

Elevator Action Group - Major Events Timeline

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What's this? A history of [Rise and Resist Elevator Action Group](#), advocates and activists for NYC subway accessibility and disability inclusion.

Date	Author	Description
8/26/20	Naomi Fisher	Original draft compiled from EAG mail archive as primary source.
9/26/20	Sasha Blair-Goldensohn	Updated, shared with the group.
2/15/22	Sasha BG	Updated with 2021 federal appeals decision
3/11/22	Sasha B-G	CIDNY v MTA cases: status updates
7/7/22	Sasha B-G	CIDNY v MTA (State) Settlement update
4/26/23	Sasha B-G	CIDNY v MTA (State) Final settlement signoff
6/2024	Sasha B-G	New Mobility and West Side Rag profiles

ELEVATORS ARE FOR EVERYONE



Intro

The [Elevator Action Group](#) started in 2017 with this mission: “We are a coalition of concerned New Yorkers and activists moving to push wheelchair accessibility in the subways to the top of the MTA agenda. Accessibility is not a dismissible issue. It is not a luxury or convenience. It is a necessity and a civil right.”

EAG is not a plaintiff in the [multiple, ongoing class action lawsuits](#) brought by PWDs against the MTA, but we support their demands and hope our advocacy speeds a just resolution. However, our group does include several class representatives in those suits (as individuals or organization members).

June, 2024 Two profiles of Sasha highlighting EAG’s work:

- New Mobility (magazine of United Spinal):
<https://newmobility.com/meet-the-wheelchair-user-making-google-maps-more-accessible/>
- West Side Rag (NYC neighborhood newspaper):
<https://www.westsiderag.com/2024/06/17/sasha-blair-goldensohn-lifelong-upper-west-sider-making-google-and-the-subway-accessible-to-all>

April 24, 2023 We met outside 60 Centre St, then proceeded into Justice Hagler’s courtroom for the final settlement approval ([DRA press release](#)) hearing in the CIDNY v MTA (state) case ([transcript](#) and [DRA’s tweet](#)). This [photo gallery](#) chronicles a truly Epic day.

March 27, 2023 [Article by Jose Martinez in The City “Busted Elevator Lawsuit Stuck as MTA Vows ...”](#) includes Photos and interview with Sasha

August 1, 2023: Fox News interview with Sasha about Elevators ([link](#)): “Subway accessibility: Disability advocates have praise and criticism for MTA’s recent actions on elevators”

June, 2022 The [landmark settlement with MTA](#) was announced in [CIDNY v MTA NY State](#) accessible station **construction** case, AKA, “You’ve got to build them!” Its statutory basis was NYC Human Rights law (thus brought in NY State court).

- Press releases: [Disability Rights Advocates](#) , [NY Governor Hochul release](#)
- News: [NY Times](#), [Daily News](#) , [Mass Transit](#), [Gothamist](#), [NY1 News](#)

We’re not done. We still need an agreement for **maintenance**, [CIDNY v MTA \(federal\)](#), AKA “They’ve got to work!” It demands accessible entrances (mainly elevators) be maintained for reasonable availability. In layman’s terms, you can’t just build elevators, they also have to work. This case is sometimes referred to as the Federal case, or Maintenance case. Its statutory basis is the ADA (thus brought in fed court).

After 5+ years, our claims have been found to have merit to the point that litigation can continue. These findings comprise a lower court decision on summary judgment (state in (ruling for defendants) which was [overturned in 2021 by a unanimous Appeals panel](#).

Thus momentum / pressure for the MTA and plaintiffs to reach a satisfactory agreement continues to build, with the State case settlement offering hope that’s possible. Until then, it’s presumed “liability” is in our favor, while the “remedy” i.e. settlement, is at issue. There is not a well-defined “next” step in terms of a scheduled trial date.

What is the goal? An agreement like those which have been reached in the State half of this case, or previously in [Daniels-Feingold vs MBTA settlement \(2006\)](#) for Boston’s “T” subway that set out a quantitative elevator reliability standard, established as a level the MBTA felt able to maintain and the PWD community felt would allow sufficient access to effectively use the trains.

When and how we achieve these things is the goal of our ongoing advocacy.

1. **Mar. 4, 2022:** Riders Alliance [Rally for Accessibility](#) at Rego Park Station in Queens.
2. **Jan. 27, 2022:** Riders Alliance rally outside Governor Hochul's office to launch their [#RidersAgenda](#) and demand that the needs of riders are prioritized in the [state budget](#) - including accessibility.
3. **Dec. 15, 2021:** [Rally for Accessibility](#) prior to MTA Board Meeting.
<https://www.facebook.com/events/912520302968243/>
4. **Dec. 1, 2021:** Meeting with Nivardo Lopez, Deputy Secretary of Transportation for Governor Hochul, to discuss ADA accessibility at the MTA.
5. **Nov. 22, 2021:** Rally and press conference with Sen. Schumer - "Broadway Junction, one of Brooklyn's busiest subway stations and most crucial transfer points, is finally set to become accessible for people with disabilities with the construction of seven new elevators, [Senator Chuck Schumer announced.](#)"
6. **Oct. 13, 2021:** [Save our Elevators](#) with Sen. Gounardes at 18th Ave. Station in Brooklyn
7. **August 24, 2021** [Unanimous Federal Appellate Decision Vindicates Rights of Subway Riders With Disabilities](#) - Elevator maintenance case
 - a. This overturned a "win" for them on the **elevator maintenance** half of our case, from Judge Daniels' March, 2020 written decision granting the MTA summary judgment.
 - b. The case is now returned to SDNY district court.
8. **June 9, 2021** [The Biggest Obstacle](#), which discusses lawsuits and documents the actions of the Elevator Action Group, premieres at the NYC Independent Film Festival.
9. **June 7, 2021:** [Riders Alliance rally for federal investment in accessible transit.](#)
"Together, in front of Hostos Community College, we will announce a sustained push for federal funding of public transit accessibility and reliability as part of the President's American Jobs Plan."
10. **Jan. 28, 2021:** Victor Dias Rodriguez's film [All Riders](#) is released."An inclusive society elevates the living standards for us all. #AllRidersDoc sheds light on a side of New York you may not know.
11. **June 8, 2020** - [Unanimous Appellate Court Upholds Ruling](#) - Access **construction** case returned to NY State court
 - a. This affirmed a "win" for us in the **station construction** case, from Judge Hagler's June 5, 2019 bench decision rejecting the MTA's summary judgment motion.
 - b. The construction case is now returned to NY State Supreme court.
12. **March 11 2020:** Pack the courts **Courthouse Rally!** [Pack the Courts Rally](#) and citywide Day- of- Action for Subway Accessibility. [Event Description](#): "Transit riders and advocates to kick off a citywide petition drive demanding that Governor Andrew

Cuomo fund the MTA's plan to make 70 subway stations newly accessible. Governor Cuomo must commit the proposed \$6 billion subsidy in the next state budget, and implement congestion pricing without carve-outs for special interests. Throughout the day, the coalition gathered signatures with their accessibility funding demands to present to the governor.” [Press release](#) and [Handout](#)

13. **January 28th 2020: Courthouse Rally** with CIDNY, BCID, Stand-Up, TransitCenter, DIA, People’s MTA in honor of Malaysia Goodson and Pack the court for Judge Hagler Hearing. [Press release](#) and [Handout](#)
14. **January 23rd 2020:** Senators Comrie and AM Dinowitz press conference to call on the MTA to preserve and expand the on-demand pilot program, and to announce new legislation that will require the MTA to do this.
15. **January 6th 2020:** “Hang On” interview on subway accessibility as part of The Civilian Series at Joe’s Pub. Sasha interviewed during performance, Monica, Jess and JVD attended and handed out E4E literature.
<https://publictheater.org/productions/joes-pub/2020/c/the-civilians-jacob-brandt--hang-on/>
16. **December 3rd 2019:** Money for Elevators, Not Cops! Rally at Herald Square hosted in partnership with Peoples Power Assemblies NYC and People’s MTA. [Money for Elevators, Not Cops Rally](#)

Event Description: The Peoples Power Assemblies held its 5th annual Int'l Day of People with Disabilities march in NYC demanding accessibility justice and an end to racist police terror, with the slogan Money for Elevators, Not Cops in the Subway! Rally 5:30 - 6:45pm.

Half of all people killed by police have a disability. With recent police attacks in the subway -- on churro vendors, on Black and Latinx youth, through the MTA's racist fare evasion campaign -- the voices calling for public transit to truly serve the riders are getting louder, and are demanding money be spent on services instead. Elevators, ramps and true transit accessibility are at the top of that list.

17. **November 6th 2019: Courthouse Rally/Pack the Court for Transit Accessibility**
[Courthouse Rally](#)

Event Description: Courthouse rally for the righteous lawsuit mandating elevators in the New York City subway. The MTA's recent 70-station announcement for elevator installation still leaves the system 60% inaccessible — with the elevators that do exist constantly breaking down or malfunctioning. Plus, the announcement lacked the crucial demand from the disability rights movement: that the MTA sign a legally binding commitment to create accessible stations. Without that, the MTA accessibility announcement could end up being another unfunded promise.

18. **August 1st 2019:** Subway access **courthouse rally** at 60 Center street co-hosted by *Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled, Bronx Independent Living Services and the Transit Center*. Rally transitioned into attending court hearing
19. **July 14th 2019:** Disability Pride Parade and Special Ribbon Cutting Ceremony co-hosted by *the Disabled in Action of Metropolitan New York*.

Event Description: “We will hold a mock ribbon cutting ceremony to remind the MTA how much work there is to be done. We'll give Cuomo's life-sized replica the chance to cut the ribbon and see what it would be like. After the ceremony, Rise and Resist will march with DIA, lining up on 26th Street between Park and Madison for the parade kickoff at 11 am” [Disability Pride Parade](#)

20. **June 5th 2019:** [Courthouse Rally for Subway Access Settlement at 60 Center Street. Rally and press conference](#) with the plaintiffs in subway elevator lawsuit, CIDNY v MTA, Judge Hagler hears arguments in Part 17, dismisses summary judgment motion. [“Disability Groups Win Big” article, Daily News.](#)
21. **May 22nd 2019:** Pack the Court! Lawsuit mandating Elevators in the subway! [Pack the Courthouse Rally](#)

Event Description: Rally before the convening of this important case being heard by Judge Hagler

22. **May 2nd 2019:** Pack the Court! Rally and Court Hearing for the Elevator Maintenance Lawsuit [Courthouse Rally](#)

Event Description: Center for Independence of the Disabled New York v. MTA

Come protest on the sidewalk, then come inside and PACK THE COURT to show support for true elevator maintenance in the New York subway system. Safe, accessible public transportation is a human right!

23. **April 17th 2019:** Rally/Protest at the MTA Board Meeting. No Fare Hike without Accessibility! [Protest at MTA Board Meeting](#)

Event Description: On Sunday, April 21, the MTA subway fare goes up again. The 7-day unlimited goes from \$32 to \$33. The monthly goes up \$6, from \$121 to \$127. The 7-day express bus monthly goes from \$59.50 to \$62.00.

And still the NYC public transportation system is notoriously inaccessible. It's not public transportation if all of the public can't use it. Lack of elevators has resulted in at least one high-profile death this year, that of Malaysia Goodson, who fell to her death while carrying her

baby and a stroller down the subway stairs. We need a court-enforceable plan to install elevators, with a timeline, instead of announcements and/or aspirational statements.

We demand the MTA not raise fares unless and until it commits to an independently monitored, court-enforceable agreement that establishes full transit accessibility by installing elevators in the subway, and also making the subways in other ways accessible for people with disabilities.

24. **March 27, 2019** - Honor Malaysia Goodson for International Women's Month! Speakers at the MTA board meeting share their stories and honor Ms. Goodson by adding their voices to accessibility rights advocates who have been calling for elevators and ramps in the subway for years. [Honor Malaysia Goodson for International Women's Month! Rally!](#)

[WPIX news coverage, Malaysia Goodson's cousin speaks at the MTA board meeting.](#)

25. **March 14, 2019** - Courthouse Rally for Subway Access - Quit Stalling, Cuomo!
[Activistas exigen que todas las estaciones del subway cuenten con accesos adecuados para personas discapacitadas](#)
26. **February 25, 2019** - [Parents With Strollers Need Elevators in the Subway!](#) The People's MTA and disability rights activists invite parents with strollers to the MTA board's monthly Bus and Subway meeting.
27. **February 21, 2019** - AARP + TransitCenter Rally for Accessibility. AARP-New York and the Penn South Program for Seniors will join TransitCenter in calling on the state to fund NYC Transit's Fast Forward plan for an accessible subway.
[AARP + TransitCenter Rally for Accessibility](#)
[AARP backs transit advocates' call for new MTA revenue streams](#)
[Subway Near Complex Where 5K Retired People Live Has No Elevator](#)
28. **January 30, 2019** - Disability advocates rally outside the station where 22-year-old Malaysia Goodson died after falling down the steps carrying her 1-year-old daughter in a stroller, calling yet again on the MTA to sign an agreement to install elevators at every subway station.

[Vigil for Malaysia Goodson](#)

[Mom's Death On Subway Steps Prompts Demands For Elevators](#)

[NYTimes-After Death on Subway Stairs, New Yorkers Lament Accessibility Issues](#)

29. **January 3rd 2019:** Members attended Assembly Member Harvey Epstein's Town Hall
30. **Dec 18 2019:** Testimony provided at City Hall meeting
31. **December 11, 2019** - [No Fare Hike! Rally and protest at the Queens MTA Fare Hike Hearing.](#)

Event Description: 4:00 PM Rally, 5:00 PM Hearing

\$215 million a year. That's what MTA president Andy Byford claims the subway is losing every year from fare evasion—and what supposedly justifies the fare hike.

Now the MTA is announcing the creation of “fare evasion strike teams” who will make the problem of the NYPD's racist profiling in the subway worse. This is a blame-the-poor tactic that riders will fight back against at next week's fare hike hearing in Queens.

32. **December 10, 2019** - [Transit users and the Fix The Subway coalition rally and then testify before the MTA Fare Hike public hearing.](#)

Event Description: Join fellow riders and the Fix The Subway coalition as we rally and then testify before the MTA Fare Hike public hearing. Instead of asking New Yorkers to pay more, Governor Cuomo and our legislators in Albany need to do their job first and give us a full funding plan to #FixtheSubway

33. **November 27, 2018** - [MTA Fare Hike Hearing/No Fare Hike Until Subways Are Accessible!](#) The People's MTA and Rise and Resist held a rally in front of the venue as well as spoke at the hearing - NO FARE HIKE UNTIL EVERYONE CAN RIDE!
[CBSNews NY coverage.](#)
34. **November 12, 2018** - [Press Conference to Demand that Developers Maintain Subway Elevators](#) TransitCenter, Rise and Resist and Council member Brad Lander held a press conference calling out mega-wealthy real estate developers who manage subway elevators but don't keep them up and running.
[News 4 New York coverage](#)
35. **November 9, 2018** - [Press Conference to Demand Subway Accessibility](#) The Elevator Action Group joined Council Member Brad Lander, neighbors, citizens and disability advocates at a press conference to call on the MTA to add an elevator at at the 7th Ave. Station, Brooklyn.
36. **October 30, 2018** - [Courthouse Rally for Subway Accessibility](#) Rise and Resist's Elevator Action Group and the People's MTA called on the MTA to make a binding legal agreement to make New York City's subway system fully accessible.
37. **October 5, 2018** - [Courthouse Rally to Demand Subway Access](#) We are Not Backing Down from our simple, steadfast demand: Every subway station must have stair-free access -- for everyone.
38. **October 2, 2018** - [Coalition to Fix the Subways](#) Fix The Subway rally Union Sq.

Event Description: The “Fix The Subway Coalition,” a multifaceted group of activist organizations that want the state to step up and, uh, fix the subway, held a kickoff rally in Union Square, during which members of the coalition explained why they were demanding congestion pricing.

- 39. **August 21, 2018** - [Disability Justice Virtual Town Hall with Cynthia Nixon](#)
- 40. **July 15, 2018** - [Disability Pride Parade, New York City](#)
- 41. **May 10, 2018** - [Accessible Subway Stations Now! Rally at 60 Centre Street](#)

Event Description: Rally for accessible subway stations, just before the start of a negotiating session between the MTA and our attorneys in a lawsuit calling for full accessibility throughout the system. Right now, only 24% of subway stations are accessible to people with disabilities, leaving hundreds of thousands unable to use the system.

- 42. **May 7, 2018** - [Rally for Accessibility: 72nd St. B/C Station](#)
- 43. **April 26, 2018** - "Only in New York" event at the Museum of the City of New York with MTA Chairman, Joe Lhota, was disrupted by The People's MTA. Rise and Resist was in attendance with other disability rights protesters.
- 44. **April 13, 2018** - Members of Rise and Resist tour the subway system with Andy Byford, President of the NYCTA - [Photos](#)
- 45. **March 5th 2018:** Protest at NY Supreme Court to maintain elevator case [Photos](#)
- 46. **January 23, 2018** - Community Board 1 Meeting approves elevators at Broad St. Station - Rise and Resist is there
- 47. **January 22, 2018** - [Accessibility Map presented to Andy Byford, President of New York City Transit](#)
- 48. **December 16, 2017** - [This Station is a Dinosaur - Press Release | Photos](#)

Event Description: Members of Rise and Resist, residents from across NYC, City Councilwoman Helen Rosenthal, and Susan Dooha, executive director of the Center for the Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY), will be protesting outside the Museum of Natural History Subway Stop on Saturday to impress upon the city organization the importance of accessible subway stations. While the MTA has made excuses based on budget and resources, the fact remains that New York City lags behind most other major cities in the country in terms of devoting adequate taxpayer money to creating accessible transit options.

- 49. **November 15, 2017** - [Elevators Are For Everyone - Rally at MTA Headquarters - Press Release | Photos](#)

Event Description: rally on Wednesday, November 15th at 9 a.m. at MTA headquarters, 2 Broadway, before their board meeting, to urge the MTA to address the lack of accessible elevators.

By excluding people with disabilities from the subways, Cuomo and the MTA are complicit in rejecting their civil rights, forcing them to fend for themselves or rely on an inferior transportation system.

We intend to remind them that ELEVATORS ARE FOR EVERYONE: New Yorkers with disabilities, the elderly, people with strollers, travelers with luggage, those with injuries and delivery people.

Rally with us in front of 2 Broadway, from 9-10 a.m. At 10, if you are available, come upstairs to the meeting where the public can make comments. The nearest subway is Bowling Green 4/5, an accessible station

50. October 16, 2017 - [Stranded By Cuomo Flash Mob - Press Release](#) | [Photos](#)

Event Description: staged a "roll-in" with a broad range of constituents - people with disabilities, moms with strollers, people with luggage, etc. - to draw attention to the "elevator fail" at this station.