

MTA Bus Wait Assessment

Overview

General Description

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is a public-benefit corporation responsible for public transportation in the state of New York serving 12 counties in southeastern New York, along with two counties in southwestern Connecticut under contract to the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CDOT). The MTA is the largest transportation network in North America.

Bus service within New York City is operated by MTA agencies New York City Transit (NYCT) and MTA Bus Company (MTABC).

Wait Assessment (WA) measures how evenly buses are spaced. It is defined as the percentage of actual intervals between buses that are no more than three minutes over the scheduled interval for the morning (7 a.m. to 9 a.m.) and afternoon (4 p.m. to 7 p.m.) peak periods and no more than five minutes over the scheduled interval for the rest of the day (off-peak).

This dataset was published during the first phase of the MTA's commitment to increasing transparency. We continually examine all our published and publishable data with a view to both providing datasets that can be effectively utilized by our customers and the public at large, and to providing regular, automated updates to these datasets efficiently and sustainably. Consequently, this dataset may be restructured and/or combined with other similar datasets in the future.

Data Collection Methodology

Bus Wait Assessment is calculated by using BusTime data to determine the actual headways on a route and comparing those to the scheduled headways on a given route.

Statistical and Analytic Issues

This measure provides a percentage of buses passing the standard, but it does not account for extra service operated, it is not weighted based on how many customers are waiting for buses at different stops, it does not distinguish between relatively minor gaps in service and major delays, and it is not a true measurement of time customers spend waiting at stops.

Data in March 2020 is reported for March 1 to 20 and data for April 2020 is reported only for April 13 to April 30 only since buses were dispatched dynamically in transitioning to the Essential Service Plan for

COVID-19 and the actual trips could not necessarily be matched to schedules in place before the outbreak of the pandemic. In addition, April 2020 data excludes all express bus routes and May 2020 data excludes numerous express bus routes, particularly in the Bronx and Queens, due to data processing issues associated with reduced service schedules. Data in April was provided after the Essential Service schedules were phased in, from April 14.

On August 1, 2025, bus performance indicators from January 1, 2019 to present on NY Open Data were updated. The updated numbers come from a new bus performance indicator calculation process that, through the use of improved algorithms and enhanced computational capabilities, produces results that more accurately reflect the customer experience. Among these process improvements, those with the largest impact on the metrics were:

- More accurate identification of bus trips from GPS ping data, which in turn permitted better identification of scheduled bus service not operated.
- Better estimation of the time buses depart the first stop of a trip, and the time buses arrive at the last stop of a trip. This made possible more accurate estimates of customer journey times.

These new numbers are shifted from the old numbers, but should follow the same key trends 2019-present. By the end of 2025, the MTA intends to extend this metric recalculation to the years 2015-2018; in the meantime, metrics from before 2019-01-01 should not be directly compared to those after, as they represent the results of different methodologies.

In the summer of 2025, the Queens Bus Network Redesign (QBNR) took place to bring Queens faster, more reliable service with better connections. Changes were phased in by route on June 29 and August 31, which resulted in changed, discontinued, and entirely new routes. Some routes have no changes and are comparable from before and after this time period (ex. Q70); some are mostly the same but rerouted in small sections (ex. Q23); and one reuses a previous route name but is not the same route at all (Q48). New Rush routes were introduced, and there were also changes to bus stops, including stops being relocated or removed. Caution should be exercised when comparing route performance before and after the redesign took effect. [More details about routes changes can be found on MTA's website on the Queens Bus Network Redesign Service Changes page.](#)

Limitations of Data Use

There are no limitations on the data at this time.

Release Notes

Version 1.0.0 release notes instituted (6/07/2024)

Version 1.0.1 bus routes standardized (6/20/2024)

Version 1.1.0 documentation updated and 2019-present data rebuilt (8/01/2025)

Version 1.1.1 documentation updated for QBNR (8/19/2025)

Version 1.1.2 combine temporal bounded versions of data (1/23/2026)