



MTA Press Releases

[Select Language](#) ▼

Press Release

February 20, 2010

[NYC Transit](#)

IMMEDIATE

NYC Transit Annual Ridership Drops in 2009 For First Time in Six Years

2.31 Billion Served Still Second Highest Annual Ridership Since 1969

A weakened economy and regional job losses led to the first drop in NYC Transit ridership since 2003, when another recession, major fare change and a regional blackout had major impacts on ridership. Nonetheless, preliminary combined NYC Transit bus, subway and paratransit ridership for 2009 was 2.31 billion, the second highest total ridership on record since 1969. However ridership was down across the board by 2.7 percent or 63.5 million trips from 2008.

"2009 was a very tough year for the city and regional economy, and that is reflected in the preliminary ridership numbers," said Tom F. Prendergast, President, NYC Transit. "But despite the job losses, our ridership remained near record levels, which is a reflection of the importance the bus and subway network has to the region and the value that MetroCard discounts continue to provide our customers especially in these tough times," added Prendergast.

Total preliminary farebox revenue for bus, subway and paratransit combined came in some 2.1 million dollars short of estimates, at \$3.14 billion, further eroding the MTA's overall precarious financial position. 2009 revenue was 3.5 percent higher than 2008, but only due to the June fare change. The average fare in 2009 was \$1.41, up from \$1.33 in 2008. Although the average fare was higher in 2009, it was only \$.03 higher than in 1996 before MetroCard fare incentives began.

Total subway ridership in 2009 was a robust 1.58 billion, the second highest annual subway ridership since 1951, but 2.7 percent (44.2 million trips) off of 2008 totals. 2009 bus ridership was also down by 2.8 percent (20.5 million trips) from 2008, but still a healthy 726.4 million.

Average weekday ridership for the bus and subway system in 2009 was 7.4 million, the second highest since 1969, but down 2.6 percent (198,000 trips) from 2008. On the subways, average weekday ridership was 5.1 million in 2009, the second highest weekday ridership since 1952. However, average weekday subway ridership decreased by 2.7 percent (139,000 trips) from 2008 totals. Average weekday local bus ridership declined by 2.5 percent (58,000 trips) to 2.3 million in 2009, while average weekday express ridership declined 4.9 percent (2,000 trips) to 44,000 in 2009.

On the subways, the largest decrease in ridership occurred in Manhattan. Average weekday ridership was down 3.6 percent, mostly due to ridership losses in Midtown associated with job losses. Queens average weekday subway ridership was down by 2.5 percent while Brooklyn saw a decline of 1.1 percent. The Bronx had the smallest decrease in average weekday ridership, down only 0.6 percent from 2008.

Average weekday local bus ridership losses were also lowest in the Bronx, down only 1.6 percent from 2008, while Manhattan average weekday ridership declined by 3.1 percent, followed closely by Queens which was down 3 percent. Staten Island average weekday local bus ridership declined by 2.7 percent, while Brooklyn was down by 2.6 percent.

Weekend subway ridership in 2009 remained steady with average ridership (Saturday and Sunday combined) declining by 1.5 percent (79,000 trips) to 5.2 million, still coming in as the second highest weekend subway ridership in over thirty five years. Average weekend local bus ridership in 2009 was 2.5 million, a decline of 2.1 percent (54,000 trips) while express bus ridership on the weekend increased 1.2 percent to 10,000 due entirely to special events routes X80 and X81 which carried riders to events on Randall's Island. Weekend express bus ridership on regular routes (X1, X10, X17, X27, and X28) decreased 1.0 percent from 2008 to 2009.

Paratransit ridership grew 17.2 percent (1.2 million trips) from 2008, with average weekday ridership of 27,000 and average weekend ridership at 28,000, an increase of 17.3 percent (4,000 trips) and 18.6 percent (4,000 trips) respectively from 2008.