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Press Release

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LIRR

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MTA LIRR Tracks Customer Travel Patterns as Origin and Destination Study is Completed

MTA Long Island Rail Road has completed the initial analysis of its Origin and Destination (O&D) Study. The customer counts taken during the study provided the LIRR with a comprehensive database of ridership at each of its stations - serving as a benchmark to gauge future changes in travel behavior and a planning tool to support service improvements and equipment scheduling. The study's survey data - generated from a random sampling of customers - offers insight into reasons for travel during various day parts; origin and destination station preferences; final locations for travel; and the method of travel to departure stations and final destination locations.

In comparing the new data with count information from the LIRR's previous O&D study performed in 1998, total ridership on the LIRR - eastbound and westbound combined - increased by 7.8% from 267,182 customers in 1998 to 288,078 in 2006. Some of the key findings from the study are:

- Westbound midday, off-peak ridership increased 72%, by 14,157 customers, in 2006 - representing the LIRR's fastest growing market segment. Within this day part, the LIRR experienced a 10% growth - an increase of 6,000 customers - in travel that is recreational or social in nature.
- Total Morning Reverse Peak ridership increased 76% to 12,917 riders in 2006 (based on arrivals at destination stations) compared with 7,350 customers in 1998. The LIRR's Main Line Corridor Improvement Project - with the planned addition of a third track between Floral Park and Hicksville - is designed, in part, to meet the steadily growing demands of reverse peak ridership.
- Ridership increased on all diesel territory branches during the Morning Peak period representing a reversal from the 1998 O&D study findings. This shift is closely tied to the replacement of the LIRR's diesel fleet with modern, comfortable bi-level coaches and the introduction of one-seat rides from diesel stations through dual-mode locomotive technology.

Other observations from the O&D Study include how customers travel by county with respect to westbound morning peak travel. A comparison to the 1998 data showed that Nassau County experienced a higher representation of daily customers, since the presence of Queens customers in the daily mix has declined - most probably related to the introduction of MetroCard and the heralding of free transfers in what were previously two-fare zones for subways and buses. In addition, O&D data showed that the Intra-island market has grown, since westbound destination trips to suburban stations have increased. Trips to Nassau County locations have gone up, as well.

As in the 1998 study, Penn Station and Manhattan remain the major destination station and final location, at 78% and 79% respectively, for westbound travelers during the Morning Peak period.

The O&D study fieldwork was conducted during the spring of 2006, and involved the counting of passengers - both boardings and arrivals - at every LIRR station. The focus of the study was to count travelers during weekday and weekend travel times - including AM Peak, AM Reverse Peak, Midday Off-Peak East/Westbound, PM Peak, PM Reverse Peak, Saturday East/Westbound and Sunday East/Westbound. Counts were essentially taken during all day parts with the exception of the overnight period. The count data collected in the study provided the LIRR with station-specific ridership information - a valuable planning tool.

An Origin and Destination survey questionnaire, with prepaid return postage, was also distributed to a random sampling of customers at every LIRR station as part of the study. The information gleaned from the customers' self-completed surveys provided the LIRR with station-to-station travel patterns by market segment; as well as travel modes used at origin and destination stations.