



Who is the MTA Board?

July 2019

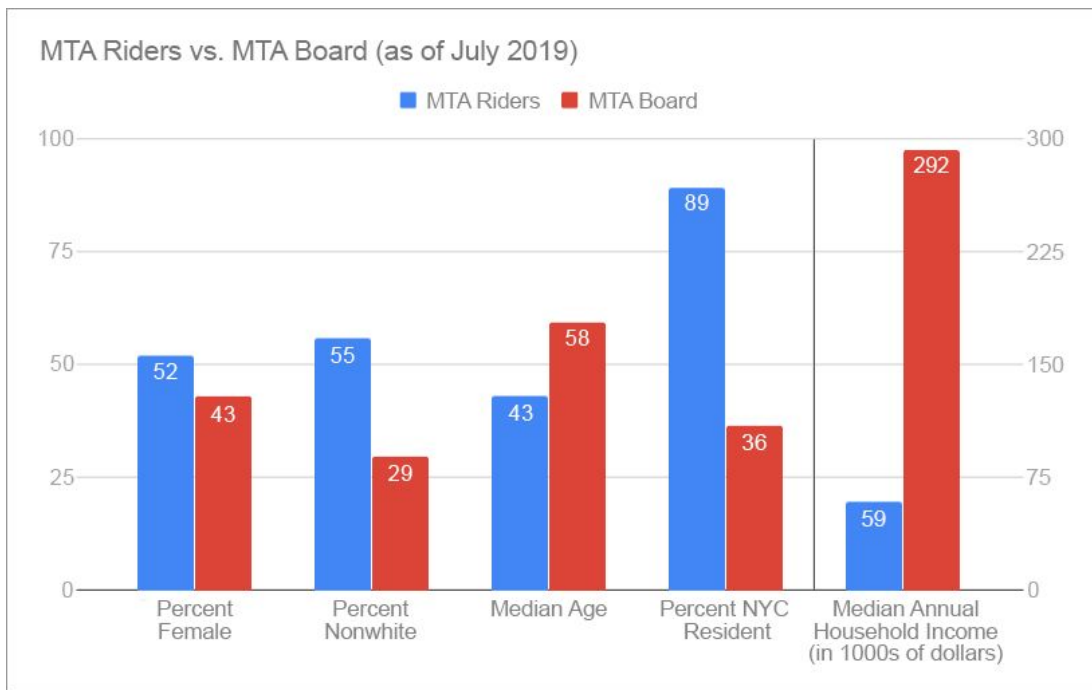
89% Of MTA Riders Are NYC Residents Versus 36% Of Voting Board Members

*With NYC Currently Missing One Voting Member, Will NYC Riders Get Fair Share of
MTA 5-Year Capital Plan?*

Board Members Predominantly Suburban, White And Wealthy

Board Members' Household Income More than Five Times MTA Riders

Since our 2018 analysis from our [Open MTA Report](#) (see Appendix 1), the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Board has had significant turnover; one of the Governor's voting members is now the ex officio appointment of the State Budget Director. While the State Senate was in session, Governor Cuomo chose not to nominate one of Mayor de Blasio's recommendations, leaving the city without one of its four permitted Board seats, likely until January 2020. This representation is particularly important as the MTA Board is expected to approve the next 5-year capital plan this fall.



Currently, only 36% of voting MTA Board members live in New York City, compared to 89% of MTA Riders. When additionally compared by age, income, and ethnicity, our updated analysis finds that the Board bears almost no resemblance to ridership. Reinvent Albany’s analysis of Board members’ ethics disclosure forms and public records reveals just how deep these disparities go, and builds on recent research by Transit Center¹ and others.

Appointment and Residency Requirements

By law the MTA Board has 17 voting members, all of whom are appointed by the governor upon the recommendation of officials in the MTA service region:

- Six chosen by the governor.
- Four recommended by the mayor.
- One each by the Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester County Executives.
- One each by Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, and Rockland County Executives, who share one vote.

Until June 2019, most members of the MTA Board were required² to be residents of the MTA commuter transportation district³, which encompasses New York City and the surrounding counties mentioned previously. A change to allow the *ex officio* appointment of the Budget Director was made in June 2019 as part of the “big ugly” bill at the end of session, which was rushed through with a message of necessity.

All MTA Board members and the Chairman/CEO are confirmed upon the advice and consent of the State Senate. The MTA is New York State’s largest unit of government with 75,000 employees and a nearly \$17 billion annual operating budget.

Voting MTA board members as of July 2019

For the purpose of this analysis, “board members” or “MTA Board” means “MTA Board members with votes as of July 2019, including the chair.” June of 2018 was the last time the board had no vacancies. Reinvent Albany’s analysis of current board members found the following:

¹Transit Center. “Who Rules Transit?” May 10, 2018. <https://transitcenter.org/2018/05/10/who-rules-transit/>

² Public Authorities Law Section 1263.

³ Public Authorities Law Section 1262.

89% of MTA riders live in NYC compared to 36% of MTA Board members

Board members are much more likely than riders to reside in suburban locales. Only 5 of 14 board members live in NYC (36%), despite New York City Transit having 93% of overall MTA ridership, and around 89% of riders being NYC residents. Robert Mujica, who serves *ex officio* on the MTA Board, is New York State's budget director, and does not even live in the MTA's service region. Even when considering together the suburban appointees who collectively share one vote, the percentage representing NYC is still only 5 of 13 votes (38%).

At least 55% of MTA riders are non-white compared to 29% of Board

As of 2008, the most recent public measurement of rider demographics, 55% of MTA riders were nonwhite and 45% white. About 20% of subway riders were African-American, 20% were Hispanic, and 16% were Asian or other, meaning that 57% of riders were nonwhite (approximately 55% across all MTA lines).^{4 5} If the MTA Board mirrored ridership, at least 9 of its 17 board members (when fully appointed) would be nonwhite; currently, that number is only four. There is not a single board member of Asian descent.

52% of MTA riders are women versus 43% of Board members

The appointing authorities for the MTA Board have made strides in improving the representation of women on the board – as recently as March 2019, there were only three women on the Board. Since then, the number has doubled to six, or 43% of the Board (about 52% of MTA riders are female).⁶ The number of women of color on the Board has also doubled from one to two.

Jane K. Butcher became the first woman appointed to the MTA Board in 1978, four years after its establishment,⁷ but no woman nor person of color has ever served as the chair. All MTA Board chairs to date have been white men.⁸

⁴ Benjamin Kabak, Second Avenue Sagas. "MTA Graphics: A Glimpse at Who Rides and How We Pay." October 20, 2010. <http://secondavenuesagas.com/2010/10/20/mta-demographics-a-glimpse-at-who-rides-and-how-we-pay>

⁵ Metro-North Railroad racial demographic data is not available, but as MNR only represents about 3% of ridership, it would not make a statistically significant impact on the percentage.

⁶ Alex Goldmark, WNYC. "Census Data Show Public Transit Gender Gap." December 9, 2012. <https://www.wnyc.org/story/283137-census-data-show-public-transit-gender-gap/>. MNR riders who commute for work were 40% female as of 2007.

⁷ New York Times. "Jane K. Butcher, 64, Is Dead." October 6th, 1987. <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/10/06/obituaries/jane-k-butcher-64-is-dead-first-woman-on-mta-board.html>

⁸ Via MTA website. Last accessed July 11, 2019. <http://web.mta.info/mta/leadership/chairs.htm>

Median age of MTA riders is 43, median age of MTA Board is 58

The median age of MTA riders is 43.⁹ The median age of the MTA Board is 58. The youngest MTA board member is 41, and as of July the board had 8 members under 60.

As of 2008, 66% of NYCT riders were between 25 and 54, with 26% being above 55. A Board that reflected MTA riders would have about 13 board members under 60, and only 4 or 5 over 60.

No board members have an ambulatory disability

The MTA has not released a census of MTA riders in more than a decade, but recent data suggests that there are 550,000 residents in New York City with ambulatory disabilities,¹⁰ and only 7.7% of them use subways.¹¹ Just a quarter of New York City's stations have elevator access, one of the lowest percentages of any transit system in the world. Disability rights activists have long advocated for greater access for those with disabilities at MTA stations and called for representation on the MTA Board.

Median household income of MTA rider \$58,000, median household income for Board \$292,080

Members of the MTA Board are also vastly wealthier than the average MTA rider. Many board members possess hundreds of thousands of dollars in real estate holdings and investments, and their average incomes greatly exceed New Yorkers'.

Using data from the last 10 years, Reinvent Albany calculated that the median household income for MTA riders is roughly \$58,455.¹² This is likely to have risen significantly since the last survey, but a more recent number would still fall far short of

⁹ Via New York Metropolitan Transportation Council website. "MTA Surveys: Facts and Findings." March 12, 2014. https://www.nymtc.org/portals/o/pdf/presentations/MTA%20Survey%20NYMTC%20BrownBag_03122014.pdf. Alphonso Castillo, Newsday. "LIRR's 87.9m riders highest in nearly 70 years." January 23, 2017. <https://www.newsday.com/long-island/transportation/lirr-87-9m-riders-highest-in-nearly-70-years-report-says-1.13002066>. According to the most recent data, subway riders have a median age of 43, LIRR riders 42.2 and MNR riders 40. Subway riders represent 93% of MTA ridership.

¹⁰ Jugal Patel, New York Times. "Where the Subway Limits New Yorkers with Disabilities." February 11th, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/02/11/nyregion/nyc-subway-access.html>

¹¹ Data received from the Center for Independence of the Disabled and the University of New Hampshire.

¹² This number was calculated using ridership numbers on the subway, LIRR and MNR services and their respective annual median household incomes. The MTA has 8.6 million daily riders (93% of the MTA total), the LIRR has 349,500 (3.8%), and the MNR 298,800 (3.2%). MTA riders have an average household income of \$52,042 as of the last survey, LIRR riders \$144,251, and MNR riders \$142,511. We multiplied these numbers by the percentage of overall MTA riders and added them together, producing \$58,445. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2018/2018summary.odn>

the median income for a single board member's household, which in 2018 was \$292,080, more than five times that of the typical MTA rider. (Data on wealth is current as of 2018, when the last financial disclosure forms were filed with the NYS Joint Commission on Public Ethics).

Nine of the MTA's 14 board members' households had at least a million dollars in value (including income, real estate holdings and other investments), with the Board's median known wealth being \$1.4 million. Four of the five whose known wealth registers under a million are all women. Reliable resources on New Yorkers' average net worth are scant, but the available data suggests that the numbers hardly compare. Studies on net worth often measure it differently, and data on New Yorkers' is nonexistent, but one study places the richest NYC zip code's net worth at \$326,104, with an average income of \$94,192. MTA board members have an average total wealth of \$7,901,976, almost 19 times that of that zip code's average net worth and income combined.¹³ (Data on the net worth of LIRR and MNR riders, who may have considerably higher salaries, is unavailable, but a separate study placed Nassau and Suffolk counties' median net worth at \$680,000).¹⁴¹⁵

Fewer NYC Residents on the Board than a year ago

While 89% of riders live in New York City, only 36% of board members are residents, down from 41% in June 2018. NYC representation seems to be less of a priority for Board nominations, particularly after the law was changed to accommodate Robert Mujica's nomination this year.

¹³ Will Rack, New York Business Journal. "Here are New York City's wealthiest ZIPs." February 7, 2017. <https://www.bizjournals.com/newyork/news/2017/02/07/here-are-new-york-citys-wealthiest-zips.html>

¹⁴ Gene Balk, Seattle Times. "Seattle household net worth ranks among top in nation - but wealth doesn't reach everyone." February 19, 2019. <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/data/seattle-household-net-worth-ranks-among-top-in-nation-but-wealth-doesnt-reach-everyone/>

¹⁵ These numbers are the *lowest possible estimates* of MTA board members' overall wealth. While it's impossible to determine the exact net worth of any given MTA board member, the disclosure forms do provide a picture of their overall wealth and sources of income, specifically by requiring each member to list their approximate income, real estate holdings, consulting practices, and the value of their investments and retirement plans. However, when filing financial disclosure forms, board members are not asked to state a *specific number* for income or the value of their investments, but rather a *range of numbers* (e.g., they would write their salary as "\$150,000 to under \$249,999," rather than \$225,000). Other members, despite having substantial holdings in companies worth billions of dollars, write that the value of their investments are "unascertainable" Thus the data our analysis provides is almost certainly on the extreme low end of board members' potential overall wealth.

While the contrast between MTA riders and the board remains stark, in many areas, riders are better represented on the board than last year (though fewer board members are residents of the MTA service area than before). It should also be noted that there do not appear to be any LGBTQ members on the Board. Here is how the board has changed since June 2018:

- **Gender.** June 2018: 18% female. Now: 43%. (Riders: 52%).
- **Ethnicity.** June 2018: 18% nonwhite. Now: 29%. (Riders: 55%).
- **Age.** June 2018: Median of 66 years old. Now: 58. (Riders: 43%).
- **Residence.** June 2018: 41% lived in NYC. Now: 36%. (Riders: 89%.)
- **Median Income.** June 2018: \$555,000. Now: \$292,080. (Riders: \$58,000).
- **Known Household Wealth.** June 2018: \$12,568,375. Now: \$7,901,976. (The average net worth in the wealthiest NYC zip code is \$326,104, with an average income of \$94,192.)

Other Findings

- **Incomplete filings.** Board members are legally obligated to submit financial disclosure forms to the NYS Joint Commission on Public Ethics every year for as long as they serve on the board. The forms help clarify potential conflicts of interest, and require members to list their household income, real estate holdings, and so forth. But several board members appear to not have fully disclosed their earnings, though some of these omissions have since been corrected.
 - **David Mack's** form does not include a specific income number, instead citing a 2018 tax return which was not included as an attachment on the public disclosure form.
 - **Haeda Mihaltses** did not list any income from her position as Vice President of External Affairs for the New York Mets.
 - **Lawrence Schwartz's** household, for example, made over \$700,000 in 2016, but did not list having any kind of income or positions of authority on forms initially submitted in 2017 and 2018 until the oversight was revealed by the New York Post and his forms were updated.¹⁶
 - On several members's forms, certain income or values of investments were listed as "not ascertainable." This included income from Sarah Feinberg's spouse from employment at Vice Media, and stock options from Pat Foye for Philadelphia Trust Company.

¹⁶ Melissa Klein, NY Post. "Questions after Cuomo's MTA enforcer missed deadline for disclosure form." June 15, 2019. <https://nypost.com/2019/06/15/questions-after-cuomos-mta-enforcer-missed-deadline-for-disclosure-form/>

- **Business before the state/MTA.** Several members of the MTA Board have business before the state or the MTA as lobbyists, either individually or through their employers.
 - **David Jones**, CEO of the Community Service Society, a nonprofit, stated that he is a registered lobbyist on his form, and cites the following agencies: "NYS Dept of Health, NYS Dept for the Aging, NYS Div of Criminal Justice, NYS Interest on Lawyers Accts, NYC Dept for the Aging, NYC Health & Hospitals [sic] Corp, NYC Dept of Health & Mental Hygiene, NYC Council, NYS Charities Bureau."
 - **Kevin Law** as President and CEO of the Long Island Association, a nonprofit, stated on his form "...We often advocate for LI before the state legislature, governor's office and various state agencies and authorities including the MTA. In fact, the President of the LIRR has been on our board for the past 9 decades."
 - The Long Island Association supports a new LIRR station for the Belmont Redevelopment Project, and noted its support for the project overall as part of its 2019 priorities.¹⁷ This may be voted on by the Board as an amendment to the Third Track Project.¹⁸
 - **Haeda Mihaltses** does not list any business before the state on her disclosure form, yet in news reports the following issues were noted¹⁹:
 - She represented Sterling Project Development, an owner of the Mets, on the Belmont Redevelopment Project, which as noted now includes a proposed LIRR train station.
 - The Willets Point LIRR/7 train station provides direct service to the New York Mets at CitiField. The proposed AirTrain to LaGuardia would also connect to this station.

While Mihaltses has committed to recusing herself from "any MTA board action that relates to the New York Mets, Belmont or Willets Point"²⁰ we note that recusals are not the ideal situation – better would be a nominee without current business involving the MTA.

¹⁷ Via Long Island Association website. "LIA Priorities." Accessed July 11, 2019.

<http://www.longislandassociation.org/lia-priorities>

¹⁸ Winzelberg, David. Long Island Business News. "New LIRR train station planned for Belmont." July 3, 2019. <https://libn.com/2019/07/03/new-train-station-planned-for-belmont-park/>

¹⁹ Newsday Daily Point. "Rethinking the MTA Board." April 1, 2019.

<https://www.newsday.com/opinion/newsday-opinion-the-point-newsletter-1.29255431>

²⁰ Rubinstein, Dana. "Cuomo's MTA appointee to recuse herself from Islanders-related votes, following local request." Politico Pro. April 3, 2019.

<https://subscriber.politicopro.com/states/new-york/whiteboard/2019/04/03/cuomos-mta-appointee-to-recuse-herself-from-islanders-related-votes-following-local-request-9107320>

- **Vacant positions.** There are currently three vacant voting positions for the MTA and its Board: one nomination from the Mayor of New York City, and one each for Dutchess and Rockland Counties. An additional non-voting seat for the Long Island Rail Road Commuters Council is also vacant. There are also four members of the MTA Board still serving in “holdover” status, whose terms have expired – one of the governor’s appointees, and three nonvoting members. All of these appointees would require the advice and consent of the Senate. The Senate is unlikely to convene again before January 2020, however, as the legislative session ended in June 2019, leaving several gaps in representation from the MTA district.

Tables on Following Pages

Board Members' Race, Gender, Residence and Age (As of July 2019)

Name	Race	Gender	Residence	Age	Recommended By
Sarah Feinberg	W	F	Manhattan	41	Governor
Pat Foye	W	M	Nassau County	62	Governor
Rhonda Herman	B	F	White Plains, NY	59	Westchester County Executive
David Jones	B	M	Manhattan	71	Mayor
Linda Lacewell	W	F	New York, New York	56	Governor
Kevin Law	W	M	Suffolk County	57	Suffolk County Executive
Robert Linn	W	M	Brooklyn (Park Slope)	70	Mayor
David Mack	W	M	Nassau County	78	Nassau County Executive
Susan G. Metzger	W	F	Warwick, NY (Orange County)	75	Orange County Executive
Haeda Mihaltses	W	F	Queens	55	Governor
Robert Mujica	H	M	Columbia County, NY	46	Governor
Lawrence Schwartz	W	M	Westchester County	62	Governor
Veronica Vanterpool	H	F	Scarsdale, NY	44	Mayor
Neal Zuckerman	W	M	Garrison, NY (or Philipstown)	48	Putnam County Executive
	Percent White	Percent Male	Percent Outside NYC	Median Age	
	71%	57%	64%	58	
	Percent Nonwhite	Percent Female	Percent in NYC		
	29%	43%	36%		

Board Members' Investments, wealth, and household income in 2018
(Board as of July 2019)

Member	Investments	Real Estate, Retirement Plans, or Other Family Wealth	Total Household Income	Total Household
Sarah Feinberg	\$750,000	\$250,000	\$531,000	\$1,531,000
Pat Foye	\$11,800,000	\$0	\$380,000	\$12,200,000
Rhonda Herman	\$0	\$20,000	\$150,000	\$170,000
David Jones	\$0	\$250,000	\$555,000	\$805,000
Linda Lacewell	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$203,509	\$403,509
Kevin Law	\$0	\$650,000	\$355,000	\$1,006,000
Robert Linn	\$5,102,000	\$500,000	\$105,000	\$5,707,000
David Mack	\$45,750,000	\$26,250,000	\$0	\$72,000,000
Susan G. Metzger	\$200,000	\$1,000,000	\$655,000	\$1,855,000
Haeda Mihaltses	\$105,000	\$350,000	\$0	\$760,000
Robert Mujica	\$370,000	\$680,000	\$229,160	\$1,279,160
Lawrence Schwartz	\$1,417,000	\$200,000	\$1,700,000	\$4,117,000
Veronica Vanterpool	\$200,000	\$0	\$53,000	\$253,000
Neal Zuckerman	\$2,806,000	\$2,450,000	\$3,167,000	\$8,541,000
Total 2018	\$68,600,000	\$32,700,000	\$8,083,669	\$110,627,669
Average 2018	\$4,900,000	\$2,335,714	\$577,405	\$7,901,976
Median 2018	\$285,000	\$300,000	\$292,080	\$1,405,080

Board Members' investments, wealth, and household income in 2017²¹
(Board as of June 2018)

Member	Investments	Real Estate, Retirement Plans, or Other Spousal Wealth	Total Household Income	Total Household Wealth
Fernando Ferrer	\$500,000	\$1,750,000	\$560,000	\$2,810,000
David Jones	\$500,000	\$3,150,000	\$555,000	\$4,205,000
Joseph Lhota	\$6,850,000	\$10,750,000	\$2,430,000	\$20,030,000
Susan G. Metzger	\$175,000	\$500,000	\$555,000	\$1,230,000
John Molloy	\$3,600,000	\$0	\$0	\$3,600,000
Mitchell Pally	\$825,000	\$741,000	\$161,001	\$1,727,001
Scott Rechler	\$79,001,000	\$1,000,000	\$17,666,001	\$97,667,001
Andrew Saul	\$26,421,000	\$9,525,000	\$6,708,003	\$42,654,003
Lawrence Schwartz	\$1,411,000	\$1,050,000	\$0	\$2,461,000
Polly Trottenberg	\$260,000	\$440,000	\$404,000	\$1,104,000
Veronica Vanterpool	\$210,000	\$41,000	\$81,000	\$332,000
James E. Vitiello	\$0	\$0	\$950,000	\$950,000
Peter Ward	\$5,000	\$9,570,000	\$405,000	\$9,980,000
Carl Weisbrod	\$2,990,000	\$1,905,000	\$240,000	\$5,135,000
Carl Wortendyke	\$5,000	\$100,000	\$1,350,000	\$1,455,000
Neal Zuckerman	\$966,000	\$2,045,000	\$2,743,000	\$5,754,000
Total 2017	\$123,719,000	\$42,567,000	\$34,808,005	\$201,094,005
Average 2017	\$7,732,438	\$2,660,438	\$2,175,500	\$12,568,375
Median	\$662,500		\$555,000	\$3,205,000

²¹ Charles Moerdler is not included in the 2017 data, as his filings still were being reviewed the Conflict of Interests Board as of the date of publishing our prior report.