

New York City Transit Riders Council

PRESS RELEASE #306

July 14, 1999

11:00 AM

STUDY FINDS SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS WITH SUBWAY SERVICE DIVERSION NOTICES

New York City Transit fails miserably when posting service diversion notices at subway stations, according to a survey of stations conducted by the New York City Transit Riders Council (TRC). The survey is one part of the Council's report "NOT Going Your Way," a study of the notices New York City Transit uses to alert riders to planned service diversions. The Council released the report today.

The TRC found problems at 42 of the 44 stations it surveyed. The most common problem was missing notices. Almost 90% of the fare control areas surveyed were missing at least one notice, and nearly 30% of the fare control areas had no notices. The Council also found that New York City Transit does not routinely post notices at platforms, even though riders would benefit greatly from having the notices at the platforms. Many notices were also posted at stations where they did not belong; one-quarter of the fare control areas contained a mistakenly posted notice.

The Council also found problems with the content of the notices that were posted the weekend of the survey (Friday, April 23rd, to Sunday, April 25th). Some of the notices were inaccurate, and others were confusing or misleading. Many did not give riders the best alternative travel routes. People were often advised to ride well out of their way when they could have more easily walked or used their MetroCard to transfer to another bus or subway line.

"The genesis for the project was the many complaints we have received from the public about notices," said Council Chairman Andrew Albert. "We expected to find problems, but were dismayed to learn that they were so widespread. When subway service is not running by its usual route, riders need timely and clear information about the diversion and what they should do. They're obviously not getting the information they need and probably feel bewildered whenever there's a diversion."

The report contains several recommendations on how New York City Transit can improve, including:

- Using subway station field managers to ensure that notices are properly posted at stations;
- Posting notices at platforms as well as at fare control areas;

- Color-coding notices by subway line to make it easier for customers to distinguish among notices;
- Making use of MetroCard's flexibility to provide riders with better alternative travel routes;
- Instituting a customer awareness campaign to educate customers to watch for notices as they enter a station.

Copies of the full report are available upon request.

The TRC was created in 1981 by the New York State Legislature to represent the interests of subway and bus riders. The 15 volunteer members are appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of the Mayor (5) the Public Advocate (5), and the Borough Presidents (1 each).