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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

Governor Cuomo Announces Additional Transit Service for Pope Francis' Visit to New York

MTA and Port Authority Ready for Extra Travelers to Papal Events

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced there will be an increased number of trains and buses to support the expected amount of travelers during Pope Francis' visit to New York later this month. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Port Authority will add extra service and will have additional crew on hand to coincide with the papal events.

"We are proud to host Pope Francis here in New York, and we are working to expand mass transit options to ensure that everyone can travel safely and securely during this time," Governor Cuomo said. "I encourage anyone planning to be in New York City at that time to plan ahead and check the new travel schedules."

Pope Francis will arrive in New York on Thursday, Sept. 24, and will have a full schedule of events across the city on Friday, Sept. 25, including afternoon Mass at Madison Square Garden. Access to the Pope's events is strictly limited to ticket-holders, and those without tickets are advised to avoid the locations the Pope is visiting. People who can avoid traveling into Manhattan on those days should do so, since many street closures near those locations will result in traffic congestion and pedestrian diversions.

Customers taking the New York City Subway, Metro-North Railroad, the Long Island Rail Road or PATH trains for papal events should buy round-trip MetroCards or train tickets in advance and expect some crowding.

"Pope Francis' visit to New York is a significant honor for everyone in our service area, and we are prepared to accommodate additional customers traveling to his events along with our 8.6 million average weekday customers," said MTA Chairman Thomas F. Prendergast. "While some schedules and routes may change, we are ready to get everyone where they need to go during this special time."

"The Port Authority is partnering with Governor Cuomo and state agencies on planning, coordinating and providing additional transportation services to serve those traveling for the Pope's visit," said Port Authority Executive Director Pat Foye. "This is another example of the continued cooperation between the region's transportation agencies to minimize disruptions for customers as much as possible during major events."

The MTA Police Department and the Port Authority Police Department will increase deployments during Pope Francis' time in New York to ensure the safety and security of all customers. They will conduct additional inspections, deploy specialized units, and work in concert with the Secret Service, the New York Police Department and other agencies to protect their transportation networks.

Prior to the Pope's visit, travelers are encouraged to sign up for text and email alerts to stay immediately informed about changing transit and traffic conditions. MTA alerts are available at www.mymtaalerts.com and Port Authority alerts at www.paalerts.com.

Metro-North Railroad service

MTA Metro-North Railroad will have additional trains and crews stationed in Grand Central Terminal as well as strategic outlying locations to be dispatched as necessary to provide additional capacity.

Metro-North will run a normal schedule on Thursday, Sept. 24. On Friday, Sept. 25, the railroad will operate three additional inbound trains, leaving Poughkeepsie on the Hudson Line at 10:37 a.m.; leaving Southeast on the Harlem Line at 10:08 a.m.; and leaving Fairfield Metro on the New Haven Line at 11:00 a.m. Some earlier trains will be combined and canceled to provide crews and equipment for those trains; details on those service changes will be available at www.mta.info/mnr.

Long Island Rail Road service

MTA Long Island Rail Road will operate eight extra westbound trains into Penn Station on Friday, including three on the Babylon Branch leaving Babylon at 12:20 p.m., 12:43 p.m. and 1:20 p.m.; two on the Port Jefferson Branch leaving Huntington at 12:19 p.m. and 1:19 p.m.; one on the Port Jefferson Branch leaving Hicksville at 1:07 p.m.; and two on the Ronkonkoma Branch leaving Ronkonkoma at 12:40 p.m. and 1:40 p.m.

Penn Station will remain open during the Papal Mass at Madison Square Garden, which is directly above the station, but some individual staircases may be closed at times for security reasons or to manage crowd conditions. Extra eastbound trains will be on standby at Penn Station to carry people back to Long Island at the conclusion of the Papal Mass.

New York City Subway service

The MTA New York City Subway system carries up to 6 million people on an average weekday, and will be able to accommodate additional customers attending papal events. Subway managers will be prepared to adjust train operations as necessary based on conditions in stations near those events. Additional customer service personnel will be on duty in subway stations near papal events to assist customers as they enter and leave the system.

New York City Bus service

The MTA New York City Bus system is planning significant service changes to bus routes that operate near the locations of papal events, in order to accommodate street closures and pedestrian restrictions. Those service changes will be posted at www.mta.info/nyct as they are finalized based on consultation with other transportation and security agencies. Customers should expect delays and changes to their customary routes, and may wish to consider using subway service as an alternative if possible.

Port Authority Bus Terminal

The Port Authority is working closely with NJ Transit and other bus carriers to accommodate any increase in bus demand that may occur during the papal visit, and will be prepared to handle additional bus traffic at the Port Authority Bus Terminal or George Washington Bridge Bus Station. Bus travelers are urged to check with their carriers prior to September 25 about the status of service to and from the terminal.

PATH rail service

PATH will provide additional service on the Journal Square to 33rd Street and Hoboken to 33rd Street lines on Friday, September 25. PATH is coordinating with regional transportation and security agencies to continue to evaluate expected numbers of visitors beyond those with tickets to papal events and will adjust service accordingly. In addition, the entrance to the World Trade Center PATH station will remain open and passengers can continue to access the station via Vesey Street or through the West Concourse.

Bridges and Tunnels

The Port Authority's Hudson River crossings and MTA Bridges and Tunnels' nine New York City crossings will be fully staffed with toll collectors and a robust law enforcement presence to ensure a safe commute for those who choose to drive during the Pope's visit. The Port Authority and the MTA are working with Transcom and the region's law enforcement and transportation agencies, including NJ Transit, the city and state Transportation Departments, and the New York City Police Department to ensure travelers are aware of traffic and transit conditions in Manhattan on Sept. 25.