

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLANNING THE EVACUATION OF TRANSPORTATION -
HANDICAPPED PERSONS FROM NEW YORK CITY - SUPPLEMENTARY TESTIMONY

Samuel W. Anderson, PhD February 21, 1983

1. New York City Office of Civil Preparedness was contacted by telephone for the purpose of obtaining update on plans for evacuation of disabled persons in the event of a nuclear accident. Inspector Robert Littlejohn informed me that a "limited evacuation plan" is now in effect, but that I could obtain no detailed information about the plan because it is "classified." Inquiries addressed to the Mayor's Office of the Handicapped were referred to the Office of Civil Preparedness.
2. Enclosed is a copy of a letter from City Comptroller Harrison J. Colandin to Richard Ravitch, Chairman of the Metropolitan Transit Authority that reports the outcome of a field test of the MTA's wheelchair-accessible bus program, nearly one year after the service was put into effect. Although liftbuses are now operating on many of the city's mainline bus routes, the test was limited to 14 routes that were specially designated "accessible" by the operating authority. Out of 89 attempts by disabled persons in wheelchairs to obtain service, only 41, (46%) were successful.

Also enclosed is a report on the number of complaints received by a consumer group, Mobility Through Access, from disabled individuals reporting denial of accessible service for the month of October, 1982: A total of 194 complaints were received, citing various reasons for denial of service, the principal one being the observed malfunction of the lift device, others including unfamiliarity of the driver with operation of the lift mechanism. These documents confirm my original testimony as to the continuing unavailability of reliable service to the TH population from the MTA.

3. Paratransit is a designation for transit service utilizing special vehicles and/or operating on special schedules and routes (often upon demand) in a manner designed to serve only a special population. According to Federal, State and City designations, TH accessible paratransit vehicles must be able to accommodate wheelchairs. Such vehicles include all specially operated buses, vans, ambulettes, etc. that are usable by people in wheelchairs.
4. Standard dimensions of lifts and doorways provided for mass transit provide for entry and exit of nearly all TH persons. Those who are not able to use them are those who, for whatever reason, require a personal vehicle that is too large to be accommodated.



Mobility Through Access

ACCESSIBLE BUS SURVEY

(October 9, 1982 - October 31, 1982)

TOTAL COMPLAINTS RECEIVED - 194

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
I. Lift malfunctions	95	49%
A. Operator claimed lift not working (18 or 19%)		
B. Malfunction actually observed (77 or 81%)		
II. Operator had no key	12	6%
III. Operator passed by disabled person prior to boarding attempt	17	9%
IV. Bus too crowded	1	.5%
V. Driver untrained in lift operation	2	1%
VI. Driver claimed bus was not lift equipped	2	1%
VII. No fare payment envelope on bus	10	5%
VIII. Driver was trained but unfamiliar with lift operation	19	10%
IX. No accessible buses on designated route	13	7%
X. Uncooperative driver	5	2.5%
XI. Securement device not working	8	4%
XII. Other	10	5%
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>194</u>	<u>100%</u>



Mobility Through Access

SIX MONTHS ACCESSIBLE BUS SURVEY

(April 1, 1982 - October 8, 1982)

TOTAL COMPLAINTS RECEIVED - 990

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
I. Lift malfunctions	458	46%
A. Operator claimed lift not working (242 or 25%)		
B. Malfunction actually observed (216 or 21%)		
II. Operator had no key	119	12%
III. Operator passed by disabled person prior to boarding attempt	120	12%
IV. Bus too crowded	3	.5%
V. Driver untrained in lift operation	11	1.5%
VI. Driver claimed bus was not lift-equipped	16	1.5%
VII. No fare payment envelope on bus	53	5%
VIII. Driver was trained but unfamiliar with lift operation	50	5%
IX. No accessible buses on designated route	53	5%
X. Uncooperative driver	47	5%
XI. Securement device not working	46	5%
XII. Other	14	1.5%
<u><i>TOTAL</i></u>	<u>990</u>	<u>100%</u>



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10007

HARRISON J. GOLDIN
COMPTROLLER

July 13, 1982

Honorable Richard Ravitch, Chairman
Metropolitan Transportation Authority
347 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10017

Dear Dick:

During the week of May 21st we conducted a field test, in cooperation with a number of handicapped citizens, of the New York City Transit Authority's (TA) handicapped accessible buses. Our observations were made on 14 of the 33 routes on which the TA provides special lift service. (The dates, locations and routes are shown in Appendix A.) We observed lift service, including operability, waiting times, lift operating times and tie-in security during peak weekday morning hours (8:30-11:30 AM) and peak afternoon hours (2:30-5:00 PM) on six bus routes in Manhattan, five in Brooklyn, two routes in The Bronx and one on Staten Island. In all, we monitored 89 attempts by individuals confined to wheelchairs to board handicapped-accessible buses.

Our major findings are as follows:

- o More than one-half (48 of 89) of the attempts to board buses by hydraulic lifts were unsuccessful. The most frequent problem (56 percent of the unsuccessful attempts - 27 instances) was a lift malfunction or a claim by the driver that the lift was inoperable. The second most frequent problem (15 percent of the unsuccessful attempts, or 7 instances) was that the driver did not have the key that operates the lift.
- o During 27 percent of the successful boardings (11 out of 41), handicapped people had to wait 30 minutes or longer for the arrival of a bus and/or operator capable of providing lift service. Furthermore, 12 percent (5 of 41) of the handicapped riders had to wait more than 45 minutes for service. In two cases riders had to wait an hour and a half or more and,

yet, were never able to board a bus. The average overall waiting time of approximately 25 minutes could have been reduced to about 12 minutes had the first accessible bus and/or operator been able to provide lift service.

- o The time bus operators required to operate the GMC bus lift varied substantially, from less than one minute to as long as eight minutes. Overall, average lift operation time was two minutes and nine seconds. According to GMC, the builder of the accessible lifts we observed, boarding by a handicapped passenger should take no more than 30 seconds and the total process of boarding and disembarkation a little more than one minute.
- o Tie-ins, the mechanisms which are supposed to hold one wheel of a wheelchair to prevent its rolling about, were inoperable 29 percent of the time (during 12 boardings) and presented a considerable hazard. For example, some handicapped riders were forced either to hang on to the nearest stationary object or rolled about dangerously. In several cases, drivers did not or could not operate the tie-ins.

Boarding Problems

Following is an analysis of the reasons for failed or denied boardings.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1. Lift malfunction:	27	56.2%
a. Driver claimed lift was inoperable	7	14.6%
b. Actual malfunction observed	20	41.6%
2. No key for operating lift	7	14.6%
3. Driver deliberately drove off prior to boarding attempt	4	8.3%
4. Overcrowding on bus	3	6.3%
5. Driver not trained to operate lift equipment	3	6.3%

6.	Driver claimed bus was not accessible	3	6.3%
7.	Driver passed by without stopping	1	2.0%

On four occasions drivers of accessible buses deliberately drove off after able-bodied passengers had boarded the bus. The drivers left the handicapped riders waiting at the bus stop even though they had queued up for boarding with able-bodied passengers. Furthermore, in three instances drivers of accessible buses bearing the symbol indicating wheelchair accessibility stated either that their bus was not equipped with a lift or that it was not designated an accessible bus.

Other Matters

We also observed that fare envelopes were not made available to many handicapped riders. This is significant because these envelopes are the basis for collecting revenues and determining the utilization levels of accessible buses.

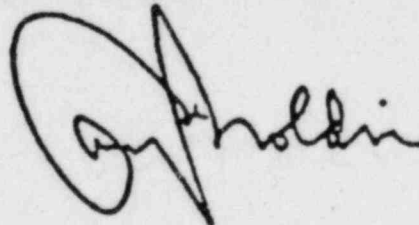
Finally, we found that, generally, able-bodied passengers willingly cooperated when asked to vacate their seats in the wheelchair tie-in areas. Overall, the reaction of riders was positive and supportive.

* * * * *

There is a clear need for improving handicapped-accessible bus service. All drivers should have keys to operate lifts and a sufficient number of fare envelopes before the start of each shift. All tie-in mechanisms should be checked to ensure that they are functioning properly. The TA should ensure that its drivers cycle lifts during refueling or before the shift starts in order to detect lift mechanism defects and to refresh the drivers' understanding of operating techniques.

I hope our observations will help to improve this aspect of the TA's operations.

Sincerely,



cc: John Simpson, President
NYCTA

APPENDIX A

<u>Date</u>	<u>Bus Routes Tested</u>	<u>Starting Point</u>
May 17	S7	Victory Boulevard and Clove Road
	S7	Victory Boulevard and Clove Road
	S7	Victory Boulevard and Clove Road
	M32	Madison Avenue and 31st Street
	M32	Madison Avenue and 31st Street
	M32	Madison Avenue and 45th Street
	M32	60th Street and 3rd Avenue
	M32	60th Street and 3rd Avenue
	M32	60th Street and 3rd Avenue
	M32	60th Street and 3rd Avenue
	M7	14th Street and Broadway
	M7	14th Street and Broadway
	M7	35th Street and Broadway
	M7	35th Street and Broadway
	M7	35th Street and Broadway
	M7	35th Street and Broadway
	M7	7th Avenue and 58th Street
	M7	7th Avenue and 58th Street
May 18.	B41	Clark Street and Cadman Place West
	B41	Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues
	B12	Parkside and Flatbush Avenues

APPENDIX A (Cont'd)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Bus Routes Tested</u>	<u>Starting Point</u>
	B12	Parkside and Flatbush Avenues
	B41	Flatbush and Clarkson Avenues
	B41	Flatbush and Clarkson Avenues
	B41	Flatbush and Clarkson Avenues
	B41	Flatbush and Clarkson Avenues
	B41	Bond Street and Livingston Street
	B49	Dean Street and Bedford Avenue
	B49	Dean Street and Bedford Avenue
	B49	Rogers and Clarkson Avenues
	B49	Rogers and Clarkson Avenues
	B68	Coney Island Avenue and Avenue V
	B68	Avenue J and Coney Island Avenue
	B68	Church and Coney Island Avenues
	B68	Church and Coney Island Avenues
	B68	Church and Coney Island Avenues
	B68	Church and Coney Island Avenues
	BX17	Gunther and Allerton Avenues
	BX17	Gunther and Allerton Avenues
	BX17	Gunther and Allerton Avenues
	BX17	Dreiser Loop
	BX17	Dreiser Loop

APPENDIX A (Cont'd)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Bus Routes Tested</u>	<u>Starting Point</u>
May 19	BX17	Dreiser Loop
	BX17	Dreiser Loop
	M4	Madison Avenue and 32nd Street
	M4	Madison Ave and 32nd Street
	M4	5th Avenue and 48th Street
	M4	5th Avenue and 48th Street
	M4	5th Avenue and 48th Street
	M4	5th Avenue and 48th Street
	M4	5th Avenue and 48th Street
	M4	5th Avenue and 48th Street
	M14	14th Street and Avenue B
	M14	14th Street and Union Square
	M14	14th Street and 9th Avenue
May 20	BX41	225th Street and White Plains Road
	BX41	225th Street and White Plains Road
	BX41	225th Street and White Plains Road
	BX41	205th Street and Webster Avenue
	BX41	Fordham Road and Webster Avenue
	BX17	Allerton Ave. and Eastchester Rd.
	BX17	Eastchester Rd. and Allerton Ave.
	BX17	192nd Street and Valentine Avenue
	DX17	192nd Street and Valentine Avenue
	BX17	Baychester Ave and Donizetti Street
	DX17	Baychester Ave and Donizetti Street

APPENDIX A (Cont'd)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Bus Routes Tested</u>	<u>Starting Point</u>
May 21	M32	Madison Ave and 30th Street
	M32	Madison Ave and 44th Street
	M32	1st Avenue and 60th Street
	B68	Avenue V and Coney Island Ave.
	B68	Ave V and Coney Island Ave.
	B68	Ave V and Coney Island Ave.
	B36	Avenue 2 and Coney Island Ave.
	B36	Avenue 2 and Coney Island Ave.
	B36	Surf Avenue at Aquarium
	B68	Surf Ave and West 5th Street
	B68	Surf Ave and West 5th Street
	B68	Surf Ave and West 5th Street
	M7	14th Street and Union Square
	M7	14th Street and Union Square
	M104	6th Ave and 42nd Street
	M104	6th Ave and 42nd Street
	M104	6th Ave and 42nd Street
	M104	6th Ave and 42nd Street
	M10	6th Ave and 42nd Street
	M10	Broadway and 61st Street
	M14	14th Street and 7th Ave.
	M4	Madison Avenue and 32nd St.
	M32	5th Ave and 49th Street