November 2025

The Pokey, Schleppie, and Mazel

"AWARDS" FOR NYC BUS SERVICE

Acknowledgements

This report was written by Megan Ahearn and Natasha Elder with the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) Straphangers Campaign, and Brian Fritsch, Kara Gurl, and Henry Mei of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC). Data analysis was conducted by PCAC. Images were created by Megan Ahearn. Maps were created by Henry Mei with NYC Open Data and mass transit data layers compiled by Anastasia Clark, Frank Donnelly & Zhi Keng He using GTFS data from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

Since 1979, the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign has organized the riding public – college students, in particular – to speak up for affordable fares, more attractive service, and the continued rebuilding and expansion of public transit.

Created by the New York State Legislature in 1981, the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC) serves as the official voice of riders of the subway, bus, Staten Island Railway, Long Island Rail Road, and Metro-North Railroad, advocating for affordability, transparency, accessibility, and equity across the MTA system.

NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign

PCAC PERMANENT CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MTA

Executive Summary

With renewed focus on buses and speeding the trips for the millions of riders who rely on them, the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) Straphangers Campaign and Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC) announced reinvigorated Pokey and Schleppie Awards for poor bus service, and creation of a new category – the Mazel – for most improved.

This year marks the 18th in the series of the dubious recognition awards, which were last issued in 2022. The latest awards measured bus speeds and reliability as of May 2025 (prior to implementation of the Queens Bus Network Redesign.) The advent of congestion relief has helped improve even the worst line, and even more progress will be possible following implementation of the Bus Network Redesign projects. A clear take-away is the need for complementary efforts such as bus lanes, enforcement, and bus priority projects.

The 2025 Pokey and Schleppie Award "Winners"

Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and New York City Transit (NYCT) local bus routes which have 5,000 daily riders or more were eligible for the Pokey and Schleppie Awards (see Methodology, Appendix D).

- **The "winner" of the 2025 Pokey Award is the M42**, clocking in at **5.25 Miles Per Hour (MPH).** It had the slowest speed out of the high-ridership bus routes reviewed by PCAC and the Straphangers Campaign. Positively, the M42 runs faster than the most recent Pokey winner in 2022, we believe that's in large part because of the launch of congestion relief.
- **The "winner" of the 2025 Schleppie Award is the Q8**, with riders waiting on average 3.62 minutes longer than the scheduled wait time between buses. It had the least reliability out of the high-ridership bus routes reviewed by PCAC and the Straphangers Campaign. With the Queens Bus Network Redesign now fully implemented, here's hoping the schleppie Q8 sees some pep in its step next year.

Announcing: The 2025 Mazel Award!

While some routes continue to crawl, others have shown meaningful improvements over the past year. The inaugural "Mazel Award" is awarded to both the standard and express bus routes that have

improved their average speeds the most between May 2024 and May 2025 (see Methodology, Appendix D).

- **The winner of the inaugural Mazel Award for standard buses is the M79+**, which improved from 6.63 to 7.25 Miles Per Hour (MPH).
- **The winner of the inaugural Mazel Award for express buses is the SIM32** (Travis Staten Island – Lower Manhattan), which jumped by more than 2 MPH to reach an average of 17.14 MPH.

Recommendations

Well-targeted reforms with consistent on-the-ground enforcement can realize riders' dreams: Fast, reliable bus service.

- New York City must implement the mandated Streets Plan and install more busways and priority bus lanes, such as those implemented on 14th Street in Manhattan, to cut delays and boost reliability.
- Properly enforce busways and priority bus lanes.
- Build on improvements in traffic congestion by investing in signal priority technology and active headway management.

The 2025 Pokey Award

Slowest high-ridership standard bus routes

The un-coveted Pokey award, given to the slowest of Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and New York City Transit (NYCT) local bus routes based on average speed of routes, is a golden snail on a pedestal. High-ridership routes (with 5,000 daily riders or more) were considered for the "award."

The "winner" of the 2025 Pokey Award is the M42, clocking in at an excruciating **5.25 Miles Per Hour (MPH).** It had the slowest speed out of the high-ridership bus routes reviewed by PCAC and the Straphangers Campaign. The M42 runs within the Congestion Relief zone and has seen considerable improvements thanks to the program, but it continues to face serious barriers to getting riders where they need to go.

Unlike 14th Street, which benefited from a full busway, 42nd Street lacks a comparable dedicated space for buses, leaving the M42 to compete with taxis, cars, and trucks that still dominate the corridor. Double-parked vehicles and weak enforcement of the bus lanes that do exist only add to the delays, making the M42 a vivid example of why congestion relief must be paired with strong bus priority policies.

Compared to the last Pokey Awards in 2022, bus speeds among the slowest routes have shown some modest improvement. In 2022, several Manhattan crosstown routes struggled to reach even 5 MPH. In 2022, the slowest route in the city was the M102 at just 4.6 MPH. In 2025, the M102 clocked in at an average speed of 6.08 MPH, marking a nearly 1.5 MPH improvement from 2022 speeds. The slowest routes now average between 5.2 and 6.0 MPH.

One factor behind this uptick is the introduction of congestion relief, which has significantly reduced car trips into Manhattan's Central Business District and helped ease the worst gridlock. Still, the gains

remain limited; without complementary measures like strong bus priority infrastructure, many buses remain stuck in traffic.

Borough-wide Pokey "Winners"

According to our analysis, the slowest, high-ridership buses in each borough were:

Bus	Speed	Route
M42	5.25	United Nations - W 42 St Pier via 42nd St Crosstown
B35	5.36	Brownsville - Sunset Park via Church Av / 39th St
Bx35	5.59	George Washington Bridge - West Farms Road via E 167th / W 181st St
Q72	6.08	LaGuardia Airport - Rego Park via 94th St / Junction Blvd
S48	9.19	St. George - Mariners Harbor via Forest Av

The pokiest bus in each borough, perhaps not coincidentally, provides crosstown transit connections and supplements the Manhattan-centric nature of the subway system. The Bx35 runs east-west in the Bronx – a borough abundant in north-south subway/rail lines but entirely lacking in any east-west rapid transit. Likewise, the Q72 provides service through the heart of Corona, Jackson Heights, and East Elmhurst to LaGuardia Airport, connecting with the M, R, and 7 trains along the way.

Now more than ever, New Yorkers need faster and more reliable options for traveling within and between the boroughs outside Manhattan. Planned rail projects such as the Interborough Express (IBX) play a key role in addressing this need. Improved bus infrastructure and full-scale bus rapid transit (BRT), where feasible, also need to be part of the discussion.


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STRAPHANGERS CAMPAIGN
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The pokiest buses of 2025 by borough
The Bronx
Bx35
5.59mph
Manhattan
M42
5.25mph
Queens
Q72
6.08mph
B35
5.36mph
Brooklyn
S48
9.19mph
Staten Island
Speeds calculated from May 2025 using the "MTA Bus Speeds: Beginning 2025" dataset. Only routes with over 5,000 average daily riders were considered, except for Staten Island due to substantially lower local bus ridership compared to the rest of the city. For Staten Island, only routes with an average daily ridership above 1,345 – the borough average – were considered.

The 2025 Schleppie Award

Most unreliable high-ridership standard bus routes

This is the fourteenth "Schleppie Award." It is awarded to the city's least reliable, high-ridership bus route. This year's Schleppie Award is based on Additional Bus Stop Time (ABST), a measure of how much longer riders actually wait for a bus, compared with the scheduled wait time. In practice, ABST can lead to bus bunching, when riders wait far longer than expected and then multiple buses arrive at once.

The Schleppie Award is composed of golden, lumbering elephants on a pedestal. And **the 2025 Schleppie winner is the Q8.** This route had the highest Additional Bus Stop Time (ABST) of any major route, with riders waiting on average 3.62 minutes longer than scheduled — a level of service that is inadequate for the Q8's thousands of daily weekday riders.

Running between Gateway Mall in East New York, Brooklyn, and Jamaica, Queens, via 101st Avenue, the Q8 serves as a critical link between shopping, residential, and transit hubs. Instead of dependable service, riders are too often left waiting long stretches only to watch multiple buses show up at once.

Notably, this review was undertaken before the Queens Bus Network Redesign was implemented, during which the Q8 had over a quarter of its nearly 100 round-trip stops removed to improve speed and reliability. We look forward to seeing improvement on this route next year.

Buses which routinely arrive late gives riders an uneasy sense that daily service is coming on an unreliable and unplanned basis. Practically, it could mean showing up late for a family dinner or having to make up for a missed college class.

Borough-wide Schleppie "Winners"

The most unreliable high-ridership bus routes in each borough are:

Bus	ABST in minutes	Route
Q8	3.62	Gateway Mall / East NY - Jamaica via 101st Av
B15	2.90	Bedford Stuyvesant - JFK AirTrain via Marcus Garvey Blvd / New Lots Av
M5	2.29	George Washington Bridge - 31 St & 6 Av via 5th Av / Av of Americas / Riverside Dr
Bx11	2.19	George Washington Bridge - Parkchester via E 170th St / E 174th St
S76*	5.53	St. George - Oakwood via Richmond Rd / New Dorp Ln

***The S76 has the highest ABST of any bus on Staten Island, but fails to meet the daily ridership threshold of 5,000 that the other borough "winners" are required to meet.**

Taken together, the data suggests that while some boroughs have seen modest reliability improvements thanks to investments in dispatching technology, bus lanes, and congestion relief policy, progress remains uneven. Lateness continues to be an issue on routes that travel through dense corridors with no dedicated busways and heavy boarding activity, such as Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn and 101st Avenue in Queens.

When comparing the "winners" from 2022 to 2025, we find that reliability problems are not confined to one corridor or borough, but are a citywide challenge. Routes in Queens and Brooklyn dominated the 2025 Schleppies, where many working-class New Yorkers depend on the bus the most. The Bus Network Redesigns may help to address some of the lateness and reliability concerns.

A Look at Low-Ridership Buses and Ghost Buses

While the Pokey and Schleppie Awards focus on high-ridership routes, thousands of New Yorkers also rely on lower-ridership lines that often escape public attention. Many of these routes serve subway deserts — neighborhoods with few subway connections — or provide the only public transit option for seniors, students, riders with accessibility needs, and workers traveling off-peak hours.

...continued

For these riders, even infrequent service is essential. This issue is especially pronounced on Staten Island, where local bus ridership is substantially lower than in the other four boroughs. Because the Pokey and Schleppie methodology sets a threshold of 5,000 average daily riders, most Staten Island routes would be excluded from consideration altogether.

To account for this, the report uses a borough-specific threshold of 1,345 daily riders — Staten Island's borough-wide average — to better reflect the reality of service there. Without this adjustment, Staten Island's slower and less reliable buses would disappear from the analysis, despite being lifelines for the riders who use them every day. The Schleppiest bus in the borough is the S76 between St. George and Oakwood; riders wait on average an additional 5.53 minutes for the S76 compared to its scheduled frequency.

Adding to the challenge is the prevalence of "ghost buses" — scheduled trips that may even show up on apps but never arrive, leaving riders stranded with no information and no alternative. Although ghost buses don't always appear in official performance data, they have an impact on riders' perception of service and on their lives.

The analysis highlights the need for more transparency and accountability in how the MTA measures reliability. Ghost buses undermine trust in the system and undercut the very communities that depend most on public transit.


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The schleppiest
buses of 2025 by borough
The Bronx
Bx11
+2.19 min waiting
Manhattan
Queens
M5
+2.29 min waiting
Q8
+3.62 min waiting
B15
+2.9 min waiting
S76
+5.53 min waiting
Brooklyn
Staten Island
Schleppie Award is based on additional bus stop time (ABST), meaning the average added time that customers wait at a stop compared with their scheduled wait time, for May 2025. Data is pulled from "MTA Bus Customer Journey-Focused Metrics: Beginning 2025". Only routes with over 5,000 average daily riders were considered, except for Staten Island due to substantially lower local bus ridership compared to the rest of the city. For Staten Island, only routes with an average daily ridership above 1,345 – the borough average – were considered.

Announcing: The 2025 Mazel Award!

Most improved standard and express bus routes

While some routes continue to crawl, others have shown meaningful improvements over the past year. We are pleased to announce the inaugural "Mazel Award," awarded to both the standard and express bus routes that have improved their average speeds the most over the past year. The "Mazel Award" was calculated by finding the difference in speed for each route between May 2024 and May 2025. This was done for both standard (local/limited and Select Bus Service) routes and express buses.

The winner of the inaugural Mazel Award for standard buses is the M79+, which improved from 6.63 to 7.25 Miles Per Hour (MPH). Once the 2014 Pokey winner, the M79+ has undergone considerable changes as part of Select Bus Service implementation over the past decade: new queue jumps (bus-only signals at intersections); all-door boarding; and off-board fare payment have all contributed to greatly improved bus speed and reliability. More specifically, for the past year, the route has benefited from reduced congestion in Manhattan, despite being north of the congestion relief zone. The route is slated for additional capital improvements from NYC DOT to its bus stops and sidewalk infrastructure this fall that will continue to improve pedestrian safety and customer comfort and will build on its recent success.

Top Five: Most improved high ridership standard bus routes

Route	May 2024	May 2025	+ MPH	Route Direction
M79+	6.6325	7.2475	0.615	Yorkville - West Side via 79th St Crosstown
Q83	8.65	9.2375	0.5875	Jamaica - Cambria Heights via Liberty Av / Murdock Av
B26	6.6875	7.26	0.5725	Downtown Brooklyn - Ridgewood via Halsey St / Fulton St
M42	4.9325	5.2475	0.315	United Nations - W 42 St Pier via 42nd St Crosstown
M96	6.245	6.51	0.265	East Side - West Side via 96th St Crosstown

Many of the other routes highlighted by this year's new "Mazel" Award demonstrate the payoffs of some major bus priority improvements. The Q83 in Queens and B26 in Brooklyn also recorded notable speed increases. One notable top-five Mazel winner, the M96, benefitted from a street redesign project and upgraded bus lane on 96th Street, leading to a substantial gain in speeds over its first few months of implementation.

Three of the top five local "Mazel" finalists are in Manhattan, indicating that lower traffic volumes due to congestion relief are showing bus speed benefits around the borough. Most significantly, and ironically, the M42 — the winner of this year's Pokey award — is the fourth most improved local bus, showing that bus speeds are headed in the right direction even for the city's slowest buses.

Express Bus Close Up

The winner of the inaugural Mazel Award for express buses is the SIM32 (Travis Staten Island – Lower Manhattan), which jumped by more than 2 MPH to reach an average of 17.14 MPH. Several of the most improved express routes posted significant speed gains between May 2024 and May 2025. The QM31 (Glen Oaks – Midtown) gained 1.3 MPH, and the QM15 (Lindenwood – Midtown) improved by nearly 1.2 MPH.

Top Five: Most improved express bus routes

Route	May 2024	May 2025	+ MPH	Route Direction
SIM32	15.125	17.14	2.015	Travis - Lower Manhattan via N Gannon Av / Victory Bl
QM31	11.83	13.13	1.3	Glen Oaks - Fresh Meadows - Midtown via Horace Harding Expwy / 73rd Av / Union Turnpike
QM15	11.4125	12.5975	1.185	Lindenwood - Midtown via 157th Av / Woodhaven Blvd
QM36	14.595	15.745	1.15	Lake Success - Midtown via North Shore Towers / Union Turnpike
SIM35	15.17	16.115	0.945	Port Richmond - Lower Manhattan via Clove Rd

All five of the most improved express routes enter the Manhattan Central Business District, highlighting how congestion relief and targeted traffic management can benefit commuter coach services that operate long distances on highways and major arterials before entering Manhattan. Reductions in car traffic mean fewer bottlenecks at key entry points and smoother trips once express buses reach Midtown.

Still, not all express routes improved equally and many remain vulnerable to choke points when approaching bridges, tunnels, and congested surface streets. As with local buses, the data underscores the need for continued investment in bus priority at critical entry corridors, better enforcement of bus lanes in Manhattan, and policies that lock in the gains congestion relief has begun to deliver.


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Mazel!
most improved local & express bus
from 2024 to 2025
M79
+0.6 mph
6.6 to 7.2 mph
SIM32
+2 mph
15 to 17 mph
The Bronx
Manhattan
Queens
Brooklyn
Staten Island
Speeds calculated from May 2024 and 2025 using the "MTA Bus Speeds: 2020 - 2024"
and "MTA Bus Speeds: Beginning 2025" datasets.

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In New York City, mass transit defines where you live, where you play, and where you go to school. It is the "great equalizer" of opportunity and why accessible, affordable, and safe transportation is so important.

Many New Yorkers depend heavily on bus service for daily travel and can attest to the fact that the city's buses are notoriously slow. Yet, as this report finds, overall, bus speeds showed meaningful improvement compared to the last report in 2022.

Well-targeted reforms with consistent on-the-ground enforcement can realize riders' dreams: Faster, more reliable bus service. Busways and priority lanes, such as those implemented on 14th Street in Manhattan, have proven effective in cutting delays and boosting reliability when properly enforced. Where traffic has been eased through congestion relief in Manhattan, riders are beginning to experience quicker, more consistent bus trips. The challenge ahead is ensuring that these benefits extend citywide, particularly to routes outside Manhattan.

The MTA is currently undergoing a series of borough Bus Network Redesigns that are making stop-level and route-based upgrades to each borough's bus network. Up to this point, the Bronx Bus Network Redesign has been in effect since 2022, and the Queens Bus Network Redesign finished implementation in August of 2025.

The lesson is clear: pairing congestion pricing with robust bus priority measures can transform the rider experience, while relying on either one in isolation leaves riders only marginally better off. Expanding proven strategies — such as dedicated busways, signal priority, and active headway management — can turn today's incremental improvements into a system-wide shift toward fast, dependable bus service. The mandated Streets Plan can support these efforts, and New York's next Mayor should make its implementation a priority to improve service for bus riders across the five boroughs.

APPENDIX A:

Average Speeds of the 15 Slowest, High-Ridership Bus Routes

Route	Average MPH*	Route Direction (end to end)
M42	5.25	United Nations - W 42 St Pier via 42nd St Crosstown
M57	5.26	East Side - West Side via 57th St Crosstown
B35	5.36	Brownsville - Sunset Park via Church Av / 39th St
M31	5.42	Yorkville - Clinton via York Av / 57th St
M34+ / M34A+	5.54	East Side - Javits Center and Waterside - Port Authority Terminal via 34th St Crosstown
B63	5.56	Bay Ridge - Cobble Hill via 5th Av / Atlantic Av
BX35	5.59	George Washington Bridge - West Farms Road via E 167th / W 181st St
BX19	5.62	NY Botanical Garden - Riverbank Park via Southern Bl / E 149th St
M104	5.68	West Harlem - Times Square via Broadway / 8th Av
M7	5.73	Harlem - 14th Street via Columbus / Amsterdam / 6 & 7 Av / Bway
BX2	5.82	Kingsbridge Heights - Mott Haven via Grand Concourse / E 149th St
M14A+ / M14D+	5.85	Lower East Side - Abingdon Sq via 14th St / Av A and Lower East Side - Chelsea Piers via 14th St / Av D
M4	5.94	The Cloisters - 32 St via 5th Av / Madison Av / Broadway / Ft. Washington Av
M103	5.96	East Harlem - City Hall via 3rd Av / Lexington Av
M66	5.98	East Side - Lincoln Center via 65th & 68th St (East) / 67th & 66th St (West)

*Pokey Awards are based on data from "MTA Bus Speeds: Beginning 2025". Only routes with an average daily ridership of 5,000 or more were considered; express bus routes are not included. Routes with significant overlap (e.g. M34 and M34A) were combined.

APPENDIX B:

The 15 Least Reliable, High-Ridership Bus Routes

Route	ABST* in minutes	Route Direction (end to end)
Q8	3.62	Gateway Mall / East NY - Jamaica via 101st Av
Q38	2.99	Rego Park - Corona via Penelope Av / Eliot Av
Q18	2.98	Astoria - Maspeth via 30th Av / 58th St / 65th Pl
B15	2.90	Bedford Stuyvesant - JFK AirTrain via Marcus Garvey Blvd / New Lots Av
Q59	2.82	Rego Park - Williamsburg Bridge Plaza via Grand Av / Grand St
Q54	2.75	Williamsburg - Jamaica via Jamaica Av / Metropolitan Av
Q60	2.73	Queens Blvd - East Midtown via Queens Blvd / Sutphin Blvd
Q58	2.70	Flushing - Ridgewood via Corona Av / Grand Av / Fresh Pond Rd
B82+	2.68	Coney Island - Spring Creek Towers via Bay Pkwy / Kings Hwy / Flatlands Av
B44 LCL	2.62	Sheepshead Bay - Williamsburg via Nostrand Av
B3	2.57	Bensonhurst - Bergen Beach via Avenue U
B6	2.55	Bath Beach - East New York via Bay Pkwy / Avenue J / Flatlands Av
B12	2.52	Lefferts Gardens - East New York via Clarkson Av / Empire Blvd / East New York Av
B61	2.51	Park Slope - Downtown Brooklyn via Van Brunt St / Columbia St / 9th St
B46 LCL	2.50	Kings Plaza - Williamsburg via Utica Av - Malcolm X Blvd

*Schleppie awards are based on Additional Bus Stop Time (ABST), or the average added time that customers wait at a stop compared with their scheduled wait time, for May 2025. Data is pulled from "MTA Bus Customer Journey-Focused Metrics: Beginning 2025". Only routes with an average daily ridership of 5,000 or more were considered; express bus routes are not included. See selection in Methodology.

APPENDIX C:

Top Five Slowest, High-Ridership Buses by Borough

Brooklyn

Route	Bus Speed	Route Direction
B35	**5.36**	Brownsville - Sunset Park via Church Av / 39th St
B63	**5.56**	Bay Ridge - Cobble Hill via 5th Av / Atlantic Av
B12	**6.09**	Lefferts Gardens - East New York via Clarkson Av / Empire Blvd / Easter New York Av
B11	**6.18**	Sunset Park - Midwood via 49th & 50th St / Avenue J
B52	**6.25**	Downtown Brooklyn - Ridgewood via Gates Av / Greene Av / Atlantic Av

Queens

Route	Bus Speed	Route Direction
Q72	**6.08**	LaGuardia Airport - Rego Park via 94th St / Junction Blvd
Q49	**6.12**	Jackson Heights - East Elmhurst via 35th Av / 89th & 92nd Sts / Astoria Blvd
Q33	**6.14**	Jackson Heights - East Elmhurst via Roosevelt Av / 82nd & 83rd Sts / 23rd Av
Q23	**6.32**	East Elmhurst - Forest Hills via 108 St
Q32	**6.36**	Jackson Heights - Penn Station (Midtown) via Roosevelt Av / Queens Blvd / 5th Av / Madison Av

Manhattan

Route	Bus Speed	Route Direction
M42	**5.25**	United Nations - W 42 St Pier via 42nd St Crosstown
M57	**5.26**	East Side - West Side via 57th St Crosstown
M31	**5.42**	Yorkville - Clinton via York Av / 57th St
M34/M34A	**5.54**	East Side - Javits Center and Waterside - Port Authority Terminal via 34th St Crosstown
M104	**5.68**	West Harlem - Times Square via Broadway / 8th Av

Bronx

Route	Bus Speed	Route Direction
BX35	**5.59**	George Washington Bridge - West Farms Road via E 167th / W 181st St
BX19	**5.62**	NY Botanical Garden - Riverbank Park via Southern Bl / E 149th St
BX2	**5.82**	Kingsbridge Heights - Mott Haven via Grand Concourse / E 149th St
BX13	**6.11**	George Washington Bridge - Bronx Terminal Market via Q 181 St / Ogden Av / River Av
BX11	**6.19**	George Washington Bridge - Parkchester via E 170th St / E 174th St

Staten Island*

Only routes with an average daily ridership above 1,345 – the borough average – were considered for Staten Island, as opposed to the 5,000 rider benchmark used for the other boroughs, due to substantially lower local bus ridership.

Route	Bus Speed	Route Direction
S48	**9.19**	St. George - Mariners Harbor via Forest Av
S76	**10.68**	St. George - Oakwood via Richmond Rd / New Dorp Ln
S46	**10.78**	St. George - West Shore Plaza via Castleton Av
S44	**10.94**	St. George - Staten Island Mall via Richmond Av
S53	**11.36**	Port Richmond - Bay Ridge via Verrazano-Narrows Bridge / Clove Rd

APPENDIX D - METHODOLOGY

To determine this year's award winners, we used data from the MTA Metrics portal to determine route-level speed and reliability. Data for New York City Transit and MTA Bus Company buses were included in this analysis. We looked at all local, limited, and Select buses for the month of May 2025 to determine the Pokey and Schleppie "winners;" we also looked at express buses when determining the most improved Mazel winners between May 2024 and May 2025.

We only considered high-ridership bus routes, with at least 5,000 average daily riders, for the "awards," as has been the practice since post-2020. Data for Queens bus routes does not reflect changes from the Queens Bus Network Redesign, which was implemented during the summer of 2025. Neither the Pokiest (Q72) nor Schleppiest (Q8) bus in Queens received routing changes as a result of the redesign, though they did receive some service increases and bus stop consolidations, which may impact their average speeds and reliability today.

For Staten Island-only charts, only routes with an average daily ridership above 1,345 – the borough average – were considered due to substantially lower local bus ridership compared to the rest of the city. Ridership is calculated from the "MTA Bus Hourly Ridership: Beginning 2025" dataset.

1. Determining Speed

We calculated speed for each route using the "MTA Bus Speeds: Beginning 2025" dataset. As the data is broken up by weekday and weekend periods, and further by peak and off-peak hours, we calculated the *average of the average* speed for each route.

2. Determining Bus Unreliability

We based the Schleppie Award on Additional Bus Stop Time (ABST), meaning the average added time that customers wait at a stop compared with their scheduled wait time, for May 2025. Data is pulled from "MTA Bus Customer Journey-Focused Metrics: Beginning 2025". As the data is broken up by peak and off-peak hours, we calculated the *average of the average* ABST for each route.

Previous awards have calculated the Schleppie by finding the percentage of buses observed that "bunch" using data generated by MTA's BusTime. "Bunching" was defined as two or more buses arriving at a stop around the same time – within 25 percent of the scheduled headway after the bus in front of them. We did not use this methodology for this year's Schleppie award.

3. Determining Most Improved Local and Express Buses

We calculated the difference in speed for each route between May 2024 and May 2025 using the same methodology previously described in "determining speed." This was done for both standard (local/limited and Select Bus Service) routes and express buses. For express buses, no ridership threshold was used due to their nature as commuter coaches lacking consistent all-day service.