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Press Release

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NYC Transit

IMMEDIATE

### MTA New York City Transit Completes Comprehensive Review of AC Subway Lines

#### *Detailed Study of System's Longest Subway Line Identifies Opportunities to Improve Service*

MTA New York City Transit has completed a full, end-to-end review of the **A** **C** Lines, the fourth such comprehensive study joining previous reviews of the **F**, **L**, and **G** lines. New York City Transit (NYCT) examined all elements of the lines' operations in order to improve service reliability, regularity, and customer convenience. Some of the recommendations in the review have already been implemented, and NYCT will continue to implement many of the recommendations over the course of 2016.

Combined, the **A** and **C** serve 800,000 customers a day and the **A** connects with every other subway line in the system except the **6**. The local **C** train serves stations from 168 St. in Washington Heights to Euclid Av in the East New York section of Brooklyn. **A** service begins at 207 St in Inwood and ends at three terminals in southeast Queens: Ozone Park-Lefferts Blvd, Far Rockaway-Mott Av, and Rockaway Park-Beach 116 St. The longest line in the New York City subway system, the **A** stretches more than 32 miles between 207 St and Mott Av.

"The **A** **C** corridor is unique in that the **A** splits three ways at its eastern end in Queens. It is also exceptionally long and merges several times with other lines. The combination of these traits along with increasing ridership has affected reliability," said MTA Chairman and CEO Thomas F. Prendergast. "I am pleased that this line review has identified a number of opportunities to improve the customer experience on the **A** **C** lines, with actions to improve service management and reliability, station access and conditions, and customer communications."

#### Findings and Recommendations

While **A** **C** ridership has grown in recent years, average customer loads and service frequencies are within NYCT loading guidelines during both peak and off-peak hours with three exceptions:

- Weekday crowding on the Manhattan-bound **A** at Hoyt-Schermerhorn Sts in the later part of the morning peak between 9 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.
- Long scheduled headways on the **C** on early Sunday mornings
- Long scheduled headways on the Far Rockaway **A** in the early midday on weekdays

To address this, NYCT adjusted the timing of peak **A** service this week to meet increased ridership demand in the late morning peak and to even out customer loads on both the **A** and the **C**. By the end of 2016, timetables will be adjusted to decrease headways in Far Rockaway, and **C** service will be increased early Sunday mornings.

In order to improve reliability on both lines in the coming weeks, NYCT will facilitate on-time terminal dispatching through new internal communications tools. Platform controllers will also be deployed to Hoyt-Schermerhorn Sts in the morning peak to minimize dwell times. By mid-2016, additional crews will be added to the **A** Line, when feasible, further improving reliability by increasing the amount of time at terminals crews will have to make their return trips and ensuring that crews will be available for on-time train departures. Timetables will also be adjusted to better reflect actual running times in the morning peak and on weekends to provide more even **A** train spacing.

The review also noted the opening of the South Channel Bridge south of the Broad Channel station in Jamaica Bay is a major cause of delays and major gaps in service on the **A**, as well as on Rockaway Park **S** trains. While there are currently short periods of time during the morning and evening rush hours during which the Bridge is not opened for maritime traffic, NYCT will work with the U.S. Coast Guard to expand these moratorium periods to cover more of the rush hours to reduce delays.

Long-term plans call for improved communications infrastructure on the **A** **C** lines. The review recommends prioritizing these planned communications upgrades, pending capital funding, with real-time information in upper Manhattan, new dedicated announcers in Downtown Brooklyn, and expanded information about the three **A** terminals in Queens with a focus on connections to JFK Airport.

The line review uncovered opportunities to make entering and leaving stations more convenient at some **A** **C** stations. NYCT will improve station access by reconfiguring entry and exit turnstile layouts, widening stairways, and opening new or currently closed entries and stairways, based on capacity needs, potential time savings, and the availability of capital funds. If funding is identified, NYCT will look to reopen closed entrances at the Franklin Av, 168 St, and 50 St (southbound) stations, where existing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance makes such work relatively cost-effective.

Some other improvements to increase customer convenience, reduce travel times, and improve waiting conditions include the relocation of the stopping positions for **C** trains with signs on **C** subway platforms to better communicate where the trains stop to customers. Platform benches will also be added

or relocated to enhance customer comfort.

Planned capital improvements include upgrades to signals, train-tracking infrastructure, and the replacement of subway cars that are among the oldest in the system. The older cars that run on the **A** **C** (R32's built in 1964 on the **C** and R46's built in 1976 on the **A**) lack features found on newer cars but are nevertheless still in a state of good repair, and the review noted car problems are not a major cause of delays on either line. As part of the line review's recommendations, NYCT has already swapped approximately half of the **C** train fleet for the newer R160's. Upon delivery of R179 cars that are currently on order, the entire **C** fleet and a small portion of the **A** fleet will be replaced with the new cars. The remaining **A** R46 fleet will be replaced with the upcoming car order of R211's included in the current proposed 2015-2019 capital program.

The full **A** **C** review and appendices can be found at [http://web.mta.info/nyct/service/AC\\_LineReview.htm](http://web.mta.info/nyct/service/AC_LineReview.htm)