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NYC Mass Transit Ridership Up

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Good News? Subway and Bus usage is up despite ongoing capital projects that produce [baffling subway re-routes every weekend](#) and slow buses service because of traffic congestion.

Average weekday subway ridership rose to 5.076 million in September, the highest level since transit officials began making monthly calculations in 1970, New York City Transit said yesterday. It was the first time since 1970 that the average weekday figure passed 5 million on the subway. Combined subway and bus ridership in September was 7.61 million on an average weekday. That was the highest combined figure since December 1970, when it was 7.627 million.

However this is still significantly down from December 23rd 1946 when [almost nine million \(8,872,244\) trips were made on NYC transit subways and buses](#).

Photograph of crowded L train from [lauratitian on Flickr](#)

But the trains and buses do seem overcrowded these days. How will we convince more people to take mass transit when it's so crowded? It's one thing to urge people to take mass transit instead of driving, but it's another to create conditions that induce subway usage. The MTA and NYPD's commitment over the last 20 years to cleaning up the subway system and reducing crime have increased subway usage dramatically. But now many subway line are reaching their breaking

point. Even on the weekend when there are less commuters and school kids filling the system, service is infrequent enough that the trains are still crowded.

Here are some short and long term ideas for reducing overcrowding on the subways.

1. Increase subway service on the weekends to improve service and reduce overcrowding.
2. Build out the biking infrastructure (Protected lanes, indoor/secure parking) to encourage shorter trips to be done by bike instead of subway/bus.
3. Accelerate system expansion - especially finishing the complete Second Avenue Subway as quickly as possible.
4. Quickly expand the BRT roll-out to supplement subway service and consider light rail for many
5. Encourage more mixed use walkable pedestrian neighborhoods that eliminate the need for subway and bus utilization.

It's time for the city to get serious about long term planning to substantially increase the capacity of mass transit to safely and comfortably move people around and through our great city. And where will the money for all this come from? Perhaps congestion pricing, or changed formulas of how transportation money is matched by the Federal government on highways versus mass transit?

But now is the time to begin planning for better quality, fuel efficient and environmentally friendly transportation system.



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