



NYPIRG

Straphangers Campaign

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NEWS RELEASE

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Top Ten Lists for City Subways and Buses in 2015

The NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign today released its annual best and worst top ten lists for New York City subways and buses.

“On truly bad days, a subway and bus ride can feel like surviving the ten plagues,” said Gene Russianoff, staff attorney for the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign. “On good days, navigating the system is thankfully less daunting, but always challenging.”

Here are the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign’s best and worst top ten lists for New York City subways and buses in 2015.

The best moment of the year? An agreement on a 5-year, \$26 billion capital program to invest in the future of New York City, backed by Governor Cuomo’s pledge.

The worst? Declining service and higher fares.

Top Ten Best List for New York City Subways and Buses in 2015

1. The best transit moment of 2015 was reaching an agreement on a 5-year, \$26 billion capital program to invest in the future of New York transit, backed by Governor Cuomo's pledge.
2. As part of the deal, the City of New York agrees to quadruple its support of MTA rebuilding to \$2.5 billion, as this trillion-dollar asset is key to New York City's economy and quality of life.
3. Veronique "Ronnie" Hakim is chosen president of New York City Transit, which operates the city's buses and subways. A respected 20-year MTA veteran, she's the first woman to hold this key post.
4. MTA starts new bus routes in Brooklyn and Queens like the non-stop Q70 Limited between LaGuardia Airport and the subway.
5. The City is on target to meet its pledge of 20 Select Bus Service routes by 2017. Recent additions: M86 SBS crosstown in Manhattan and Q44 SBS serving Jamaica, Flushing and the Bronx.
6. A record year: 6,217,621 riders enter subways on Thursday, October 29, 2015.
7. In encyclical, Pope Francis laments that transit riders must put up with "undignified conditions due to crowding, inconvenience, infrequent service and lack of safety."¹
8. Developer SL Green agrees to spend \$220 million improving an overcrowded Grand Central subway station in exchange for zoning permitting greater density.
9. The first new subway station since 1989 opens at 11th Avenue and West 34th Street on the 7.
10. MTA Chairman Tom Prendergast asks MTA staff to be more open to outside ideas. Recently, two riders groups have proposed: 1) the "Freedom Ticket," which would be good for unlimited rail, subway, and bus trips within the city; and 2); and a free shuttle between the subways and LaGuardia Airport (Riders Alliance.)

¹ Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

Top Ten Worst List in 2015 for New York City Subways and Buses

1. The subways are in a slump, say both riders and the MTA's own performance measures. The ability to respond is limited by the system's age and needed resources.
2. Chief among riders' complaints: severe crowding. NYC Transit admits: "We are seeing a system that is bursting at the seams in terms of increased ridership."²
3. In March, the MTA raised fares on subways and buses by a quarter, to \$2.75, and the cost of a 30-day MetroCard by \$4.50 to \$116.50.
4. MTA proposes to ban all "political" ads from City's buses, trains and stations, continuing the agency's long hostility towards free speech in the subways.
5. In the past year, subway riders were less satisfied: 74% o.k. with service now, down from 78% in 2014. Lower marks on frequency and reliability, finds the MTA's survey.
6. The front car of a G-train carrying 150 passengers derailed south of the Hoyt-Schermerhorn station in downtown Brooklyn, resulting in minor injuries.
7. Viral sensation "Pizza Rat" drags a slice on the subway, instantly capturing the darker imaginations of riders.
8. No new cars on the J/Z until 2022 following upstate manufacture Bombardier's announcement of design and financial problems. This delay will cost the MTA \$50 million.
9. Labor unrest roils MTA's paratransit Call Center. Complaints by workers against private contractor range from bedbugs to wages, which run \$9 to \$11 an hour.
10. The tragedy of pedestrians being hit by buses continued in 2015. One response: new buses that further reduce conflicts by addressing a blind spot drivers have long bemoaned. Another: legislation clarifying who has the right of way.

It should be noted that in February, a northbound Metro-North train hit a passenger vehicle at a crossing in Valhalla in Westchester County, killing six and injuring fifteen. It was the deadliest crash in Metro-North history. While the Campaign's top ten lists focus on New York City subways and buses, we thought it appropriate to note this tragic crash and to remember its victims.

² Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/20/nyregion/delays-and-costs-agitate-mta-riders-in-a-system-bursting-at-the-seams.html>.