

*TRANSIT BIGS' 'BLUNDER'-BUS - RIDERS FORCED TO TAKE A 'STAND' The New York Post
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HEADLINE: TRANSIT BIGS' 'BLUNDER'-BUS - RIDERS FORCED TO TAKE A 'STAND'

BYLINE: PATRICK GALLAHUE, Transit Reporter

BODY:

A surge in bus travel is leaving more riders with standing room only, a transit advocacy group charged yesterday.

The rise in ridership over a decade is fast outpacing service increases, leading to a tight squeeze during the morning commute, according to a Straphangers Campaign report.

"Crushed by crowds? Have to wait for more than one bus to go by? It's not your imagination," said Gene Russianoff, of the Straphangers Campaign. "Transit officials have never caught up to the waves of new bus riders."

Between 1997 and 2007, average weekday ridership on local buses grew 22 percent - from 2 million to 2.45 million - while the number of buses increased only 15 percent.

New York City Transit disputed the claims that it has sat by while passengers are stuck on their feet.

The agency said that overall service - including weekend and express buses - increased 29 percent over the 10 years cited by the campaign, a time when ridership exploded thanks to MetroCards and free subway-to-bus transfers.

NYC Transit also claimed that given the depressed ridership in the mid-'90s, service was already in place for the new riders.

"Important in this discussion is the fact that in 1996, bus ridership was at its lowest point ever,

with 492 million annual riders," NYC Transit said in a statement. "The system was nowhere near capacity, allowing for much of the ridership growth since 1996 to be accommodated within existing available capacity."

But Russianoff fired back: "The question is: Has it been enough? . . . We think the agency has been behind the curve."

The report also found that not every borough is feeling the pinch. Service increases in Manhattan and Staten Island actually exceeded ridership growth, according to the report.

But in Brooklyn, Queens and The Bronx, average weekday ridership growth far surpassed service increases.

Hell on wheels

Average weekday ridership and service on buses:

Sept. 1997 -- Sept. 2007 -- Ridership increase -- Service increase

Manhattan 517,851 584,038 13% 15%

Brooklyn 615,159 773,505 26% 8%

Bronx 468,638 582,744 24% 14%

Queens 316,662 411,146 30% 20%

Staten Island 90,455 106,966 18% 23%

Total 2,008,764 2,458,399 22% 15%

GRAPHIC: JAMMIN': Riders like these packing a bus yesterday are victims of an NYC Transit failure to plan for growth, advocates charge. [NY Post: Tamara Beckwith]

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Terms: **bus and (ridership increases) or (increasing ridership or increased commuters) and not Asia and not Europe and not India and not China and not Mexico and date(geq (June 18, 2008) and leq (August 18, 2008))** ([Edit Search](#) | [Suggest Terms for My Search](#))

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