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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA May Reroute Portions of 25 Bus Routes During Pope Francis' Visit

Bus Customers Should Expect Delays and Diversions; Take Subway If Possible

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) plans to reroute portions of up to 25 bus routes – some of them in more than one location – during Pope Francis' visit to New York City from the evening of Thursday, September 24 to the morning of Saturday, September 26.

All of the affected routes are in Manhattan, including Manhattan segments of the Q32 bus from Queens. The New York City Police Department has announced extensive traffic closures throughout Manhattan during the pope's visit, and traffic is also subject to unannounced closures, diversions and frozen zones for the United Nations General Assembly.

"Pope Francis' visit to New York will be a time for celebration throughout the city, and we are preparing our bus network to move customers efficiently despite challenging traffic and road conditions," said Darryl Irick, President of MTA Bus and Senior Vice President, MTA New York City Transit Department of Buses. "These routes may experience delays and crowding at times, so we encourage our bus customers to plan alternate routes if possible."

Bus customers are urged to travel by subway if possible throughout this period. Local and Express buses in Manhattan will experience delays, detours and closures near papal events across the borough, and some bus stops may be temporarily relocated. While Staten Island Express Buses are scheduled to operate normally, customers may consider using the Staten Island Ferry and connecting to the subway network to avoid street 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.

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

The MTA will run extra service on Metro-North Railroad and Long Island Rail Road on Friday, September 25 to accommodate travelers to papal events. The New York City Subway can accommodate additional customers and will have additional personnel available to assist customers and adjust service if necessary. MTA Bridges and Tunnels will fully staff its seven bridges and two tunnels with toll collectors and Bridge and Tunnel Officers to ensure safe travels for those who choose to drive during Pope Francis' visit.

Bus diversions for Pope Francis' visit are described in general below. Detailed descriptions of those diversions will be available at www.mta.info.

Fifth – Madison Avenues:

Pope Francis will travel to St. Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue for Evening Prayer (Vespers) in the evening of Thursday, September 24. He will later stay at a residence on the Upper East Side until his departure on the morning of Saturday, September 26. When Fifth Avenue is closed during those times, the **M1**, **M2**, **M3**, **M4** and **Q32** buses that usually travel on Fifth and Madison avenues will instead use major cross streets to travel to Lexington and Third avenues. The **M5** will travel south on Seventh Avenue, then take 42nd Street to Fifth Avenue.

These diversions may take effect before papal events begin to accommodate preparations, but those routes are scheduled to run normally during the Thursday morning rush hour. Intermittent road closures could occur at any time.

Throughout the papal visit, the **M72** will be diverted to the 79th Street Transverse across Central Park. Eastbound buses will use Amsterdam and Lexington avenues to reach this diversion, and westbound buses will use Third and Columbus avenues.

United Nations:

At all times during the General Assembly, northbound **M15** and **M15 SBS** buses will bypass stops on First Avenue between 39th Street and 50th Street. During certain United Nations events, northbound **M15** and **M15 SBS** buses will be diverted from First Avenue to Third Avenue between 34th Street and 57th Street.

The eastbound **M42** will turn short to avoid the United Nations during the entire General Assembly. The bus will turn at Second Avenue if possible, and if not, at Lexington Avenue, before returning on Third Avenue to westbound 42nd Street.

Throughout the papal visit, the **M50** will be diverted between Sixth and Lexington avenues. Westbound buses will travel on 42nd Street and eastbound buses will travel on 57th Street. This is in addition to other diversions in place between Madison and Lexington avenues during the General Assembly,

when westbound buses will travel on 47th Street and eastbound buses will travel on 52nd Street when possible.

Lower Manhattan:

The **M9**, **M20** and **M22** bus routes will curtail service short of Battery Park City during the multi-religious service late Friday morning at the 9/11 Memorial and Museum at the World Trade Center site. The **M9** and **M22** will terminate near City Hall, while the **M20** will travel southbound on Broadway and northbound on Church Street.

East Harlem:

Several bus routes will be diverted during Pope Francis' visit to the Our Lady Queen of Angels School in East Harlem on Friday afternoon. The **M96** eastbound will be diverted to 106th Street between Madison and Lexington avenues. If 106th Street is closed, the **M96** and **M106** eastbound will be diverted to 116th Street between Madison and Lexington avenues.

If Second or Third avenues are closed through East Harlem, additional diversions will take effect. The **M15** and **M15 SBS** southbound would divert to Lexington Avenue between 116th and 86th streets. The **M98** and **M103** northbound would divert to First Avenue between 96th and 116th streets. The **M101** and **M102** northbound would divert to Madison Avenue at 96th Street.

Central Park:

Buses along Central Park West will be diverted throughout Friday during preparations for Pope Francis' procession through Central Park. The **M5**, **M7**, **M10**, **M20** and **M104** will be rerouted along 57th Street to Columbus and Amsterdam avenues; the **M10** will return to Central Park West at 81st Street.

The **M66** will be diverted eastbound to 57th Street between Broadway and Madison Avenue, and westbound between Lexington and Amsterdam avenues. The **M72** will be diverted eastbound to 81st Street and then via the 79th Street Transverse between Amsterdam and Lexington avenues, and westbound to the 79th Street Transverse and then 81st Street between Third and Columbus avenues.

Madison Square Garden:

Several routes will be diverted from streets near Madison Square Garden from late morning through late evening Friday to avoid the Papal Mass being celebrated there Friday evening.

The southbound **M4** and **Q32** routes will turn in a loop using 23rd St. and Sixth Avenue to reach 32nd Street and their normal northbound route. The southbound **M7** and **M20** will be diverted from Seventh to Ninth avenues between 41st and 24th streets, and the northbound **M20** will be diverted from Eighth to Tenth avenues between 23rd and 40th streets.

The **M34 SBS** and **M34A SBS** routes will be diverted to 23rd Street between First and Tenth avenues. Waterside Plaza customers can reach the buses at the FDR Drive and Avenue C.