

Critical Data On City's Transit System Inaccessible: Report

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NEW YORK — Thousands of pages of critical data on the nation's largest transit system is in "static black and white charts" and needs to be set free so the public can use it.

That's one major conclusion from a nearly [two year-long study](#) on the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's efforts to make data about its vast operations widely available.

A group that works to keep the MTA accountable released a report based on its findings, titled "The MTA in the Age of Big Data," on Tuesday.

[Read the full Gotham Gazette story here.](#)

The report, which largely praised the MTA for its efforts to make data more available to the public, recommended that the agency begin to invest in the distribution of its performance statistics, including with visualizations that can help the public understand what is going on with the subways and buses.

"The future of the MTA must be more digitally oriented and technologically savvy for the agency to be efficient and successful," said the report by the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA. It said the MTA's technological capabilities are currently "underfunded, under staffed and under supported, leaving the MTA ill-prepared to move into a technology-based future."

Ellyn Shannon, a transportation planner and staff member of the PCAC, said a new generation of commuters is craving access to data about the MTA's operations and to see it visually.

"I think it draws the onlooker in in a way that their brain can learn and they can understand with greater clarity their system," she said.

The MTA said that it had dedicated a task force to find ways to implement the PCAC's recommendations.

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Image of data visualization prototype courtesy of the PCAC. Built using the [Roambi](#) platform.

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