



# Slow Buses

In “[A Review of Initiatives to Improve Bus Speeds in New York City](#),” IBO looked at why NYC buses are so slow and how this affects riders, especially in neighborhoods with fewer transit options.

## How Do Slow Buses Impact NYC Residents?

Buses are a critical mode of transportation for **1.4 million daily riders**, especially in neighborhoods the subway doesn’t reach. They’re especially important for older adults and mobility impaired individuals who can’t easily use the subway. Slow and unreliable buses mean:

- **Longer commutes:** Some buses move as slow as **4 miles per hour**, barely faster than walking.
- **Unequal access:** Low-income neighborhoods and communities of color often rely on buses the most, making delays particularly harmful.

## Why Are NYC Buses So Slow?

New York City buses average just **8.1 miles per hour**, making them some of the slowest in the country. The main reasons buses are slow include:

- **Traffic congestion**, especially in Central Manhattan during peak hours
- **Lack of bus lanes**, particularly protected ones
- **Limited** officer-issued traffic violations

## What’s Being Done to Speed Things Up?

City agencies like the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the MTA have introduced plans to improve bus speeds, including:

- **Adding protected bus lanes:** Special lanes separated from traffic. But only **9.6 miles** have been built since 2022, far below the 150 miles required by law by 2026.
- **Transit signal priority:** Traffic lights that give buses the green light sooner. The City met its goal in 2022 but fell short in 2023
- **There have been small wins:** Select Bus Service routes with bus lanes and all-door boarding, have improved speeds in certain areas, such as 21<sup>st</sup> Street in Queens

To improve bus speeds the City may need to dedicate **more funding to bus lane projects, hire more staff for transit projects, and prioritize building the 140+ miles of protected bus lanes** still required under LL195. Strengthening enforcement of bus lanes and expanding transit signal priority will also be key to making buses faster and more reliable.