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Press Release

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[NYC Transit](#)

IMMEDIATE

### MTA NYC Transit Retires Last of 1980s-Era Buses as Modernization of Fleet Continues, Providing Customers with Better, More Reliable Service

*'RTS' Buses Replaced by Cleaner, Low-Emissions Models with Traffic Signal Priority, Digital Screens for Route Info, Enhanced Security & Other Modern Features*

*NYC Transit Adding More All-Electric Vehicles to 100 Percent Accessible and Increasingly Greener Bus Fleet*

*Photos of the Retirement Ceremony, Final Run are Available [Here](#)*

MTA New York City Transit retired the last remaining Rapid Transit Series (RTS) bus from service today, ending a near-40-year run of the blue and white buses that generations of New Yorkers have grown up riding on city streets. With today's final trip on the M55 route in Midtown and Lower Manhattan, the RTS buses have been replaced by a modern, low-emissions fleet that includes new state-of-the-art hybrid and zero-emissions vehicles allowing NYC Transit to better serve customers.

"We're passing the torch to the next generation of modern buses, including all-electric models, that are setting the standard for transit agencies around the country and allowing us to better serve our customers," said Darryl C. Irick, MTA Bus Company President and NYC Transit's Senior Vice President of Buses. "Both my father and I drove the 'Big Blues & Whites' during our careers at New York City Transit, so the retirement of the RTS fleet is a nostalgic moment for my family."

"One of the cleanest bus fleets in the world is now getting cleaner with the retirement of this model as we push on with the latest technologies including zero-emission electric buses," said NYC Transit President Andy Byford. "We're working hard to improve bus service and win back customers, and a state-of-the-art fleet is key to that endeavor."

NYC Transit's fleet of nearly 4,900 RTS buses were built by GMC Truck and Coach Division, TMC and Nova Bus, and were ordered between 1981 and 1999. The first RTS bus was put into service in 1979 as a demo, and eventually the RTS buses served routes in every borough and operated out of nearly every NYC Transit and MTA Bus Company depot across the city. As recently as this year, RTS buses were serving a wide variety of neighborhoods across the boroughs. Several were sent to Atlanta for use during the Summer Olympics in 1996. NYC Transit became the first major public transit agency to have a 100 percent accessible bus fleet through its use of the RTS vehicles, all of which have wheelchair lifts.

NYC Transit began testing greener technology by using RTS buses to test alternative fuels such as Compressed Natural Gas and methanol in the 1990s. Building on those efforts, NYC Transit now has one of the cleanest fleets in the world, with nearly 1,700 hybrid-electric buses, 745 CNG buses, 10 all-electric buses and more than 3,000 clean diesel buses. These cleaner, lower-emission buses, which have replaced the RTS vehicles, adhere to the latest and most stringent EPA regulations. The entire NYC Transit bus fleet is wheelchair accessible.

NYC Transit is continuing to pursue an even greener bus fleet, with the recent purchase of the MTA's first all-electric articulated buses. The MTA Board awarded a contract in January to New Flyer of America Inc. for 15 all-electric articulated buses, 16 in-depot chargers and one mobile charging unit. This new contract for the articulated buses, which are higher-capacity 60-foot-long buses used on Select Bus Service as well as on higher ridership routes, makes MTA New York City Transit one of the first public transit systems in the country, and the nation's largest public bus network, to use zero-emissions technology on these larger, heavier vehicles that, in turn, require more power to operate.

The MTA has allocated funding for purchasing a total of 60 all-electric buses in its current capital program, with many more to come in the future. Transit officials are ultimately pursuing a zero-emissions fleet, pending the viability of electric propulsion and charging technologies being tested in depots and on city streets right now.

The MTA removes 17 million metric tons of carbon emissions from the air per year by providing public transit services as an alternative to personal vehicle use, and an all-electric bus fleet would further reduce the city's carbon footprint. All-electric propulsion technology also results in quieter operations in addition to the benefits of zero tailpipe emissions, which make it ideal for operating vehicles in densely populated areas such as New York City. All-electric buses use an electric motor powered by a battery pack, and its propulsion system recaptures energy normally wasted in braking.

NYC Transit is also implementing several initiatives to improve bus service and attract new customers. They include working with the New York City Department of Transportation and NYPD on initiatives to increase bus speeds such as by redesigning the entire bus route network borough by borough, redesigning street traffic infrastructure, adding bus lanes and traffic signal priority for buses, adding automatic camera enforcement of bus lane violations, and keeping bus lanes clear with stepped-up police enforcement including the use of tow trucks.

Under the latest electric bus contract, New Flyer will install the in-depot charging equipment beginning in July, followed by the delivery of the first new bus in September. Delivery of all the buses is scheduled for completion in January 2020, with an incentive for earlier delivery. Once delivered, these buses will be put in service on 14th Street, where NYC Transit has enhanced bus service to provide robust alternate crosstown service during the [F 146 Project](#).