

# **Evaluating the 2010 Service Reductions**

September 2011

# Background

- MTA 2010 budget gap totaled \$900 million
- NYCT implemented service reductions in June 2010
  - Saved \$67.8M annually
  - Helped stabilize MTA finances
  - Helped preserve appropriate levels of subway and bus service city-wide
- Reductions were focused on the least utilized routes, route segments and times of day
- 85% of NYCT trips were unaffected and an additional 10% were only minimally affected (the average wait for a subway increased by just 1-2 minutes)

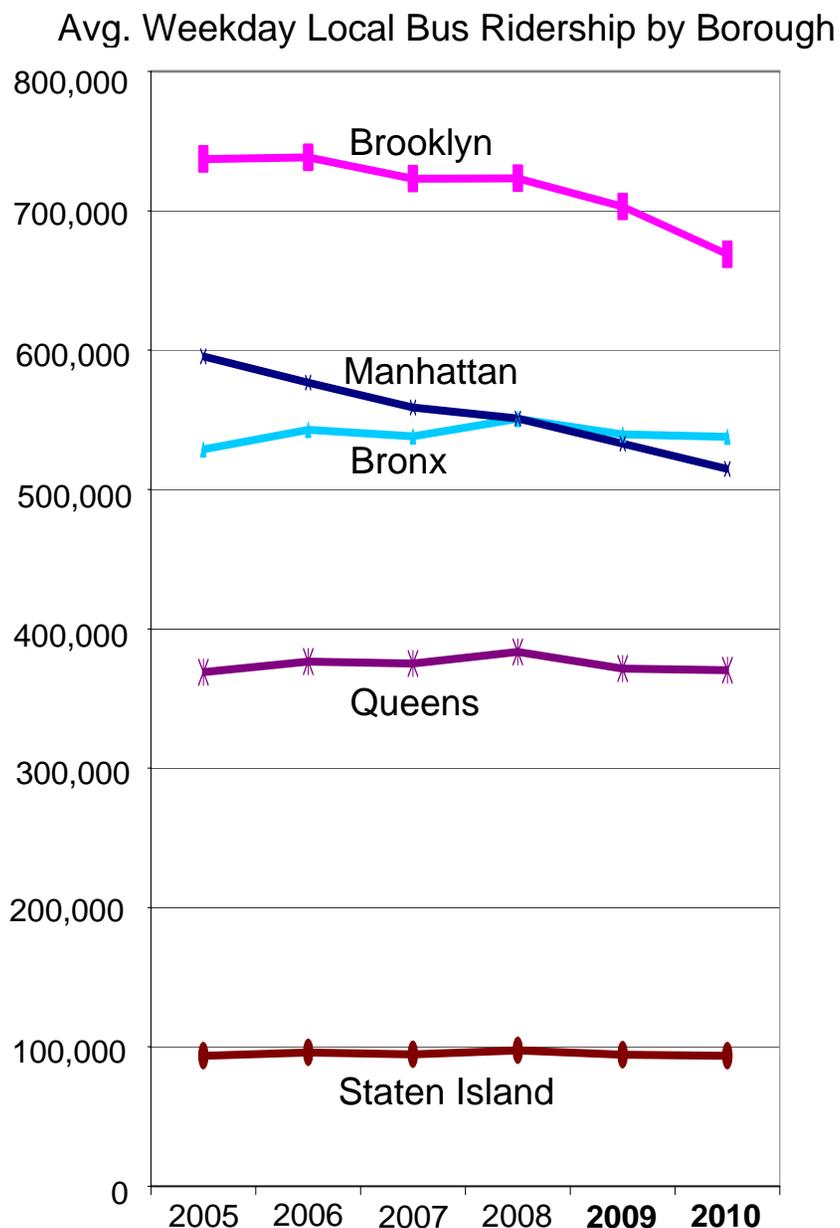
# Follow-Up Evaluation

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- Comprehensively analyzes changes in ridership and cost effectiveness since June 2010
- Presents actions already taken to correct shortcomings in original plan and maintain compliance with loading and service guidelines
- Recommends a framework for moving forward

# System-wide Ridership Context

- Subway ridership
  - Over the past decade, except for a recession-related drop in 2009, subway ridership has been increasing, even after the service reductions
- Bus ridership
  - Over the past decade bus ridership has generally been flat
  - However, in Manhattan and Brooklyn bus ridership was declining prior to the service reductions due to shifts in ridership to the subway and traffic, and has continued to decline after the service reductions



# System-wide Ridership Changes

- Actual ridership losses due to the bus service reductions are hard to predict given the variability in ridership effects of various factors, such as the economy, demographics and fare increases, as well as unknown factors.
- Subway ridership appears not to have been adversely affected by the subway service reductions
  - Subway ridership actually increased due in part to riders shifting from bus to subway, which is a more efficient mode
- Bus ridership is estimated to have declined approximately 1.7%, about what we projected, with a portion of those lost bus riders (0.6%) diverted to the subway, resulting in a net loss of bus ridership of approximately 1.1%

# Subway Cuts

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- Analyzes ridership travel patterns and shifts to other lines
- Determines if resulting subway loads comply with MTA guidelines
- Addresses operational and scheduling issues

# Subway Findings & Actions

- Subway riders continued to ride the subway despite minor reductions in service frequencies and some increases in ridership loads on trains
  - **Despite these load increases from the service reductions, train loads remain within MTA loading guidelines**, although a minor service increase was needed on the **J** line
- Some riders benefited from new direct subway access
  - North Brooklyn riders now have a direct weekday service to Midtown via the rerouted **M** line (ridership at 6<sup>th</sup> Av Stations increased significantly)
  - Brooklyn **N** riders now have direct access via the Manhattan Bridge to local Manhattan stations between Canal St and 34<sup>th</sup> St on weekdays (ridership at these local stations increased significantly)
- Follow-up actions already taken:
  - **J** service added to address loading issue during AM shoulder periods
  - **M** schedule adjusted to reduce service gaps northbound between 6<sup>th</sup> Av stations and 53<sup>rd</sup> St stations during the AM rush hour

- Analyzes bus ridership changes in affected corridors, including whether riders shifted to alternate subway and/or bus services (including MTA Bus Company services) or no longer take transit
- Determines if bus loads comply with MTA guidelines
- Looks at cost-per-rider on bus routes in affected corridors to determine changes in cost effectiveness

# Bus Findings

- Generally there were three types of outcomes for both local and express bus corridors:
  - All or most ridership shifted to other bus or subway routes - ridership increased, or stayed about the same, and cost efficiency improved (most desired outcome)
  - Some riders shifted to other bus and subway routes, but overall ridership decreased, while cost efficiency improved (most common outcome)
  - Most riders no longer took transit - ridership decreased and cost efficiency decreased or was unchanged (least desired outcome but not unanticipated)
    - For Example
      - To maintain geographic coverage, a discontinued route was replaced in part by rerouting another bus route, which became less efficient as a result
      - An extremely low ridership route was discontinued and ridership was lost

- Follow-up actions already taken:
  - Adjusted service to meet MTA loading guidelines
  - Adjusted service on express bus routes where travel times were longer than anticipated due to traffic
  - Rescheduled rush hour buses to correct bus-bunching problems
  - Made cost-neutral adjustments in conjunction with community input
  - Adjusted route spans

# Conclusions

- 95% of all subway and bus riders were unaffected or minimally affected
- Virtually all subway riders continue to use the subway and about 99% of bus riders continue to make their trips using buses or subways
- The service reductions did result in some customers losing access to transit service or experiencing a degradation in their service, but the need to reduce costs made such impacts unavoidable
- Bus ridership losses were greatest in Manhattan and Brooklyn, where bus ridership was already declining
- While more subway riders were affected than bus riders, most were minimally impacted by small service frequency changes
- As a result of the service reductions, cost efficiency of the remaining services improved in most cases, with only a 0.3% drop in bus and subway ridership combined
- MTA Bus Company's evaluation of its service reductions mirrored NYCT's findings

# Framework for Moving Forward

- Evaluate all service changes based on the following factors according to our established service change process:
  - Loading Guidelines
  - Economic Performance
  - Transit Dependency
  - Population Density
  - Availability of Alternative Service
- Continue, with community input, to analyze ridership patterns and operational issues to develop cost-neutral improvements
- Compare new service investments with the restoration of service cuts that resulted in significant ridership losses (e.g., a discontinued route where most riders shifted to non-transit modes)