



CITIZENS UNION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Testimony to the NYC Council Governmental Operations and
Oversight & Investigations Committees
on the Structure and Content of the Mayor's Management Report
December 10, 2014

Good morning Chairs Kallos and Gentile, and other members of the Council Governmental Operations and Oversight & Investigations Committees. My name is Rachael Fauss, and I am the Director for Public Policy for Citizens Union of the City of New York. Citizens Union is a nonpartisan good government group dedicated to making democracy work for all New Yorkers. Citizens Union serves as a civic watchdog, combating corruption and fighting for political reform.

Thank you for the invitation to testify today about the 2014 Mayor's Management Report (MMR). Citizens Union has been previously engaged on this issue, having testified before the Governmental Operations Committee in 2011 and 2012 at similar oversight hearings, and served on the Mayor's Management Report Roundtable convened by the Mayor's Office of Operations in 2012. The Roundtable's goal was to redesign the MMR to make it more user-friendly to the public and more effective as a measurement of agency performance.

Having looked back at our previous recommendations, the MMR has seen some notable changes in recent years, including:

1. Cross-agency evaluation of mayoral initiatives, as newly seen this year for Universal Pre-K and Vision Zero, among other ongoing initiatives such as the Young Men's Initiative (2012 and ongoing);
2. Inclusion of data from the City Board of Elections as pulled from the board's annual report (beginning 2013); and
3. Agency goals are established and listed in the agency chapters (2012 and ongoing).

One notable change from 2013 to the 2014 report is the deletion of what was a new section – the "How is NYC Government Doing?" section that summarized key information from agencies in the introduction. We saw this change as positive in 2013, and in looking to a 2015 MMR would recommend that top-level information be summarized in a manner similar to 2013 for easier public understanding.

We are also pleased that the Council is holding this oversight hearing, and making the topic on the specific content of the MMR, per CU's recommendations in 2012 to allow the public the opportunity to comment on the content and metrics that should be included.

Looking at further changes, Citizens Union recommends the following be addressed in the 2015 MMR:

- 1. Performance targets** were too often blank in 2014, as in previous years, and should be completed by agencies;
- 2. More detailed budgetary information** should be included for each agency's programs if not its goals in the MMR;
- 3. The Council should pass Int. No. 302 (Lander) requiring the Board of Elections in the City of New York to report performance data** to the Council for inclusion in the Mayor's Management Report; and
- 4. The MMR should include important good government, cross-agency initiatives such as:**
 - Inclusion of data on the open data portal
 - Agency Compliance with the Pro-Voter Law
 - Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) Responses
 - Meetings webcast or recorded

A more detailed description of our recommendations is provided below.

1. Setting of Additional Performance Targets

As Citizens Union noted in its testimony in 2012, the MMR should reflect agency targets for each performance statistic, where appropriate. We recognize that there are areas where the "desired direction" of the agency is "neutral," rather than an improvement to decrease responses times, or increase number of New Yorkers, served, for example. In general, Citizens Union believes that if the data is important enough to be tracked in the MMR and there is a desire to improve upon the data, the setting of specific goals seems appropriate.

We are pleased, however, that the Critical Indicators for each agency in which there is a desired change (rather than a neutral position) appear to have had targets set.

2. Provision of More Detailed Budgetary Information

Citizens Union also believes more detailed budget information should be included in the MMR to accurately measure the effectiveness of each agency. While general budget information is provided for each agency - including expenditures, revenues, personnel costs, capital and overtime expenditures - there is no way to tell if service delivery reflects dollars well spent. The MMR and PMMR should provide detailed budget information for each agency service delivery goal established. This would enable the Mayor and Council during its budget hearings to determine the levels of funding appropriate for each service delivery goal agencies are trying to achieve.

Citizens Union understands that other budget documents produced by the Council and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) contain more detailed financial information

for agencies. However, those documents do not measure performance. We cannot stress enough the need for OMB to make detailed agency spending that is linked to actual program performance more transparent and accessible to the public, and the MMR is one important way to deliver this information.

3. Passage of Int. No. 302 (Lander) requiring the Board of Elections in the City of New York to report data for the MMR

Citizens Union renews its call for the Council to require the Board of Elections in the City of New York (Board) to report the data requested in the MMR. While we recognize that the Board of Elections is reporting data in its annual report in a format that better allows the Mayor's Office of Operations to include data in the PMMR and MMR, there is currently no formal mechanism for performance metrics to be created and the resulting data monitored.

Citizens Union drafted this legislation in the previous Council session with Councilmember Brad Lander, which would require the Board to report to the Council data conforming to the metrics in the MMR and PMMR. The Council would, at its discretion, report the Board's data to the Mayor's Office for inclusion in these reports. This proposal is permissible under state law as the Council is the Board's oversight authority and the recipient of the board's annual report, another performance assessment report. The Council also has a long track record of requesting and receiving information from the Board as a part of the budget process.

4. Inclusion of Cross-Agency, Good Government Initiatives

Citizens Union has been pleased that the City Council has passed several important pieces of legislation in the last several years, including the Open Data Law, Webcasting Law, and, most recently, reforms to the city's Pro-Voter Law. For each of these areas, the Council has engaged in oversight, and advocacy organizations have also been interested in tracking implementation of these laws.

Another area important to transparency and accountability that warrants monitoring and tracking is the city's responses to Freedom of Information requests (though it should be noted that Citizens Union also supports passage of legislation sponsored by Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, and Councilmembers Kallos and Vacca to create an OpenFOIL tracker, Intro 328).

Similar to the cross-initiatives tracked in the beginning of the MMR, we believe that these good government metrics also deserve inclusion for each relevant agency.

Thank you again for providing the opportunity for Citizens Union to provide its thoughts on the 2014 Mayor's Management Report. I am happy to answer any questions you might have.