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Press Release

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[NYC Transit](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA NYC Transit Ridership Shows Continuing Growth In 2008

Highest Total Ridership Since 1965

Fueled in part by higher prices at the pump, strong economic activity during the first half of the year, increased tourism and new residential development, NYC Transit combined bus and subway ridership in 2008 increased 3.1 percent from 2007 to 2.37 billion, the highest since 1965. The increase was led by an annual subway ridership of 1.62 billion, an increase of 3.9 percent from 2007 and the highest annual subway ridership since 1950. While the overall increase in ridership continues a growth trend that began in 2004, the ridership growth slowed considerably toward the end of the year, due to the declining economy.

"The sustained ridership growth in our subway and bus network is proof of the vital role NYC Transit has in moving the region forward in an environmentally sustainable manner," said Elliot G. Sander, MTA Executive Director and CEO. "The improvements we have made to the infrastructure, including the purchase of new buses and subway cars, are paying dividends, and the ridership growth we've seen is proof positive how important a fully funded capital plan is to the continued reliability and viability of the system and to the region as a whole."

In 2008, average weekday bus and subway ridership was 7.6 million, an increase of 2.8 percent from 2007 and the highest since 1969. For the first nine months of 2008 average weekday ridership increased 3.6% from the first nine months of 2007. In contrast, average weekday ridership for the 4th quarter of 2008 increased only 0.4% from the 4th quarter of 2007. On the subway, average weekday ridership reached 5.2 million in 2008, an increase of 3.6 percent from 2007, and the highest since 1951. Bronx subway ridership showed the strongest rate of increase – up 6.2 percent from 2007 to 2008, nearly double the system-wide increase.

The subway line with the largest weekday growth from 2007 to 2008 was the 14 St/Canarsie Line L train with an 8.5 percent increase. Seven stations, located all along the line, had over 10 percent growth: 1st, Bedford, Wilson, Bushwick (Aberdeen St.), Atlantic, Livonia and New Lots Avenues. Weekday ridership on the L line is up 29% since 2003 and 79% since 1998.

"The L line's growth is not surprising, given that it has been the fastest growing line in the system for years," said Howard H. Roberts, Jr., President of NYC Transit. "The service we added in late 2007 and the additional new subway cars running on the line have provided needed relief for riders, who have noticed and appreciate the hard work Line General Manager Greg Lombardi and his team are putting in, from cleaning to minimizing delays. In 2008, riders gave the L a "C-Plus" grade for overall service, up from a "C" in 2007, and I know Greg and his team is hoping to push that grade higher in 2009," added Roberts.

The Sea Beach N line in Brooklyn had the second largest weekday ridership growth with an 8.1 percent increase. The Sea Beach line is up 48 percent since 2003 and 111% since 1998, due in part to service improvements implemented in 2004 following the end of construction on the Manhattan Bridge.

Residential development also had an impact on subway ridership in 2008. Of the top eight stations with the largest weekday ridership growth from 2007 to 2008, four are in areas of new residential development: Vernon Blvd.-Jackson Avenue 7 in Long Island City (up 19%), Beach 44th Street A in the Rockaways (up 16%), Bowery JMZ on the Lower East Side (up 16%), and York Street F in Dumbo (up 15%).

Bus ridership in 2008 also rose but not as dramatically as subway ridership. Annual bus ridership in 2008 was 747 million, a 1.2 percent increase over 2007, and the highest since 2002. Average weekday ridership in 2008 rose slightly, by 0.9 percent, to 2.4 million, the highest since 2006.

On the buses, the big story in 2008 was the Bx12 Select Bus Service (SBS), which began operation last summer. Select Bus Service uses Traffic Signal Priority (TSP) and prior to boarding proof-of-payment fare collection. Traffic signal prioritization holds or advances a green signal by several seconds to allow a bus through an intersection without stopping. From August to December, weekday ridership on the entire Bx12 corridor (including SBS and local buses) was up 9.4% from 2007 to 2008. "The success of Select Bus Service demonstrates how the use of innovative technology combined with the cooperation of our city and state partners can yield enormous benefits for our customers and for service," said Joseph J. Smith, Sr. Vice President of Buses at NYC Transit. "SBS is the blue print for how we'd like to improve bus service city wide," added Smith.

2008 NYC TRANSIT RIDERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

TOTAL RIDERSHIP*

- Preliminary 2008 total ridership of 2.37 billion was the highest since 1965, and increased 3.1 percent (71.4 million trips) from 2007 with most of that growth occurring in early 2008 due to strong job growth and tourism.
- Average weekday total ridership in 2008 was 7.6 million, the highest weekday ridership since 1969, and increased 2.8 percent (208,000 trips) from 2007.

- Average weekend total ridership in 2008 (Saturday and Sunday combined) was 7.9 million, the highest weekend ridership in over thirty-five years, and increased by 2.4 percent (183,000 trips) from 2007.

SUBWAY RIDERSHIP:

- Total subway ridership in 2008 was 1.62 billion, the highest subway ridership since 1950, and increased by 3.9 percent (61.1 million trips) from 2007.
- Average weekday subway ridership in 2008 was 5.2 million, the highest weekday ridership since 1951, and increased 3.6 percent (183,000 trips) from 2007.
- Average weekend subway ridership in 2008 (Saturday and Sunday combined) was 5.3 million, the highest weekend ridership in over thirty-five years, and increased 3.1 percent (161,000 trips) from 2007.

BUS RIDERSHIP:

- Total bus ridership in 2008 was 746.9 million, an increase of 1.2 percent (8.9 million trips) from 2007.
- 2008 average weekday local bus ridership was 2.3 million, an increase of 0.9 percent (20,000 trips) from 2007.
- Average weekday Express bus ridership in 2008 was 46,000, an increase of 2.1 percent (1,000 trips) from 2007.
- Average weekend local bus ridership in 2008 was 2.6 million, an increase of 0.7 percent (18,000) from 2007.
- Average weekend Express Bus ridership in 2008 was 10,000, a decrease of 1.0 percent (100 trips) from 2007.

*excludes Paratransit ridership