



Published in the

**POLITICO** NEW YORK

## Dinapoli Provides Fodder for Both Sides in MTA Funding Fight

By Dana Rubinstein

September 29, 2015

State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli released a report on Tuesday that has something for every combatant in the war over how to fund mass transit in the New York City region.

For Governor Andrew Cuomo, the MTA he controls and the Transport Workers Union, which has acted as his proxy on this issue, there's data showing that New York City's proposed contribution to the \$30 billion, five-year capital plan falls on the low end of the historical range.

"Facts are facts, and the facts in this report make clear it is long past time for the city to contribute its fair share to the MTA Capital Program," said MTA spokesman Adam Lisberg.

"This report reveals that city contributions to the incredibly important MTA Capital Plan have been irresponsibly low," agreed TWU Local 100 president John Samuelsen.

The city tends to point out that city residents already foot the bulk of the MTA's expenses, through taxes and fares, an assertion backed by the Citizens Budget Commission.

The governor's office didn't comment on DiNapoli's report, though its positions on funding distribution have been articulated in the current fight with the city by the MTA and Samuelsen.

For Mayor Bill de Blasio, who met the MTA's initial demand for a city contribution hike only to be met with new ones, the report lends credence to his concerns that the governor's promise of a \$8.3 billion toward the program is just that, a promise.

De Blasio spokeswoman Amy Spitalnick said that any "fair and responsible" funding framework would include both "identifying where the promised State funds will come from," and "returning the \$270 million that [the state] has been raided from the MTA and committing to no further raids."

Nicole Gelinas, a transportation expert at the right-leaning Manhattan Institute, said, "The two most important takeaways are, first, despite the governor's words, the state has not at all legally committed money to the capital plan. The governor needs the state Legislature's approval for MTA funding, and even a pledge of general revenues is dependent year-to-year on the economy. So de Blasio, while he should put up his portion of the funding, is completely correct to insist that the governor first explain where the state money is coming from."

Gelinas' second takeaway?



Published in the

# POLITICO NEW YORK

“The report reminds us that the terrible labor deals that the governor allowed the MTA to do with the unions are taking away from capital spending,” she emailed.

The report warns that the MTA has a rocky road ahead of it, especially if it doesn’t get the funding it is requesting for its capital plan.

“If the MTA doesn’t get the funding it needs, the MTA will have to choose between cutting the size of the capital program or borrowing more, which could lead to less reliable service or higher fares and tolls,” DiNapoli said, in a statement.

That is, less reliable service than the not-that-reliable service the MTA is already providing.

“Subway car reliability has fallen by 18 percent over the past three years, although there was some improvement during the first seven months of 2015,” notes the report.