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Press Release

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[MTA Headquarters](#)

IMMEDIATE

### MTA Urges Customers to Prepare for Service Changes and Crowding During Pope Francis' Visit to New York City

#### *Subways, Buses, Railroads, Bridges and Tunnels Prepared for Additional Customers*

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is urging customers to prepare for service changes and potential crowding on New York City Buses, Metro-North Railroad and the Long Island Rail Road during Pope Francis' visit to New York beginning this evening through Saturday morning.

"The MTA is prepared for the challenges presented by Pope Francis' arrival in the city today," said Chairman and CEO Thomas F. Prendergast. "Mass transit will be the best way to get around during his visit, and while our customers should expect some crowding and possible delays, we are prepared to get everyone to their destinations safely and efficiently."

Access to Pope Francis's events is strictly limited to ticket holders, and streets and sidewalks around papal events may be closed at any time. Customers are urged to avoid traveling into Manhattan if possible on Friday, September 25, when the pope has scheduled events across the borough.

Customers on all MTA services should plan additional time for their travels and purchase round-trip MetroCards or rail tickets at the start of their journeys. To stay informed of service changes and diversions, visit [www.mta.info](http://www.mta.info) to view service status and sign up for email and text message alerts for all MTA services.

The Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad will provide additional trains on Friday, and the railroads will have additional trains on standby in case conditions warrant even more additional trains. In order to allow for extra crews and trains to be stationed and readied, Metro-North is canceling and combining some regularly scheduled trains. Full details on these schedule changes are listed below.

The MTA Police Department will increase deployments in Grand Central Terminal, in Penn Station and throughout the railroad network to ensure the safety and security of all customers. Officers will conduct additional inspections, deploy specialized units, and work closely with the Secret Service, the New York City Police Department and other agencies to protect their transportation networks.

#### **New York City Transit**

The New York City Subway plans to run all lines and serve all stations, though customers may experience crowded conditions, especially near papal events. Some stairways and entrances near St. Patrick's Cathedral, Central Park and Madison Square Gardens may be closed for security or crowd control reasons during papal events. Additional personnel will be available to assist customers at stations and adjust service if necessary.

New York City Bus service will be significantly affected by street closures and frozen zones across Manhattan for Pope Francis as well as for the United Nations General Assembly. Up to 25 local bus routes and almost all Express Bus routes may be diverted to parallel streets at times to avoid papal events. Full details are posted at [www.mta.info](http://www.mta.info). Bus customers are urged to travel by subway if possible to avoid delays and congestion.

Access-A-Ride will be operating full service during the entire papal visit, but customers should expect delays and congestion during this period, and should postpone travel if possible. Access to areas and roadways near papal events will be uncertain, limited and in some cases blocked.

#### **Bridges and Tunnels**

For those who choose to drive, MTA Bridges and Tunnels will fully staff its seven bridges and two tunnels with toll collectors and Bridge and Tunnel Officers to ensure safe and smooth travels. All construction and roadwork which could require temporary lane closures has been suspended until after Pope Francis leaves New York on Saturday morning.

#### **Metro-North Railroad**

Metro-North will operate three extra New York City-bound trains on Friday, September 25, and will have multiple trains pre-positioned and staffed throughout the day, ready to move as conditions warrant:

##### *Hudson Line*

An extra train will depart from Poughkeepsie at 10:37 a.m., stopping at New Hamburg, Beacon, Peekskill, Croton-Harmon, Harlem-125th Street and Grand Central Terminal.

The 6:40 a.m. departure from Poughkeepsie, due into Grand Central at 8:16 a.m., will not operate.

*Harlem Line*

An extra train will depart from Southeast at 10:08 a.m., stopping at Brewster, Goldens Bridge, Katonah, Mt. Kisco, Chappaqua, North White Plains, White Plains, Harlem-125th Street and Grand Central Terminal.

The 6:12 a.m. departure from Southeast, due into Grand Central at 7:33 a.m., will not operate.

*New Haven Line*

An extra train will depart from Fairfield Metro at 11:11 a.m., making all stops to Stamford except for Southport and Green's Farms, then Harlem-125th Street and Grand Central Terminal.

The 6:20 a.m. train from New Haven, which departs Stamford at 7:27 a.m., will run express and will not make its normal stops at Old Greenwich, Riverside, Cos Cob and Greenwich.

The 7:13 a.m. train from New Canaan, departing Stamford at 7:31 a.m., will make additional stops at Old Greenwich, Riverside, Cos Cob and Greenwich, then run express to Harlem-125th Street and Grand Central Terminal.

The 6:31 a.m. train from New Haven, due into Grand Central at 8:14 a.m. will not operate.

All train schedule changes will be reflected in the Metro-North Train Time™ app and website, and in Metro-North's online schedules page. For more information, customers can visit this web page: [http://web.mta.info/mnr/html/pope\\_visit.htm](http://web.mta.info/mnr/html/pope_visit.htm)

**Long Island Rail Road**

The papal mass being celebrated at Madison Square Garden will pose challenges for LIRR customers who access Penn Station from nearby streets. Certain street entrances to Penn Station will be closed, and others will be more crowded than normal. The LIRR's 34th Street Entrance and the Amtrak entrance at 32nd Street and Seventh Avenue under the Madison Square Garden marquee are expected to remain open, but customers should expect heavier-than-normal volume at these access points.

The LIRR advises customers to consider traveling to/from Atlantic Terminal in Brooklyn. It will be less congested than Penn Station and features connections to the 2345BDNQR subway lines. For a complete list of travel tips during the pope's visit, and a list of items that are banned from Penn Station for security reasons, please visit: <http://web.mta.info/supplemental/lirr/papalvisit2015.htm>

As previously announced, the LIRR will operate eight extra westbound trains to Penn Station on Friday.

*Babylon Branch*

Three extra trains will depart from Babylon, at 12:20 p.m., 12:43 p.m. and 1:20 p.m. They will make all stops through Rockville Centre, then Jamaica, and will arrive at Penn Station at 1:36 p.m., 1:58 p.m. and 2:36 p.m.

*Port Jefferson Branch*

Two extra trains will depart from Huntington, at 12:19 p.m. and 1:19 p.m. They will make all stops through Hicksville, then Mineola and Jamaica, and will arrive at Penn Station at 1:28 p.m. and 2:28 p.m.

An extra train will depart from Hicksville at 1:07 p.m., make all stops through Merillon Avenue, then Jamaica, then arrive at Penn Station at 1:59 p.m.

*Ronkonkoma Branch*

Two extra trains will depart from Ronkonkoma, at 12:40 p.m. and 1:40 p.m. They will make all stops through New Hyde Park, then Jamaica, and will arrive at Penn Station at 2:13 p.m. and 3:15 p.m.

All train schedule changes will be reflected in the Long Island Rail Road Train Time™ app and website, and in the LIRR's online schedules page. For more information, about the papal visit, customers can visit this web page: <http://web.mta.info/supplemental/lirr/papalvisit2015.htm>