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NYC's Slowest Bus Gets Even Slower, Takes Home Second Consecutive Pokey Award

Uncoveted Schleppie Award earned by B62 for unreliable service; Q27 takes Mazel Award for most improved bus speed

BROOKLYN, NY — New York City's slowest bus is moving in the wrong direction. The **M42**, which earned last year's **Pokey Award**, is back for another round, averaging just 4.78 miles per hour (MPH), nearly 9% slower than in 2025.

The New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) Straphangers Campaign and the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC) announced the results of their annual Pokey, Schleppie, and Mazel Awards today, recognizing the city's slowest and least reliable high-ridership bus routes, along with the route showing the greatest improvement.

The M42 isn't the only route leaving riders frustrated. Brooklyn and Queens riders on the **B62** face an average of 4.63 minutes of additional bus stop time, earning the route this year's **Schleppie Award** for the city's most unreliable service.

There is some good news for Queens riders. The **Q27** takes home the **Mazel Award** after improving its average speed by 0.91 MPH over the previous year, showing that progress is possible even as other routes continue to struggle. The MTA's Bus Network Redesigns remain an important part of improving service, highlighted by the fact that the top ten routes on the Mazel list all improved through the Queens Bus Network Redesign.

“The M42 has managed to do something no bus rider wants to see — get even slower. Winning the Pokey Award two years in a row is bad enough, but losing speed when we're supposed to be making progress is unacceptable. New Yorkers shouldn't have to plan their lives around buses that crawl through traffic or leave them guessing when the next one will show up. We've seen what works: busways, bus

lanes, all-door boarding, and better enforcement. It's time to stop talking about faster buses and start delivering them," **said Natasha Elder, Regional Director of Equity and Resiliency Projects at NYPIRG.**

While congestion pricing has helped reduce traffic in Manhattan, the M42's performance shows that congestion relief alone cannot fix slow bus service. Advocates are calling on the City and MTA to expand Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), dedicated bus lanes, transit signal priority, and all-door boarding, along with stronger enforcement to keep buses moving.

"New York City's millions of bus riders deserve service that is far faster and more reliable than what we have today, whether they ride on the slowest or most improved route in the city," said **Kara Gurl, Planning and Advocacy Manager for the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC).** "That's why the strong partnership that Governor Hochul, Mayor Mamdani, the MTA, and NYC DOT have forged is essential to making that vision a reality, including ensuring that our streetscapes prioritize buses. We are proud to release this work with the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign to continue to highlight successes like the Queens Bus Network Redesign, along with areas where riders still face significant challenges that we expect the City and MTA to work together to expeditiously address."

The Pokey and Schleppie Awards, represented by a golden snail and lumbering elephants, respectively, have long drawn attention to the challenges facing New York City's bus riders. The Mazel Award, first introduced in 2025, recognizes routes making the greatest gains in speed.

The awards were announced Thursday morning in Downtown Brooklyn along the B62 bus route.

“The Mamdani administration is going to be working tirelessly to bring world-class bus service to New York City that is fast and reliable. More than a million daily riders are currently stuck in traffic, showing up late to work, missing appointments or time with their families and friends,” said **NYC DOT Commissioner Mike Flynn**. “Next Stop: Fast Buses, Better Service is our blueprint for transforming our bus system and making 175 routes across the city faster and more reliable.”

“The NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign and PCAC report is clear: our buses are too slow, and we’re committed to fixing it,” said **Elizabeth Adams, Senior Advisor for Fast and Free Buses for Mayor Mamdani**. “New Yorkers take 2.75 million bus trips a day, and for too many riders, the bus is still the slowest part of their day. Through Next Stop: Fast Buses, Better Service — a historic partnership between the City and State — we will speed up buses by 20% on 175 routes, nearly 75% of the city’s bus network. We’ll do it by building more bus lanes and busways, clearing blocked lanes, and investing in critical service improvements, starting where riders face the slowest trips. New York’s bus riders deserve nothing less.”

“The B62 traverses our whole Council district – and like far too many buses - it crawls slower than I bike and sometimes even walk. It’s critical that we prioritize faster, more reliable bus service for the millions of New Yorkers who rely on MTA buses daily,” said New York City Council Member “The B62 traverses our whole Council district – and like far too many buses - it crawls slower than I bike and sometimes even walk. It’s critical that we prioritize faster, more reliable bus service for the millions of New Yorkers who rely on MTA buses daily,” **said New York City Council Member Lincoln Restler.**

“I’m grateful but unsurprised that the B62, which runs right through my district, is being recognized with the Schleppie Award this year for its incredibly unreliable service. My constituents, and all New Yorkers, should be able to count on our buses, especially one that runs through such a vital corridor. Instead, we’re

left guessing when the bus might show up, if it even comes at all. We need automated camera enforcement, dedicated bus lanes, and free buses!" **said Assemblymember Emily Gallagher.**

"Working families in my district and across the city rely on city bus service. For many, the bus is the only option available to get to school, work, and move through life," **said Council Member Jennifer Gutiérrez.** "The fact that some city buses move slower than average walking speed is unacceptable and must change. With the recent passage of my bill, Intro 202, which increases traffic safety at schools, I'm proud to stand for improved transportation which includes bus service."

About the Organizations

Since 1979, the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign has organized riders — especially students — to fight for affordable fares, better service, and investment in public transit.

Created by the New York State Legislature in 1981, the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC) serves as the official voice of riders of the subway, bus, Staten Island Railway, Long Island Rail Road, and Metro-North Railroad, advocating for affordability, transparency, accessibility, and equity across the MTA system.

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