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Press Release

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[MTA Headquarters](#)

IMMEDIATE

Governor Cuomo Announces Advances in MTA Real-Time Digital Communications

MTA Bus Time Now Covers All Buses in New York City; Four in Ten Railroad Riders Have Downloaded Free Apps for Metro-North and LIRR

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced two major steps forward in digital real-time communications provided to Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) customers. All buses in New York City now provide real time tracking on smartphones, through text messages and online. This allows customers to know how far away the next bus is at more than 22,000 bus stops serving every route in New York City. And in the three months since the release of official apps for railroad customers, [LIRR Train Time™](#) and [Metro-North Train Time™](#), approximately 120,000 people have downloaded the apps for iPhone and Android. Based on ridership statistics, about four out of ten railroad passengers have downloaded the apps.

"Now, millions of New Yorkers will know when their bus or train will depart in real-time with just a click of a button," Governor Cuomo said. "More New York City residents are using public transportation than ever before, and we must make sure our transportation services are working better than ever for them. New York State will continue to strive to make smart and innovative investments in technology that make a real difference for residents."

MTA Bus Time™ Goes City-Wide

"Keeping customers informed is a key mission for the MTA, and MTA Bus Time is an excellent example of how providing information makes traveling better," said MTA Chairman and CEO Thomas F. Prendergast. "Just as subway countdown clocks make waiting for the next train easier, MTA Bus Time is a way our customers can 'Know Before You Go.'"

The initiative required installing enhanced GPS hardware and cellular data transmission equipment on 5,700 buses, which send their location and route information to a central server every 30 seconds. The server uses sophisticated algorithms to determine how far each bus is from the next stop.

Customers can see this information by visiting mta.info/bustime on the web or a smartphone, or by texting a unique code for each bus stop to 511123. Numerical codes and digital QR codes are posted on the Guide-A-Ride signs at bus stops in Staten Island, the Bronx and Manhattan, and will be posted in Brooklyn and Queens starting this week.

The system is used more than 5 million times per month. Customers access it 3.2 million times per month with mobile web browsers, 1.7 million times per month by SMS text message, and 550,000 times per month on desktop web browsers.

The data generated by MTA Bus Time is also used to study how buses operate their routes, in order to improve their performance. In one recent example, data was used to study bus use and determine route changes for new service improvements coming to Coop City in the Bronx.

As part of the State's unprecedented commitment to transparency, the MTA Bus Time data feed is also available at no charge to software developers, who can create their own interfaces and apps for it.

LIRR and Metro-North Apps Receive Positive Reception

The strong demand for the LIRR and Metro-North Train Time apps has been fueled in part by positive reviews on blogs and by customers writing on the Apple App Store and Google Play. Reviews of the apps, which are free, have been very positive. On the combined ratings of Google Play and the Apple App Store, 71% of 294 reviews for Metro-North Train Time were either 4 or 5 stars and 68% of 240 reviews for the LIRR Train Time were either 4 or 5 stars.

"I'm sure it probably goes without saying that this is a must-have app for frequent users of the LIRR," Mark Bangs [wrote](#) in a review of the LIRR Train Time app on the website App Picker. "The developer has done a very thorough job of covering the entire network, with all of the information presented in a slick, streamlined interface that you'll have no trouble finding your way around."

Here are some other user reviews:

- "This app hits all the marks: user-friendly interface, bright primary colors, timely info at my finger tips. Delightful, just delightful." –App Store customer review of Metro-North Train Time on Dec. 19, 2013 (five stars)
- "Bad snow storm today. . . . This app reflected the change in schedule and it worked perfectly. Looks like this will be my go to app now." –App Store customer review of LIRR Train Time on January 22, 2014 (five stars)
- "In addition to an abundance of useful information, the user interface is beautiful, intuitive and information rich. A truly superbly done app and a must-have for any regular commuter." –App Store customer review of Metro-North Train Time on December 27, 2013 (five stars)
- "This is by far the best LIRR app I've ever used. It's quick when I'm on the go and has all the station information I could ever want!" –App Store customer review of LIRR Train Time app on December 19, 2013 (five stars)

- “Amazing, mind blowing. Omg best app ever used! Couldn’t be better, God among apps! A+++ Hoorah! Bravo!” –Google Play customer review of LIRR Train Time on Dec. 21, 2013 (five stars)
- “Real time train information at your fingertips!!! I can see train status, track, even if the elevators are working! As a regular commuter the Favorite Trips feature is perfect! I save my trips once and can see what I need in seconds every time I open the app. A must have app for anyone traveling on Metro-North.” –App Store customer review of Metro-North Train Time app on December 19, 2013 (five stars)
- “Great to have all LIRR information in one place. Efficiently designed and easy to use. I will use this a lot. Now with WiFi in the subway, I can check the way platform before I get to Penn Station and go directly there when I exit the subway. This is awesome!” –Google Play customer review of LIRR Train Time on March 7, 2014 (five stars)
- “Handy! I like this app. Lets me know when I should hustle it up and try to catch that train with rail time tracking! Or when I have plenty of time to stroll to the station.” –Google Play customer review of Metro-North Train Time on February 17, 2014 (five stars)

The railroads have been tracking specific responses by users about how to improve the apps, so that improvements can be made when upgraded versions of the apps are released.

“The reception that the two apps have received has been excellent,” said MTA Chairman and CEO Thomas F. Prendergast. “The fact that so many of the railroads’ customers have downloaded the apps reminds us that customers greatly appreciate convenient access on the go to real-time information.”

Built from each railroad’s web-based Train Time™ data feed, the apps make it easy to find out – with nothing more than the tap of a finger – when the next trains are due at your station, whether each one is running on time, and which track each one is slated to use.

“The LIRR is continually looking for ways to improve customer communication as we know that useful information, especially during a disruption, is among our riders’ No. 1 concerns,” said Helena E. Williams, President of the Long Island Rail Road. “The new Train Time app allows us to better connect directly with our customers in real time and we are delighted at the response.”

Joseph Giuliotti, President of Metro-North Railroad, said: “Our focus right now is on our top priority, safety. However, we are also looking to improve service quality. Expanding access to real-time information is a major part of that, and I am glad to see that many of our customers are using this app.”

The departure tracks are posted in the apps at the same time that they are posted at digital signs in stations, where available. Tracks are usually available more than an hour in advance at most stations. At Penn Station, where platforms are much busier than elsewhere and shared by three railroads, track listings are posted about 10 minutes prior to departure.

The apps also make it easy to find out fare information, see railroad maps, and learn about stations, including waiting room hours, parking availability, connecting transit services, status of accessibility for the disabled, elevator and escalator status, and phone numbers for area taxi companies. Each app also includes real-time service status, brief up-to-the-minute service alerts, railroad news items, info on special deals and getaway packages, and more detailed notices about service changes resulting from planned track work. And each app also includes information about connecting with the railroad via social media, email and 511.

To learn more about the apps, including how to download them to your iPhone, iPad, or Android smartphone, visit these web sites:

- Metro-North Railroad: <http://web.mta.info/mnr/html/trainimeapp.htm>
- Long Island Rail Road: <http://web.mta.info/lirr/trainimeapp/>

In addition to supporting the efforts of scores of app developers who use MTA data and intellectual property in 130 transportation-related apps that can be found in the MTA’s App Center, the two railroad apps are just two of eight apps that have been officially created or commissioned by the MTA itself. The other MTA apps for iOS, Android are:

- [Subway Time](#), which provides real-time train arrival estimates for all stations on the L, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 subway lines and S 42nd Street Shuttle.
- [The Weekender](#), which lets New York City Subway customers visualize weekend service changes caused by subway track work.
- [MTA Drive Time](#), which provides graphically animated views of current travel speeds and travel times on the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, RFK Bridge, Queens-Midtown Tunnel, Bronx-Whitestone Bridge, Throgs Neck Bridge, Hugh L. Carey Tunnel, Henry Hudson Bridge, Cross Bay Bridge and Marine Parkway Bridge.
- [Meridian](#), which provides comprehensive information about the permanent artwork installed throughout the MTA system, including the ability to search by line or by artist, get turn-by-turn directions to the art, and see photos.
- [Grand Central](#), which combines information about where to eat, shop, and run errands within Grand Central with Metro-North track listings and departure times.