



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

State of New York

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EXECUTIVE CORRESPONDENCE

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OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER
THOMAS P. DiNAPOLI
COMPTROLLER

December 3, 2018

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Honorable Thomas P. DiNapoli ✓
Office of the State Comptroller
59 Maiden Lane, 31st Floor
New York, NY 10038

RE: Response to Report #2017-S-37 – Long Island Rail Road: Management of Unexpected Delays and Events During Winter 2017-18

Gentlemen:

On August 7, 2018, the Office of the State Comptroller issued the above referenced audit report. As required by Section 170 of the Executive Law, I am providing you with the attached response which addresses the recommendations contained in the report.

A copy of the final audit report is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Fernando Ferrer

c: Helene Fromm, MTA Chief of Staff
Michael J. Fucilli, Auditor General, MTA Audit Services

Attachment

The agencies of the MTA

MTA New York City Transit
MTA Long Island Rail Road

MTA Metro-North Railroad
MTA Bridges and Tunnels

MTA Capital Construction
MTA Bus Company



Long Island Rail Road

November 27, 2018

Mr. Fernando Ferrer
Acting Chairman
Metropolitan Transportation Authority
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004

**RE: MTA Long Island Rail Road
Management of Unexpected Delays / Events During Winter 2017 - 2018
Report 2017-S-37**

Dear Acting Chairman Ferrer:

As required by Section 170 of the Executive Law, detailed below are the updated actions that have been taken to address the recommendations contained in the above-referenced audit report. The report contained six specific recommendations, and as detailed in our response dated July 23, 2018 and again in this letter, the LIRR already has made progress implementing them.

Providing customers and employees with the most accurate and useful real-time information is a centerpiece of the LIRR Forward initiative. The LIRR recognizes that achieving this goal will require the adoption of additional best practices and better use of technology available to us. Consequently, I have directed my senior staff to go beyond implementing the specifically defined actions below, and to embark on a more comprehensive review of our incident response structure and customer communication process. We are reviewing both how we gather information about service disruptions and how we communicate that information to the public. The "Customer-First" principle is at the core of LIRR Forward and everything we do at the LIRR. It is my expectation that this effort will produce tangible benefits to our customers and allow them to make more informed decisions about their travel.

Below is a status report on the six specific recommendations included in your report.

Recommendation No. 1

- Ensure individuals who are designated to fulfill roles of the Incident Response Structure for the Operations Center are documented in the event logs.

LIRR Implementation Status: *Implemented and Ongoing*

Effective August 2018, the LIRR implemented a new coding system to classify events by levels based on the incident's anticipated impact to service (e.g., levels D1 – D4 with D4 being the most severe). During major incidents classified as levels D3 or D4, when the Incident Response Structure (IRS) is necessary, the Movement Bureau has begun to document the name of the employee assuming the Incident Commander position. In addition, Management will launch a pilot initiative over the next six (6) months to one (1) year to evaluate the feasibility of documenting the additional IRS roles assumed by personnel during an incident. Results will be evaluated to determine if the initiative can be sustained permanently.

Recommendation No. 2

- Review the nature of incidents that have occurred in at least the past year, and ensure that plans are developed to cover the major types of incidents that have had a significant impact on passengers. Develop a structured incident management flowchart to cover incident management protocols.

LIRR Implementation Status: *Previously Implemented and Ongoing*

As indicated in our July 23, 2018 response, the LIRR already reviews the nature of incidents that occurred during the previous year and maintains structured incident management protocols by expanding its Operational Incident Guidelines for various incidents accordingly. For example, the guidelines were created in 2009 consisting of approximately 20 sections reflecting various incident protocols. Today, the Guidelines consist of 35 such sections, including newly added protocols for Yard Derailments and Trespasser Strikes arising from this audit. Management will, however, create a flowchart(s) reflecting incident management protocols based on the impact to service, as applicable by 2Q 2019.

Recommendation No. 3

- Document which plan or protocol is implemented for each incident and whether an Incident Commander is appointed.

LIRR Implementation Status: *Previously Implemented*

See response to Recommendation #2 related to the Guidelines. During an incident, personnel respond by drawing on their knowledge and training in and as documented by the applicable section of the Guidelines. They then focus on responding to the incident's impact on service by implementing plans / protocols to accommodate customers based on the severity level. As of October 2018, Management ensures that plans/protocols implemented to address affected service are documented in the daily log and/or within the manager incident reports on a regular basis, as needed. (e.g., AM/PM cancel/combo plans; cancellations; cross-honoring; AM/PM diversion plans).

Recommendation No. 4

- Develop a process to manage bus service during an incident, including notifications to customers of the availability of bus service. Ensure the use of bus service is documented (e.g., that they arrived, and when they are assigned to a particular location or service).

LIRR Implementation Status: *Previously Implemented*

LIRR's Stations Department has hired and fully trained five (5) managers to manage bus service. The managers are physically located in the Movement Bureau (MB) to provide hands on coverage during emergency events. More specifically, they are responsible for calling out buses and recording pertinent information such as:

- Number of buses ordered;
- Number of buses that arrive;
- Release times;
- Use of buses (i.e., used to transport customers or as standby).

Further, Stations field personnel have begun recording bus numbers to verify that buses ordered arrived in order to verify invoices for payment. Field personnel will also direct which routes the buses are required to take. If field personnel are unavailable, the Stations Manager in the MB will coordinate the bus routes directly with the bus company dispatcher. Stations will also communicate with bus company dispatchers to locate buses that were ordered but did not arrive. Conductors on-board an affected train and Transportation Managers who are dispatched to the disruption site can also provide bus arrival verification.

Stations continues to work with MTA IT to determine the feasibility of an application that will allow Stations to record, track and report bus activity electronically.

The LIRR Public Information Office (PIO) currently notifies customers of the availability of bus service as soon it receives the information to relay. The PIO will also encourage customers to take alternate branches, as applicable (e.g., if the number of buses available will not accommodate the number of customers affected by a major incident).

Recommendation No. 5

- Develop standard alternative service plans for each main line and branch, to be implemented should service be suspended (including alternative train or bus support). Provide information regarding where passengers can reasonably go in the event service is interrupted.

LIRR Implementation Status: *Previously Implemented*

As indicated in our July 23, 2018 response, the LIRR agreed and had identified this issue for implementation prior to the OSC audit. In addition to information already included in the LIRR's Train Movement Operational Incident Guidelines (Guidelines), a "PM Commission Hour Service Response Guide" has also been added as well as two sections for Trespasser Strikes and Yard Derailments.

The LIRR strives to provide timely and proper information to its customers as this is critical to the customer experience and will continue to review its Operating Guidelines to include more specific information regarding alternative train or bus support, including where customers may go in the event of a service disruption.

Additionally, when service is suspended / interrupted, the PIO will encourage customers to consider taking alternate branches.

Recommendation No. 6

- Ensure customers are notified in a timely and continuous manner throughout an incident.

LIRR Implementation Status: *Implemented and Ongoing*

By 4Q 2018, the LIRR will have installed and implemented GPS on its M3, M7 and diesel fleets (M9's will already include this functionality) allowing for the tracking of trains in real time. Also, a customer-facing website is being developed to allow customers to see their train location in real-time.

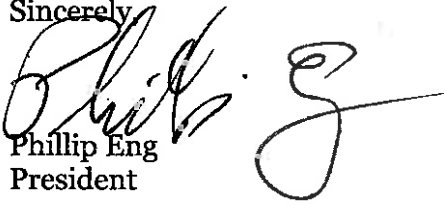
The LIRR is creating internal dashboards fueled by GPS data from the trains that will provide employees increased situational awareness during incidents. From there, LIRR will start to develop protocols for specific incidents with communication protocols and manuals updated, as needed.

Professional training services of the LIRR Public Information Office (PIO) and Ushers including, but not limited to providing clear, more concise and customer focused announcements has been successfully completed.

Mr. Fernando Ferrer
November 27, 2018
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The above noted items are part of the LIRR's formal and approved plan which we believe addresses the recommendations of the New York State Comptroller's Office. Please contact me should you require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phillip Eng", with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Phillip Eng
President