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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Announces Comprehensive Transportation Plan to Prevent Major Disruptions to New Yorkers' Commutes During Amtrak-Forced Summer Service Cuts

LIRR Maintains Passenger Capacity into Penn Station by Adding New Trains to Schedule, Adding Cars to Existing Trains

New Bus and Ferry Network Created for LIRR Commuters from July 10 – Sept. 1 to Increase Capacity to/from Manhattan Above Current Levels; Free Morning Rush Transfers for LIRR Riders to Subways During Summer Construction Period

Trucks Pay ½-Price Tolls on MTA Crossings Between 10 p.m. & 5 a.m. to Alleviate Congestion on Roads

In the wake of Amtrak's forced summer service cuts at Penn Station, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and the Penn Station Task Force today released a comprehensive transportation plan that restores rush-hour commuter capacity to and from Manhattan and alleviates anticipated delays and disruptions for LIRR commuters.

The plan, developed in conjunction with the Penn Station Task Force established by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo in May, addresses the near-term summer crisis at Penn Station and will minimize the long-term operating and management failures of Amtrak. It focuses on three key service objectives in the face of Amtrak service cuts: maintaining LIRR's Penn Station passenger capacity, providing alternative transportation options and mitigating an anticipated increase in traffic. This action plan will be communicated through an aggressive public awareness campaign to ensure riders have the information they need to plan ahead.

The newly released plan and LIRR summer schedule, which will be in place during Amtrak's emergency repair work planned from July 10 through at least Sept. 1, lays out a series of robust mitigation measures, including:

- Maintaining LIRR's Penn Station passenger capacity during peak hours by adding new rush-hour trains and lengthening the number of existing trains;
- The creation of a new bus and ferry network that's free to LIRR monthly and weekly ticketholders;
- Free morning subway transfers for all LIRR ticketholders; and
- Half-price tolls for trucks on MTA crossings between 10 p.m. – 5 a.m. to alleviate congestion on roads.

The Penn Station Task Force consists of:

- Matthew J. Driscoll, Commissioner, NYS DOT
- Polly Trottenberg, Commissioner, NYC DOT
- Congressman Peter King
- Congressman Jerrold Nadler
- Former Congressman Charles Rangel
- Nassau County Executive Ed Mangano
- Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone
- Joe Lhota, Senior Vice President, Vice Dean and Chief of Staff, NYU
- Langone Medical Center
- Kevin Law, President, Long Island Association
- Kathy Wylde, President and CEO, Partnership for NYC
- Steve Roth, Chairman and CEO, Vornado Realty Trust
- John Samuelson, President, TWU Local 100
- Tom Wright, President, Regional Plan Association
- Carl Weisbrod, Senior Advisor, HR&A

"As Amtrak conducts much-needed repairs at Penn Station this summer, we have been working hard to find a way to aggressively minimize the impact to LIRR commuters," said **MTA Interim Executive Director Ronnie Hakim**. "We're providing more rush-hour capacity to and from Manhattan by adding trains to the modified schedule, adding cars to existing trains, and creating a brand new bus and ferry network that adds thousands of seats."

"The MTA has put in place a robust mitigation plan that provides a number of transportation alternatives for LIRR pass holders because we know that even the slightest change to their commute is an inconvenience and we value their support and patience during a difficult summer," said **MTA Acting Chair Freddy Ferrer**. "We will also hold Amtrak accountable by asking for regular progress reports and will closely monitor how the plan is working in order to make real-time adjustments as needed."

"The MTA and the Long Island Rail Road in conjunction with the Penn Station task force, came together in an extraordinary way to provide a robust mitigation plan to deal with the Penn Station crisis created by Amtrak," **Penn Station Task Force Member Joe Lhota said**. "From day one, it was understood that the plan developed needed to minimize the disruption for commuters. This robust plan meets this goal. It expands capacity and provides numerous alternative ways for long Islanders to commute to New York City. This comprehensive mitigation plan is well-developed and goes a long way in addressing the Amtrak crisis."

"Only with reliable, efficient public transportation can our economy continue moving forward," said **Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone**. "I'm proud to have joined the MTA and members of the Penn Station Task Force to ease travel for Suffolk County visitors and commuters ahead of Amtrak's emergency repairs at Penn Station this summer, and I commend them for taking this timely and comprehensive action and standing up for Long Islanders."

"On behalf of Nassau County commuters, I applaud the diligent response to the Long Island Rail Road crisis," said **Nassau County Executive Edward P. Mangano**. "My administration was happy to assist the task force and offer convenient locations for bus service to Manhattan. From alternative transportation to a quicker construction period, this robust plan makes the best of a challenging situation."

MAINTAINING LIRR'S PENN STATION PASSENGER CAPACITY




As a result of reduced track capacity during Amtrak's emergency repair and construction work this summer, LIRR was faced with having to cancel or divert up to 15 trains that normally arrive at Penn Station during the morning rush period between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m., affecting approximately 9,600 customers. After an extensive analysis, LIRR is providing seats for every potentially affected customer by adding three new trains into Penn, and adding approximately 36 cars to additional Penn-bound trains.

In order to stock these additional cars, LIRR is canceling three overnight trains between 2 a.m. and 4 a.m. This will impact only 90 people per night and the LIRR is adding supplemental bus service over the same period.

The glaring lack of capacity to stock these trains, however, highlights the urgent need for the advancement and completion of the LIRR's Double Track and Third Track projects to improve mass transit, reduce congestion, and ensure the continued viability of Long Island's transportation infrastructure.

*Specific LIRR timetables are available for download here and at www.mta.info

Customers can connect to subways at the following stations, which will cross-honor LIRR tickets during the morning rush hours:

- Atlantic Terminal 
- Jamaica 
- Hunterspoint Avenue 

*View subway service info at www.mta.info

PROVIDING ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS WITH BUSES AND FERRIES

While these actions successfully offset service disruptions, we are taking further steps to provide customers with even more service options. The MTA is increasing the capacity to move commuters to and from Manhattan during rush hour with the creation of a new bus and ferry network, both free for LIRR monthly and weekly ticket holders.

New LIRR Bus Network

A new network of 200 buses will provide LIRR ticket holders with robust supplemental service from Long Island commuter parking lots to Manhattan. Buses will run Monday through Friday from 6-10 a.m., and 3-7 p.m. and will cross-honor fares for customers who show their valid monthly or weekly LIRR tickets.

All buses will operate on strictly-enforced HOV lanes on the Long Island Expressway, and will enter Manhattan via the MTA's Queens Midtown Tunnel. The New York State Police and TBTA Police will work collaboratively with local law enforcement partners in New York City and on Long Island to keep designated lanes clear for busing while aggressively enforcing HOV restrictions. Violators will be subject to a \$243 fine and the loss of 2 points on their license.

Additionally, there will be full-service hospitality tents at each park and ride location offering free Taste NY food and beverage, on-site customer service, free reading materials, phone charging and Wi-Fi stations.

Buses will originate in eight locations across Long Island and accommodate 2,900 cars in total, including:

- Melville Park & Ride at LIE Exit 49, where there are 200 parking spaces available
- Bethpage State Park, which has 500 parking spaces
- Seaford LIRR Station, where there are 425 parking spaces for residents
- Nassau Coliseum, where there are 500 spaces
- Roosevelt Field Mall, where there are 450 parking spaces
- North Hempstead Beach Park in Port Washington, which has 300 parking spaces
- Valley Stream LIRR Station, where 125 parking spaces are available
- Belmont Racetrack, where there are 656 parking spaces available

In Manhattan, buses will drop off passengers at three locations during the morning:

- East 34th Street and Third Avenue
- West 34th Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues
- Grand Central Terminal

In the afternoon, buses will pick up passengers at four locations:

- West 34th Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues
- East 34th Street between Park and Lexington Avenues
- East 42nd Street between First and Second Avenues
- Lexington Avenue between East 43rd and 44th Streets

**View LIRR bus service info at www.mta.info*

New Ferry Service for LIRR Customers

The MTA will also offer ferry service to LIRR ticket holders who show their weekly and monthly passes. Ferries will run from 6-10 a.m. and from 3-7 p.m. and will be able to accommodate nearly 2,300 New Yorkers. The MTA is evaluating the feasibility of an additional South Shore ferry route.

Ferries will run:

- From Glen Cove to 34th Street. Three runs in the morning and three in the evening with a total capacity of 1,122 customers.
- From Hunters Point in Long Island City to 34th St Pier, with additional ferries supplementing the existing service. Three runs in the morning and three in the evening with a total capacity of 1,200 customers. The MTA will establish a shuttle bus between the Hunterspoint Avenue LIRR station and the ferry to coincide with the LIRR trains newly rerouted to Hunterspoint Avenue.

**View LIRR ferry service info at www.mta.info*

ENACTING HALF-PRICE TOLLS FOR TRUCKS AT ALL MTA CROSSINGS

To reduce highway traffic during peak hours, the MTA will reduce tolls for trucks by 50 percent between the hours of 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. on all MTA-operated bridges and tunnels: the Henry Hudson Bridge, Whitestone Bridge, Throgs Neck Bridge, RFK Triborough Bridge, Queens Midtown Tunnel, Hugh L. Carey Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, Marine Parkway-Gil Hodges Memorial Bridge, and Cross Bay Veterans Memorial Bridge.

PRE-DEPLOYING RAPID RESPONSE TEAMS TO HELP CLEAR ROADWAYS MORE QUICKLY

NYS DOT will also pre-deploy highway maintenance staff and equipment at strategic locations to quick-clear debris, perform emergency maintenance or other tasks necessary to ensure the flow of traffic during the morning and evening peak travel period. To quickly clear vehicles experiencing mechanical failure or involved in incidents, DOT will also be pre-deploying tow trucks at strategic locations on Long Island and in Queens. All daytime conflicting non-emergency construction and maintenance activities will be suspended. Additionally, DOT will deploy variable message signs to inform motorists of traffic restrictions, location of temporary LIRR bus services and the status/capacity of parking facilities.

LAUNCHING A ROBUST OUTREACH AND AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

To ensure every affected LIRR rider has the information they need to get where they need to go as quickly and easily as possible, the MTA is launching a robust outreach and awareness campaign. The new campaign will include letters to employers to inform them of the service changes, informative commercials and newspaper advertisements running throughout the summer, flyers on every seat of the LIRR, electronic messages direct to customers via text and email, social media announcements and a significant increase in the number of LIRR representatives on trains and at stations.

The LIRR will also activate emergency banners on its mobile ticketing app and mta.info to provide up-to-the-minute information to riders. Customers may visit mta.info as a one-stop shop for the latest updates.

Details for how to get around during Amtrak's track work – from amended LIRR timetables and transfer locations to bus schedules to ferry details – is all consolidated at www.mta.info

Email and text message service updates – Customers are encouraged to sign up to receive the alerts by visiting MyMTAAlerts.com. To avoid unwanted messages, a user can tailor the messages to the specific branch, and the specific times of day.

@LIRR on Twitter – Twitter users can follow @LIRR to receive updates of a similar nature to the email and text alerts, shortened to fit Twitter's format.

LIRR Train Time app – Customers who use the LIRR Train Time app will see up-to-the-minute status for each upcoming train at each station. As a caution, trains that start out their trips on time may experience delays en route.

The above communications channels can be accessed while at home or on the go. For customers who are located at stations, the LIRR will post the latest service updates on digital signs at station platforms and will make audio announcements over public address systems, and on-board announcements made by train crews.

The New York State Department of Transportation will also assist commuters with travel alternatives and work to mitigate potential impacts on major state roadways. DOT will provide accurate and timely traveler information through www.511ny.org, and assist with specific highway and transit conditions resulting from the service disruption, including carpool/matching opportunities.

For those who prefer the telephone, information is available from the LIRR's Customer Service Center by calling 511, the New York State Travel Information Line, and saying: "Long Island Rail Road" Those who are deaf or hard of hearing can use their preferred service provider for the free 711 relay to reach the LIRR at 511.

PENN STATION TASK FORCE MEMBERS

LIRR President Patrick Nowakowski: "Since Amtrak announced the need for this extraordinary track work, the LIRR has thoroughly explored every alternative to minimize the impact on our customers. We exhaustively reviewed scheduling opportunities to find ways to deliver maximum benefits for our customers in spite of the infrastructure constraints. And I want to thank the Penn Station Task Force for identifying many useful mitigation options."

Congressman Charles Rangel: "This aggressive mitigation plan will help ensure New Yorkers' commutes are as efficient as possible during Amtrak's emergency repair work this summer. The MTA, together with the Penn Station Task Force, worked hard to develop a smart action plan that delivered for New Yorkers and put the needs of our commuters first. We will continue to hold Amtrak accountable to repair their aging infrastructure and ensure that we have the 21st century transportation network New Yorkers deserve."

Congressman Jerrold Nadler: "Amtrak is making vital and necessary repairs to the tracks at Penn Station this summer. As a member of the Penn Station task force and in coordination with the MTA and LIRR I'm pleased that an emergency plan will be implemented that will improve travel conditions for millions of commuters who depend on this critical transportation network."

Congressman Peter King: "The Penn Station Task Force, together with the MTA and LIRR, have presented a thorough plan to help address the predicted Amtrak "summer of hell" and reduce the stressful commute as much as possible."

New York City Department of Transportation Commissioner Polly Trottenberg: "The Penn Station Task Force and MTA are taking valuable steps to mitigate the impact Amtrak's emergency repairs at Penn Station will have on Long Island Rail Road commuters and on the City's transportation network. The City stands ready to work with our partners involved in helping to implement the measures announced today."

President of the Long Island Association Kevin Law: "This plan represents creative solutions to bring Long Islanders into the City this summer. I applaud the MTA for working with our Task Force to develop real options for commuters and help ease their fears."

Carl Weisbrod, Senior Advisor for HR&A: "The LIRR and the entire MTA network are the lifeblood of New York, supporting and strengthening the economy of the entire region. The Amtrak summer crisis poses a critical threat to service across the system, and it is imperative we do everything in our power to minimize inconvenience to commuters. As a member of the Penn Station Task Force, I applaud the MTA for their expedient and efficient work."

Tom Wright, President, Regional Plan Association: "I am honored to serve on this task force to develop transit solutions that address the crisis at Penn Station. It is critical that we take a comprehensive approach that includes both short- and long-term measures to address the serious challenges facing commuters and travelers. I want to congratulate the MTA for taking a comprehensive approach to understand the challenges and identify creative, practical, and effective solutions for New Yorkers. As we all know, the long-term solution is building the Gateway project and providing the capacity for a growing city and region. The track repairs this summer are the first step back for Penn Station."

TWU Local 100 President John Samuelsen: "The Penn Station Task Force has done a solid job under very demanding circumstances to deliver a mitigation plan that meets the needs of New Yorkers and ensures that commuters are not hampered by Amtrak's repair work. This plan delivers a number of transportation alternatives that will make life easier for thousands of Long Islanders during this difficult time."