

When will they ever learn...When will they ever learn?
The agency no one trusts with our money – aka The MTA
– shows us why the public and our elected
representatives must never give the agency a blank check
when it comes to money. Imposing tolls – recall the
dumb, unfair and inequitable, economy killing
congestion tax – on free East River bridges offers just
that. It means a free ride for that agency accountable to
no one. Just another reason for the Ravitch Commission
and lawmakers to look elsewhere as they look to find
[new and stable resources](#) for transit.

http://www.nypost.com/seven/11162008/news/regionalnews/mta_office_bloat_138950.htm



MTA OFFICE BLOAT 444 IN PUBLIC RELATIONS, MARKETING

Last updated: 3:39 am, November 16, 2008

Posted: 2:10 am, November 16, 2008

The MTA is weighed down with managers, marketing types and p.r. staffers - fat the agency should trim before it slashes service, hikes fares or creates new bridge tolls, state auditors told The Post.

The agency has a growing roster of 70,000 employees - including thousands of redundant and nonessential positions - and is still slated to hire hundreds more, the auditors found.

MTA records show 288 New York City Transit employees in "corporate communications," 70 Long Island Rail Road staffers in "market development and public affairs," and 52 at MTA headquarters in "corporate and community affairs."

Nearly two-thirds of the MTA's current \$10.9 billion budget covers salaries, fringe benefits and pension contributions, according to an analysis by state Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli's office. Its latest report, completed in September, found that the MTA:

* Increased staffing by 6,436 since 2005, including 3,400 workers from private bus lines it took over and 373 employees in central administration.

The axman cometh

As the MTA threatens to raise fares, add bridge tolls and shutter station booths, the state Comptroller's Office says the agency is sitting on easy cuts to its \$1 billion budget deficit.

■ Two-thirds of the \$10.9 billion MTA budget covers salaries.

■ 2,110 duplicate jobs exist among its different divisions.

■ \$709 million goes to pay those 2,110 salaries.

■ 444 of those jobs are in public relations and marketing.

■ 818 more MTA employees are budgeted to be hired by the end of the year.

Source: NYS Comptroller reports 2004-2008



* Added 568 employees in "managerial, supervisory, professional, technical and clerical" jobs since 2007 - and budgeted the hiring of 818 more by the end of this year. None of these are rank-and-file jobs like drivers and repairmen.

* Plans to cut 351 maintenance workers, but only 59 administrators. It also vows to ax another 103 employees by the end of 2009, but hasn't said which.

"There are opportunities for efficiencies that have not been realized," DiNapoli told The Post. "That needs to be the first step before the riding public is asked to bear a greater burden."

MTA CEO Elliot Sander warned last week of "draconian" cuts and massive fare hikes - as high as 30 percent. Meanwhile, a state commission is considering proposing tolls on the city's East River bridges as a way to bail out the MTA, The Post reported last week.

On Thursday, Sander will give the MTA board his plan to close budget gaps of \$1.2 billion next year and up to \$2 billion in 2012.

The top-heavy agency is chopping too low, DiNapoli said.

"The first step should be wringing out all the excess expenses - starting with the administrative overhead," he said.

Despite calls for such cuts from the state Comptroller's Office since 2004, the MTA has dragged its feet on eliminating duplication among its seven divisions.

The MTA has agreed it can save money by streamlining. The agency is spending \$210 million to create a "business service center" that would consolidate payroll and finance divisions.

But the MTA won't see bottom-line savings from that effort at least until 2012 - too long to wait, DiNapoli said.

"We'd like them to show more urgency. They should have a more aggressive timetable to implement what they have to do," he said.

MTA spokesman Aaron Donovan defended the "marketing and public relations" staff identified by the auditors, saying the workers perform vital tasks.

He confirmed 288 "corporate communications" positions at NYC Transit, but said only 259 are filled. Those workers include customer-service representatives who answer telephones and e-mails and MetroCard salespeople who travel in vans.

Others run reduced-fare programs for the elderly and students; create and distribute pamphlets, schedules and maps; produce service notices; write press releases and newsletters; and advertise promotions.

Donovan defended the rising staff count, saying it has not kept pace with ridership, which has doubled in the past 12 years.

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