



Transportation and Equity: A Vision for New York State Leadership in 2018

Transit is New York’s lifeblood. The region’s economy and tax base are founded on it. For millions of households, transit is the only way to get around. As housing costs rise, New Yorkers must spread out to find affordable homes and rely on transit to stay connected. Equity demands that state leaders prioritize transit in the public budget and policy-making process.

But public transit infrastructure isn’t keeping up with the city or the New Yorkers of all incomes who depend on it. While population, jobs, and tourism set records, eight million daily subway and bus riders endure record delays and slowdowns. Rather than meet growing need, service has fallen apart. Subway delays nearly quadrupled from 20,000 per month in 2012 to 76,000 in January. The New York City Independent Budget Office found riders lost an average of 35,000 hours to delays each weekday morning. And that’s just riders able to board trains -- most subway stations are inaccessible to people with physical disabilities. Meanwhile, buses are slower than ever, providing worse service than in any other big US city, and rapidly losing ridership.

Yet there’s hope. In May, New York City Transit President Andy Byford proposed Fast Forward, a plan to modernize subway and bus service and make transit accessible. The state’s Fix NYC panel has recommended congestion pricing to fund essential transit upgrades. While elected leaders haven’t yet made the investments or passed the laws to get transit up to speed and accessible to everyone, we have in Fast Forward and Fix NYC a plan to fix the system and a way to fund implementation. Now we need the attention and will of the governor and legislature to make it happen.

As state policymakers run for election this fall, transit advocates put forth this budgetary, legislative, and policy agenda for Albany to take up in the coming months.

I. Fund Fast Forward

The Plan: Fast Forward to modern, accessible subways and buses and a functional paratransit system

- State of the art signals on all subway lines in 15 years, modernizing 1930s technology

- Upgrades on 5 lines benefitting 3 million daily riders in 5 years
- Upgrades on 6 more lines benefitting a total of 5 million riders in 10 years
- 3,000+ new subway cars to replace old cars from the 1960s and '70s and add capacity so that, with modern signals, more trains can run, reducing crowding
- 50 new accessible subway stations in 5 years, 130 in 10 years, all possible in 15 years
- 300+ subway station upgrades
- Nearly 5,000 new buses
- Redesigned bus routes in all 5 boroughs in 5 years
- A new subway and bus fare payment system in 5 years

The Price: Fixing our broken transit system will cost about \$30 billion

- The price includes major portions of the next two MTA five-year capital plans and another \$10 billion for the current capital plan that was promised but not yet funded

Paying for It: Fix NYC will upgrade transit infrastructure while reducing traffic congestion

- Enacted March 2018: Congestion surcharge on taxi and for-hire vehicle trips in Manhattan below 96th Street beginning in January 2019
 - Revenue will primarily fund Subway Action Plan maintenance begun in 2017
 - Additional revenue will support outer-borough transit improvements
- **Not Yet Enacted:** Congestion charge on trucks and private cars entering the Manhattan Central Business district below 60th Street
 - Over \$1 billion in annual revenue would support transit modernization

Adopting the complete set of Fix NYC recommendations is essential to funding Fast Forward

- Congestion pricing is a fair and reliable source of revenue to fund transit investments
 - Households with cars earn more than twice households without cars
 - Only 2% of working poor households would pay a congestion charge
- Any additional funding sources must also be fair and sustainable
 - Fixing the subway will cause inconvenience and require community buy-in
 - Funding must remain consistent through fluctuations in the state's economy
- Additional concerns about the fairness of Fix NYC itself can be alleviated through:
 - Freedom Ticket on LIRR/MNR in Queens and the Bronx
 - Improving bike/pedestrian/bus connections to subways
 - Subsidizing additional modes of access to transit deserts
 - Toll reductions on outer-borough bridges
 - Discounts or waivers for low-income drivers and drivers with disabilities

II. Improve Our Buses: Make buses efficient, reliable and environmentally sound

- Protect and expand the existing bus lane network to prioritize buses on city streets

- Bus lanes are an essential tool for planning and providing reliable service
- Automate bus lane enforcement through legislation lifting restrictions on camera use
 - Enforcement cameras keep lanes clear and enable free movement of buses
- Invest in an all-electric bus fleet as quickly as possible; Shenzhen, China is already there
 - Electric buses reduce fossil fuel reliance and carbon emissions

III. Make the transit network accessible

- Fund a fully accessible subway network within 15 years and ongoing accessibility improvements beginning now
 - More than three-quarters of subway stations lack elevators and even those elevators break down too frequently
 - Every subway station must be physically accessible via elevators within 15 years, including consistent station accessibility features, expanded employee training, and improved communication with riders with disabilities beginning now
 - NYU's Rudin Center reported that Access-A-Ride trips starting or ending near non-ADA-accessible subway stations cost \$258 million in 2015; 16 of the stations each had more than \$2 million worth of pickups or drop-offs within a quarter-mile
- Give Access-A-Ride vehicles access to bus lanes
 - People with disabilities should have equal access to valuable infrastructure
 - Paratransit should be less vulnerable to street congestion
- Expand the Access-A-Ride on-demand pilot program to include all Access-A-Ride users, and decrease the number of lengthy, circuitous rides.
 - Mandate an increase in the number of accessible cabs and for-hire vehicles to enable the MTA to expand on demand paratransit service.

IV. Create Safe, Transit-friendly Streets

- Give the New York City Department of Transportation full discretion over automated speed limit and traffic signal enforcement cameras
 - Camera enforcement is critical to street safety; the agency responsible for safe streets should have unfettered access to this tool
- Eliminate free parking placards for private vehicles operated by non-disabled drivers
 - Parking placards induce unnecessary driving and make arbitrary distinctions among New Yorkers
- Require drivers to pass bicyclists at a distance of no fewer than three feet

- Safe cycling requires safe passing; while safe passing distances vary according to speed, three feet is a minimum safe distance
- Permit electric-assisted bicycle operation on city streets
 - Electric bikes are essential transportation for delivery workers and older adults and should be permitted and regulated as such
- Permit City government to regulate autonomous vehicle operation on city streets
 - City government bears responsibility for maintaining safe streets and needs the authority to do its job as technology changes
- Train motor vehicle drivers in pedestrian and bicyclist safety as part of licensure
 - New drivers should be trained to share the road with more vulnerable users
- Approve and allocate funding for a pedestrian and bicyclist path on the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.
 - The state can build regional connectivity and create a safe, sustainable transit solution for all New Yorkers

V. Restore Trust and Accountability to Transit

- Transit funding should be lockboxed so that what's intended for transit is spent on transit
 - Plans like Fast Forward depend on consistent revenue streams which should not be subject to raids for other purposes
- The MTA should produce a full accounting of its assets
 - Proper maintenance requires a complete understanding of MTA property and equipment to be maintained

VI. Fix Penn Station and Fund New York's Share of the Gateway Tunnel

- Penn Station handles three times as many passengers as it was intended to and cannot be fully transformed while an aging Madison Square Garden sits atop it
- Madison Square Garden's operating permit expires in 2023, when East Side Access will also bring Long Island commuters to Grand Central Terminal, providing a unique opportunity to transform Penn Station in the near future
- Master planning, including the exploration of relocation options of the Garden and value capture for funding station expansion and improvements, should begin immediately