



The MTA's new subway cuts will hurt passengers

MORE THAN 40% OF SUBWAY RIDERS SURVEYED SAID THEY are waiting too long for trains. Yet, the MTA just announced plans to cut service on Mondays and Fridays, when ridership generally is lighter, on seven lines: the No. 1, No. 6, No. 7, E, F, Q and L.

For weekday riders, that will mean fewer trains on the rails, longer waits on the platforms, and more crowding on both.

Is this good customer service? No.

Is this going to encourage people to ride more often on weekdays? No.

Those are just some of the reasons why TWU Local 100 today is launching a petition urging the MTA to cancel service cuts:



<https://change.org/p/stop-service-cuts>

(The MTA says it will add weekend service on the G, J, and M lines but that won't help weekday riders.)

The service changes were announced with little detail at the NYC Transit Committee meeting on Dec. 19. NYC Transit President Rich Davey said the scheduled gaps between trains on Mondays and Fridays will increase between "3 and 30 seconds." That night, however, the agency gave the union a list of changes that included increasing the scheduled gaps between L trains by 60 seconds. Headways would rise from 3 minutes to 4 minutes during the 8 a.m. rush hour.

Instead of running 20 trains during that hour, the MTA will run just 15 on the L line. If that's when you commute, you're getting hit with a 25% service cut.

Davey said management would bring a more detailed reduced Monday/Friday service plan to the MTA board in January. But management isn't seeking approval or authorization for public hearings. The changes would be implemented in



**BE OUR GUEST
BY RICHARD DAVIS**

June.

They are completely unnecessary. Even Davey struggled to justify them. The MTA annual operating budget is more than \$19 billion. These cuts will save a relatively paltry \$1.5 million, he said.

"This is not about budget savings at all," Davey said. "This is not about saving money."

The MTA is just giving riders what they want, Davey said, matching supply with demand.

"The changes reflect what our customers are asking for," he said.

That's ridiculous, of course. Riders do not want fewer trains, longer waits, and more crowding — especially in a pandemic.

We know that ridership is down on Mondays and Fridays in part because the MTA's higher-income white-collar commuters, those with offices in Midtown and lower Manhattan, are staying home in the suburbs on those days. But a lot of people are still coming to work and riding. Ridership is averaging 3.4 million on Mondays and 3.6 million on Fridays.

Among those still coming to work those days are riders who didn't have the luxury of staying home during the pandemic, and still don't have that luxury.

Nurses, grocery store staff, warehouse employees, social workers, cooks. The men and women who mop the hospital floors, take care of the elderly, fill prescriptions, prepare meals,

stock shelves. Working-class, front-line, essential workers — many of whom are immigrants and people of color.

Ridership may be well below pandemic levels at most Manhattan stations. But ridership is stronger in the outer boroughs, where many of our blue-collar and lower-income riders live.

In fact, ridership is between 70% and 80% of pre-pandemic levels at more than 50 stations in the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn. These include stations on the No. 6 line in South Bronx neighborhoods like Hunts Point, Longwood, and Mott Haven, and along the No. 7 line in Queens in neighborhoods like Jackson Heights, Corona, and Elmhurst. Ridership in a lot of blue-collar neighborhoods is in the 60% to 80% range compared to pre-pandemic.

So, the executive with the corner office gets to work at home, but the person who cleans that office gets to stand on the platform longer on the way to work.

The last thing the MTA should be doing right now is make it harder for riders to get to work.

Gov. Hochul and Mayor Adams just released a report on how to revitalize our business districts. It says the MTA should maintain peak-hour service and increase service during off-peak hours.

"We must make it easier for New Yorkers to get to work," the report declares.

We believe these service cuts are just the start. If MTA management gets away with them, without even holding public hearings, then more dramatic and more painful service cuts will follow. That's bad for riders and workers. We see a direct correlation between rider anger and frustration and assaults and abuse inflicted on transit workers. They see our uniform and take everything out on us. For us, that's reason enough not to impose service cuts, but there are plenty of other reasons too.

**Davis is President of
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