



MTA Press Releases

[Select Language](#) ▼

Press Release

May 14, 2015

LIRR

IMMEDIATE

40,000 LIRR Customers Face Delays over Weekend of May 16-17 as Railroad Demolishes Ellison Avenue Bridge

No Train Service between Hicksville & Mineola for 48 Hours; Port Jefferson and Ronkonkoma Branch Travelers Are Advised to Use Other Branches

An estimated 40,000 Long Island Rail Road customers face significant delays over the weekend of Saturday, May 16 and Sunday, May 17 when the Railroad suspends train service between Hicksville and Mineola during demolition of the Ellison Ave. Bridge in Westbury. Hockey fans planning to take the train to Madison Square Garden for the New York Rangers' Game 1 of the Eastern Conference Finals against Tampa Bay at 1 p.m. on Saturday will need to plan their travels with this service disruption in mind.

The 48-hour service outage affects all LIRR branches but will primarily affect the Ronkonkoma and Port Jefferson Branches where customers are facing 40-60 minutes of extra travel time because their regular route to and from New York City takes them right through the demolition zone in Westbury. However, all Long Island Rail Road branches will be affected with revised departure and arrival times for weekend trains. Special weekend timetables will be in effect on all branches.

As an alternative, LIRR President Patrick A. Nowakowski urged Ronkonkoma and Port Jefferson Branch customers to use other LIRR branches if possible, including the Babylon, Far Rockaway, Hempstead, Long Beach, Montauk, Port Washington, Oyster Bay or West Hempstead Branches, during the two day construction period. Those branches will experience minor only scheduled adjustments.

"We regret the inconvenience, but for obvious safety reasons, demolition of the bridge requires a complete suspension of train service between Hicksville and Mineola," Nowakowski said. "We are working hard to minimize the impact by providing bus service and re-routing trains. Everyone should consult the special May 16-17 weekend branch timetables to pinpoint the departure and arrival times of their trains and allow for plenty of extra travel time."

The LIRR is replacing the obsolete bridge as part of a \$17.5 million project to improve safety for railroad customers as well as the thousands of motorists and pedestrians who use the 74-year-old span each day. The project includes replacement of the bridge, a new roadway, sidewalks, curbs, fencing and paving and is being financed by the MTA Capital Program. The new bridge is scheduled to open by April 2016 and all construction activities, including site restoration, will be completed by June 2016.

Local elected officials and community leaders have lobbied for years for the bridge's replacement, citing the ever-worsening condition of the roadway.

State Senator Jack M. Martins, long a proponent of a new bridge, said: "After decades of waiting, the Westbury/Carle Place community is one step closer to having a new, state of the art bridge. While this project, like any major construction project, will cause some temporary inconvenience, it will be far outweighed by the long-term community benefits in terms of safety, economic development, and job creation. I thank the Long Island Rail Road for continuing to move forward and for working with Westbury Mayor Peter I. Cavallaro and I to ensure this vital project is completed."

Mayor Cavallaro said: "The Village and surrounding residents are happy that the bridge work is underway. This weekend is a crucial one for the project, as the bulk of the bridge will be taken away. We appreciate the continuing efforts of Senator Martins and his staff in monitoring this project, and we are very happy with the way that LIRR and its contractor, Posillico, have conducted the project so far. We continue to work with them, and all involved parties, to minimize any local impacts and to make sure that the project proceeds according to plan and can be completed in a timely manner."

Summary of Changes for Weekend of Saturday & Sunday May 16-17:

Ronkonkoma Branch

Midnight – 7 a.m.: Buses replace trains between Hicksville and Mineola.

7 a.m. – Midnight: Bethpage customers will be bused between Mineola and Hicksville. Ronkonkoma through Farmingdale customers will travel to/from Penn Station by train without transfers, as trains will be diverted via the Central & Babylon Branches.

Huntington/Port Jefferson Branch

Buses replace trains between Hicksville and Mineola for the entire weekend. Trains between Huntington and Port Jefferson will operate every two hours instead of the usual 90-minute intervals. Service between Huntington and Penn Station will operate hourly instead of the usual 30-minute intervals. Carle Place and Westbury will be served by buses only.

Traffic Detours

The Ellison Avenue Bridge, long the bane of motorists and truck drivers because of its badly deteriorated roadway, was closed to vehicular traffic on April 14. Since then, the LIRR and its contractors have been preparing for the demolition. During the year-long closure, only local traffic will be allowed on Ellison Ave. All other vehicles will be detoured to Post Ave. and Cherry Lane in Westbury. For the grade crossing improvement work, vehicular traffic will be diverted from School St. to Urban Ave. and Post Ave. for the entire weekend.

Attention New York Mets Fans Heading to CitiField

To avoid busing and delays to Mets home games on May 16 & 17, take south shore branches or the Port Washington Branch. At Woodside, eastbound customers must board trains in the first two cars all weekend. Ronkonkoma trains will not stop at Woodside all that weekend.

Parking at Hicksville Station

The Town of Oyster Bay parking lot on the north side of Hicksville Station will be closed on Saturday, May 16 and Sunday, May 17 to accommodate MTA shuttle buses transporting customers between Hicksville and Mineola. Parking will be available in the Town of Oyster Bay parking garage just east of Hicksville Station.

School St. Grade Crossing & Other Work in the Vicinity

In addition, the LIRR will take advantage of the 48-hour train service suspension by performing other critical work in the vicinity during the outage. This additional work will include switch improvements in Hicksville, rail welding and drainage work between Carle Place and Hicksville and replacement of the School St. grade crossing in Westbury. To accommodate the grade crossing improvement work, vehicular traffic will be diverted from School St. to Urban Ave. and Post Ave. for the entire weekend.

Pick Up the Special Timetable for Your Branch

For specific departure and arrival times for trains operating during the May 16-17 weekend, customers should pick up a copy of the special timetable for their branch or view it online at www.mta.info/lirr.

For More Information

The LIRR has also published a special brochure "Ellison Ave. Bridge Demolition," which follows this press release, details the project and includes some helpful maps. The latest information on LIRR service is available at <http://web.mta.info/lirr/Timetable/> or by signing up for free customer service alerts via email or text at www.mymtaalerts.com. Customers may also call 511, the New York State Travel Information line, and say: Long Island Rail Road to reach a customer service representative. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, use your relay service provider or the free 711 relay to reach LIRR at 511.