

**Questions for Mr. Eric Gilbert**  
**Questions from Chairman Gerald E. Connolly**  
Subcommittee on Government Operations

February 14, 2022, Hearing: “Waiting on the Mail: Postal Service Standard Drops in Baltimore and the Surrounding Area”

---

1. Baltimore has more often than not underperformed the rest of the nation for Single-Piece First-Class Mail since fiscal year 2014. Why has Baltimore mail delivery performance remained below the nationwide average for so long?

**Response:**

**The overall reason why it was historically low and now better is due to investments made in 2021. Postal leadership approved investments in people, processing capacity and facility space that allowed for more success.**

**Similar to other markets across the nation, there are a variety of internal and external factors that impact Single-Piece First Class Mail Performance, such as:**

- **Staffing – both the number of employees on rolls and daily employee availability**
- **Processing capacity**
- **Constrained facility space – processing, logistics and carrier annexes were opened in 2021**
- **Operating plan – when mail is scheduled to be processed and delivered**
- **Contracted transportation – both air and surface – limited air capacity offered, truck driver shortages**

**USPS has and is continuously addressing these factors from, first mile to last mile, to improve service to our customers.**

2. During Christmas week, Baltimore’s on-time delivery rate for First-Class Mail jumped from around 30% in 2020 to 80% in 2021.<sup>1</sup> What changes enabled Baltimore to improve its delivery performance so drastically during the most recent peak season?

**Response:**

**As described in my testimony, like the rest of the country, we focused on adding employees and expanding our package processing capabilities. In the City of Baltimore, between October and December 2021, we hired 267 total employees, including 231 CCAs, 23 holiday clerk assistants, 7 PSEs, and 6 RCAs. To support processing operations, we hired an additional 399 employees during this same period.**

**We established 5 new delivery annexes in the City of Baltimore and began moving package volume to those sites on November 6 to be run separately from normal delivery operations. In Maryland, we also leased additional space in Baltimore and Forestville for Package Sorting Annexes and added six package sorting machines to increase processing capacity.**

**These annexes allowed us to provide more consistent mail and package delivery for customers by alleviating space constraints in our regular delivery units, improving package sortation, and providing more flexibility. In addition, we conducted 6:00 to 9:00 a.m. package delivery runs in all Baltimore City delivery units to ensure timely package delivery and early carrier return.**

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Postal Service, *Service Performance- Market Dominant Products Weekly Through Week 01-28*.

3. The Postal Service Office of the Inspector General (OIG) offered seven recommendations in its audit report titled “Mail Delivery and Customer Service Operations – Select Baltimore Units, Baltimore, MD,” three of which are still open:
  - a. the OIG’s third recommendation to “open another city carrier training academy to efficiently train new carriers as they are hired;”
  - b. the OIG’s sixth recommendation to “develop and implement a plan to ensure all delayed mail is reported daily in the Customer Service Daily Reporting System and monitor for accuracy;” and
  - c. the OIG’s seventh recommendation to “develop and implement a plan to monitor and ensure compliance with package scanning and handling procedures.”

For each of the open recommendations listed above, please provide:

- An explanation for Baltimore’s performance on the issue that led to the recommendation, including the unique challenges Baltimore faces compared to the rest of the nation;
- The steps you have taken to close the recommendation;
- The steps you plan to take to close the recommendation; and
- Challenges you expect to encounter as you work to close the recommendation.

**Response:**

**After providing sufficient documents to the OIG, the above recommendations have been closed.**

- a) **This recommendation is closed. Currently, we have a Driver Training Course in the Baltimore Incoming Mail Facility, which is capable of training 18 carriers per week. A new Driver Training Course opened at the Nottingham Station in Baltimore to reduce the cycle time between a carrier's onboarding date and training date. Nottingham Station is capable of training 14 carriers a week, and training started on November 29, 2021. If we have more new hires in the city of Baltimore than our capacity, we will utilize available training courses across the Maryland District.**
  - b) **This recommendation is closed. Effective on March 25, 2022, the Daily Condition Visualization (DCV) replaced the antiquated Customer Service Daily Reporting System (CSDRS). Given its enhanced capabilities, DCV will be able to better support the accuracy of Manual Line Items being entered by the delivery units. In Baltimore, the Managers, Customer Service Operations (MCSOs) are required to perform daily virtual Gemba's if they cannot physically be in a unit to ensure accuracy of reported conditions within DCV. Photos are sent to the Postmaster daily for validation.**
  - c) **This recommendation is closed. Reports that monitor proper package scanning and handling procedures are pulled daily and sent to the field. This includes the *All Scanning Performance*, *Scanning Integrity*, and *Arrival at Unit No Stop The Clock* (AAU No STC) reports. Follow up for vital units on these reports is completed by the MCSOs and reported to the Postmaster daily. To ensure compliance and understanding of tools being sent, a weekly training is provided to the entire District every Tuesday. Recordings of the training are posted on the District Website.**
4. According to the same OIG audit report, the Baltimore area has a complement coordinator, and Baltimore units hold weekly complement meetings.

- a. Please describe the role of the Complement Coordinator.

**Response:**

**The Complement Coordinator leads District management in the development, analysis, and submission of staffing reports to generate and execute strategic workforce plans that incorporate business needs and account for immediate and long-term staffing requirements. To assist management in the review of staffing and complement reports. Provides recommendations on staffing, capacity and productivity**

**options that will increase the effectiveness and efficiency.**

- b. Please describe the purpose of the weekly complement meetings.

**Response:**

**Weekly complement meetings are held to discuss immediate and long-term staffing requirements, to assist management in reviewing complement reports, and to mitigate “On the Rolls Not Available” (ORNA) removals and approved staffing at the individual unit level.**

- c. At weekly complement meetings, are specific strategies for addressing attendance issues discussed? Please describe the strategies that management has identified as most effective in these meetings.

**Response: As provided in our closing response to the OIG, effective November 4, 2021, weekly attendance telecons are held with the Attendance Control Officer and Baltimore city leadership. Bi-weekly complement calls have been changed to weekly calls to enhance focus on Zero Workhours, ORNA, and removals/separations. As a result, we have reduced ORNA by 15 employees, and maintained the existing level of zero workhours as our On the Rolls complement increased.**

- d. What specific metrics, if any, does management use to identify these most effective strategies?

**Response:**

**The daily monitoring of Employee Availability percentage, attrition percentage and total number of new hires onboarded is discussed, with anticipated dates for replacement employee(s) to report to their work facilities.**

- e. Has the Baltimore Postal district seen improvement in attendance over the past year? Please provide specific datapoints that support your assertion.

**Response:**

**We have seen an improvement in attendance since the expiration of the EFEL benefit, with Baltimore employee availability averaging between 75.3 and 79.6 percent.**

5. Does the Baltimore Postal district track customer satisfaction on a local or regional basis? If so, what does that data say about the experience of

BaltimorePostal customers today? Please describe how both quantitative and qualitative customer satisfaction data, including customer complaints, inform the decisionsyou make as Baltimore’s Executive Postmaster.

**Response:**

**Baltimore customers’ overall satisfaction is 47.83% with the Maryland district satisfaction at 63.61% overall Quarter 2 to date. Baltimore’s customers are telling me overall, that we still have opportunity on improving delivery performance based on customer response. Improving performance is the daily communication to the entire delivery staff and our weekly performance is shared during site visits and weekly conference calls.**

District ^	# of Respon...	OSAT	Packages delivered in good condition	Packages delivered to correct address	Packages received by date expected	Missed package delivery instructi... clear	Mail delivered in good condition	Mail delivered to correct address	Letter carriers friendly/...	Interact... feeling	Feel like a valued customer
MARYLAND	1,003	63.61%	85.16%	77.48%	62.08%	61.88%	83.65%	71.16%	83.83%	71.80%	57.53%

**Baltimore City**

<u>200-A</u>	184	47.83%	78.70%	70.48%	41.92%	56.57%	79.31%	63.37%	79.27%	57.58%	41.32%
--------------	-----	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------

6. During the February 14, 2022, hearing, Mr. Chuck Metzger asked, “Why [hasn’t ReBUILD Metro] received 480 pieces of water bills from the beginning of the year?” You responded,

Well, I can directly tell you, sir, that I myself went and surveyed the delivery route that falls for your delivery address, and that route is 100% current. There is no mail staged or warehoused within that facility. So if we received it, we delivered it.

Your response implies that the delivery units you oversee never received the water bills addressed to Mr. Metzger’s employer, ReBUILD Metro.

- a. What might explain Mr. Metzger’s missing and delayed mail? Please list the people and facilities that would handle a mailpiece addressed to someone in the city of Baltimore once the mailpiece enters the city of Baltimore and before it arrives at one of your delivery units. If not you, who is in charge of the mailpiece at each of these key touchpoints?

**Response:**

**When mail is collected or deposited, it is separated by mail type then transported to the mail processing facilities which could enter multiple facilities depending on its origin. Baltimore Processing & Distribution Center Plant Manager Nat Gramblin or the Incoming Mail Facility Plant Manager Damone Williams are responsible for Baltimore city once that mail enters the City of Baltimore and before it arrives at the delivery units. Mailpieces are sorted on mail processing equipment based on mail type and handled by mail processing clerks or mail handlers in those facilities. Once inducted into the Postal Service network, mail is sorted to the finest depth for destination to delivery facilities by ZIP Code.**

- b. Describe the process Mr. Metzger and other customers with missing mail should follow to alert postal officials of delivery problems in their area.  
How can these customers recover their lost mail and avoid the late fees and reputational damage that can occur when mail is late or undelivered?

**Response:**

**All customers are encouraged to contact their local delivery unit manager or file delivery issue concerns on the postal website at [usps.com](https://usps.com). This will allow a case number to be created with specific issues documented for review and appropriate follow up.**

7. As highlighted in the hearing, the inoperable tray management system at the Baltimore P&DC adds two hours to the moving of mail each day, likely contributing to delayed mail and decreased customer satisfaction across the Baltimore region. Despite its impact on your customers, you emphasized that repairing the Baltimore P&DC's tray management system "doesn't fall within [your] purview" as Baltimore Executive Postmaster, which oversees delivery and retail.

But presumably, to achieve optimal service performance in the Baltimore region requires consistent and actionable coordination between Postal entities, including between management at Baltimore's delivery units and P&DC.

- a. In what capacity do you communicate and coordinate with management at the Baltimore P&DC, including the Plant Manager?

**Response:**

**We have conference calls twice a day to discuss mail conditions, the flow of mail to the units within Baltimore and what issues impacted the movement of the mail, if any. We also discuss service scores and our opportunity lanes.**

- b. If a customer complains about delayed mail, and you believe that the cause of the delayed mail is not under your purview, what steps do you take? Please describe the process Baltimore's delivery units follow to address customer complaints no matter the presumed origin of the delay. How do you ensure that every single customer complaint is addressed fully and in a timely manner?

**Response:**

**Baltimore delivery units must provide written responses to all customers complaints for which a case number has been assigned when reported via usps.com or the 1-800 customer service number. The follow up and the quality closure of cases is tracked and logged through our national tracking system by residential or business name, address and case number.**