

**NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign**  
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**Statement on MTA 2013  
Preliminary Operating Budget**  
(July 25, 2012)

The Straphangers Campaign thanks the Metropolitan Transportation Authority for proposing to include \$29 million in transit service restorations and additions in its 2013 operating budget.

In a transit system with subways and many bus routes bursting at the seams with high and growing ridership, it is the right thing to do.

The Straphangers Campaign realizes that these changes pose fiscal and operating challenges for the MTA. But if future finances make it possible to restore more service, we would highlight two areas for consideration.

First, the plan calls for restoring service on the B39 across the Williamsburg Bridge and that is a victory for the disabled community. The B51 – which used to travel over the Manhattan Bridge – however is not restored and should be. According to NYC Transit, the B39 served 1,180 weekday passengers, while the B51 served 900. Second, the MTA says in its materials that its plan “responds to continued ridership growth, particularly during weekends, evenings and weekday off peak periods.” This is particularly true of the subway side. Last May 2012, the subways had the highest weekday average ridership of any month in over forty-five years.

However, the MTA plan leaves in place less generous subway “loading guidelines” that were adopted as part of the June 2010 service cuts. These standards allow more standees and less service on many subway lines during off hours and on weekends. The result contributes to a subway that can often be packed and have long waits at many different hours during the week.

The Straphangers Campaign urges reconsideration of these off-peak and weekend loading guidelines.