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Press Release

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[Metro-North](#)

IMMEDIATE

Metro-North's New Spring Schedule Enhances Reliability Service Level Maintained

Improved Travel Times for Most Bottlenecks Eliminated in the Bronx and Fairfield

MTA Metro-North Railroad today announced new timetables for the Hudson, Harlem and New Haven lines effective Sunday, May 11, 2014 that are designed to provide substantially improved performance and reliability while accommodating new safety measures.

Systemwide, 96% of inbound AM peak customers will have a shorter commute compared to the current timetables, which were implemented last November. The new schedule will continue to provide 700 trains each weekday on the Hudson, Harlem and New Haven lines.

"Our first goal, now and always, is to provide a safe service," said Metro-North President Joseph Giulietti. "This train schedule supports our ongoing efforts to serve our customers while providing our maintenance forces the time they need to inspect, maintain and repair the system."

The schedule accounts for actual operating conditions and new mandatory speed restrictions and will be more reliable for customers at intermediate stops as well as at final destinations. While some trip times will decrease and others will increase, all will be more predictable.

"Since I returned to Metro-North two months ago, our customers have consistently said they want to be able to rely on our schedules again and that's exactly what these changes aim to do," Giulietti said. "We have analyzed train performance with an eye to bottlenecks, permanent speed reductions, actual running times, customer requests and the need to provide sufficient time to allow ongoing track and infrastructure improvements. We believe the new schedule will result in substantially improved performance."

The new timetable also reestablishes traditional AM Peak arrival times at Grand Central Terminal. Schedule changes made last summer resulted in many trains arriving later and customers shifted to earlier trains. The new timetable will undo those changes.

The schedule also removes extra running time that was added last summer to accommodate emergency track work and also will better reflect the impact of slower operating speeds at many locations as directed by the Federal Railroad Administration in its Emergency Order No 29 last December. The net impact of those two changes is that most people will have shorter trips.

The schedule allows for ongoing, infrastructure repair and maintenance in the midday off-peak and at nights and on weekends. There is much work to be done, as identified by the high-tech diagnostic equipment provided by Transportation Technology Center Inc., which Metro-North hired after the May 17, 2013 derailment in Bridgeport.

In the past 12 months, an intensive and accelerated track improvement program was begun.

In the Bronx, all four tracks have been improved so that allowable speeds will be restored to 75 mph before the new timetable takes effect on May 11. This should minimize delays in a highly congested area. At Melrose and Tremont stations, where peak busing has been needed to allow track work, full train service resumes.

Next month also will mark the first time in four years that all four tracks in the eight-mile section between Bridgeport and Southport will be in service. The Connecticut Department of Transportation contractors have replaced the overhead catenary wires that power the trains and rebuilt four bridges that carry the tracks over local roads. (Another bridge was filled in as the road became a dead end when Marlins Stadium was built in Bridgeport.)

This work had required two of the four tracks to be out of service continuously, and had required trains to slow down while passing the work zone and when changing tracks at either end of the construction area. The impact of having all tracks available for service in this key area will be increased flexibility in scheduling trains during peak periods, the elimination of temporary speed restrictions and less impact to trains when there are operational problems in this section of the railroad. The catenary work resumes in August, but in two locations where only one track will be out of service at a time.

Other service changes include an additional AM peak express train from New Haven by extending a train that currently runs from New Haven to Stamford only. It will now depart New Haven at 6:02 a.m., stop at Stamford at 7:00 a.m., and be extended to Grand Central Terminal, arriving at 7:50 a.m.

In response to customer requests, the timetable also restores the first early morning through train that originates in Danbury. The 5:28 a.m. train once again will be a one-seat ride to Grand Central, so customers will not have to change trains in South Norwalk. In the afternoon a 4:29 p.m. departure from Grand Central to Danbury will be a through train with a 5:18 p.m. stop at Stamford but no transfer required.

Work on the new signal system and grade crossing protection continues on the Danbury Branch and should be complete later this summer. When completed, midday and weekend busing will end.

To improve mechanical reliability of the Waterbury Branch service, the maintenance and operations base for branch service is being moved from New Haven to Stamford, where Danbury locomotives already are serviced. As a result, the connection between one mid-day Waterbury shuttle and the main line train will be moved from Bridgeport to Stamford, and a new express train from Grand Central to Stamford will operate to provide a convenient connection from New York.