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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Holds Open Houses to Improve Express Bus Service on Staten Island

Redesign of Express Bus Network to Simplify Routes, Reduce Commute Times

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) will host a series of open houses in October to engage Staten Island communities and express bus customers who will see improved service resulting from a planned redesign of the borough's express bus network to align with the results of a comprehensive two-year customer experience study.

In June 2017 following a number of meetings with Staten Island Borough President James Oddo and officials representing the MTA, labor unions and various Staten Island communities, the MTA proposed a redesign that would streamline routes to improve express service across Staten Island. The recommendations, which are subject to public input, include:

- Dividing the network into routes going to either lower or midtown Manhattan to bypass congested streets and reduce travel time;
- Eliminate underused stops on Staten Island, which will allow most customers to continue using their same stop, but with a shorter, more direct route to and from work;
- Offer more service on fewer routes to mitigate overcrowding and shorten average wait times;
- Streamline routes on Staten Island by using the most direct path;
- Design routes to improve connections to subway lines and simplify them to give bus operators greater flexibility in responding to traffic incidents.

"We are committed to improving service for the thousands of Staten Island express bus customers who told us that they want a more direct and reliable way to get to Manhattan. Our Staten Island customers deserve a comprehensive study on how we can improve their commute, whether it's where they get on the bus or how we shorten bus travel times or how we add service in neighborhoods that have experienced growth. We now have the opportunity to redraw Staten Island's express bus network, and we want to hear from our customers," said MTA Managing Director Ronnie Hakim.

In 2015, following a series of "Bus Summits" hosted by Staten Island Borough President James Oddo at Borough Hall, MTA New York City Transit began exploring ways to improve express bus service between Staten Island and Manhattan to address slow travel times, unreliable service and overcrowding. The MTA surveyed more than 2,000 customers across all Staten Island express bus lines, held public workshops, met with community leaders, elected officials and transit advocates, and held a hack-a-thon to generate innovative solutions. That two-year-long study found that the current network, which has been largely untouched for decades, is outdated and not reflective of current ridership demands or residential trends. For example, it found that the majority of customers — 83 percent — use the busiest 50 percent of stops, which meant that the other half of stops were underused, slowing trips and complicating routes. The average express bus makes 27 stops before leaving Staten Island.

The study also found that nearly all express bus customers go to either lower or midtown Manhattan, but the outdated routes force buses to travel through congested areas elsewhere in Manhattan where they spend up to half their travel time stuck in traffic. Additionally, the current network is so complex that customers have difficulty determining the best route for their commutes.

Borough President Oddo said, "I urge Staten Islanders to participate in these opportunities for public input. Now is your chance to learn more about and have an impact on the proposals. No one knows the realities of commuting via express bus better than those commuters who utilize the service every day. Your input is crucial as the MTA tweaks and finalizes the plan. The goal of this study was to make our commutes easier and more bearable and return a small chunk of commuters' lives back to them. A quicker commute will mean fewer days explaining to their employers why they were late for work again, and more time spent with family instead of sitting on a bus. Thank you to the MTA for the creativity and working with us to conduct this bus study. Far too often government acts incrementally, instead of making the effort to reimagine how it could more effectively provide services. In this case, the MTA came into this process with an open mind and willingness to redesign an entire system, which is outdated and simply doesn't work as intended."

During the open houses, MTA staff will provide information on the proposed redesigns and changes and solicit community feedback on the best routes and stop locations to maximize accessibility to the largest number of customers. The public is strongly encouraged to participate in these open houses, which are expected to solicit meaningful input on travel itineraries and commute routes for customers who will be affected by changes to express bus service on Staten Island.

The open houses are a drop-in format, so members of the public can stop in at any time between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. to view information on the project and speak with representatives from New York City Transit. The open houses will take place on the following dates:

Wednesday, October 4, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Elk Lodge

3250 Richmond Avenue (adjacent to the Eltingville Transit Center)

(Take X1, 4, X5, X7, X8, X15, X17, X21, X31, S55, S56, S59, S89, S74/84 or S79 SBS.)

Wednesday, October 11, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Regina McGinn Education Center, Staten Island University Hospital

475 Seaview Avenue (at Mason Avenue)

(Take X1-X9, S78, S79 SBS or S51/81. The S52 route operates onto the hospital campus)

Note: Attendees who park in the hospital visitors' lot will be charged a \$6 parking fee.

Thursday, October 12, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

All Saint's Episcopal Church

2329 Victory Boulevard (at Woolley Avenue)

(Take X10, X11, X12/X42, X14, X17, X30, X31, S62/92 or S93)

Members of the public who are unable to attend can find more information on the Staten Island Express Bus Study and submit feedback online [here](#).