100,000 daily boardings in July 2001.

That's a new record and perhaps the strongest indicator yet -- among others noted in an FY 2001 performance review -- that the Metro System continues to improve.

"From a technical standpoint, it seems that the service we're putting out is getting more dependable," said Transit Operations Chief Richard Hunt. "We're more reliable, more comfortable and more passengers are recognizing this because our complaints are down significantly. We're also safer as well as more punctual.

The appearance of Metro Buses, a priority since a cleanliness program was initiated in September 1999, also has shown marked improvement.

### **Cleanliness has improved**

In September 1999, on a scale of 1 to 10 for bus cleanliness, the operating divisions averaged between 4 and 5. In April, May and June 2001, that rating improved to a 7.4. Criteria included the condition of dashboards, windows, graffiti control, bumpers, the driver's area and the step well.

Significant progress also was reported in such categories as fewer cancelled bus runs and a higher percentage of buses pulling out from divisions on time, both of which impact the number of customer complaints.

In the first quarter of FY 1999, more than 1,700 bus runs were cancelled, compared to zero in the last quarter of FY 2001.

The percentage of buses leaving bus divisions on time has increased from 94.19% in August 1997 to 99.53% in June 2001.

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