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Press Release

March 21, 2011

LIRR

IMMEDIATE

### Bus Service Between Freeport & Babylon Weekend Of April 9-10; Train Service Available On Main Line & Other Points

***Shuttle Buses Will be Provided Between Freeport and Babylon as LIRR Modernization Project Brings State of the Art Signal Technology to Critical Switching Areas at Amityville and Wantagh***

Buses will replace trains between Freeport and Babylon on the weekend of April 9-10, as the MTA Long Island Rail Road completes work on a major signal modernization project between Amityville and Wantagh. The work will require a 42-hour suspension of train service starting at 4 AM on Saturday, April 9 and continuing through until 10 PM Sunday, April 10, on a 14-mile stretch of track between Freeport and Babylon. During that period, buses will shuttle Babylon Branch customers between Freeport and Babylon - a quick 25-minute bus ride along Sunrise Highway.

Nine eastbound and nine westbound Montauk Branch trains will operate normally, without bus service, using the LIRR's Central Branch that connects between Babylon and the LIRR's Main Line east of Bethpage. Customers on Speonk/Patchogue local trains will be provided with shuttle bus service for the portion of their trips between Freeport and Babylon. Montauk Branch customers can avoid this bus service by taking trains - which are specially highlighted in the April 9-10 weekend Montauk Branch timetable - that are not affected since those trains are not routed on the Babylon Branch.

#### To Avoid Busing - Use Unaffected Stations/Branches

Babylon Branch customers who normally use stations between Babylon and Freeport can avoid the substitute bus service on the weekend of April 9-10 by taking LIRR train service to/from alternate stations such as Freeport, Hicksville, Farmingdale, and Bethpage, Wyandanch and Deer Park. LIRR train service at these stations will be operating normally on the weekend of April 9-10.

"This weekend busing for a portion of the Babylon Branch is needed as we complete another phase of our ongoing effort to modernize the LIRR's signal system, which controls train traffic," said LIRR President Helena Williams. "When this project is finalized, it will mean better service reliability for our customers on the Babylon Branch."

Extra LIRR personnel will be on duty throughout the April 9-10 weekend to assist customers and to make sure the project is completed on time.

The Amityville-Wantagh Signal Improvement Project brings state-of-the-art technology to these important switching locations on the LIRR's Babylon Branch by upgrading the current signal technology with a modern microprocessor based system. The new system will increase service reliability for trains on the LIRR's busiest branch, helping to reduce customer delays. The cost of the project is approximately \$23 million. Funding is provided by the MTA LIRR Capital Improvement Program.

#### Detail on Service Impact on Babylon/Montauk Branches: Babylon Branch

**Eastbound Babylon Branch Customers** will have regularly scheduled weekend train service to Freeport. Those traveling further east will transfer at Freeport Station to shuttle buses for service to stations Merrick through Babylon. Eastbound customers should anticipate increased travel time of up to 25 minutes.

**Westbound Babylon Branch Customers** will board shuttle buses at stations Babylon through Merrick to Freeport where connections to regular train service will be available to points west. Westbound customers will depart their stations up to 25 minutes earlier than normal.

#### Montauk Branch

**Eastbound Montauk Branch Customers** looking to avoid the substitute bus service between Freeport and Babylon can take one of the nine highlighted eastbound trains in the special April 9-10 Montauk Branch Timetable. These trains will be routed on a connecting track that runs east of Bethpage on the Main Line to Babylon and then continues on the Montauk Branch for points east.

Some other eastbound Montauk Branch trains to Patchogue and Speonk will originate at Babylon and will have connections from Babylon Branch trains departing western terminals 30 minutes earlier than regular and will require a transfer to an express bus for service between Freeport and Babylon.

**Westbound Montauk Branch Customers** looking to avoid the substitute bus service between Freeport and Babylon can take one of the nine highlighted westbound trains in the special April 9-10 Montauk Branch Timetable. These trains will be routed on a connecting track that runs between Babylon and the LIRR's Main Line east of Bethpage for points west.

Some other westbound Montauk Branch trains from Speonk and Patchogue will terminate at Babylon, where customers will transfer to buses for stations Lindenhurst through Freeport. Connections to train service will be available at Freeport for customers traveling to points further west.

**Alternate Stations to Avoid Bus Service between Freeport & Babylon*****Babylon Branch***

For Babylon Branch customers who wish to avoid busing between Freeport and Babylon during the weekend of April 9-10, the LIRR recommends driving to alternate LIRR stations where train service will operate normally. Here are some possible alternatives:

**Merrick and Bellmore customers** are advised to drive to the Freeport Station for direct train service to New York. There is adequate weekend parking and no weekend parking fees or restrictions. These stations are all in Fare Zone 7.

**Wantagh, Seaford, Massapequa and Massapequa Park** customers are advised to use LIRR train service to/from Hicksville Station. Parking is available and restrictions are waived on weekends. These stations are all in Fare Zone 7.

**Amityville, Copiague, and Lindenhurst** (Fare Zone 9) customers may wish to drive to Wyandanch (Fare Zone 9) or Farmingdale (Fare Zone 7) for direct train service. Parking is available and restrictions are waived on weekends.

**Babylon** customers are advised to use LIRR train service to/from Deer Park Station (Fare Zone 9), where weekend parking is available with no restrictions or fees.

***Montauk Branch***

For Montauk Branch customers who are not able to use any of the 9 Montauk Branch trains in each direction that operate through the Central Branch without busing and wish to avoid the busing between Freeport and Babylon during the weekend of April 9-10, we recommend driving to alternate LIRR stations where train service will operate normally. Here are some possible alternatives:

**Bay Shore** customers are advised to use LIRR train service to/from Deer Park Station (Fare Zone 9), where weekend parking is available with no restrictions or fees.

Customers at stations **Islip through Speonk** may wish to consider driving to Brentwood, Central Islip or Ronkonkoma (Fare Zone 10), where there's plenty of free weekend parking, with no residency requirements.

**Mets Fans:**

To avoid busing on the weekend of April 9-10, use unaffected stations, including stations on the Port Washington, Port Jefferson or Ronkonkoma Branches.

**Project/Service Information**

The LIRR will be providing information to the public and to its employees on this major project using various media including the MTA/LIRR website at [www.mta.info/lirr](http://www.mta.info/lirr), customer e-mails, on-train brochures, letters to elected officials, highway Inform signs, station posters, electronic message boards at Jamaica, Atlantic Terminal and Penn Station, public address system announcements, radio and newspaper advertisements, and on-train announcements. An internally-produced instructional video will be made available for use on the LIRR website and on Penn Station, Atlantic Terminal and Jamaica monitors.

Project and service information will also be available on the LIRR's Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/mtalirr?ref=nf> and on twitter at <http://twitter.com/LIRRScoop>

For the most up-to-date information throughout the April 9-10 weekend, sign up for LIRR E-alerts and text messages at [www.mymtaalerts.com](http://www.mymtaalerts.com)

Customers can also pick up copies of the special April 9-10 weekend Babylon and Montauk Branch timetables at all terminals or their local stations; or consult the LIRR's website at [www.mta.info](http://www.mta.info). Customers can also contact the LIRR's Travel Information Center at 718-217-5477 (718-217-LIRR). If you are deaf or hard of hearing, use your preferred relay service provider or the free 711 relay to reach LIRR at 718-217-5477.