

As NYC Economy Grows, Subway Ridership Increases

BY LINDA J. WILSON

New Yorkers love to gripe about the deficiencies of the subway system, but the fact of the matter is, more of them are using the trains now than at any time in at least the past 25 years. According to figures compiled by the city Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), in 2006 1.4 billion riders took the subway— 49 percent more than in 1990, 16 years earlier, and more people than at any time since 1952. In February 2007, the number of subway riders totaled roughly 115 million, an increase of 3 percent from February of the preceding year, 2006.

While the weekday commuting crowd accounts for the greater part of the ridership increase, weekend ridership rose as well. Average ridership rose by 90 percent from 1990, reaching 2.4 million in 2006. The large increase in weekend ridership as well as the fact that the daily ridership increase has exceeded the increase in the number of resident subway commuters, indicates that the system is attracting an increasing number of discretionary riders—rides who have other means of transportation available, but are choosing to take the subway.

The system includes 26 routes connecting a total of 468 stations throughout the city, and a higher number of

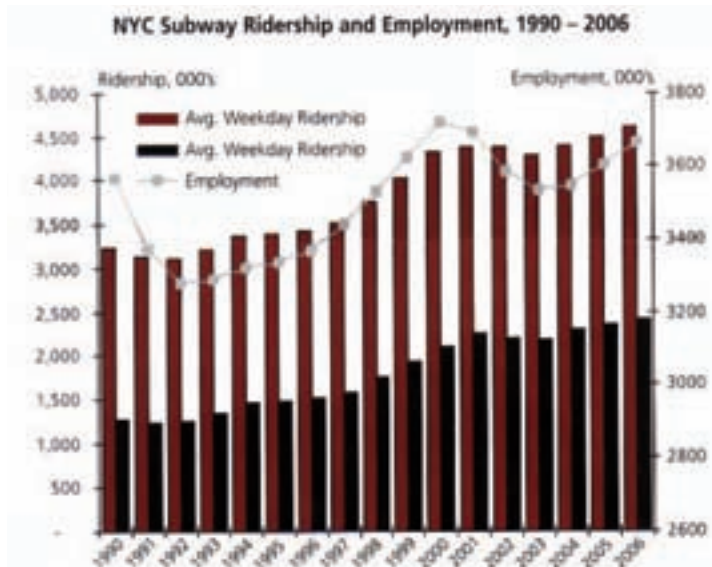
subway riders means that more of those 468 subway stations are seeing increased usage, too. At 17 percent of the subway stations throughout the system, ridership doubled. The stations in Queens showing the greatest increase in use were those in Jamaica and Flushing and along the 63rd Street tunnel line. Ridership at the 21st Street-Queensbridge station on the F line rose by 215 percent between 1990 and 2006, making it the most used station in the borough. The 45th Road-Courthouse Square station showed the next highest increase, 189 percent, followed by the 23rd Street-Ely Avenue station on the E and V lines and the Court Square/Long Island City station on the G line, where ridership rose by 142 percent. The 75th Avenue station had a 120 percent increase in rider use, and the Beach 90th Street station on the A and S lines rounded out the five Queens stations showing the greatest ridership increase at 109 percent. In Manhattan, stations showing increased rider usage were mostly in Upper Manhattan (8th Avenue/Central Park West, Lenox Avenue and Lexington Avenue) and Lower East Side sectors. In Brooklyn, Canarsie, Culver and Sea Beach were among most of those stations that more than doubled their ridership; in The Bronx, Pelham and White Plains Road

stations showed the greatest increases in riders' use.

Some stations showed a decrease in ridership. In Queens, the five stations where ridership declined most were the Beach 25th Street station on the A line, with a 4 percent decrease, the 179th Street Jamaica terminus of the F line, 20 percent, Queens Plaza on the E, G, R and V lines, 31 percent, the Parsons Boulevard station on the F line, 36 percent, and the Aqueduct station on the A line, 53 percent.

New York City residents account for 65 percent of all subway commuters in the United States. Subway ridership, according to the EDC, follows the overall economy, especially employment trends. Employment in New York City rose 3 percent in 2006 and average daily weekday ridership reached more than 4.6 million during that same year, an increase of 42 percent over the 1990 level. The number of employed New York City residents increased by 8 percent from 1990 to 2005; those using the subway to commute to work rose by 12 percent during those 15 years.

Other modes of commuting showed some surprising declines. In 1990, 24 percent of New York City residents drove cars to work. In 2005, the number had dropped to 23.6 percent. The percentage of New Yorkers carpooling to



work dropped from 8.5 in 1990 to 6.5 in 2006. Fewer New Yorkers took cabs to work as well: that percentage declined from 1.6 to 1.4. Even the percentage of commuters walking to work declined, from 10.7 in 1990 to 9.4 in 2006. Only the percentage of New Yorkers bicycling to work showed an increase: up to 0.5 percent in 2006 from 0.3 in 1990.

The only commuting methods to show an increase during the 15 years from 1990 to 2005 were those in the mass transportation sector on land. (Ferryboat commuting use dropped from 0.5 to 0.3 percent.) Streetcar or trolley car use rose from 0.2 to 0.4 percent, commuting by rail increased from 1.7 to 2 percent, bus or trolley car use increased from 12.7 percent in 1990 to 13.8 in 2005, and commuting by sub-

way or elevated train line, already leading the pack in 1990 at 36.7 percent, went up by 1.4 percent to 38.1 percent 15 years later.

In all, total ridership on MTA subways, trains and buses, with bridge and tunnel use figures included, was roughly 205 million in February 2007, a 2 percent increase from February 2006. Subway ridership specifically was roughly 115 million in February 2007, an increase of 3 percent from February 2006.

The number of New Yorkers who did not commute to work showed one of the bigger increases: where 2.4 percent of New Yorkers worked in their homes in 1990, 3.6 percent did so in 2005.



KIWANIS CLUB OF ASTORIA/LIC



On Wednesday, May 23, the Astoria/Long Island City Kiwanis held their annual Scholarship Dinner at Ponticello Ristorante. All members were delighted that this year's sponsor again was Commerce Bank. Not only did they sponsor the event, but they gave each student a Savings Bond.

ASTORIA/LIC KIWANIS AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS

Representing Commerce Bank was Michael Serao, Assistant Branch Manager of the Ditmars Branch. Chairman of the event was Paul A. Vallone of Vallone & Vallone; co-chairperson was Rose Anne Alafogiannis of Alafogiannis Plumbing. Committee members were Linda Perno of Lincole Lithograph and Rey Quevedo of Morisco Funeral Home, Inc. Also in attendance were 114th Precinct Commanding Officer Inspector Brian McCarthy and Community Relations Officer Paul Chatham.

Scholarships were given out to four community high schools. There was a total of \$5,000 given out to the students. The "Tom Alafogiannis" Academic Scholarship went to St. John's Prep student Marie Gambino, and the "Pam Smith" Art Scholarship went to Long Island City H.S student Jin Mei Liu. All scholarship recipients, along with their families and school representatives, had a wonderful evening.

We also had a wonderful showing of our Kiwanians, along with this year's honorees for our September 20th, Gala Cocktail Party & Journal, our "Woman of the Year", First Central Savings Bank Vice President and Branch Coordinator/Human Resources Christine Lolos, our "Man of the Year", George Fakiris of the Apollo Group, LLC, and "Community Persons of the Year" George Rivera and Rey Quevedo of Morisco Funeral Home, Inc. We wanted our guests of honor to see first hand what it is exactly we do at Kiwanis with the funds generated through our yearly events. All in attendance were so impressed and moved by the students that Mr. Fakiris donated \$3,000 that very evening.

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