

# Methodology: 2007 Pokey Awards

This report is intended as a follow-up to the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign's five previous *Pokey Award* reports issued in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006. The methodology used by the Campaign in this report is identical to the ones used in 2005 and 2006.<sup>1</sup>

## *Selection of Routes*

Routes included in our sample are identical to those surveyed in our 2005 and 2006 reports; they had been selected on the basis of slow performance as reported in 2004. The sample includes the ten slowest routes system wide, plus the three slowest from each borough. As the ten slowest in 2004 were all Manhattan routes, our sample included three routes each from the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island.

Due to significant differences between route patterns of the Manhattan M14A and M14D, these routes were measured separately. In total then, our sample includes 23 local bus routes.

## *Bus Speed Measurement*

Surveys were conducted by four Straphangers Campaign staff members and nine volunteers, between May 22 and October 11, 2007. Each route was measured with an actual trip in both directions<sup>2</sup> beginning with the first bus departing from a terminus after 12:00 noon. The return trip was made from the second terminus back to the first on the next available bus.

During each trip, surveyors recorded to the second the amount of time taken from terminus to terminus in each direction. Timing began as each bus pulled out of the first stop and concluded immediately after stopping at the last. In our analysis, times were rounded down to the minute and converted to a fraction of an hour. Distances covered were measured to the nearest 1/100<sup>th</sup> mile using GIS software.

Bus speeds were calculated by dividing the number of miles per trip by the fraction of the hour taken to cover that distance. For each route, the bus speed cited in this report is an average of the speeds calculated for each direction on the route. Below is an example of how this methodology was applied to a sample route, Staten Island's S61.

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<sup>1</sup>The 2005 Pokey awards methodology represented a significant departure from the one used in the 2002-2004 reports. In previous reports, Straphangers Campaign relied on MTA New York City Transit schedules to determine average local bus speeds. In the 2005 report, we decided to measure distances and times recorded from actual trips conducted by Campaign staff.

<sup>2</sup> Due to its unusual route pattern, the Staten Island S60 was measured in one closed loop, departing from the terminus at Seneca Avenue and Victory Boulevard and returning to the same location.

*Sample Calculation—S61*

Bus speeds on the S61 were measured on July 9, 2007. Surveyors boarded a westbound S61 which pulled out of its terminus at St. George Ferry at 12:03:07 PM. The bus came to a stop at its western terminus—Yukon Avenue and Forest Hill Road at 12:52:00 PM. This trip represents a distance of 9.33 miles, which was covered in 48 minutes, 53 seconds—48 minutes when rounded down. To the nearest 1/100<sup>th</sup>, this represents 0.80 hours. Westbound speed on the S61 then was calculated as  $9.33/0.80$ , or 11.7 miles per hour.

Immediately following their westbound measurement, surveyors boarded the next eastbound S61 at its western terminus. The trip began at 1:34:24 PM and concluded at 2:23:41 PM at the eastern terminus, St. George Ferry. The eastbound trip represents a distance of 9.63 miles, which was covered over 0.82 hours—a speed of 11.7 miles per hour.

This report cites an average of the west- and eastbound speeds on routes surveyed. For the S61, this speed averages out to 11.7 miles per hour.

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