

# Planning for New York City's transit future

Should the MTA continue to pursue "big shiny objects" or focus on maintenance and upgrades?

## INTRODUCTION

**New York City's transit system is at a crossroads.** By far the nation's most widely used, it is seeing the highest ridership numbers in history (1.75b/year). A report released by the State Comptroller also indicates weekday on-time performance fell by 10 percentage points between 2013 and 2015.

Meanwhile, Gov. Andrew Cuomo's mass-transit proposals for the state have focused on two major

## RESEARCH QUESTION & ANALYSIS

I have collected government data and studies by prominent NYC transit experts from the last several years. Topics include projected project costs, on-time performance, and systemwide ridership. Using this data, I will examine two competing visions of New York City's transit future:

1. Heavy expenditures on a handful of major infrastructure projects, which will give the city a number of marquee facilities but serve a relatively small number of riders.
2. Continual attention to maintenance and upgrades, which will serve a greater number of daily transit riders but provide the city with fewer showcases.

### 1. THE CUOMO APPROACH

#### PENN STATION



- Estimated Cost: \$3 billion (\$325m from govt)  
(Source: Second Avenue Sagas, 1.7.16)
- Timeline: Finished by 2019...if we're lucky
- Riders Served: Approx. 600,000 daily  
(Source: NYT, 1.6.16)



#### LaGUARDIA AIRPORT

Est. Cost: \$4 billion  
(Source: NYS Governors Office)



- Timeline: Finished by 2019-20
- Flyers Served: 27 million yearly  
(Source: PANYNJ)
- Bells and Whistles: AirTrain from #7 Subway to Terminal, Ferry Dock

### 2. THE BORING APPROACH

#### BETTER BUSES



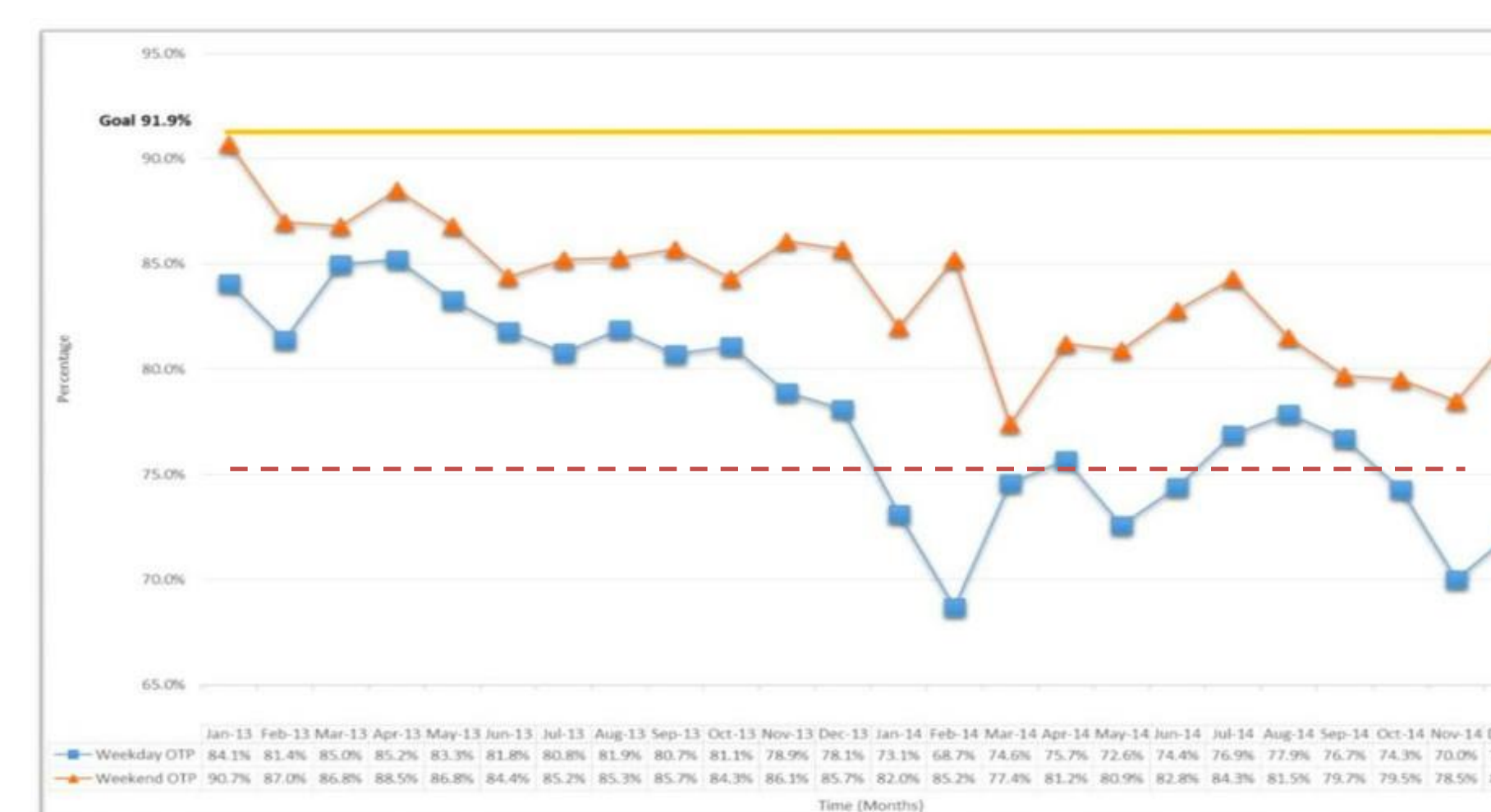
- Each of these lines has more daily riders than the 720 in Los Angeles (40,000+, or 15m+ yearly)  
(Source: MTA)
- A new Select Bus Service line (NYC's imitation of BRT) costs approx. \$10 million to install  
(Source: Streetsblog)



- New York City buses have 2.5m daily boardings
- 2 of the 3 most popular bus routes run through an outer borough and are not parallel to a subway line: The Bx12 (Bronx) and B46 (Brooklyn)

### FIXING THE CENTURY-OLD SUBWAYS

- A 2015 study indicated that trains' on-time performance dropped by over 10 percentage points during 2013 and 2014. (See left)  
(Source: Office of the NY State Comptroller)
- In addition to "terminal delays," (whether trains stick to schedule), avg wait time has also increased over the last several years.  
(Source: MTA)



- The MTA's \$30b Capital Plan provides for tech & signal upgrades, but will be financed by NY taking on more debt.

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