



PRESS RELEASE

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Straphangers Campaign Releases Best & Worst Moments in NYC Transit List for 2025

(New York, N.Y.) - Today, the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign released its review of the top five best and worst moments for New York City's subways and buses in the past year. The list offered a look back at consequential rider wins and setbacks for 2025.

"2025 showed that progress is possible — but far from guaranteed — for New York City's transit riders," said **Natasha Elder, Regional Director for Equity & Resiliency Projects at the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign**. "Where long-planned policies were implemented, investments were targeted, and rider voices were heard, we saw real service benefits. But riders still experienced frustrations with service, major disruptions, and increasing costs."

"Looking forward, the Mamdani Administration is inheriting a system where service reliability, transit affordability, and system maintenance create daily challenges for millions of New Yorkers. Riders are looking forward to clear leadership that prioritizes dependable faster service, real accessibility, and transparency in how transit decisions are made," Elder added.

The best moments of the year highlight what works when riders are prioritized. The worst underscore the work still needed to provide improved daily service, reliability, and rider equity.

TOP FIVE BEST TRANSIT MOMENTS OF 2025

1. Congestion Pricing Secured as a Dedicated Transit Funding Source

After years of sustained rider advocacy, congestion pricing was finally turned on in early January 2025. The policy represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to invest billions into subway and bus reliability, accessibility upgrades, and system modernization. For riders, congestion pricing stands as one of the most significant transit wins of the decade — already logging strong marks in traffic and air-pollution reduction. Full benefits will be dependent on strong implementation and accountability moving forward.

2. Automated Camera Enforcement Expanded for Bus Lanes

In late 2025, the MTA expanded the number of bus routes equipped with automated camera enforcement (ACE), to reduce illegal parking and standing in bus lanes, a key factor slowing bus service citywide. The move brings [the total number to 54 routes](#) across the City. By improving compliance without relying on constant police presence, automated enforcement helped ensure that existing bus lanes function as intended, improving reliability and reducing delays on high-ridership routes. For riders, enforcement—not just infrastructure—is critical to making bus investments meaningful.

3. Bus Lanes Paved the Way For Faster Buses

New and expanded bus lanes improved reliability on several key routes including Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn (B41/B41 SBS) and Hillside Avenue in Queens (Q1, Q36, Q43, Q44 SBS, Q82). The 96th Street busway in Manhattan (M96 and M106) – completed in late 2024 – also survived a court challenge in 2025. Targeted bus priority treatments improve consistency in bus service and reduce delays. According to NYC DOT project updates and MTA bus performance reporting, buses on Hillside Avenue previously operated at speeds as low as four miles per hour in some segments. Comparable corridors with dedicated bus lanes—such as 14th Street in Manhattan—have seen bus speeds increase by roughly 20 percent or more following implementation. Corridors with dedicated space and enforcement tools continued to outperform comparable routes without them—reaffirming a long-standing rider truth: buses work best when they are given their own space.

4. Subway Signal Modernization Picked Up Steam

More Communications-Based Transit Control upgrades were completed in 2025. The signal overhauls impacted subway segments including the Crosstown G line and parts of the Queens Boulevard Line serving the E and F trains, improving reliability and reducing delays on some of the busiest lines, according to MTA capital program updates. The MTA also [recently announced](#) that signal modernization projects are moving forward for the A and C lines. The Straphangers Campaign applauds continued commitment to modernizing the decades-old signal infrastructure which will mean smoother service and fewer cascading disruptions for riders.

5. Rider Information and Transparency Tools Enhanced

Enhancements to digital tools and service alerts—including real-time service alerts, improved arrival predictions, and more transparent elevator outage reporting—provided riders with more timely information about delays, service changes, and elevator outages. Better information helps riders plan trips and navigate disruptions with less uncertainty.

TOP FIVE WORST TRANSIT MOMENTS OF 2025

1. M42 Named 2025 Slowest Bus & Q8 Named Most Unreliable

While the average speeds of New York City's slowest buses have increased modestly over the last few years – thanks in part to congestion relief and boroughwide route redesigns — riders on many corridors still face long, unreliable trips, particularly in transit-dependent communities. The NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign again released our [Pokey and Schleppie Awards for 2025](#),

highlighting New York City bus routes in each borough that continued to rank poorly for on-time arrival and painfully slow travel times. For riders in subway deserts, too-slow bus service reinforces long-standing transit inequities.

2. Fares Go Up As OMNY Implementation Gets Mixed Reviews

As riders said farewell to the MetroCard on December 31, the rollout of an OMNY-only future has come with some bumps in the road... or track. [Riders have reported](#) tap-and-go failures, delayed fare capping, difficulty resolving billing errors, limited cash-reload locations, and barriers for unbanked riders and students. [And the MTA board voted once again in 2025 to raise fares.](#) Taken together, rider frustration is understandable. MTA should fix OMNY bugs, hold the line on fare hikes, and state and city leaders should increase funding for fare discount programs like Fair Fares and free college student OMNY cards.

3. Major Summer Incidents Underscore Reliability & Resiliency Challenges

[According to MTA data](#), service reliability remains the most significant challenge affecting daily commutes in 2025. This past summer [saw one of the worst periods of service in years](#). A high number of major incidents were recorded from June to August, including signal failures, power issues, and other system disruptions that delayed dozens of trains at a time. Flash flooding incidents — [including service disruptions in Brooklyn](#) — further underlined how vulnerable the system remains to extreme weather. Regular state-of-good-repair maintenance, alongside stronger planning for a changing climate, must be prioritized to reduce these disruptions and the impacts they create for riders.

4. Alarming Wait Times for Access to Emergency Doors

[On May 2, 2025](#), riders and advocates raised serious concerns after the MTA implemented delays on emergency exit doors as part of a fare-evasion deterrence strategy. Media reporting documented that these measures introduced hesitation and confusion at emergency exits, slowing access at moments when immediate and intuitive egress is essential for rider safety. Regardless of intent, policies that place barriers or delays on emergency exits are fundamentally incompatible with safe station design and emergency preparedness. Fare enforcement strategies must never compromise evacuation, accessibility, or public trust. Any approach that adds friction to emergency exits undermines rider confidence and poses unacceptable safety risks, particularly for riders with disabilities, seniors, and families with children.

5. Too Many Track Fires and Smoke Incidents

In February 2025, [a track fire at the 191st Street](#) station on the 1 line in Washington Heights filled the station with smoke, injuring at least 18 riders and forcing service suspensions. According to reporting, the incident occurred after a train struck debris that came into contact with the third rail, igniting a fire and creating hazardous conditions for riders during a routine commute. While the incident was acute, track fires are [unfortunately a recurring hazard](#) with certain high-traffic stations repeatedly experiencing fire-related disruptions that compromise safety and reliability for riders.