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Business as usual

If only the MTA learned as well as [The Eagles'](#) Don Henley and Glenn Frey learned from watching [Pogo playing](#) at the [Troubadour](#) in '68. One would think this far into its existence – the state legislature created the MTA before what later became known as [Poco](#) took to the stage later that same year – the storied transit agency could get things right. Evidently not so.

*Business as usual
Just grinding away*

A joint audit by the State and City Comptrollers found waste in NYC Transit's mismanagement of subway diversions. It identifies late starts and early finishes that cost \$10.5 million. For sake of comparison, the [misguided bus cuts](#) imposed by the MTA in Queens last year involved under \$8 million. And then the agency failed to monitor cost-overruns to the tune of \$26.6 million; that sum exceeds 25% of last year's cuts. Reading the audit, makes one think of the Eagles' [song](#) that titles this commentary.

*Business as usual
Is breakin' me down*

Read the [joint audit](#), *Subway Service Diversions for Maintenance and Capital Projects*, issued by City Comptroller John Liu and State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli.

Read [Audit Faults M.T.A. on Subway Service Changes](#) in the New York Times

Audit Faults M.T.A. on Subway Service Changes

By MOSI SECRET

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New York City Transit's poor management of [subway service diversions](#) leads to tens of millions of dollars in cost overruns and leaves the public ill-informed about when and where maintenance is happening, according to an audit by the city and state released on Sunday.

The [audit](#) examined work orders from Jan. 1, 2009, through July 14, 2010, and found that work often started late and ended early, costing the agency \$10.5 million.

Auditors attributed an additional \$26.6 million in overruns to the failure of transit officials to monitor expenses.

The audit also found that New York City Transit, the division of the [Metropolitan Transportation Authority](#) that runs the city's subway system and bus service, did not give subway riders adequate notice of service changes.

There were not enough signs in the stations, and too few signs in languages other than English and in elevators where disabled passengers could see them, the audit found.

"Our audit found that M.T.A.'s service diversions are increasing in frequency and leaving taxpayers on the hook for millions of dollars in cost overruns," Thomas P. DiNapoli, the state comptroller, said in [a statement](#) accompanying the audit.

Mr. DiNapoli's office conducted the audit with the office of the city comptroller, John C. Liu.

"Sadly, this confirms the nagging suspicion of riders, residents and business owners alike, that subway service is taken down more than necessary," Mr. Liu said in the statement.

In response to the audit, Kevin Ortiz, a spokesman for New York City Transit, said in an e-mail: "Due to the 24-hour, seven-day-a-week operation of the subway system, planned service diversions are necessary in order to perform maintenance and capital work. We make every effort to minimize customer inconvenience by coordinating work — performing multiple jobs in the same area so that we do not have to go back again. However, some projects are extremely involved, requiring several shutdowns."

A service diversion happens when all or part of a subway line is closed for maintenance. For each diversion, the transit agency has to shut off power for the affected subway tracks, move workers to and from the site, and provide alternative service for passengers.

There were 3,332 service diversions during the period that auditors examined.

Auditors reviewed a random sample of 50 of those service diversions.

New York City Transit officials provided auditors with time sheets for 29 of those service diversions. Work started late on 28 projects and ended early for 21, auditors found.

The loss of work time ranged from 10 to 27 percent, as a result of workers' starting late or leaving early, the audit found.

The auditors assumed that each of the 3,332 projects was unproductive 10 percent of the time and calculated \$10.5 million in costs that could have been avoided.

Auditors also reviewed four contracts that were not completed within budget and found that they were \$26.6 million over their budget of \$56.5 million.

Auditors found that eight other contracts were within budget.

New York City Transit has hundreds of contracts for work that is currently being done.

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