



**January 14, 2013**

## **Ex-Transit Chief Lhota Heads Toward NY Mayoral Run**

NEW YORK — The former transit official who led the New York City subway system's recovery from Superstorm Sandy is now looking to lead the city itself.

Former Metropolitan Transportation Authority Chairman Joseph Lhota said Monday he aimed to file papers this week to run for mayor, declining to discuss his plans further until his candidacy was official.

Lhota's potential entry into the race has been a hot topic of political chatter since the Oct. 29 storm, which brought him praise for the MTA's bounceback from the worst flooding in the transit system's history. Some buses began running the day after the storm arrived, and some subway service resumed within three days.

Lhota resigned as the agency's chief last month to explore a mayoral run.

"I would not have left the MTA, a job and position that I loved, if I was not going to run for mayor of New York," he told members of the New York Building Congress on Monday, before elaborating to reporters about his filing plans.

In a speech focused on the MTA's Sandy response, he credited teamwork among employees and said much of his focus during his year there had been on improving the image of an agency that often had been seen as beleaguered and ineffective.

If New Yorkers think better of the MTA now, "imagine what I can do in my future with a much more complex organization," he said.

Lhota, a Republican whose wife is a prominent fundraiser for the party, is seen as an experienced governmental hand who would be an attractive candidate to business leaders, a point underscored by his speech Monday to the building group. After working as a deputy mayor and budget director under former Mayor Rudy Giuliani, Lhota went into investment banking and was an executive at the company that runs Madison Square Garden.

Giuliani has publicly urged him to run, telling NY1 TV last week that Lhota would be "very good for the city."

Lhota is a Republican in a city where registered Democrats outnumber Republicans by more than 6 to 1, though no Democrat has won the mayor's seat since David Dinkins in 1989.

Lhota also faces the challenge of a field that already includes a roster of other declared and likely Republican, Democratic and unaffiliated candidates seeking to succeed Republican-turned-independent Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who is term-limited.

Announced and likely Democratic contenders include former city Councilman Sal Albanese, Public Advocate Bill de Blasio, Comptroller John Liu, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and former Comptroller Bill Thompson. Declared and potential Republican candidates include Tom Allon, a publisher; billionaire grocery store chain owner John Catsimatidis; and George McDonald, the head of a nonprofit that helps homeless people. Former Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion, a former Democrat who is now unaffiliated, might run as an independent on the Republican line.

And whatever the kudos for the MTA under Lhota's leadership, the agency also has gotten knocks for fare increases in recent years, including one on the day he announced his resignation. Lhota and other board members said they had no choice because the agency wasn't getting as much money as it needed from the state.