Engl 21007: Writing For Engineers

To:	Governor Andrew Cuomo
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Subject:	Contracting will fix the MTA
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The purpose of this memo is to shed light on the broken MTA bidding system that allows greedy contractors to charge extra which leads to fare hikes.

New Yorkers constantly rely on public transportation to move around to their various destinations. People of different ethnicities, cultures, and ages use the MTA services as a means of transportation. Although there is heavy use of this service, there are many issues that flaw the operational system of these services. Passengers experience delays, low frequencies, overcrowd throughout their daily commute. People have been dealing with these issues for years and are overwhelmed by the persistent issues that they face.

A solution to this major MTA crisis could involve rewiring the contracting process. The MTAs current system has far too few competitors, and is littered with personal connections, leading to situations where jobs that should be relatively normal in terms of costs are suspiciously expensive. The costs of repairs on NYCs railways is absurd if we compare the costs to repairs of foreign subways.

If more money can be saved by investing in reasonable investors, the money can be redirected to repair more antiquated signaling systems which are the primary cause of delay or even running more trains and buses to tackle the slow frequencies of these services. We all know that a major step in improving MTA service requires replacing old signaling systems, and this requires funding. It is in New York State's best interest to amend the contracting process, as this will allow the MTA to make these repairs without asking the state for more money.

Regular people want good service from the MTA, but don't want an accompanying fare hike, or higher NYC/NYS taxes.

So, before the MTA gets forced to raise fares again, or calls for more money from the state, we can fix the biggest leak: Greedy contractors.

"The Second Avenue subway cost $2.5 billion per mile, a staggering sum that far outpaced any other municipality. In Paris, the cost of subway expansion is $450 million per mile."

The reason for these outrageous costs is the faults in the MTAs contract bidding system.

When the MTA needs work done, it puts out a request, and contractors then submit proposals. Normally, when many contractors compete for a job, they all bid lower and lower, leaving the employer with very desirable choices.

But when the MTA had to build the Second Avenue Subway, for example, only two contractors submitted proposals.

This problem is magnified when you consider the levels of corruption: Most of these already few contractors have personal relations with members of the MTA.

If we solve this problem, the MTA can save a lot of money. It can also get more done on less money, which may help increase ridership, in turn making it even more money. We believe that we should all be invested in the success of the MTA. It defines us as New Yorkers. When tourists come from overseas, it is one of the first things they notice. We do not want us, or our city to be perceived as dirty, overpriced, or expensive.

In summary, we recommend that the MTA's bidding process be opened, split projects into many smaller projects so that smaller contractors stand a chance, and create transparency within the MTA to fight corruption.

Citations:

Barkan, Ross. "To Save Money, MTA Must Reform Its Contracting Process." *CSNY*, 25 Oct. 2018, www.cityandstateny.com/articles/opinion/commentary/mta-must-reform-contracting-process.html.

Harris, Connor. "Potemkin MTA Reform." *City Journal*, 6 Mar. 2019, www.city-journal.org/nyc-subway-mta-reform.

Team contribution notes:

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Role:

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Note: Each member participated in the production of this memo with thoughts, ideas, and research that helped with originating a solution.