

# RESCUE MUNI

# *Transfer*

No. 5,  
Spring 1998

## Muni Earns 'C' Grade - Again

### *1998 Muni Riders' Survey Results*

Is Muni getting better? 147 volunteers set out to find the answer this past February, collecting over 3,000 data points on Muni reliability. The results weren't encouraging: Muni reliability again earned a **C** grade, while the Metro was graded **D**. Many widely-used lines did even worse. Some areas improved, like driver courtesy and the F-Market historic streetcar. See how your line did on *Page 6*.

### *Also Inside This Issue:*

**Executive and Steering Committee Reports:** The RESCUE MUNI leadership reports on its policy decisions on *Page 2*.

**RESCUE MUNI Turns One:** It's been a year since we formally began operations. Read about what we've done on *Page 3*.

**Elections:** RESCUE MUNI will be electing new Executive Committee members at the General Meeting on **May 11**. Read the candidates' resumes on *Page 4*.

**Sorry, No Drivers Today:** Muni often misses runs because there's no operator. We have an analysis of the problem and recommended solutions on *Page 12*.

**What YOU Can Do to Fix Muni:** RESCUE MUNI needs you! Help us get the word out and keep the pressure on. We have a Top 10 List of volunteer activities on *Page 11*.

Spring 1998  
**General Meeting**  
**May 11 (Monday), 6 pm**  
Sierra Club, 85 2nd St.



RESCUE MUNI

P.O. Box 190966  
San Francisco, CA 94119-0966  
415-273-1558 • [www.rescuemuni.org](http://www.rescuemuni.org)

Spring 1998  
**Transfer**

The Newsletter of  
RESCUE MUNI

Riders' Survey Results  
RESCUE MUNI Turns One  
Elections & Candidate Resumes  
Muni's Driver Shortage  
What You Can Do to Fix Muni

Place  
Stamp  
Here

# Steering Committee Report

Howard Strassner tells us about RESCUE MUNI's policies decided in the spring of 1998

The **Steering Committee** has approved the following positions as RESCUE MUNI policy since the last General Meeting.

In accordance with the Bylaws none of the following are RM policy unless consented to by the General Membership. We will discuss these at the May 11 General Meeting.

1. When Muni reinforces rail beds for Breda cars, they should modify the bed similar to the N Line between Ninth and Nineteenth to provide the street cars with a **dedicated right-of-way**.

2. If **Advanced Train Control System (ATCS)** testing is not completed by the end of August, as

recently promised, then testing should be done **between 1 and 5 am** in order to make cars available to provide service to riders.

3. **Printed schedules** should be posted at all E-Line stations.

4. Muni should **describe all Metro runs between Balboa and Embarcadero as the same run** whether on the J, K or M (the time difference is small ranging from 38 to 40 minutes) for quarterly sign ups. This will allow **balancing of service** between the three lines as they leave the Embarcadero and Balboa.

5. Muni should prepare a complete service study for the **South of Market** area.★

## Transfer

the newsletter of RESCUE MUNI  
Spring 1998 - No. 5

Editor: Howard Strassner  
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[www.rescuemuni.org](http://www.rescuemuni.org)  
[transit1@rescuemuni.org](mailto:transit1@rescuemuni.org)

# Membership Form

**We need YOU to help us Rescue Muni.**

Join us by mailing this form to P.O. Box 190966, San Francisco, CA 94119-0966.

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Phone:**

**Fax:**

**Email:**

**Muni lines you ride:**

**# riders in your household:**

**I would like to volunteer!** Y N

**Membership category:**

\$5 Limited Income  
 \$15 Basic  
 \$40 Sustaining  
 \$100 Contributing  
 Other: \$\_\_\_\_\_

RESCUE MUNI may from time to time publish membership lists *with names only* (no phone numbers or addresses). May we publish your name only as a member? Y N

**Signature:**

## Executive Committee

Chair: Joan Downey  
Membership Sec'y: Daniel Murphy  
Recording Sec'y: Howard Strassner  
First Coordinator: Andrew Sullivan

## Steering Committee

Chair: Andrew Sullivan  
Vice-Chair: Daniel Murphy  
Joan Downey, John Rudolph, Richard Mlynarik, David Pilpel

## Standing Committees

**Governance:** examines high-level oversight, management, and funding of Muni (Chair: John Rudolph, 647-1146, [qoheleth2@aol.com](mailto:qoheleth2@aol.com))

**Muni Metro:** addresses scheduling and reliability of Muni's light rail lines. Meets first Wed. of every month, 6 p.m., at the Sierra Club, 85 Second St., 3d floor

(chair: Howard Strassner, 661-8786, [ruthow@juno.com](mailto:ruthow@juno.com))

**Service Standards:** formulates service goals for Muni and recommends implementation strategies (chair: David Pilpel, 267-1830, [david.pilpel@sierraclub.org](mailto:david.pilpel@sierraclub.org))

## Other Committees

**Bus Service** (chair TBA)  
**Membership** (chair: Daniel Murphy, 665-4074, [daniel@well.com](mailto:daniel@well.com))

**Surveys** (chair: Andrew Sullivan, 673-0626, [celebes@well.com](mailto:celebes@well.com))

**22-Fillmore** (chair: Jeff Goldblat, 923-0477, [jeffg10@juno.com](mailto:jeffg10@juno.com))

Any member may form a committee. If it meets at least six times per year, the committee may appoint a representative to the Steering Committee, the policy-making body of RESCUE MUNI.

**Cast your vote** continued from page 13 mittee, Steering Committee, Membership Committee; active on many levels of RESCUE MUNI. Active member of several community organizations in addition to RM.

*Background:* former high-school teacher, world traveler, advanced degrees in theology and classical languages, will be attending joint-degree program in law and city planning. Aspire to position within city government to effect the changes that we talk about at RESCUE MUNI.

*What I hope to accomplish:* expand membership; invigorate current membership; increase community outreach; heighten RESCUE MUNI public visibility; drive wedge of citizen-activism into decrepit city planning and Muni management schemes, via RESCUE MUNI energy and acumen.

### How to Vote by Mail or Email

If you qualify to vote by mail (see above), mail your selection of no more than **four** of the above candidates to RESCUE MUNI, P.O. Box 199966, SF 94119 in time to arrive before **May 8**. Mark the envelope: ELECTION. Put your name and return address on the envelope, so that we can easily ballot check for dues payment and prevent ballot stuffing. Clearly write the names of the candidates you are voting for (no more than four). Put the paper in the envelope and mail quickly so that we can start organizing and counting. If you vote by e-mail, put your name on top of the letter for checking purposes. Leave some space between your name and list of four candidates, so that your vote is relatively secret. Send to **ruthow@juno.com** by May 8. The vote counters will avert their eyes. ★

**What you can do** cont'd from page 11 9. Clip out and mount **newspaper articles** and letters about Muni.

10. Whatever you think RM needs to do to help rescue Muni!

### RM Email List

RM has a newsworthy chat list that many members are using to voice their concerns. With a little coordination, this list may be able to replace meetings as a way to rescue a particular Muni line. To see who has a Muni problem similar to yours, just send an e-mail to **rescuemuni-request@lists.best.com** with the word "subscribe" in the body. You'll join a vibrant online conversation about SF transit and how we can make it better. ★

**No drivers today** cont'd from page 13 gym would help. Maybe drivers need longer breaks. Maybe routes should be re-scheduled so that drivers aren't asked to make unrealistic internal schedules. Maybe drivers should get longer vacations so that their absences are at least planned for. We don't necessarily advocate any of these solutions, but we do think something needs to be done.

Finally, there are the "other" reasons for not coming into work. Those reasons account for a full 16 days per year on average. RESCUE MUNI needs to ask Muni officials what could possibly not be covered by miss outs, vacation, injuries, and sick leave. Training is unlikely. Union officials have told us that operators receive little meaningful training, which is a worry in itself.

*If you would like to help out with this ongoing data-gathering and analysis, please call the RESCUE MUNI hot line (273-1558) and leave your name, number, and area of interest.* ★

# RESCUE MUNI Turns One

*Howard Strassner* reminiscences about the first year of San Francisco's first-ever transit riders' group

**A**lthough RESCUE MUNI had been gestating since the summer of 1996, it only officially came alive in May 1997. In that month we met to approve a draft Bylaws and elect Excom members. By then, we had about 50 paid members. We now have nearly 300.

When you consider that we've been around such a short time and that everyone in RM is a volunteer, we've done a remarkable amount. The organization came into the world with coverage from the Examiner and support from San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) in the crucial early days. We now get good coverage from all of the media, bringing riders' concerns to public attention as never before. We still work with SPUR, but for logistical reasons we usually find it easier to meet at the Sierra Club.

One of our greatest challenges has been to take everyone's frustration with Muni and channel it into constructive, well-developed proposals. Each of us has ideas for how to improve Muni, but having ideas isn't enough; we need to work together to bring them into practice. To this end, four committees have become active in discussing issues and shaping RM policy. These committees represent a broad range of rider opinion — in keeping with RESCUE MUNI's grassroots, deliberative approach.

For example, hashing out our response to a SPUR proposal for an ballot initiative (possibly for this November) took up a lot of meeting time during the past year. In the end, the posi-

tions developed by the Governance Committee disagree with much of the SPUR proposal, though we have areas of concern that still need more effort. Meanwhile, our Standards Committee helped to develop Muni Service Standards, an important part of any workable governance scheme. Our Metro Committee suggested low- and no-cost changes that could improve service. The resulting RM policies successfully encouraged Muni to add some late-evening and holiday Metro service and to distribute cars leaving Embarcadero Station more evenly. The Membership Committee formed recently with the goal of recruiting members.

Perhaps our major impact on Muni has been the 1997 and '98 surveys (see p. 6). The surveys clear measured one aspect of Muni service tribulations: extremely long waits because of lack of cars, lack of drivers, and lack of common sense.

With all these goings-on, our expenses — especially mailings to members — have been significant. We felt we had to increase our regular annual dues from \$10 to \$15. With the added funding and some fiscal care, we should soon be able to retire the accumulated start-up debt for funds put out by our founders.

We now seem to be recognized as an important voice by the supervisors, and our e-mails and letters are responded to by Muni. This will provide a good start for us to help make Muni a little better next year. ★

# Cast Your Vote

*Howard Strassner explains how to make your voice heard in RESCUE MUNI's elections*

RESCUE MUNI's second annual election is scheduled for the **May 11 general-membership meeting**. Up for grabs will be four spots on RM's Executive Committee, or Excom, the main administrative body of the organization.

All active RM members are eligible to vote. By "active" we mean members who have attended two or more general meetings during the past year or are active on a committee. In addition, active members may vote by mail (see below). Voting will be by secret ballot and votes will be counted by members of the current Excom.

As important as this election is, it is not the only way to make your voice heard in RESCUE MUNI. Each standing committee can appoint a representative to the Steercom, the policy-making body of the organization. We encourage all members to join or start a committee, since the committees are where most of the real work in RM gets done. Moreover, decisions made by the Steercom are subject to approval by the general membership at one of the quarterly meetings.

Candidate résumés are listed below alphabetically. All the candidates were nominated by a standing committee.

## Duties of Excom Members

But first a word from our bylaws, section V-4:

"The Excom shall provide administrative leadership and establish Stand-

ing Rules, administrative structure, and procedures for RESCUE MUNI in order to facilitate the Purposes.

The Excom shall handle all administrative business within the approved budget limits.

The Excom shall set annual and reduced level dues.

The Excom shall collectively coordinate the efforts of RESCUE MUNI Committees to minimize conflict and ensure support of the Purposes.

The Excom shall meet to plan the agenda for the Steercom.

The Excom shall take no policy positions for RESCUE MUNI.

The Excom shall set the agenda for General Membership Meetings.

The Excom shall establish the number of additional Steercom members to be elected.

After each election the Excom members elect RESCUE MUNI officers from their membership to do some of the particular functions listed below. Because the Excom is only nine all-volunteer members, each member/officer must also assist his/her colleagues as required.

Excom members may also serve, if they choose, on the Steering Committee, the RESCUE MUNI policy-forming body."

Because most people want to share in the development of RESCUE MUNI policy positions, the Excom currently meets just before the Steercom meeting.

**Cast your vote** continued from page 5 in a number of political campaigns in the past decade. I have lived in San Francisco for twelve years.

*What I Hope to Accomplish:* Muni needs fundamental change. A customer-focused Muni would put service reliability ahead of political considerations. RESCUE MUNI's service standards are a blueprint for a Muni that serves riders, not well-connected bits of the city bureaucracy. Expanding our membership will allow us to hold the mayor, the supervisors, and Muni's management and labor accountable to those standards.

I think my community, political, and business background can help bring us to full speed.

## Richard Petersen

Lines: N, F, 22, 6.

*Muni activities:* worked on RESCUE MUNI Governance Committee and pushed the campaign to "Fix the Muni" both with a web site and on bumper stickers. Quoted in the *Chronicle's* report on "Commuter Chronicles" that the mayor "should not be re-elected if he is unable to live up to his promise to fix the Muni."

*Background:* BS Physics, worked in marketing, programming, writing, and software publishing. Founded two companies. Interests include art, photography and publishing.

*What I hope to accomplish:* work with other RESCUE MUNI members to assist the organization in becoming a respected voice of riders. My reason for running for the board is to add a voice for the rights of all members in the organization — not just an elite few who seem to want to call all the shots.

I believe that RESCUE MUNI will gain strength and credibility by marshaling all the voices in the community for a well-run public transportation system in San Francisco.

## David Pilpel

Lines: I mainly ride the K, M, and 23 plus sporadically most other Muni lines and regional transit.

I worked for Muni as an intern while in high school and as a paid consultant (briefly) later on. I have been interested in transit issues since that time and have actively participated in transit advocacy for the last 10 years. My major interests are in planning and schedules, with a minor in management and budget.

I am a member of the Sierra Club San Francisco Group Executive, Conservation, and Transportation Committees. I am the Sierra Club Bay Area Transportation Chair, and serve on the Sierra Club San Francisco Bay Chapter Political and Conservation Committees. I have served as Vice President of the San Francisco League of Conservation Voters. I am currently Vice Chair of San Francisco's Sunshine Ordinance Task Force, dealing with access to open meetings and public records.

I am a member of the Rescue Muni Standards and Steering Committees. I believe my direct experience within Muni and political experience outside can help Rescue Muni continue to be able to improve Muni service at little or no increase in cost.

## John Rudolph

Lines: J, 48, 24, 21, 5, 22, 1, F.

*RESCUE MUNI activities:* assist with phone work, mailing, membership, policy formulation; Governance Com

*Continued on next page*

# Sorry, No Drivers Today

Muni says it doesn't have enough drivers. Ken Niemi asks why

Though having enough working vehicles is a regular headache for Muni, an even bigger problem is having enough operators. According to Muni's figures from the first half of 1996, only 20 percent of missed service is due to lack of vehicles. A full 80 percent is due to lack of operators.

Muni officials routinely attribute this to short-staffing. As of last year, they said they needed another 150 operators to meet the scheduled level of service. Leaving aside the issue of whether Muni should be promising service it admits it can't provide, director Emilio Cruz does seem to have a problem in bringing new people on board fast enough. He told RESCUE MUNI he has trouble even replacing the operators who quit or retired.

Why? The blame often falls on the difficult and cumbersome Civil Service hiring process. Muni has the money to hire more employees, but can't actually hire those employees because of red tape. We wonder — along with plenty of other people — why City Hall continues to tolerate this. But what about those things that do fall under Muni's control? Of those operators Muni does have, how many are actually behind the wheel?

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1997, the productive time of Muni operators amounted to only 77 percent of total paid hours. The "miss outs" — the times when drivers just fail to show up for work — get the headlines, but they're actually a relatively minor problem. Employees only went AWOL for

1.1 days per year on average — a mere 0.43 percent of the total work hours. Muni's *Short Range Transit Plan* states, "On most days the number of miss outs in each division is only one."

Nor are vacations a threat to Muni's well-being. The average Muni employee is on vacation only 4 percent of total work hours. This amounts to 10 days, the usual length of a vacation in this country.

## You Don't Look Well

But the figures for sick leave and disability leave are hideous. During the same fiscal year, operators were unavailable to drive nearly 12 days on average because of claimed industrial injuries. That's over two weeks per year. RESCUE MUNI is trying to find out why. For instance, if the problems involve lower back pain from sitting all day, they could be reduced with ergonomic seating and seminars on posture and exercises. If the problems involve accidents, the question becomes: Why do Muni drivers have so many accidents? Are the accidents "at-fault" or not "at-fault"?

As for sick leave, the average operator is unavailable 21 days per year — 8 percent of total hours. This is four weeks: an incredible amount of sick leave. Obviously, if drivers suffer emotional problems, heart conditions, eye strain, or other ailments, they should be on sick leave. Obviously, being an operator is a high-stress job. But these facts don't excuse Muni, the union, and the city from reducing the high cost and daily disruption of sick leave. Maybe a voluntary exercise program and on-site

*Continued on page 14*

## Excom Candidate Résumés

### Eric Carlson

*Lines:* KLM Metro, 14, 22, 24, 33, 37, 38, 42/47/49, F, N, J, Market Street surface lines.

I have been active with RM's Metro Committee since the day we formed.

*Other Muni related activities:* various Cruz community forums, RM's general meetings, letters to editor re Muni, data-gathering for RESCUE MUNI's annual performance surveys, and "Pix Page/SFGate"-type email forums.

*Focuses with RESCUE MUNI:* seemingly simple improvements Muni might do to improve service — system maps in the Metro stations, communications about problems and delays, schedules, explanation of why problems in implementing the ATCS are visited upon passengers instead of the contractor, failure to alternate outbound Metro trains among the various lines.

### Richard Mlynarik

*Lines:* J and many other Muni lines.

I have been interested in transit, urban quality-of-life, and environmental issues my entire life, and have become involved in regional transit advocacy in the last several years. I see vibrant, compact, dense urban development and the transportation infrastructure to support it as basic prerequisites for a sustainable and livable future, and believe them to be perfectly aligned and with and conducive to economic prosperity.

I am a member of the RESCUE MUNI Governance and Metro committees and represent Metro on the Steering Committee. I am actively involved in the campaign to save the Transbay Terminal for bus and rail transit use, and

vow to see the Caltrain line extended into downtown San Francisco. I am an active supporter of RESCUE MUNI, Peninsula Rail 2000, the Alliance for AC Transit, the Regional Alliance for Transit, and the SF Bicycle Coalition.

I believe that not only must public transit have a higher priority and a bigger slice of transportation budgets, but that transit dollars should be spent far more cost-effectively than they are now.

I have lived in San Francisco since 1990 and have never owned a car. I hope Muni will be Rescued so that a car-free life in San Francisco will be viable for all.

### Daniel Murphy

*Lines:* N-Judah, 6-Parnassus, 43-Masonic, 44-O'Shaughnessy, 71-Haight/Noriega

*RESCUE MUNI Activities:* I currently serve on the Executive Committee, where I'm the membership secretary. I also serve as the vice chair of the Steering Committee and chair of the Membership Committee. In the past year, I've brought our membership database up to date, worked on press relations to get coverage of both rider surveys, and generally worked to keep the organization focused on real-world issues that affect Muni riders daily.

*Professional and Community Experience:* I own a small business specializing in demographic and population research, as well as public policy consulting. I am a past president of the Sunset Community Democratic Club. I have been active in many planning and land use issues in my neighborhood (Inner Sunset/Cole Valley), in city and state lesbian and gay rights issues, and

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# 1998 Riders' Survey Results

Has Muni improved? We ran the numbers. *Andrew Sullivan explains.*

In the last year, the San Francisco Municipal Railway (Muni) has attracted a large amount of attention from the press, public, and elected officials. 1997 saw a flurry of activity by the City and Muni management aimed at improving service, including significant budget increases, the introduction of new light-rail vehicles, crackdowns on traffic congestion, and the completion of one portion of the Muni Metro expansion program, the E-Embarcadero line. To assess whether these initiatives are making a difference, RESCUE MUNI conducted the 1998 Muni Riders' Survey in February.

Unfortunately for Muni and its customers, the survey shows quite clearly that **Muni reliability has not improved since 1997, and Muni Metro reliability has significantly declined.** While some lines (and modes) showed improvement, the experience of the Metro rider has gone from bad to worse, particularly at rush hour. This is of particular interest due to recent progress in the Metro construction and car replacement project.

This year's survey participants experienced delays **28%** of the time, slightly more than last year's figure of 25%. (For 28% of all rides taken, the participant waited longer than Muni's total advertised frequency.) This earned Muni a total score of **C**, the same as in 1997. On the Metro, however, **35%** of riders were delayed, almost half again last year's score of 24%; this significant decline earned the Metro a **D**. At rush hour, the Metro was even worse: **57%** of PM rush riders (of all lines) experienced a delay, for example. As we pointed out last year, this means that riders who take Muni to work every day can expect to be delayed every other day, or every day if they transfer; riders who take Metro to work can expect delays three times a week.

Particularly striking was the performance of Muni's above-ground light-rail lines. All

major Metro lines (except the E and the KLM underground between West Portal and Embarcadero) were among the bottom ten, and all but one (the M) were graded **F**. The worst-performing Metro line, the L—"Terrible", delayed its passengers a staggering **53%** of the time, 31 percentage points worse than in 1997, and the others were not far behind. Other modes were less uniform in their performance, with some bus lines doing particularly poorly (the I4-Mission, 41-Union, and 48-24th St/Quintara were all graded **F**) and many other lines, including the F-Market historic streetcar, improving or holding steady since 1997.

## Methodology

This survey attempts to measure Muni's reliability from the rider's perspective. For the first two weeks of February, volunteers recorded how long they waited for the buses and streetcars that they used every day, and a few watched vehicles go by and recorded the headways. **147** volunteers recorded **3004** separate vehicles, over twice the number recorded in 1997.

For each ride, we calculated waiting time and compared it to the frequency advertised in bus shelters. We calculated the percentage of riders delayed, the average waiting time, and the average *normalized waiting time* - waiting time over posted frequency - for each line with at least 20 data points. For data collected by watching vehicles go by (1110 data points), we used a system of weighted averages to calculate these for a hypothetical rider arriving at random. We then assigned grades based on the percentage of riders delayed, and we compared these with the 1997 results.

## Key Findings

### System-wide performance

In 1998, Muni delayed passengers **28%** of the time, slightly more than in 1997. Of the 3004 vehicles tracked, 832 had waiting

# What You Can Do To Rescue Muni

*Late trains, abysmal communication, unsafe buses: You don't have to take it any more, and Howard Strassner explains why*

In an ideal world, Muni would get better on its own.

So welcome to the real world. We need to turn up the heat on our city officials — and to give them positive reinforcement when they do things right. RESCUE MUNI is trying, but here are some areas where we are especially in need of help:

## Form Your Own Bus Committee

The recent survey showed that many bus lines have severe problems. Big surprise. But riders need to do more to bring attention to the woeful buses. That means we need volunteers to help solve problems on their own bus line. The RESCUE MUNI officers are volunteers and they can't do it all by themselves — especially not on lines with which they have little experience. But they can help you to get your own **bus committee** going.

Already we have an active Metro Committee with ten frequent members and some recent successes. Metro's problems are severe and we feel that we have developed a process that should bring improvements to buses, too. Furthermore, the drivers' union has said they'd like to **work with riders** to come up with improvements on specific bus lines.

If you are willing to help Muni serve you better, RM will help you to establish your committee. If you can't come to the general membership meeting, phone me at **661-8786** or e-mail **ruthow@juno.com** with your name,

telephone, and the bus line that you want to rescue.

## Volunteers Needed

Bus committees aren't the only way to help RESCUE MUNI. To volunteer your time, call 273-1558 and leave a message with your name, number, and task you're willing to take on. A Steering Committee member will return your call to get you started. Even a couple of hours can go a long way. Some of the tasks are:

1. Fill out the forms to get **non-profit status** for RESCUE MUNI.
2. Attend **public meetings**, speak out for the riders, and write a summary of what happens.
3. Prepare a monthly **calendar** of the various meetings to be posted on the web site, so that riders know where to go to tell our public officials about our concerns.
4. Put up **posters** for RM when needed. This includes removing posters after a week.
5. Call people to inform them of meetings and direct actions. A **phone tree** is a good way to build up enthusiasm.
6. Give speeches at **neighborhood meetings**. Start with your own group and hand out membership forms.
7. Help put out *Transfer*, write, fold, label, stamp. A little time is needed every quarter.
8. Assist with updating the **web site**, probably a little every week.

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## Rider Comments

As one might expect, riders were generous with their comments on Muni service quality during the service period and in general. Many commented on crowding; we received 263 comments from riders that buses were “crowded,” “SRO,” “full,” “packed,” or “sardines.” 40 participants reported bunching of some sort, and 21 reported that their vehicle was late. Several participants provided positive feedback as well; 40 riders reported that their ride was “good,” “nice,” “great,” or “courteous.”

Many riders reported trouble with Muni: *So overcrowded [it's] unsafe.*

*Total Metro Meltdown!*

*[21 ] The worst! 53 min! 2 leaders missing.*

*[K ] Left 100+ people on platform; no room.*

*[KLM underground] Repeatedly, full cars arrived. PA: “No delays, 30 cars short!”*

Others reported a good experience:

*[21 line] Driver friendly and called out stops.*

*[24 line] Overcrowded, but friendly driver.*

Unlike in 1997, very few participants reported that Muni appeared to be “on its best behavior” during the survey period.

## Action Required

**Metro Improvement:** Muni needs to take a hard look at the effects the Breda, ATCS and MMX projects are having on riders. Has the opening of the E line actually exacerbated car shortages? If so, E service needs to be sharply cut back until Muni has enough cars. Is ATCS making matters worse? If so, Muni should consider putting it on hold until the other problems have been solved. In any case, Muni must refocus its Metro efforts on **delivering the advertised service today** - and if that means delays in the new projects, so be it.

**Traffic:** Transit-only lanes and parking enforcement in transit-rich zones like downtown seem to be working. The City should continue to expand this program; closing a portion of Market Street during rush hour is well worth a try, as is the program to put parking control officers on buses (e.g. the I-California) through heavy-traffic neighborhoods. It is critical, however, that parking enforcement be directed

against vehicles that actually block buses - not cars most likely to meet a ticket quota.

**Budget and Accountability:** An increase in Muni's budget comparable to last year's probably couldn't hurt - but it may not help. The Mayor and Board of Supervisors must assign **real performance standards** to this year's budget to ensure that Muni is spending SF taxpayers' hard-earned dollars properly. In particular, the new superintendents of the various modes should be compensated in part based on standards met: on-time performance, missed runs, safety, and so on. This principle of measurable, enforceable standards is particularly important if Muni should try to raise fares.

## Conclusion

The 1998 Muni Riders' Survey, conducted by 147 volunteers in early February, demonstrates that the San Francisco Municipal Railway has failed to show significant improvement in service reliability since 1997. Riders continue to suffer delays with frustrating regularity; 28% of participants in the survey were so affected, earning the system a grade of **C**. Muni Metro (light-rail) riders had a worse experience, experiencing delays 35% of the time, significantly more than in 1997; the Metro was graded **D**. The problem was particularly acute at rush hour, with 38% of all riders and 57% of Metro riders delayed on their rides home.

So is Muni getting better? We wish we could say yes, but we can't. This has significant policy implications for San Franciscans and their government. Is the current Muni organizational structure appropriate for running a railway? In today's organization, is it even possible for a director of public transportation to demand the kind of accountability that we so clearly need? Can the city be trusted to meet its commitments on the Metro this time, having clearly failed to in 1997? Are the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors, despite their well-documented good intentions, actually getting in the way of real Muni reform? This survey does not attempt to tackle these questions, but a skeptical public has every right to demand the answers. ★

times longer than the frequency advertised on the system map. This represents a slight increase since 1997, when 347 of 1365 rides (25%) were delayed. A statistical t-test found that this difference was not quite significant within a margin of error of 5% ( $P=0.059$ ), leading us to conclude that overall Muni reliability is not significantly different from last year.

## Reliability by mode and time of day

Muni's reliability also varies significantly depending on the mode (type of vehicle) and the time of day. This difference was particularly pronounced when we compared the Muni Metro with other modes. The Metro is substantially less reliable this year, earning a grade of **D** with 35% of riders delayed. In contrast, the collective scores for the bus lines hardly changed at all since 1997 (see Chart 1 on p.8); all were graded **C** last year and this year. One bright point was the F-Market historic streetcar; it improved from a dismal 39% of riders delayed in 1997 to 13%, earning a **B**.

Reliability also varied by time of day (Chart 2, p.8). In particular, Muni was much less reliable at rush hour; when it is the most crowded; 30% of morning and 38% of evening rush-hour riders experienced delays, earning those periods a score of **D**. Half again as many riders were delayed in the evening rush, for example, as were delayed during midday periods (21% delayed, graded C) or evenings and weekends (22% delayed). This contrast was particularly striking with the Metro; as stated above, 36% of riders were delayed in the morning and 57% in the evening rush hours, while only 26% were delayed in the evenings. Expresses were much worse in the mornings (33% late) than in the evenings (22%).

## Severity of delays

We also analyzed the probability of waiting twice or three times posted frequency to assess the severity of the delays that do happen. Even though average frequency might be close to Muni's ideal, many riders wait far beyond the posted time. Overall, Muni riders waited 2x posted frequency 10% of the time and 3x posted frequency

4% of the time, in both cases more than last year. This was much more egregious during the evening rush (16% waited 2x, 8% waited 3x) and on the N-Judah (18% waited 2x frequency, 8% waited 3x). Both of these examples, and the systemwide metric, reflected a decline in reliability since 1997.

## Problem lines (and better lines)

Our analysis found significant differences between different Muni lines, even of the same mode. While systemwide performance rated a C based on the teacher's grading scale, seven lines rated an **F** and five rated a **D**. (We excluded lines for which we received fewer than twenty responses from this analysis.) Lines graded F were the **41-Union, L-Taraval, 14-Mission, J-Church, N-Judah, K-Ingleside**, and **48-24th St/Quintara**, and lines graded D were the **14X-Mission Express, M-Ocean View, 15-Third, 71-Haight/Noriega**, and **24-Divisadero**. The percentage of riders late, and the grade derived from it, are noted on Page 9. Also of note is the average normalized wait time for these lines: with the exception of the K, riders of all lines graded F can expect to wait more than total posted frequency on average, clearly not an acceptable figure.

In contrast, some lines did reasonably well. Only two of 36 lines, the **2-Clement** and **44-O'Shaughnessy**, were graded A this year; however, eight lines were graded B, including the **F-Market, 7-Haight**, and the **underground (KLM)** portion of the Muni Metro. On these lines, passengers were not often delayed, and they did not typically wait very long; riders on all lines graded B or A except the 7 waited less than 60% of the posted frequency on average. The 2-Clement stands out: not only were only 9% of riders delayed, riders waited less than half (44%) the posted frequency on average.

A complete listing of measured lines is provided on Page 9. Detailed analysis of line reliability can be found in the full survey report, available on our web site.

# 1998 Muni Riders' Survey: Results at a Glance

Chart 1: Percentage of riders delayed (by mode)

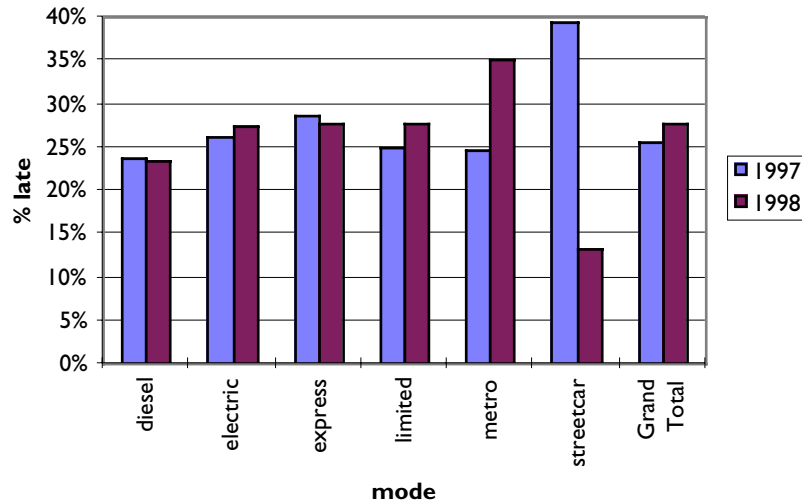
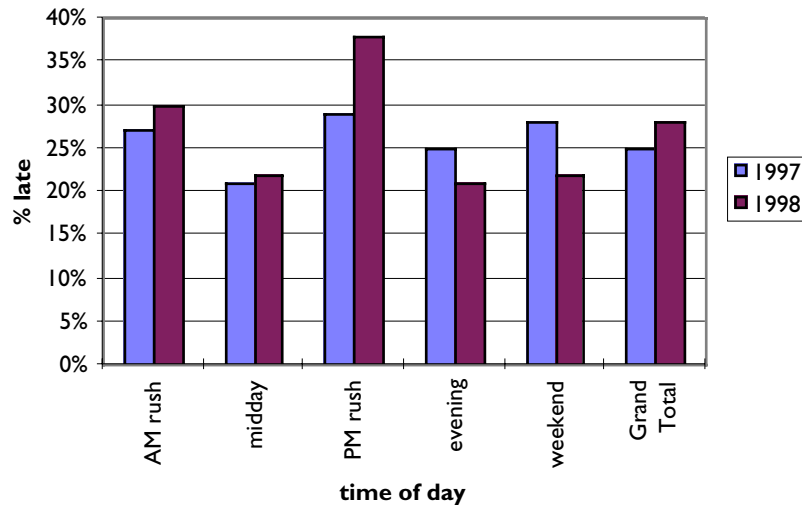


Chart 2: Percentage of riders delayed (by time of day)



# 1998 Muni Riders' Survey: Lines Compared

route	% late	grade	1997 % late	1997 grade	change in % late	avg wait time	avg norm wait time	total responses
41	63%	F				0:07	163%	25
L	53%	F	22%	C	<b>+31%</b>	0:13	168%	86
14	51%	F	33%*	*		0:06	157%	59
J	42%	F	22%	C	<b>+20%</b>	0:10	138%	111
N	42%	F	33%	D	<b>+9%</b>	0:10	123%	199
K	41%	F	27%	C	<b>+14%</b>	0:09	93%	39
48	40%	F	42%*	*		0:13	100%	47
14X	32%	D	0%*	*		0:08	97%	22
M	31%	D	30%	C	<b>+2%</b>	0:09	92%	112
15	31%	D	34%	D	<b>-3%</b>	0:06	91%	45
71	31%	D	25%	C	<b>+6%</b>	0:11	108%	48
24	30%	D	23%	C	<b>+7%</b>	0:09	86%	102
21	30%	C	22%	C	<b>+7%</b>	0:08	93%	127
49	29%	C	12%*	*		0:08	69%	46
22	29%	C	55%	F	<b>-26%</b>	0:08	108%	35
38L	29%	C	25%*	C		0:04	80%	147
5	28%	C	16%	C	<b>+12%</b>	0:05	82%	120
9	27%	C	19%*	*		0:07	81%	74
31	27%	C	22%*	*		0:08	75%	65
38	26%	C	27%	C	<b>-2%</b>	0:04	74%	174
42	25%	C	21%*	*		0:08	72%	52
1	23%	C	43%	F	<b>-20%</b>	0:06	72%	40
43	23%	C	23%	C	<b>0%</b>	0:08	66%	122
19	22%	C	42%	F	<b>-20%</b>	0:08	77%	27
6	21%	C	9%	A	<b>+12%</b>	0:07	67%	96
30	21%	C	33%	D	<b>-12%</b>	0:04	79%	81
30X	20%	B	8%*	*		0:03	61%	63
7	19%	B	0%*	*		0:06	65%	65
45	16%	B	22%*	*		0:05	54%	60
37	15%	B	0%*	*		0:10	47%	20
KLM†	14%	B	7%	A	<b>+7%</b>	0:06	56%	132
28	14%	B	19%	B		0:06	53%	33
F	13%	B	39%	D	<b>-26%</b>	0:06	54%	79
E	12%	B	N/A	N/A		0:06	55%	33
2	9%	A	33%*	*		0:06	44%	49
44	9%	A	31%	D	<b>-22%</b>	0:07	51%	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>+2%</b>	<b>0:08</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>3004</b>

\* This line had insufficient data in 1997, so the comparison is not valid.

† This is the underground section of the Muni Metro.