



- A **grassroots organization** made up of subway and bus riders who fight for better and more affordable public transportation in NYC
- With **6 million* subway riders and 2 million bus riders**, we should be the most powerful constituency in NYC
- That's where community organizing comes in: we're shifting the balance of power
- It's about democracy: Holding our elected officials accountable.
- Civic engagement, too. You can't fight if you can't get to the fight.



Problems with NYC subways and buses

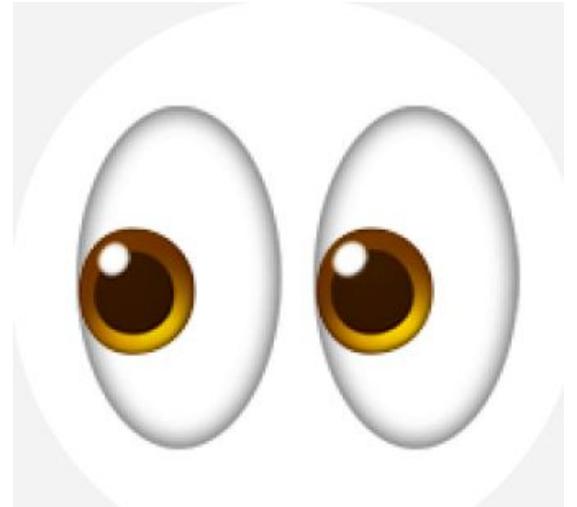
- Delays, breakdowns, overcrowding, buses stuck in traffic not enough service for many
- A lack of capital investment that lead to:
 - Outdated signal technology
 - Very old train cars
 - Fare increases
 - Inadequate accessibility
- A lack of operating investment means infrequent service at off peak hours and threats of service cuts and fare hikes
- To #FixTheSubway, riders needed billions of dollars from Albany in FAIR and sustainable revenue



Riders Alliance member gathering petition signatures

Political Accountability: Identifying The Target

- The MTA is a state agency. The board and staff are not accountable to the ridership
- But Governor Cuomo is ... and so are the legislators in Albany (Assembly and Senate)
- **Elected official targeting and accountability is central to the work we do and how we win campaigns**



Political Accountability: Tactics



Political Accountability: Tactics



The Turning Point ...

- **August 2017:** After tremendous political pressure to fix the subways, and as the **Summer of Hell** escalates, Governor Cuomo tells the New York Times that “congestion pricing is an idea whose time has come”.
- Once Governor Cuomo began pushing himself for congestion pricing, we started to be more explicit in pushing for it as well ... while still making sure to hold him accountable to Fix the Subways
- This is also when we shifted to targeting specific legislators as well



Building Coalition and Talking Equity

- 2015: The Riders Alliance and its allies won our first effort to make transit more affordable with **pre-tax transit benefits legislation** in the New York City Council.
- 2016: Launch of the (successful) **#FairFares** campaign for discount MetroCards for **Low-Income New Yorkers**
 - Coalition of over 70 organizations
 - **Shifted the narrative**
 - Began to put transit equity and transit as a social justice issue into the agenda for other progressive movements in NYC
 - Equity and social justice becoming (more) central for NYC groups that are transit advocacy orgs.



Historic #FixTheSubway Coalition

- Launched in October 2018
- Not your “usual suspects”
- Highlight and elevate the voices of the many constituencies who rely on subways and buses
- Fight myths around congestion pricing and transit funding as being regressive
- There are challenges to coalition building



#FixTheSubway Coalition: Transit Funding is about Racial and Economic Justice

- Transit-reliant low-income New Yorkers & New Yorkers of color make up 66% of subway and 75% of bus riders.
- Hourly workers, low-income parents, and displaced communities are heavily impacted by bad transit service



PUBLIC TRANSIT FUNDING: A Racial & Economic Justice Issue

Low-Income New Yorkers and New Yorkers of Color Depend Overwhelmingly On Transit

- New Yorkers who earn \$35,000 or less per year depend most on public transit
- African American and Latino New Yorkers are 53.3% of all transit riders

Fixing the Subway Would Greatly Help Low-Income New Yorkers and New Yorkers of Color

- A Federal Reserve study found that lower income city residents have longer commutes
- Riders with longer commutes are more vulnerable to train delays and poor service
- Low-income New Yorkers are especially vulnerable to bad transit service
- A Center for an Urban Future study found that healthcare workers who rely on transit face a median commute of 51.2 minutes—the longest travel time of any workers in the private sector

Congestion Pricing Specifically Would Help Low-Income New Yorkers and New Yorkers of Color

- Commuters who earn \$50,000 or more drive more than lower income New Yorkers and are better able to afford a congestion charge
- A Community Service Society study found that 38 times as many working poor commuters rely on transit as drive to work in Manhattan

Congestion Pricing Offers Important Benefits to Low-Income Communities and Communities of Color

- Fixing the subway and bus systems would overwhelmingly help the communities that rely on public transit the most
- Congestion pricing revenue could help reduce commuter rail and express bus fares for commuters in communities far from the subway system, like Southeast Queens and parts of the Bronx
- By reducing traffic congestion, congestion pricing would also improve local bus service and air quality and reduce the number of collisions between cars and pedestrians

Who Drives Into Manhattan? Who relies on transit?

- Healthcare workers who rely on transit face median commutes of 51.2 minutes
- Commuters who earn 50k or more drive more than lower-income New Yorkers
- 38x as many poor working commuters rely on transit
- Most districts have less than 4% population driving into Manhattan

Fair Funding, No Fare Hike (Or: Cuomo's Fare Evasion)





DON'T STEAL
FROM \$RIDERS

**DeKalb Avenue
Station**

B Q R



Elevator at DeKalb Avenue

Coalition members in Albany



We need a subway that works so we can too



Working with State Senators and Assembly Members

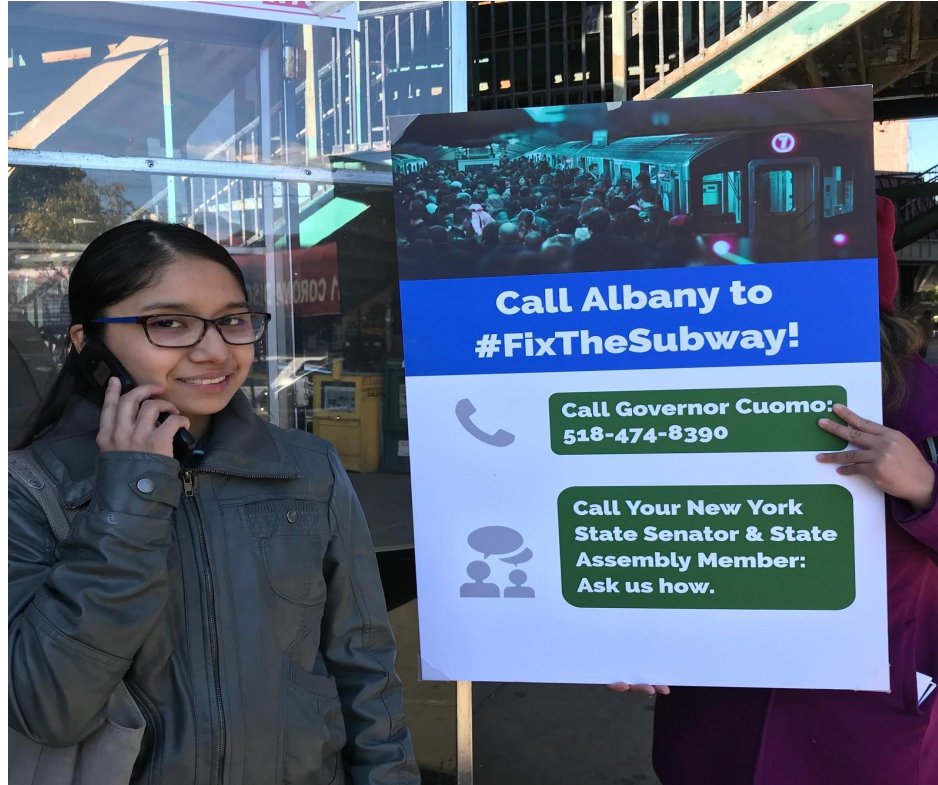
Political Landscape: Manhattan and Bronx largely positive towards congestion pricing as well as well served parts of Queens, but further in the boroughs, we saw a lack of support

Tactics:

- Show data from districts: who *actually* drives to the central business district from your district? (99% argument)
- **Making the riders' voices loudest**
- **Vinegar:** Anti congestion pricing legislators were targeted through “mobile phone banks” at subways and buses so they could hear directly from riders during delays. A couple legislators also got rallies against them.
- **Honey:** Supportive or converted elected officials get love (op-eds, photos with us, thank yous, opportunities to talk to constituents with our “ride-alongs”



Mobile Phone Banks



Ride Alongs



Assembly Member Martiza Davila and State Senator Andrew Gounardes talking to their constituents in their districts for Riders Alliance sponsored “ride-alongs” to talk Fixing the Subway and congestion pricing

Locking Down Support and Thanking Electeds



BREAKING

Congestion Pricing in Manhattan, First Such Plan in U.S., Close to Approval



New York moved closer to formalizing a congestion pricing plan for Manhattan, as the leader of the State Assembly indicated on Monday that his members were “ready to go forward.”

Dave Sanders for The New York Times



BIG WIN! A BUDGET FOR SUBWAY AND BUS RIDERS!

WIN! A Budget for Subway