

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Statement: NYC bus ridership continues decline in the face of population and job growth**

**New York, NY** – New York City’s bus service continued its free fall in 2016, seen in the ridership numbers and reliability analysis the MTA shared with its board this week. Despite tremendously crowded subways and a growing population, there were 31,000 fewer daily bus rides taken on weekdays in 2016 than in 2015, a decline of 1.3%. This continues a steady multi-year trend of riders abandoning the bus because of increasingly slow and unreliable service.

Bus service in NYC can be turned around. The Bus Turnaround Coalition has outlined practical strategies for bus reform in our report, *Turnaround: Fixing New York City’s Buses*. We call on the MTA and/or NYC DOT to take action on three of those strategies to improve buses for riders in 2017:

- Implement **transit signal priority** on key routes across the system. At the October 6, 2016 New York City Council hearing on buses, the MTA committed to beginning implementation of transit signal priority in 2018. With bus travel time improvements of up to 30% made possible with the use of this tool, we should not wait. We call on the MTA and DOT to expedite deployment of transit signal priority, ensuring buses citywide use TSP by the first quarter of 2018.
- Put technology and policy in place now to speed up buses via **all-door boarding** when the new fare payment system is rolled out. Buses now spend around 20% of their operating time at bus stops while riders board. Getting riders onto the bus more quickly would mean faster trips for riders and allow the agency to provide more service with its existing fleet. We want a guarantee from the MTA that any new fare payment system will incorporate all-door boarding.
- **Prioritize transit on our streets** with new bus lanes, bus bulbs and boarding islands, optimized traffic signals and intersection “queue-jumps.” Recently, the Bus Turnaround coalition put out an analysis of the top 10 streets in need of bus priority. We call on the DOT to speed up commutes for 250,000 riders by making these common-sense changes to targeted local streets in 2017.

Ridership numbers released by the MTA yesterday make clear that buses, and our transit system as a whole, is not absorbing NYC’s growth. If the NYC DOT and MTA don’t respond proactively, decreasing ridership will contribute to a downward spiral of increasing congestion, slower travel speeds, and a slower New York.

### **About the Bus Turnaround Coalition:**

The Bus Turnaround Coalition is a group of diverse New Yorkers working to turning around the poor bus service that’s plaguing NYC’s bus system and the 2.5 million rides that are taken on it daily. We’re promoting practical strategies that can be implemented quickly to make bus trips faster and more reliable. See our recommended

solutions here: [http://transitcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Turnaround\\_Fixing-NYCs-Buses-20July2016.pdf](http://transitcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Turnaround_Fixing-NYCs-Buses-20July2016.pdf)

Bus Turnaround Coalition Members:

TransitCenter ([www.transitcenter.org](http://www.transitcenter.org)) is a foundation committed to improving urban mobility through research, advocacy, and grantmaking that empowers communities, policymakers, and riders.

The Riders Alliance ([www.ridersny.org](http://www.ridersny.org)) is a grassroots organization of subway and bus riders, pushing for better service at affordable fares and a stronger public investment in mass transit.

The Straphangers Campaign ([www.straphangers.org](http://www.straphangers.org)) a project of the New York Public Interest Research Group, has advocated for New York's public transit system since 1979.

Tri-State Transportation Campaign ([www.tstc.org](http://www.tstc.org)) is a nonprofit advocacy organization working toward a more balanced, transit-friendly and equitable transportation network in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.