



BACKGROUND

The global COVID-19 pandemic brought New York's public transit system and the millions of riders who rely on it to the brink of catastrophe, costing the MTA billions of dollars in fares, tolls, and taxes. New York riders demanded and won tens of billions of dollars in federal emergency aid and infrastructure funding to save the city's buses, subways, commuter trains, and paratransit and create a path to a strong recovery.

Governor Hochul is now moving forward with long held goals like a new Penn Station and Second Avenue Subway extension and initiating new projects like the Interboro Express, a bold vision for equitable infrastructure that will ultimately serve millions of riders. State leaders must also seize the moment to build further on that foundation.

In this year's budget, the governor and legislature must take full advantage of our extensive public transit system to meet the needs of today's riders and confront inequity and the climate emergency with a compelling package of affordable, frequent, and accessible service.

NO FARE HIKES FOR AT LEAST FIVE YEARS

Public transit services must be as affordable as possible to retain existing riders and make the system more widely accessible to riders at every income level and in all neighborhoods.

- Fare hikes before ridership rebounds to pre-pandemic levels would be highly inequitable—falling hardest on essential and low-income workers—and discourage potential riders from coming back
- While the MTA once relied on regular fare hikes, the new normal demands a more aggressive approach to affordability, including a flat rate for subway, bus, commuter rail, and paratransit trips within the city and promoting and expanding Fair Fares for low-income New Yorkers
- The governor and legislators should start by funding the MTA's request for \$250 million annually in place of this year's fare hike

CUT LONG WAITS FOR BUSES AND TRAINS

Public transit needs to be more useful than before to maximize its value as an engine of opportunity for those who need it most and to attract as many new riders as possible.

- Even as public transit affords opportunities to so many, [existing transit service is inequitable](#), placing white New Yorkers within reach of roughly twice as many jobs as Black New Yorkers, who often live far from the subway and rely on infrequent buses
- More frequent bus and train service—[every six minutes, seven days a week](#) on most lines – and bus network redesigns mean faster trips for riders, enhancing access to opportunity and stiffening competition with less affordable and efficient private cars
- The governor and legislature should make available \$250 million annually for faster transit trips to build an equitable, sustainable future both for the transit system and the city that relies on it

FULFILL THE PROMISE OF AN ACCESSIBLE SUBWAY

A generation since the Americans With Disabilities Act, our subway is still shamefully inaccessible, excluding half a million New Yorkers, when all of us will have trouble climbing stairs at some point—elevators are for everybody.

- The MTA's [Fast Forward](#) plan promised reliable subway signals and full station accessibility by 2034, requiring 20 newly accessible stations each year—nearly double the record of 11 station accessibility projects completed in 2020
- Legislators took a bold step to authorize congestion pricing in the Manhattan Central Business District to raise \$15 billion for upgrades that are essential to a humane and inclusive subway system
- Now the governor must finish the job by expediting this first-in-the-nation effort to cut traffic while delivering the accessible subway system New Yorkers need and deserve

LEVERAGE PUBLIC TRANSIT TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

New York's public transit system may be the state's single most important asset in the fight against climate change. Shifting more trips to transit could literally save coastal areas of our city and state from the threat of rising tides and stronger storms, both by cutting our own carbon emissions and setting a powerful example for others to follow around the globe.

- The governor must fully and fairly implement congestion pricing as quickly as possible with no new special interest carve outs for privileged groups of drivers
- State leaders should work with City officials to mitigate subway flooding by turning streets into sponges, adding permeable green infrastructure to complement sewers
- Future state climate laws should invest in public transit, acknowledging its unique role in creating good jobs, advancing environmental justice, and efficiently transitioning New York as a whole to 100% clean and renewable energy