



U.S. Representative • 9<sup>th</sup> CD, New York • Brooklyn-Queens

**ANTHONY D. WEINER**

Report

# WORKING OVERTIME TO GET TO WORK

*New York City Has the Longest Commutes to Work in  
the Nation*



Prepared by:  
Congressman Anthony D. Weiner  
October 7, 2003

## Introduction

Living in the capital of the world offers a host of advantages. There's more to do, more to see, and more people to meet in New York than just about anywhere else. New York is a center for the finance, publishing, manufacturing, entertainment, insurance, and pharmaceutical industries. It leads the world with culture, with an unrivaled collection of museums, theaters, and concerts. It is truly a blessing to live in the Big Apple.

But there's a price to pay for living and working in New York. It's hard to get around. Simply put, it takes New Yorkers longer to get to and from work than citizens in any other major city in the county.

1,684,850 New Yorkers commute back and forth to work via mass transit, each year spending, on average 25,168 minutes doing so or 419.46 hours. 1,415,069 New Yorkers commute by car, each spending, on average, 15,600 minutes or 260 hours.

I believe that the price is too high, and we ought to do everything we can to reduce commute times. As President Bush considers how to dole out federal dollars, he ought to recognize how much less time New Yorkers have to spend at work and with their families because they are stuck in traffic, on a train, or in a bus.

Every ten years, the United States census reveals the rhythms of life all over America. The long form, sent to one of every six households, measures the social, economic, and housing characteristics of communities around the nation. Among the information that they collect is the length of America's journey to work.

There are three angles to this story that New Yorkers should find interesting – if not surprising:

- The first is that a nationwide county-by-county comparison reveals that commute times in the outer boroughs are lengthier than in any part of the country.
- The second reveals that within the 31-county metropolitan region, the closer you live to Manhattan, the longer your commute!
- The third suggests that those using public transit have, on average, longer commutes than those who drive, walk, or bike to work.

All in all, the situation illustrated by this report suggests just the degree to which New York has been shortchanged in the past, and how much more investment is required if the city's system of transportation is to be kept up to the standards that characterize the rest of the county.

There is no reason that New Yorkers should be second-class citizens when it comes to transportation.

### **National County Study**

In comparing every county in the United States with 100,000 or more, the census reveals that those living in the outer boroughs, Staten Island, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Queens, have, on average, the worst commutes in the country. Here are the counties with the top ten longest commutes in America.

County, State Commute Time (in minutes)

1. Richmond County, New York (Staten Island) 43.9
2. Kings County, New York (Brooklyn) 43.2
3. Bronx County, New York (Bronx) 43.0
4. Queens County, New York (Queens) 42.2
5. Charles County, Maryland 39.3
6. Sussex County, New Jersey 38.3
7. Stafford County, Virginia 37.7
8. Spotsylvania, Virginia 37.1
9. Prince William County, Virginia 36.9
10. Monroe County, Pennsylvania 36.7

### **New York City Study**

Within New York City, commutes times are bad on average, but some places are worse than others—much worse. The problem is illustrated by discerning which neighborhoods are plagued particularly by long public transit rides, while others are consumed by terrible auto traffic.

*Neighborhoods which have the longest average commutes (both transit and car) within city limits.*

Neighborhood (Borough) Commute Time (in minutes)

1. Springfield Gardens-Laurelton (Queens) 52.3
2. Arverne (Queens) 51.7
3. St. Albans (Queens) 51.7
4. Rosedale (Queens) 51.6
5. Starrett City (Brooklyn) 51.2
6. Cambria Heights (Queens) 51.1
7. Canarsie (Brooklyn) 50.8
8. Rochdale (Queens) 50.8
9. Brownsville (Brooklyn) 50.6
10. Mariners Harbor-Port Ivory (Staten Island) 50.4
11. Queens Village South (Queens) 49.8
12. South Jamaica (Queens) 49.6
13. East Flatbush (Brooklyn) 49.6
14. Flatbush (Brooklyn) 49.5
15. Co-op City-Eastchester (Bronx) 49.5
16. Coney Island (Brooklyn) 48.5
17. Cypress Hills (Brooklyn) 48.4
18. South Ozone Park (Queens) 48.2

19. Princes Bay - Woodrow (Staten Island) 47.2
20. Wakefield (Bronx) 46.8

*Neighborhoods with the longest public transit commutes*  
 Neighborhood (Borough) Commute Time (in minutes)

1. Tottenville (Staten Island) 81.9
2. Princes Bay - Woodrow (Staten Island) 78.0
3. Eltingville-Arden Heights (Staten Island) 77.7
4. New Hyde Park (Queens) 76.9
5. Mariners Harbor-Port Ivory (Staten Island) 74.8
6. Great Kills (Staten Island) 74.8
7. Breezy Point-Roxbury (Queens) 74.5
8. Rosedale (Queens) 74.3
9. Springfield Gardens-Laurelton (Queens) 73.5
10. Starrett City (Brooklyn) 72.7
11. Cambria Heights (Queens) 71.5
12. New Dorp-Richmondton (Staten Island) 71.3
13. Bellerose (Queens) 69.5
14. Hammels-Broad Channel (Queens) 69.2
15. Arverne (Queens) 69.2
16. Floral Park (Queens) 69.0
17. Castleton Corners-New Springville (Staten Island) 68.9
18. Glen Oaks (Queens) 68.2
19. Queens Village South (Queens) 68.0
20. Queens Village (Queens) 67.3

*Neighborhoods with the longest roadway commutes[1]*  
 Neighborhood (Borough) Commute Time (in minutes)

1. St. Albans (Queens) 40.3
2. Princes Bay - Woodrow (Staten Island) 38.8
3. Mariners Harbor-Port Ivory (Staten Island) 38.1
4. Queens Village South (Queens) 38.0
5. Tottenville (Staten Island) 37.3
6. Eltingville-Arden Heights (Staten Island) 36.5
7. Hillcrest-Fresh Meadows (Queens) 36.2
8. Floral Park (Queens) 34.7
9. South Ozone Park (Queens) 34.1
10. Castleton Corners-New Springville (Staten Island) 32.9
11. West Brighton (Staten Island) 31.4
12. Oakland Gardens-Bayside Hills (Queens) 31.2
13. Bay Terrace (Queens) 30.9
14. Jackson Heights (Queens) 30.6
15. Park Slope-Windsor Terrace (Brooklyn) 30.2
16. Mott Haven-Port Morris (Bronx) 28.8
17. Glen Oaks (Queens) 28.7
18. Greenpoint (Brooklyn) 28.4
19. New Hyde Park (Queens) 28.1
20. Old Astoria (Queens) 26.1

## Tri-State County Study

In comparing the counties of the 31-county metropolitan region, it turns out that commutes are longer for those living within the City of New York.

County, State, Commute Time (in minutes)

1. Richmond County NY 43.9
2. Kings County NY 43.2
3. Bronx County NY 43
4. Queens County NY 42.2
5. Putnam County NJ 38.4
6. Sussex County NJ 38.3
7. Monmouth County NJ 34.8
8. Nassau County NY 34.3
9. Hunterdon County NJ 33.5
10. Warren County NJ 33.3
11. Westchester County NY 32.7
12. Hudson County NJ 32.6
13. Rockland County NY 32.6
14. Orange County NJ 32.5
15. Ocean County NJ 32.4
16. Suffolk County NY 31.8
17. Middlesex County NJ 31.5
18. Essex County NJ 31.2
19. New York County NY 30.5
20. Somerset County NJ 30.1
21. Dutchess County NY 29.8
22. Bergen County NJ 29.7
23. Morris County NJ 29.4
24. Sullivan County NY 29.3
25. Union County NJ 28.7
26. Fairfield County CT 28
27. Mercer County NJ 27.1
28. Ulster County NY 26.9
29. Passaic County NJ 26.4
30. Litchfield County CT 26.2
31. New Haven County CT 23.2

## Explanation

Why do New Yorkers have the worst commutes in the nation? Inadequate investment. Simply put, New York City needs resources to pour into better roads, more subways, expanded ferry service, and more convenient sidewalks.

Why? There are more people in the New York metropolitan area than any area in the country. More than that, New York's infrastructure is particularly old and subject to decay.

The federal government plays an important role in providing for the maintenance and improvement of the nation's transportation infrastructure. Transportation authorization bills have played an enormous role in funding the city's development since the early 1990s. \$1 billion has been allocated for bridge restoration. Ferry projects received \$132.5 million, and a \$158 million

loan. A variety of "intelligent transportation system" technologies, bicycle ways, park improvements, and other enhancements have been purchased with federal dollars

But New York's commute times are worse in large part because the New York does not get its fair share of the dollars that are doled by the federal government. New York received about 18% of total mass transit funding between 1996 and 2000, but the city has 24.4% of the nation's mass transit riders. This is despite the fact that New York State contributed \$22.16 billion more to the Federal government than the State received in federal funds.

### **Solution**

The Congress is currently considering a new six-year bill that will determine federal level of transportation. If New York intends to get up to speed on commute times, we need to pass a bill that is large enough to make significant improvements in the city's infrastructure.

Unfortunately, the Bush Administration has outlined an insufficient plan: they could spend up to less than half of what is required to maintain and begin improving the existing transportation system on a yearly basis. In fact, the Bush administration plan would spend \$128 billion less than is sufficient, -- \$128 billion less than the amount the House of Representatives wants to spend over six years.

Those extra dollars are required if New York is going to make the major improvement to its transportation system. Major improvements, like new ferry service from Southern Queens and the Rockaways, a the new rail tunnel under the East River, and the Second Avenue Subway -- solutions that would drastically reduce commute times for New Yorkers if only by lessening traffic on other highways, ferries, and subways -- need the dollars that the President refuses to release.

But more than that, the extra money that House would provide could be used to target the very commuters who are most plagued by long commute times. From more intelligent traffic management, to improved traffic ramps, to speedier accident clearance, New Yorkers should demand improvements.

### **Conclusion**

New Yorkers are plagued with the worst commutes in the country, and this analysis suggests that underfunding from the federal government is a major cause of that problem. As Congress and the president consider how much and where money ought to be spent on improving the nation's infrastructure, they need to consider these dramatic numbers that demonstrate just how dire are the needs in New York.

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## **Reports List**