



New York by the Numbers

Economic snapshots of the five boroughs

Center for an
Urban
Future
www.nycfuture.org

March 2009
Volume 2 • Issue 1

The Center for an Urban Future is New York City's leading think tank for research and innovative thinking about key issues affecting the five boroughs.

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Facing a crippling budget shortfall, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is threatening to make 218 proposed service cuts to subway and bus lines across the five boroughs—reducing longer waits and more crowded and unreliable service on the subway and buses. The cuts are set to take effect in April 2009. But riders in these outer-borough subway and bus ridership in 2008 was higher than at anytime since 1965. Moreover, although the cuts will affect the most crowded stations, the people who live and work in the boroughs outside of Manhattan, our data shows, are the ones who have seen the most dramatic increase since has increased dramatically since in the last ten years than in Manhattan.

In this issue of *New York by the Numbers*, the Center for an Urban Future's monthly economic snapshot of the five boroughs, we take a look at the increase in average weekday ridership between 1998 and 2008 for every subway station. The subway system is the backbone of New York's public transportation system. From MTA New York City Transit, those just have important the city's public transportation system has become for residents living outside the city center!

■ 20 of the 22 stations with the largest percentage increase in subway ridership were outside in the outer-boroughs on in Manhattan north of 149th Street.

■ In 2008, 62 stations outside of Manhattan had an average weekday ridership of over 10,000 people, up significantly from 46 stations in 2003 and 38 in 1998.

■ More than a quarter of all New York City subway stations—111 out of 425—an increase in average weekday ridership of 50 percent or more during the past decade. Brooklyn had the most stations with the top-50 for the 100 subway stations, 29 in the Bronx and 22 in Queens.

■ 13 stations on the I, 1 line and one on the N line were among the 50 fastest growing stations overall. Other stations in the top-50 stations, the top-50 for the 100 subway stations, 29 in the Bronx and 22 in Queens.

The growth in outer-borough bus ridership, meanwhile, dwarfed Manhattan's during the same period. Overall, 81.7 percent of the gain in bus riders occurred outside of Manhattan. Staten Island had the largest percentage increase at 21.9 percent increase, the Bronx at 23.3 percent increase and Staten Island at 28.4 percent increase. By contrast, Manhattan's bus ridership grew by only 7.8 percent since 1998. It actually experienced a 6.7 percent decrease between 2003 and 2008, the only borough to do so.

The Center's new report on the challenges facing New York's middle class, *Reshaping City of Opportunity*, found that communities with an increasingly important quality of life issue for many residents in the city's outer-boroughs. This new data makes a strong case that these residents should be seeing an increase in service and investment in their neighborhoods. If not, then the city's outer-borough neighborhoods in Staten Island, Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx might be well-served to pay as much or more attention to their transit-riding constituents as to the relative handful of car drivers into Manhattan.

Report - March 2009

Transit Overload

This edition of *New York by the Numbers* provides a station-by-station examination of the growth in subway ridership between 1998 and 2008 and a borough-by-borough analysis of bus ridership changes. It reveals that the largest gains in transit ridership occurred outside of Manhattan.

by Center for an Urban Future

[Click here to read the full report \(PDF\).](#)

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