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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

Subway Ridership Surges 2.6% In One Year

Growing Neighborhoods See Largest Increases in 2014 While Ridership Growth Creates Challenges for Subway Operations

Subway ridership in New York City grew 2.6% to 1.751 billion customers in 2014, the highest annual ridership in more than 65 years, according to new figures from Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) New York City Transit. Some 5.6 million customers rode the subway on an average weekday and 6 million customers on an average weekend. Weekday ridership rose by more than 132,000 last year, and by more than 500,000 over the last five years. At its busiest, the subway system carried more than 6 million customers on 29 weekdays in the last four months of 2014 – a level not seen since the post-World War II boom.

This growth was seen across the city in all boroughs and all lines, with the highest percentage increase in neighborhoods seeing rapid residential development and population increases, such as Bushwick in Brooklyn and Long Island City in Queens. While ridership grew in every part of the day and every day of the week, weekday growth was strongest outside of the traditional morning and evening rush hours.

As subway ridership surges along with New York City’s population, the increased number of customers creates challenges for the MTA to operate the subway system while minimizing delays, crowding and inconvenience. The subway system has traditionally performed maintenance work during off-peak hours, which are now experiencing record ridership.

“The renaissance of the New York City subway is a miracle for those who remember the decrepit system of the 1970s and the 1980s, but moving more than 6 million customers a day means even minor disruptions now can create major delays,” said MTA Chairman and CEO Thomas F. Prendergast. “We are aggressively working to combat delays and improve maintenance, but the ultimate solution requires investing in infrastructure upgrades such as Communications-Based Train Control (CBTC) signaling systems to accommodate every one of our growing number of customers.”

Brooklyn had the largest borough-wide average weekday percentage ridership increase (2.7% or more than 31,000 riders per weekday), followed by 2.5% growth in Manhattan, 2.1% in the Bronx and 1.9% in Queens.

In Brooklyn, every station on the L line saw a ridership increase last year, with ridership increasing 4.7%, or more than 5,600 customers, on an average weekday. The **L** is the MTA’s only line with CBTC signaling, which has enabled the MTA to add dozens of trains per week to handle the ridership spike in recent years. The Bedford Av station in Williamsburg saw 27,224 average weekday customers, more than any other station on the **L** in Brooklyn, but the largest weekday percentage increases occurred farther east on the line in Bushwick at Bushwick Av-Aberdeen St (11.5%), Wilson Av (9.9%) and Jefferson St (9.3%).

The **M** line in Brooklyn serves some of the same areas and also saw rapid growth, with average weekday ridership up 6.2% at stations between Marcy and Metropolitan Aves. **M** stations from Queens through Brooklyn have seen average weekday ridership grow 31% since 2009, after the **M** was rerouted to serve Midtown Manhattan in 2010.

New residential development is driving ridership growth in Long Island City, Queens. Weekday ridership grew by 12%, or 1,500 customers per day, at the Vernon-Jackson Av **7** station, and by 9.7%, or nearly 2,000 customers, at the Court Sq **E** **G** **M** **7** station. Ridership at the Vernon-Jackson Av station has more than doubled since 2000. The MTA is installing CBTC on the **7** line, which will allow more trains to run closer together, carrying more customers while also providing countdown clock information.

In the Bronx, the **2** and **5** lines grew by 3.7%, or nearly 4,800 customers per day. In Manhattan, the Lenox Avenue **2** and **3** lines through Harlem saw 3.7% growth, or more than 2,100 customers per day.