

## Report says N.J. Transit's Super Bowl job just fine

The Associated Press By The Associated Press

on August 09, 2014 at 3:00 AM

NEWARK — A report released yesterday on New Jersey Transit's Super Bowl performance describes confusion on the ground and disagreement among top officials as train delays worsened, but praised the agency's overall performance.

The 148-page report was commissioned by NJ Transit's board of directors and prepared by the law firm of McElroy, Deutsch, Mulvaney and Carpenter. The agency was criticized after fans had to wait hours after the end of the game at MetLife Stadium because of overcrowding. More than 33,000 took trains back to Secaucus Junction after the game, more than double pre-game estimates.

"Running at optimum efficiency, the rail system can carry 35,264 passengers out of MetLife Stadium in approximately two and a half to three hours," the report said. "Due to some glitches, it took a little longer, but NJ TRANSIT still safely cleared all post-game passengers in three and a half hours."

The report described an emergency conference call convened at 6 p.m., just before the game started and after fans had flocked into Secaucus Junction station en route to the game, causing massive overcrowding and congestion. During the 40-minute call, a disagreement surfaced between state transportation Commissioner James Simpson and NJ Transit Executive Director James Weinstein over what to do with 300 buses waiting for when fans left the game.

Weinstein was more concerned about repeat overcrowding at Secaucus and wanted buses moved there, the report said, while Simpson advocated using the buses to augment rail service from the stadium. Simpson deferred, and the buses went to Secaucus. Weinstein only deployed 100 buses back to MetLife Stadium after being "strongly urged" to do so by Christopher Porrino, Gov. Chris Christie's chief counsel, according to the report.

The report concluded that one of NJ Transit's reasons for not moving the buses to the stadium earlier or in greater numbers was that officials felt they wouldn't have had a significant effect on wait times due to the configuration of the loading area. There also was concern that moving all the buses to the stadium would leave the agency vulnerable if an emergency occurred elsewhere in NJ Transit's rail system.

— THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

© 2014 NJ.com. All rights reserved.