



NYPIRG

Straphangers Campaign

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NEWS RELEASE

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Top Ten Lists for City Subways and Buses in 2016

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

“2016 was unquestionably a tough year for riders,” said Jaqi Cohen, campaign coordinator for the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign. “While there were some big wins worthy of celebration, riders continue to feel overburdened and underwhelmed with service.”

The year’s top moments included the final approval of the largest capital plan in New York State history, and the long-awaited announcement that after a near century of anticipation and skepticism, the Second Avenue Subway will officially open its doors to riders.

Among the worst moments of the year included the state’s failure to fund its share of the capital plan, and a proposed fare increase for the coming year.

This is the Straphangers Campaign’s sixth annual best/worst transit list. The first was issued in December 2010.

Detailed lists are below.

Top Ten Best List for New York City Subways and Buses in 2016

1. **Grand Opening:** After months of speculation and almost a century of anticipation, the MTA confirmed in December that the Second Avenue Subway will finally open to the public on New Year's Day.
2. **Capital Approval:** After a long 20-month process, the \$27 billion 2015-2019 MTA Capital Plan received final approval from the Capital Plan Review Board, making it the largest investment in New York's transit infrastructure in history.
3. **Commitment to Better Buses:** In June, leading transit groups formed the NYC Bus Coalition, determined to making buses faster, more reliable, and more attractive. The need to act is urgent. Bus ridership has declined by 16% since 2002, even as the city's population increased by 5.7% and subway ridership grew by 24.7%.
4. **Countdown to Countdown Clocks:** The MTA pledged that by March 2018 (18 months from now) it would provide riders on the A-Z lines with a highly-popular amenity now enjoyed by 1-7 line riders: countdown clocks. The clocks allow riders to be more efficient and strategic in their commutes. It also helps riders cope with the stress of an overcrowded and often confusing system.
5. **Commuter Transit Benefits:** Starting in January 2016, the City now requires businesses of 20 or more to offer employees the option of participating in a federal pre-tax program, potentially saving employees hundreds of dollars in commuting costs.
6. **(W)elcome Back:** After a 6-year absence, the W train returned service in anticipation of the Second Avenue Subway line's debut.
7. **SBS Expands:** The city welcomed new additions to Select Bus Service including the B46 in Brooklyn, the M23 in Manhattan, and the Q70, or "LaGuardia Link", in Queens.
8. **Future of Fare Payment:** The MTA announced that it is taking steps to update its fare payment technology by looking for a replacement for the now-outdated MetroCard.
9. **New Car Design:** The Governor announced his plans to roll out a new fleet of subway cars designed to increase rider capacity and ease crowding, hopefully reducing delays.
10. **Transit Tech:** It was announced this year that subway and bus riders will be able to access internet mid-commute with a new fleet of Wi-Fi-equipped buses and Wi-Fi in all subway stations before the end of the year.

Top Ten Worst List for New York City Subways and Buses in 2016

1. **Fare Increase Proposed:** Most New Yorkers think of December as the holiday season; for the MTA, it was the grim start of a long slog to a fare hike (with 8 public hearings along the way). The MTA will vote on a fare and toll proposal in January that will go into effect March 2017.
2. **Cuomo's IOU:** While the Governor committed to contributing \$7.3 billion in new state funds towards the MTA Capital Plan, yet included no dedicated funds for the program in his Executive Budget.
3. **Stress-A-Ride.** An audit conducted by the NYC Comptroller's office found major lack of oversight of Access-A-Ride, leading to poor and unreliable service for elderly and disabled customers who depend upon the service.
4. **Subway Sardines.** Overcrowding continues to be a chief concern of riders, and understandably so. Subway overcrowding is at an all-time high, causing more frequent delays, leaving many riders feeling, sometimes literally, on edge.
5. **L Line Shutdown:** This year, the MTA announced that the L Line's Canarsie Tunnel will close in 2019 for 18 Months in order to remedy the massive tunnel damage experienced due to Hurricane Sandy. While these repairs are critical, the decision leaves many L train riders feeling despondent.
6. **Hot City, Hot Subways:** Riders were forced to sweat it out during their commutes this summer, as riders' reports of "hot cars", or subway cars with broken air conditioning units, increased this year.
7. **Workers at Risk:** In November, two MTA transit workers were struck, one killed, by an oncoming G train in Brooklyn.
8. **Hate Crimes Spike:** The NYPD reported that hate crimes occurring in the subway system have increased, mirroring the increase of hate crimes reported citywide in 2016.
9. **Longer Commutes:** New Yorkers are experiencing longer commutes. A study from the Center for an Urban Future this year revealed that most New Yorkers have an average commute of 40 minutes or more, whereas the national average is just 26 minutes¹.
10. **Cricket Car:** A performance artist released a box of insects on a Manhattan-bound D train inciting panic amongst riders causing one passenger to pull the car's emergency brake, leaving riders stranded on the Manhattan Bridge for almost half an hour.

¹ <https://nycfuture.org/data/fast-city-slow-commute>