



NYPIRG **Straphangers Campaign**

A project of the New York Public Interest Research Group Fund

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NEWS RELEASE

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Top Ten Worst and Best Events for City Subways and Buses in 2013

The NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign today released its annual list of the top ten worst and best events in 2013 for New York City subways and buses.

“The year was – and for years to come will likely be – dominated by the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy,” said Gene Russianoff, staff attorney for the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign.

The full lists follow this release. You can also go to: www.straphangers.org/bestworst2013.

Among the worst events for city transit, the group pointed to “a seemingly endless parade” of major reconstruction projects in Superstorm Sandy’s wake, including: the R tunnel between Brooklyn and Manhattan closes for 14 months of repairs (after months of signal failures and delays). And work begins to rebuild the destroyed South Ferry station, which was just fixed in 2006. And there’s the flood “mitigation” for seven downtown Manhattan stations. And the G tunnel closes on many weekends...

Among the best events for city transit, the group pointed to the continued expansion of Select Bus Service. SBS speeds pokey buses with such features as riders paying fares in advance, three doors, and camera enforcement of bus lanes. In 2013, the B44 SBS opened on Nostrand and Rogers Avenues in Brooklyn and the Bx41 SBS opened on Webster Avenue in the Bronx. By April 2014 they will be joined by M60 SBS, which will run on 125th Street in Manhattan.

Best of all, Mayor-elect de Blasio campaigned on a promise to build a network of 20 SBS routes to underserved communities.

Finally, the Campaign would be remiss if it did not acknowledge the most tragic transit event of 2013: The derailment of a Metro-North commuter train in the Bronx, killing four and injuring dozens. The Straphangers Campaign expressed its deepest sympathies to those affected by the crash.

Top Ten Worst NYC Transit Events in 2013

1. **Fares go up in March at twice the rate of inflation.** According to an analysis by State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli: “Fares and tolls have risen much faster than inflation over the past six years. Since 2007, the cost of a 30-day MetroCard rose by 47 percent...” **But** see # 1 on the Best list!
2. **Superstorm Sandy’s overall bill: \$4.955 billion is needed to “fix and fortify” the transit system,** says the MTA. It could be a struggle to get the financial aid out of a divided and poorly-functioning national government.
3. **And in Sandy’s wake, a seemingly endless parade of major reconstruction projects,** including: the R tunnel between Brooklyn and Manhattan closes for 14 months of repairs (following months of signal failures and delays). Work also begins to rebuild the South Ferry station, which was just rebuilt in 2006. And then there’s the flood ”mitigation” for seven downtown Manhattan subway stations. And the G tunnel closes on many weekends ...
4. **And Sandy-related damage wreaks havoc with day-to-day operations.** For the first three months of 2013, delays increased by 29 percent, with track-related delays more than doubling, according to a review of the MTA’s own electronic delay alerts.
5. **Governor Andrew Cuomo vetoes “lock box legislation.”** The bill would have provided greater protection to taxes “dedicated” to transit. Diversion of hundreds of millions of dedicated funds in 2008 and 2009 triggered the worst transit cuts in decades in 2010.
6. **Many subway platforms are grim and dreary, study finds.** That’s the result of a Straphangers Campaign census of 862 subway platforms. Growing substantially worse in 2013 were exposed wiring and substantial areas of: missing tile, graffiti, and floor cracks.
7. **An uphill battle: Washington appears ready to let a tax break – for individuals using transit – fall from \$245 a month to \$125 a month;** while at the same time letting a similar break for auto use stay at \$245. Deadline for decision: December 31st.
8. **More people will die on MTA rail and subway tracks in 2013 that at anytime since 2008,** when NYC Transit started keeping records. That’s according to New York Magazine. The MTA says it’s a spike and will end up in a “normal” range. Are these deaths an issue that the MTA can afford to, and should, tackle with new technology?
9. **The long-closed Smith-Ninth Street subway station (F, G) takes twice as long to rehabilitate.** The station was closed in June 2011 and was slated to take 9 months. It did not reopen until April 2013.
10. **Biggest transit mistake during the 2013 mayoral campaign?** How about when the republican candidate for mayor said they would not cut off power on a line to save two kittens on the tracks, even in non-rush hours?

Top Ten Best NYC Transit Events in 2013

1. **The MTA cuts nearly in half a fare hike that is planned for 2015.** The MTA planned to raise fare revenues by 8.4 percent in 2015 and again in 2017 – more than twice the inflation rate. But concerns won out that big hikes were squeezing working and middle class families, showing how hard it is to afford to live here.
2. **A new and highly respected MTA Chair takes the helm.** Tom Prendergast has been president of the subways and of the LIRR. He is the seventh MTA leader in seven years! His much-praised NYC Transit team includes NYC Transit President Carmen Bianco and Senior Vice President for Subways Joe Leader.
3. **Select Bus Service expands.** SBS speeds pokey buses with such features as riders paying fares in advance, three doors, and camera enforcement of bus lanes. In 2013, the B44 SBS opened on Nostrand and Rogers Avenues in Brooklyn and the Bx41 SBS opened on Webster Avenue in the Bronx. By April 2014 they will be joined by M60 SBS, which will run on 125th Street in Manhattan. Mayor-elect Bill de Blasio campaigned on a promise to create a network of 20 SBS routes.
<http://www.billdeblasio.com/issues/transportation>
4. **Subway ridership increases to highest levels in 62 years.** This in spite of – or maybe because of – the economy. The subway's 2012 ridership of 1.654 billion was the highest in 62 years. Average weekend ridership on the subway grew by 3.0 percent, matching the all-time historic high for weekend ridership set in 1946.
5. **The MTA adds \$18 million in bus and subway service.** Some of these routes had been cut in 2010. The agency made permanent increased off-hours service on the G train and added new bus routes to go to underserved areas.
6. **Bus Time comes to all buses in Manhattan.** As the MTA says: “Instead of waiting at a bus stop in a state of uncertainty, now your phone can tell you when to start walking to the bus stop so you can get there right when the bus does.”
7. **NYC Transit conducts a comprehensive review of operations on the G.** By mid-2014, the “G sprint” will hopefully have become an urban myth, with platforms uniformly marked.
8. **Rezoning of East Midtown Manhattan slows down – there will be more time to consider how to address GCT-area transit needs.** Done right, a rezoning of the area could raise many millions to help improve super-packed stations.
9. **The controversial MTA payroll tax is held constitutional by a state court judge.** The MTA is confident of winning on appeal, but warned that losing the funds from the tax would badly hurt the agency and its customers.
10. **The MTA released a smart phone app that provides real-time information on arrivals for nearby stations on the numbered lines.** The app – MTA Subway Time – covers 156 stations on the 1 to 6 lines and the 42nd Street Shuttle and works if you are on city streets.