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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Releases Final Train and Speed Safety Task Force Report to Safely Increase Speeds up to 50% on Certain Track Segments

MTA Chairman Accepts Recommendations to Safely Increase Speeds and Capacity While Decreasing Running Times Across New York City Transit

View the Final "MTA NYCT Subway Speed and Capacity Review" [Here](#)

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced the final recommendations of the Train Speed and Safety Task Force to safely increase subway train speeds up to 50 percent in certain sections of track. The final "MTA NYCT Subway Speed and Capacity Review" includes a series of recommendations, including safely increasing speeds on curves from V4 up to V6 on select sections of track, increasing operator confidence and addressing bottlenecks, with the potential to further decrease travel times for customers and ultimately increase capacity by increasing the number of trains operating per hour.

MTA Chairman Pat Foye has accepted the recommendations after the members of the Train Speed and Safety Task Force endorsed the findings and advanced them for approval.

The Task Force was created in July 2019 and charged with addressing longstanding train slowdowns across the subway system. The Task Force hired STV Inc. to conduct an independent and thorough review of existing NYC Transit infrastructure, fleet, operational and engineering standards. The final report found that NYC Transit's standards were aligned with current industry standards and practices but found areas for improvement that could result in increased train speeds and capacity, improved operations, greater operator confidence and a more reliable and modernized signal system.

"I thank the task force for their work and accept their recommendations that will help us safely speed up trains, decrease travel times for millions of daily subway customers, and continue the service improvements achieved so far by our hard-working Subways team and thousands of employees," **said MTA Chairman and CEO Patrick J. Foye.**

"The task force unanimously endorses the report's recommendations, which will safely increase speeds and deliver benefits for millions of MTA customers," **said Jane Garvey, Task Force chair and former U.S. Federal Aviation Administrator.** "Safety is the top priority and these recommendations keep that at the forefront of all of Transit's work while helping to improve commuting times for millions of customers who rely on the system to get where they need to go."

STV's extensive review examined five key areas and delivered a set of six recommendations to achieve potential speed gains under the existing system in parallel with ongoing signal modernization efforts.

STV Review	Recommendations
<p><i>Curve Speeds</i></p> <p>The report analyzed current train speeds at curved sections of track, which are raised on the outside of a curve to increase passenger comfort and vehicle stability. NYC Transit currently operates trains at speeds based on tests performed more than 25 years ago, even though it has since put into service more modernized car fleets with better technology, passenger comfort and reliability. Using analyses of train operation on the Seventh Avenue 1 2 3 and Flushing 7 lines, the report found that NYC Transit can safely increase speeds from V4 up to V6 on some curved tracks with a radius between 750 and 2,000 feet.</p>	<p><i>Safely Increase Speeds on Curves from V4 to V6</i></p> <p>STV recommends a case-by-case engineering review and operational testing to confirm each potential speed increase for implementation with priority on the Seventh Avenue 1 2 3 and Flushing 7 lines. Potential speed increases on certain curves would be analyzed to ensure passenger comfort.</p>
<p><i>Operator Confidence</i></p> <p>The Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 has formally stated that train operators operate trains at speeds lower than those posted. Train operators frequently cited lack of confidence in the signal system's timed signals, suspected signal timer mis-calibrations and poor visibility of posted signs for operating trains at speeds lower than posted to avoid potential disciplinary action.</p>	<p><i>Get Trains Running at Posted Speeds and Continue to Recalibrate and Replace Mechanical Timer Relays</i></p> <p>The report recommends the continuation of operator education and collaboration with labor partner TWU on improvements and recalibrations of the slow clearing signal timers through NYC Transit's ongoing Save Safe Seconds program, as well as targeted improvements to speed limit signage visibility and readability, frequent verification of speedometers with train operators and improvements to an electronic timer design, calibration equipment and testing methodology.</p>
<p><i>Infrastructure Bottlenecks</i></p> <p>The report studied three locations prioritized by NYC Transit as bottlenecks due to limited track infrastructure and signaling system – the Nostrand Junction interlocking in Brooklyn, 142nd Street interlocking in Manhattan and the track area encompassing 149 St-Grand Concourse in the Bronx. The analysis reviewed operating schedules, track and signal layouts and previous studies, and found that schedules are fundamentally constrained by the infrastructure in place today.</p>	<p><i>Address Bottlenecks</i></p> <p>149th St.-Grand Concourse was identified as a good candidate for the implementation of modern axle counter technologies. NYC Transit and STV have collaborated, developed and continue to work on a detailed design using axle counters at 149th St.-Grand Concourse. The report recommends NYC Transit examine the potential use of axle counter technologies in additional bottleneck areas. The report also recommends a comprehensive,</p>

	systemwide network simulation analysis to determine all bottleneck locations and their interrelationships.
<p><i>Subway Cars and Signals</i></p> <p>STV analyzed the existing Transit car fleet to find opportunities for performance improvements and found that the fleet aligned with industry standards. It recommended that NYC Transit continue its plans to upgrade the existing fixed block signal system to a modern system and that speed gains can be pursued in parallel with this effort.</p>	<p><i>Determine, Via Cost-Benefit Analysis, Any Viable Fixed Block Signaling System Modifications Required to Accommodate Increased Speeds and Simulate Impacts on the System on a Line-by-Line Basis.</i></p> <p>Fixed block lines should be modeled in parallel with corresponding curve analysis efforts, using an industry standard signaling system software block design package. STV recommends this work start with the Seventh Avenue 1 2 3 line, with prioritization of subsequent choices determined by congestion levels and planned modernization efforts.</p>
<p><i>Dwell Time</i></p> <p>The report did not study the effect of dwell times on train speeds, but recommended NYC Transit continue to evaluate and reduce dwell times under the Save Safe Seconds program to further decrease running times.</p>	<p><i>Continue Reducing and Evaluating Dwell Time</i></p> <p>The report recommends NYC Transit continue to evaluate and reduce dwell times to further decrease running times. This Save Safe Seconds focus has led to decreases in terminal-to-terminal running times of about 3½ minutes on the numbered lines and about 2 minutes on the lettered lines compared to 2017.</p>
<p><i>Other Applications</i></p>	<p><i>Determine How Analysis Set Forth in Report Could Be Applicable for Metro-North and the Long Island Rail Road</i></p>

"The task force's recommendations will help improve systemwide performance speeds while ensuring safety continues to be our first and foremost priority as we move millions of people a day," **said Pat Warren, MTA Chief Safety Officer.** "We look forward to implementing the recommendations as quickly as possible so that our customers can look forward to faster rides and less time commuting."

"The task force's recommendations reinforce my team's hard work achieved over the past year and show that we are headed in the right direction as we seek both quick wins and long-term solutions to improve subway service and reduce travel times safely," **said Andy Byford, President of New York City Transit.** "We now look forward to continued improvement as they are implemented along with our existing Save Safe Seconds initiative."

ABOUT THE NEW YORK SUBWAY SYSTEM:

The New York subway system was built more than 100 years ago, and to provide for safe operations, various measures were implemented to ensure that trains did not go faster than the conditions they could handle. Two fatal incidents at 14 St-Union Square in 1991 and on the Williamsburg Bridge in 1995 cumulatively led to subway train speeds being adjusted and operating at slower speeds in the system. At the same time, speed limits for operational curves were established 25 years ago by testing and older car classes that were in operation at that time were used in these tests. Over the decades, improvements in car design and track geometry have allowed cars to maintain stability and safe operation at higher speeds yet limits have remained unchanged. The slowdown was further compounded by the practice of train operators, some of whom believed that the signal system was not properly calibrated, to operate at speeds lower than posted limits due to the perception they would be unfairly penalized.

ABOUT THE TASK FORCE:

The Train Speed and Safety Task Force was created in July 2019 by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to address whether trains were moving slower than in previous years and if so whether they could be safely sped up, and how NYC Transit's train speeds compare to peer systems. The task force released a preliminary report in September finding that the train speeds were indeed slower than 20 years ago, and speeds could be safely increased. The task force is chaired by former U.S. Federal Aviation Administrator Jane Garvey and members include:

- Andy Byford, President, New York City Transit
- Veronique Hakim, former Managing Director, MTA
- Robert Lauby, former Chief Safety Officer, Federal Railroad Administration
- Thomas Quigley, General Counsel, MTA
- Dominick M. Servedio, Executive Chairman, STV
- Tony Utano, President, TWU Local 100
- Patrick Warren, Chief Safety Officer, MTA