



NYPIRG

**Straphangers
Campaign**

PRESS RELEASE

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BUS RIDERS MARCH FOR FASTER, MORE EQUITABLE BUS SERVICE ON FLATBUSH AVENUE

Transit Advocates, Students, Unions, and Elected Officials Called On Mayor and City For Improved Bus Service During A Hike Down Flatbush Avenue

(Brooklyn, NY) – As bus speeds in New York City remain at all-time lows, on Thursday, October 17th, students, transit advocates, and elected officials hiked from Flatbush Junction to the Barclays Center in support of faster bus service on Flatbush Avenue. The relay-hike had stops along one of the busiest corridors in Brooklyn at Beverly Road, Midwood Street and the Brooklyn Public Library. Speakers at the press conference held in front of the Barclays Center highlighted the need for faster bus service not only on Flatbush Avenue, but throughout the city.

“Students and other straphangers know all too well that bus service is unacceptably slow and unreliable with buses moving at under eight miles per hour on New York City streets. The B41, which runs down Flatbush Avenue, crawls at an average 6.8 miles per hour. For the 132,000 Brooklynites who take buses down Flatbush Ave daily, this means missed appointments, being late for school, and less time with family,” said **Natasha Elder, NYPIRG Regional Director with the Straphangers Campaign.**

Poor bus service continues to be a nuisance to all straphangers who depend on public transportation, but disproportionately affects Black and brown people, with 78% of public transit riders being from communities of color and African-American riders making up the largest single group within that category. The average salary of a New York City bus rider is roughly \$43,000, half the income of the average driver. With almost 1 million people living in the Community Boards near Flatbush Avenue, 59% of folks do not have access to a private vehicle and 76% of local residents get to work by public transportation, biking or walking.

That’s why bus riders marched today and called on the Mayor and the City’s Department of Transportation to get on board with faster buses on Flatbush Avenue. DOT should begin implementing time-tested solutions like bus lanes and busways. The DOT’s Streets Master Plan is a law that has realistic goals for bus lane installation, and still continues to fall behind every year. By committing to bus improvements on Flatbush Avenue, the Mayor can make up for lost ground and can get bus riders where they need to go quicker.

"Reliable and efficient public transportation is essential for students, seniors, and all Flatbush Avenue residents. For students, it ensures timely access to education and activities, and for seniors, it provides a safe, affordable means to healthcare and community life. The B41 bus along Flatbush Avenue serves over 28,000 daily riders, and with 76% of local residents relying on public transportation, improving bus speeds and safety is critical for equitable access to vital resources and reducing delays," **said Assemblymember Phara Souffrant Forrest.**

"Bus service on Flatbush is slow and unreliable, but it doesn't have to be this way. New Yorkers who use the bus every day to go to work, school, and doctors' offices deserve faster bus service. There are common-sense ways to improve the service on Flatbush, including installing bus lanes. Thank you to NYPIRG, students, and the advocates for their push to make public transit more equitable," said **Assembly member Jo Anne Simon.**

"Commuters need reliable bus service to get to school, work, medical appointments, and other things in this great city of ours. Nearly 80% of the New Yorkers who use public transit are Black or brown people. As a state lawmaker who represents a predominantly Black district, access to faster bus service -- to me -- is an equity issue. We deserve quality bus service on Flatbush Avenue, on Rockaway Avenue, along Pitkin Avenue, and on every other thoroughfare that people depend on. I encourage the city's Department of Transportation to fulfill its commitment to installing bus lanes in accordance with the Streets Master Plan and speeding up overall service." **said Assemblywoman Latrice Walker.**

"I have long advocated for improved bus transportation and to ensure that the MTA has the funding it needs to maintain and improve our public transportation system. Thanks to the advocacy organizations pushing for better bus service on the vital Flatbush Avenue corridor," said **Assemblymember Robert Carroll.**

"If we had better bus service along Flatbush Avenue, I would be more likely to take the bus instead of the train because it would be faster for me, helping me get to class and other destinations more efficiently," **said Damien Andrade, a student at Brooklyn College and member of NYPIRG.** "Tons of Brooklyn College students rely on the Flatbush bus daily to reach campus. Improved bus service would mean shorter commutes, more reliable transportation, and a better overall quality of life for students like myself. Having a system we can trust is essential for our success and well-being."

"My patients count on me being there for them on time—but I cannot count on the Flatbush Avenue bus being on time. The B41 actually seems to be slower every day. Healthcare workers deserve dependable bus service so we can be there for our patients. Let's get better buses on Flatbush," said **Alison Harewood, an 1199SEIU caregiver at a Brooklyn Hospital.**

"Right now, the car-first design of Flatbush Avenue leaves far too many New Yorkers behind. More than 130,000 Brooklynites are trapped on buses crawling at less than 7 mph — making us late to school, to work, to the doctor, and more," said **Kathy Park Price, Brooklyn Organizer at**

Transportation Alternatives. "We were proud to march with students, unions, elected leaders, and fellow advocates to demand faster buses on Flatbush Avenue today and we will continue to fight for a street that works for all of us. Everyone deserves the freedom to get around our city without being stuck in traffic."

"Public transit should take precedence on our streets," said **Emily Chingay, Citywide Organizer at Open Plans.** "In fact, our Streets Plan mandates it through the creation of new bus lanes. Because the current administration hasn't followed the plan to reduce private vehicle traffic and improve bus service on a widespread, citywide scale, our buses are embarrassingly slow and frustratingly unreliable. Every corridor like Flatbush needs a dedicated bus lane. We urge DOT to prioritize Flatbush today and start making good on the promise to deliver convenient bus service to New York City's hardworking riders."

"More than 130,000 Brooklynites are forced to crawl up and down Flatbush Avenue every day on buses that go at speeds slower than a chicken – that's more people than live in the entire City of Albany," said **Lisa Daglian, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA.** "Day after day, this unconscionable policy failure hurts MTA riders through lost time with loved ones and late arrivals to work and school. It's far past time the City comply with the Streets Plan, prioritize transit riders, and get Flatbush Ave moving."

"Better public transit, and especially better buses, is a social justice issue. So many working class families rely on buses to get to work, school, and access the city," said **Jolyse Race, Senior Organizer at Riders Alliance.** "Over 132,000 riders use buses on Flatbush Avenue, and the bottom line is that buses keep the city moving. It's time our Mayor and elected officials keep their promises to riders and give them some space on the city's streets. Not only is it the right thing to do, it's the law according to the Streets Plans Law that mandates Adams to implement 150 miles of bus lanes and busways throughout the city. Riders on Flatbush Ave are more than ready for the improvements they deserve."

"Flatbush Avenue is a critical artery for Brooklynites who depend on public transit, yet bus riders face frustrating delays every day. A dedicated bus lane would revolutionize our commutes, giving community members faster and more reliable access to work, school, and essential services—resulting in more quality time with our families and less stress about being late. With over 100,000 daily riders navigating this corridor, the city can't keep turning a blind eye to these urgent needs. It's time for the Mayor and DOT to take decisive action on Flatbush Avenue because we all deserve a bus ride that actually gets us where we need to go on time," said **Laura Waxman, Communications Associate at Tri-State Transportation Campaign.**