

New York City's Subways

The first underground line of the New York City Subway opened on October 27, 1904, almost 35 years after the opening of the first elevated line in New York City, which became the IRT Ninth Avenue Line. The first line of the city-owned and operated Independent Subway System (IND) opened in 1932; this system was intended to compete with the private systems and allow some of the elevated railways to be torn down, but kept within the core of the City due to the low amount of startup capital provided to the municipal Board of Transportation, the later MTA, by the state. This required it to be run "at cost", necessitating fares up to double the five-cent fare popular at the time.

In 1940, the two private systems were bought by the city and some elevated lines closed immediately while others closed soon after. Integration was slow, but several connections were built between the IND and BMT, and now operate as one division called the B Division. Since the IRT tunnel segments are too small and stations too narrow to accommodate B Division cars, and contain curves too sharp for B Division cars, the IRT remains its own division, A Division.

The New York City Transit Authority (NYCTA) was created in 1953 to take over subway, bus, and streetcar operations from the city, and placed under control of the state-level Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) in 1968.

Soon after the MTA took control of the subway, New York City entered a fiscal crisis. It closed many elevated subway lines that became too expensive to maintain. Graffiti and crime became common, and equipment and stations fell into decrepit condition. The New York City Subway tried to stay solvent, so it had to make many service cutbacks and defer necessary maintenance projects. In the 1980s, an \$18 billion financing program for the rehabilitation of the subway began.



The September 11 attacks resulted in service disruptions on lines running through Lower Manhattan, particularly the IRT Broadway – Seventh Avenue Line, which ran directly underneath the World Trade Center between the Chambers Street and Rector Street stations. Sections of the tunnel, as well as the Cortlandt Street station, which was directly underneath the Twin Towers, were severely damaged by the collapse and had to be rebuilt, requiring suspension of service on that line south of Chambers Street. Ten other nearby stations were closed while dust and debris were cleaned up. By March 2002, seven of those stations had reopened. The rest (except for Cortlandt Street on the IRT Broadway – Seventh Avenue Line) reopened on September 15, 2002 along with service south of Chambers Street.

Expansions include the 7 Subway Extension that opened in September 2015, and the Second Avenue Subway, the first phase of which opened in December 2016.

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