

# News Release

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## **M102 Wins 2022 Pokey Award for Slowest Bus; NYC's Slowest Bus Route at 4.6 MPH, Slower Than a Fluttering Butterfly!**

### **B12 Wins Schleppe Award Most Unreliable NYC Bus; One Out of Five Bunch**

New York, NY — The NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign and TransitCenter today issued two “awards” for poor bus service in New York City.

The first is the seventeenth-annual Pokey award, given to the slowest of Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) and New York City Transit (NYCT) local bus routes.

The un-coveted Pokey Award is a golden snail on a pedestal. The award is based on the average speeds of routes. High-ridership routes (with 5,000 daily riders or more) were considered for the “award” (see Methodology on page 8).

**The “winner” of the 2022 Pokey Award is... the M102**, clocking in at an excruciating **4.6 Miles Per Hour (MPH)**. It had the slowest speed out of the 77 high-ridership bus routes reviewed by the Straphangers Campaign and TransitCenter. Many of the pokiest bus routes run to or within Manhattan, slowed by intense congestion in the borough.

The groups noted that at 4.6 MPH, the M102 moved slower than a fluttering butterfly, which typically has a pace of 5 MPH.

**AND THE 2022 POKEY FOR  
SLOWEST CITY BUS GOES TO...**



# M102

“For years, the M102 has been on the list of slowest buses in New York City, so this year’s Pokey Award should come as no surprise,” **said Megan Ahearn, with the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign**. “With buses maintaining higher ridership levels throughout the pandemic, the City’s transit leadership should be rolling out the red carpet for riders by enforcing bus lanes and opening all doors for boarding.”

While fluttering butterflies may take their time, they have the ability to move much faster when needed. Similarly, while the M102 suffers from heavy congestion along its route, common sense bus

reforms can speed up trips for its over 8,000 daily weekday riders, including the roll out of a strong congestion pricing plan and by enforcing bus lanes and implementing all-door boarding.

“The M102 and many other New York City buses are devastatingly slow, but we know that dedicated bus lanes, all-door boarding, and congestion pricing will speed them up,” said **Ashley Pryce, TransitCenter Senior Advocacy Associate**. “Hundreds of thousands of riders rely on New York City buses every day, and they need the MTA, the City, and the Governor to enact these solutions.”

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

<b>M102</b>	4.6 MPH	Between Harlem and the East Village
<b>Bx19</b>	4.8 MPH	Between New York Botanical Garden, the Bronx and Riverbank Park, Manhattan
<b>B35</b>	5.1 MPH	Between Brownsville and Sunset Park
<b>Q32</b>	5.5 MPH	Between Jackson Heights, Queens, and Penn Station, Manhattan
<b>S48<sup>1</sup></b>	8 MPH	Between St. George and Mariners Harbor

Nearly all of the City’s slowest, high-ridership routes have gotten faster since the last Pokey Award was bestowed pre-pandemic in 2019, save for the Queens winner. The Q32 clocked a slower time than the 2019 winner (Q54) by nearly a full mile per hour, overtaking the small gains made by other borough winners. When averaged, this year’s borough honorees have a slightly slower speed by .2 miles per hour (5.8 MPH in 2019’s report compared to 5.6 MPH in this year’s report).

- In **Manhattan**, the M102 overtakes the M14A as the pokiest Manhattan bus. The M14A has benefited from recent Select Bus Service (SBS) designation – speeding the route up and taking it out of contention for the Pokey Award.
- **The Bronx** winner, the Bx19, is the same winner as in 2019 and clocked the same average speed.
- The **Brooklyn** winner, the B35, is the same winner as in 2019, but has improved its average speed (going from 4.8 MPH in 2019’s report to 5.1 MPH for this year’s report).
- **Queens’** Q32 takes the mantle from the Q54 and clocks a slower time than the 2019 winner by nearly a full mile per hour.
- **Staten Island’s** S48 is the same winner as in 2019, and has improved its average speed from 7.8 MPH in 2019 to 8 MPH in this year’s report.

**The second award is the thirteenth annual “Schleppie Award.” It is awarded to each of the city’s least reliable bus routes.**

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<sup>1</sup>Very few local Staten Island buses are “high-ridership” with 5,000 daily riders or more, so the S48 is the slowest bus overall in Staten Island.

The Schleppe Award is based on the percentage of buses observed that “bunch”, using data generated by MTA’s BusTime. New Yorkers loathe bus bunching. That’s where riders wait a longer than scheduled time only to have several buses show up at the same time in a “herd.” It gives many 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. The Schleppe Award is composed of golden lumbering elephants on a pedestal.

**And the 2022 Schleppe winner is...the B12!** One out of five buses, or 19.5%, arrived bunched on the B12, a level of service that is inadequate for its 7,965 daily weekday riders traveling between Lefferts Gardens and East New York, Brooklyn.

“Our findings highlight what many city bus riders already know from daily commuting,” said **Cecilia Ellis, NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign Coordinator**. “Despite significant bus improvements in recent years, far too many riders still suffer slow and unreliable bus service.”

“Our findings show another year of buses not quite hitting the mark, for example, the B12. For daily users of the B12, at least one of their buses is bound to show up bunched and late each week, so they can essentially never count on it arriving on time, said **Mary Buchanan, Research Manager, TransitCenter**. “This is very unfair to the thousands of people who rely on the B12 and have continued to ride throughout the pandemic. The MTA must enable all-door boarding on buses, which will lessen dwell time at bus stops, making service more reliable.”

BUSES ARRIVE IN BUNCHES? BIG GAPS? OFF SCHEDULE? FIRST AMONG THE 2022 SCHLEPPIES IS...



**B12**

According to the groups, the most unreliable bus routes in each borough are:

<b>B12</b>	19.5%	Between Lefferts Gardens and East New York
<b>Bx3</b>	18.9%	Between Riverdale, the Bronx and Washington Heights, Manhattan
<b>Q58</b>	18.4%	Between Ridgewood and Flushing
<b>M100<sup>2</sup></b>	10.8%	Between Inwood and East Harlem
<b>S78<sup>3</sup></b>	10.7%	Between Bricktown Mall and St George Ferry Terminal

The groups noted that the number of routes eligible for a Schleppe Award has decreased over the years, in large part due to efforts by the MTA and NYC DOT to reverse years of failing bus service. Two of the borough winners, the M100 and S78, do not show up in the top Schleppeiest buses citywide (see Table 2) as they did not meet the 15% threshold.

Overall, between the 2019 Schleppe winners and the 2022 winners, buses are bunching slightly less – with average bunching of 15.66% this year, compared to 15.92% in 2019’s report.

- **The Bronx** Schleppe winner, the Bx3, is the same as 2019’s report, but has decreased its schleppieness (19.2% to 18.9%).
- **Brooklyn’s** winner goes from the B15 in 2019’s report to the B12 in 2022’s report, improving bunching slightly from 20% to 19.5%.
- The **Manhattan** winner, the M100, unseats 2019’s winner, the M11 – decreasing bunching substantially from 14% in 2019’s report to 10.8% in 2022’s report.
- The 2022 **Queens** winner, the Q58 replaced 2019’s Q24 and was more schleppie, arriving bunched 18.4% of the time compared to 2019’s 16.3%.
- The **Staten Island** winner goes to the same route as in 2019, the S78, and increases bunching from 10.1% to 10.7%.

**The NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign and TransitCenter are both members of the Bus Turnaround Coalition, which in February, released [New Leaders, Faster Buses](#) report detailing how Governor Hochul and Mayor Adams can deliver much better bus service for New Yorkers.**

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that while no high-ridership Manhattan bus route bunched more than 15 percent of the time, the M100 was included in this award as the most bunched route that had substantial ridership in the borough.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that while no high-ridership Staten Island bus route bunched more than 15 percent of the time, the S78 was included in this award as the most bunched route that had substantial ridership in the borough.

**Table One:**  
**THE POKEY AWARD**  
**Average Speeds of the 15 Slowest, High Ridership**  
**Local Bus Routes**

<b>Route</b>	<b>Average MPH</b>	<b>Route Direction (end to end)</b>
M102	4.6 MPH	Between Harlem and East Village
M103	4.6 MPH	Between East Harlem and City Hall
M4	4.8 MPH	Between The Cloisters and 32 Street
M100	4.8 MPH	Between Inwood and East Harlem
Bx19	4.8 MPH	Between the NY Botanical Garden and Riverbank Park
Bx35	4.9 MPH	Between George Washington Bridge, Manhattan and West Farms Road, the Bronx
Bx11	5 MPH	Between George Washington Bridge, Manhattan and Parkchester, the Bronx
B35	5.1 MPH	Between Brownsville to Sunset Park
B54	5.1 MPH	Between Downtown Brooklyn and Ridgewood, Queens
M15 <sup>4</sup>	5.1 MPH	Between East Harlem and South Ferry
Bx2	5.1 MPH	Between Kingsbridge Heights and Mott Haven
M101	5.2 MPH	Between East Village and Harlem
B12	5.2 MPH	Between Lefferts Gardens and East New York
Bx4	5.2 MPH	Between Westchester Square and The Hub 3rd Avenue
Bx15	5.3 MPH	Between Fordham Plaza and The Hub 149th Street
Bx36 <sup>5</sup>	5.4 MPH	Between Soundview, the Bronx and George Washington Bridge, Manhattan

\*Pokey Awards are based on the total distance traveled in miles divided by the travel time in hours per route, between 10am-4pm on weekdays for May 2022. See selection in Methodology.

<sup>4</sup> The M15 ridership data from the MTA includes both SBS and local ridership numbers, without differentiation.

<sup>5</sup> Since the M15 ridership data includes both SBS and local ridership numbers, we elected to include a 16th bus on this list.

**Table Two:**  
**THE SCHLEPPIE AWARD**  
**15% Or More Buses Arrive Bunched**

<b>Route</b>	<b>% of Buses Bunched</b>	<b>Route Direction (end to end)</b>	<b>Bunched Buses</b>
B12	19.5%	Between Lefferts Gardens and East New York	1 in 5
B6	19.4%	Between Bath Beach and East New York	1 in 5
Bx3	18.9%	Between Riverdale, the Bronx and George Washington Bridge, Manhattan	1 in 5
Q58	18.4%	Between Ridgewood and Flushing	1 in 6
B15	17.6%	Between Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn and JFK Airport, Queens	1 in 6
B41	17.5%	Between Kings Plaza and Downtown Brooklyn	1 in 6
Bx21	15.6%	Between Westchester Square and Mott Haven	1 in 6
Bx11	15.4%	Between George Washington Bridge, Manhattan and Parkchester, the Bronx	1 in 7
B44 <sup>6</sup>	15.3%	Between Sheepshead Bay and Williamsburg	1 in 7
B46 <sup>7</sup>	15.2%	Between Kings Plaza and Williamsburg	1 in 7

\*Schleppie awards are based on the percentage of buses arriving at less than 25 percent of the scheduled headway after the previous bus, between 10am-4pm on weekdays for May 2022. See selection in Methodology.

<sup>6</sup> The B44 ridership data from the MTA includes both SBS and local ridership numbers, without differentiation.

<sup>7</sup> The B46 ridership data from the MTA includes both SBS and local ridership numbers, without differentiation.

**Table Three:**  
**Buses who made the top 15 list for**  
**both the Pokey and the Schleppie Awards**

<b>Route</b>	<b>Pokey Ranking</b>	<b>Schleppie Ranking</b>
Bx11	7	8
Bx15	15	14
Bx36	16 <sup>8</sup>	15
B12	13	1
B35	8	11

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<sup>8</sup> See footnote 5.

## **METHODOLOGY**

To determine this year's award winners, we used electronic MTA BusTime data for May 2022 to determine route-level speed and bus bunching. Data for New York City Transit and MTA Bus Company buses were included in this analysis. For both metrics, we looked at all local buses traveling on weekdays during midday (10am-4pm) for the month of May 2022.

We only considered high-ridership bus routes, with at least 5,000 average daily riders on weekdays, for the "awards." Prior to the pandemic, the ridership threshold for this report was set at 10,000 daily weekday riders. During the pandemic, overall ridership dipped by about 50%. For this report, we applied that average percentage drop to the threshold number.

### **1. Determining Speed**

We calculated average speed for each route using BusTime's measure of distance traveled per route (in miles) divided by travel time per route (in hours). The average speed calculation includes time spent at stops, also known as dwell time, and is an average speed for the entire route in both directions.

### **2. Determining Bus Bunching**

We based the Schleppie Award on the percentage of buses observed that "bunch", using data generated by MTA's BusTime. "Bunching" occurs when two or more buses arrive at a stop around the same time, meaning that at least one is not on-schedule.

We decided that a level of bunching of greater than 15% (or one bus bunched out of seven) was not a minimum adequate level. Any route with more than 15% bunched buses was deemed a Schleppie bus, with an unacceptable level of service.

We define bunching as the percentage of buses that arrives within 25 percent of the scheduled headway after the bus in front of them. So if Bus #2 is scheduled to arrive eight minutes after Bus #1, but instead Bus #2 arrives less than two minutes after Bus #1, then Bus #2 is considered "bunched". Bunching measures the number of observed buses that are bunched at every stop on the route. The bunching rates reported are for the entire route in both directions.