



RECORD OF CONCURRENCE AND APPROVAL

PRESIDENT'S STAFF

SUBJECT: Reduction or Elimination of Station Booth Service Throughout the Subway System, including Elimination of Station Booth Lunch Relief	DUE DATE February 9, 2023	PRESIDENTIAL LOG NUMBER
DATE ROUTED February 6, 2023	ORIGINATOR OF DOCUMENT James Compton (646) 252-5120	CONTACT PERSON/TELEPHONE NUMBER Demetrius Crichlow (646) 252-5860

EXPLANATION:

This is a request for Board approval of the reduction or elimination of station booth service, including the elimination of station booth lunch relief.

ROUTING SEQUENCE	APPROVING AUTHORITY/SIGNATURE	DATE	COMMENTS
8	PRESIDENT		
7	CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER		
6	SVP SUBWAYS		
	SVP BUSES		
	SVP CAPITAL PROG. MGMT		
5	CHIEF CUSTOMER OFFICER		
4	VP GENERAL COUNSEL		
	ASSISTANT AUDITOR GENERAL		
	VP LABOR RELATIONS		
	ACTING VP SYSTEM SAFETY		
	DEPUTY AUDITOR GENERAL		
	CHIEF/TRANSIT BUREAU		
	CONTROLLER		
2	DIRECTOR, GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITY REL.		
	VP HUMAN RESOURCES		
	VP MATERIEL		
3	DIRECTOR, OMB		
1	CHIEF, OPERATIONS PLANNING		
	CHIEF, REVENUE		
	VP SUPPLY LOGISTICS		
	VP TECHNOLOGY & INFORMATION SERVICES		

Reduction or Elimination of Station Booth Service, including Elimination of Station Booth Lunch Relief



James Compton, EVP, Customer Environment & Facilities

Service Issue

Currently, each subway station or station complex (also referred to herein as a station) has at least one booth that is staffed 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.¹ Certain stations have one or more additional booths that are staffed full or part-time.

Historically, services provided from station booths included the sale or replenishment of fare media, but that service was discontinued during the COVID pandemic and will not be resumed. As a result, services currently provided from booths by station agents are limited to providing customer information, such as about how to use the transit system, and to provide assistance to customers who are not able to use the turnstiles or the AutoGate. Presently, Station Agents are limited in the services they can provide, because they can only provide services from booths.

Board authorization is sought for the reduction or elimination of station booth service throughout the subway system, including the elimination of station booth lunch relief. The services that are currently provided from station booths would instead be provided by station agents working in the station but outside of the booths. Further, moving station agents outside of the booths would enable them to provide a broader range of customer service functions throughout the station, such as providing assistance at turnstiles, at MetroCard and OMNY vending machines, and on platforms. Station agents would return to the fare array area as necessary to provide assistance to customers who are not able to use the turnstiles or the AutoGate.

Each station in which booth service is reduced or eliminated shall continue to be staffed by a minimum of one station agent per day 24 hours per day, 7 days per week (1), except during the period of the station agent's lunch break. The reduction or elimination of station booth service would include the elimination of the practice of providing a "lunch relief" station agent. Information would be provided in stations about obtaining assistance during that period, such as by using a Help Point intercom.

Pursuant to New York Public Authorities Law Section 1205(5)(a), a public hearing was held on Wednesday, February 1, 2023, to gather public input on this proposal. A transcript of the speakers' comments as well as the written comments received on or before the hearing date have been provided to all Board members. A summary of the comments and NYC Transit responses is attached to this staff summary.

Recommendation

Authorize the reduction or elimination of station booth service, including the elimination of station booth lunch relief.

Budget Impact

The elimination of lunch relief is expected to reduce costs by \$10.5 million annually, partially offset by a cost increase of \$5.1 million from changes to Station Agent pay rates.

Proposed Implementation Date

Early 2023.

¹ Five stations on the 5 Line in the Bronx (Eastchester-Dyre Av, Baychester Av, Gun Hill Rd, Pelham Pkwy, and Morris Park) are currently staffed 16 hours per day, and will continue to be staffed on that schedule.

Staff Summary



Subject:	Reduction or Elimination of Station Booth Service Throughout the Subway System, including Elimination of Station Booth Lunch Relief.
Department	Subways
Department Head Name	Demetrius Crichlow
Department Head Signature	
Project Manager Name	James Compton

Date:	February 6, 2023
Vendor Name	N/A
Contract Number	N/A
Contract Manager Name	N/A
Table of Contents Ref #	N/A

Board Action					
Order	To	Date	Approval	Info	Other
1	President		X		
2	Chairman		X		
3	NYCT Comm		X		
4	Board		X		

Internal Approvals			
Order	Approval	Order	Approval
8	President	4	VP, General Counsel
7	Chief Operating Officer	3	Director OMB
6	SVP, Subways	2	Director, GCR
5	Chief, St & Cust Exp	1	Chief, OP

Purpose

To obtain Board authorization for the reduction or elimination of station booth service throughout the subway system, including the elimination of station booth lunch relief.

Currently, each subway station or station complex (also referred to herein as a station) has at least one booth that is staffed 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.¹ Certain stations have one or more additional booths that are staffed full or part-time.

Historically, services provided from station booths included the sale or replenishment of fare media, but that service was discontinued during the COVID pandemic and will not be resumed. As a result, services currently provided from booths by station agents are limited to providing customer information, such as about how to use the transit system, and to provide assistance to customers who are not able to use the turnstiles or the AutoGate. Presently, Station Agents are limited in the services they can provide, because they can only provide services from booths.

Board authorization is sought for the reduction or elimination of station booth service throughout the subway system, including the elimination of station booth lunch relief. The services that are currently provided from station booths would instead be provided by station agents working in the station but outside of the booths. Further, moving station agents outside of the booths would enable them to provide a broader range of customer service functions throughout the station, such as providing assistance at turnstiles, at MetroCard and OMNY vending machines, and on platforms. Station agents would return to the fare array area as necessary to provide assistance to customers who are not able to use the turnstiles or the AutoGate.

¹ Five stations on the 5 Line in the Bronx (Eastchester-Dyre Av, Baychester Av, Gun Hill Rd, Pelham Pkwy, and Morris Park) are currently staffed 16 hours per day, and will continue to be staffed on that schedule.

Staff Summary



Each station in which booth service is reduced or eliminated shall continue to be staffed by a minimum of one station agent per day 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, except during the period of the station agent's lunch break. The proposal to reduce or eliminate of station booth service includes the elimination of the practice of providing a "lunch relief" station agent. Information would be provided in stations about obtaining assistance during that period, such as by using a Help Point intercom.

Pursuant to New York Public Authorities Law Section 1205(5)(a), a public hearing was held on Wednesday, February 1, 2023, to gather public input on this proposal. A transcript of the speakers' comments as well as the written comments received on or before the hearing date have been provided to all Board members. A summary of the comments and NYC Transit responses is attached to this staff summary.

Recommendation

Authorize the reduction or elimination of station booth service, including the elimination of station booth lunch relief.

Alternatives

1. No change. Not approving the proposal will prevent station agents from providing a comprehensive range of customer services that can only be delivered outside of the booths.
2. Maintain 24/7 station agent booth service throughout the system and add another station agent at each station to provide service outside of the booths. This would approximately double the station agent staffing costs with little customer benefit.
3. Reduce or eliminate station booth service throughout the subway system, but without a commitment to provide a minimum of one station agent at each station outside of the booths on a 24/7 (except lunch relief) basis. This would be less costly than the proposal being advanced but would not provide customer service at all stations on a full-time basis.


Budget Impact

The elimination of lunch relief is expected to reduce costs by \$10.5 million annually, partially offset by a cost increase of \$5.1 million from changes to Station Agent pay rates.

Implementation Date

Early 2023.

Approved:


for Richard Davey
President

Staff Summary



Summary of Public Comments and Staff Responses

This document provides a summary of comments provided by speakers at the public hearing on Wednesday, February 1, 2023 and written comments received on or before that date relevant to the proposal for a change to customer booth service and coverage during agent meal breaks with booth service to be replaced with more effective and enhanced customer service outside of the booths. Where multiple speakers made the same or similar comments, those comments are collectively summarized. Comments made by speakers not relevant to the subject proposals are not addressed in this document but were forwarded as appropriate to NYC Transit staff for follow-up.

The safety of Stations Agents will be put at risk by working outside the booth.

The safety of employees and customers is NYC Transit's top priority. Station Agents will be provided with multiple tools to enhance their safety, including mobile devices that will allow them to contact the Rail Control Center for immediate help, panic alarms to use if necessary, and de-escalation training. Station Agents will also be able to return to the booth as needed. In addition, NYC Transit management and the Transport Workers Union have convened a joint task force to address the issue of assaults across all employee groups, including Station Agents.

The safety of customers will be put at risk if Station Agents work outside the booth or are not available during a lunch relief.

Station Agents are currently limited in their ability to respond to emergencies since they are generally not permitted to leave the booth. By working throughout the station, Station Agents will be able to identify issues faster and report them immediately using their mobile devices. One commenter referred to Station Agents as the eyes and ears of the system, and this proposal will give them even greater visibility into what is happening throughout stations, rather than just what they can see from the booth. In addition, Help Points located throughout stations are available to report any issues directly to the Rail Control Center or emergency personnel.

Stations Agents will not know if someone in the control area needs assistance.

As stated above, Station Agents will be provided with mobile devices that can be used to notify them when customer assistance is needed. In addition, Help Points located throughout stations can be used to reach NYC Transit personnel immediately.

Station Agents need a place to sit and to access heat and air conditioning.

Although Station Agents will primarily work outside the booth, the booth will still be available for station agents to use as needed.

Help Points and MVMs are unreliable

Nearly every station has multiple MetroCard Vending Machines available to sell fares. It is very rare for all to be out simultaneously, and there are automatic notifications when this happens to expedite repairs. These machines are scheduled for replacement with new vending machines as part of the rollout of OMNY over the next two years, which will increase reliability.

Help Points are highly reliable and are routinely tested during station inspections. There are multiple Help Points in every station, so there are alternatives in the unlikely event one isn't working properly.

Staff Summary



We need booths on every platform and agents in every booth

Since 2010, most stations and station complexes have had only one staffed booth, which has been sufficient to meet customer needs as most transactions moved to MetroCard Vending Machines. With OMNY and additional online tools, the number of transactions has decreased further. In addition, Station Agents are limited in the service they can provide from inside the booth. Adding additional booths to the system would be an inefficient use of resources providing little or no customer benefit.

Senior and disabled customers need assistance in stations and with converting to OMNY.

One of the goals of this proposal is to improve the customer service provided to seniors and disabled customers. Station Agents outside of the booths will be able to better assist these customers at vending machines and with wayfinding throughout the stations.

Moving Station Agents outside of the booth is a good idea that will improve interaction with customers and is consistent with other large transit systems in the United States.

We agree.

NYC Transit should establish Customer Service Centers in every borough in addition to 2 Stone Street.

Although not part of the proposal that was the subject of the public hearing, NYC Transit plans to open 15 Customer Service Centers across all five boroughs in 2023. These Centers will provide comprehensive services that go far beyond those previously provided at station booths, including the ability for eligible customers to enroll in reduced-fare, request delay verifications, and report commendations and concerns. Currently, these services are only available at 2 Stone Street in Manhattan.

Pregnant women cannot work outside the booth.

Employees may apply for reasonable accommodations for pregnancy-related conditions as well as other disabilities.

Fare evasion will increase if Station Agents work outside the booth.

Station Agents are extremely limited in their ability to address fare payment from the booth. By policy, Station Agents should not directly confront fare evaders and this will not change. Station Agents should continue to report fare evaders and call for police assistance as needed.