



MTA Press Releases

Press Release

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NYC Transit

IMMEDIATE

MTA Board Approves Comprehensive Redesign of Staten Island Express Bus Network for Faster, More Reliable Service

Simpler, Faster Routes and Additional Service Every Day Will Improve Commutes Starting Aug. 19

Complete Redesign of Nearly 60-year-old Network Based Upon Unprecedented Levels of Customer and Community Feedback

Video on the New Staten Island Express Bus Network can be [Seen Here](#)

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Board voted today to implement the complete redesign of the Staten Island express bus network, transforming the nearly 60-year-old service from the ground up to add service seven days a week while improving trip speeds and reliability. Following a two-year study of the express bus network and unprecedented levels of customer, community and stakeholder outreach, NYC Transit will start running the redesigned Staten Island bus network on Aug. 19. This redesign is the first part of -- and serves as a model for -- the comprehensive redesign of the entire city's local and express bus network, first announced as the [NYC Transit Bus Plan](#) and now a major pillar of the [Fast Forward Plan](#) to modernize all aspects of NYC Transit.

"Staten Islanders rely heavily on the MTA's express bus network and its ability to navigate congested streets to move tens of thousands of people every day," said MTA Chairman Joseph Lhota. "This reimagining of the Staten Island express bus network is thoughtful, collaborative, and comprehensive -- I thank President Byford, President Irick, Borough President Oddo and Danny Cassella for their great work here."

"I made improving bus service one of my top priorities from Day One on the job, and I'm pleased to say that we have hit the ground running on Staten Island," said NYC Transit President Andy Byford. "If you want to see how important faster and more reliable bus service is to New Yorkers, then look no further than the thousands of customer surveys and packed public hearings and open houses that we hosted while developing this comprehensive network redesign. I'd like to thank our customers, local communities, advocates, elected officials, our bus operators, and ATU Local 726 for their input and collaboration to help ensure the best redesign possible."

The express bus redesign is the result of the Staten Island Bus Study to evaluate how to improve long and unreliable commutes between Staten Island and Manhattan. Utilizing trip performance data, ridership profiles and extensive customer input, NYC Transit concluded that the most effective way to make substantial improvements would be to undertake a comprehensive reorganization of the network.

Currently, the average express bus makes 27 stops before ever leaving Staten Island. The redesign enables faster commutes for all Staten Island express bus commuters largely by simplifying circuitous routes and updating stop locations to streamline trips. The variety of physical routes is being streamlined to simplify operation, peak capacity (number of buses) is being maintained fully, and off-peak capacity is being added, every day of the week but most significantly on weekends. The vast majority of customers -- 72 percent -- will continue to use the same express bus stop that they use today. Other customers will need to use an alternate stop, but less than one percent of those riders will need to walk more than five minutes from their existing stop.

The new express routes are more direct and streamlined to minimize long trips on local streets, while making the best use of bus priority streets and connecting to trains and local buses. The new routes in the express bus network will serve the same general geographic areas of Staten Island as the current routes, but with greater speed and efficiency. The average route length will be 23 percent shorter, saving time for many customers and allowing for an increase in the number of trips.

The redesign also includes the addition of off-peak weekday and weekend service on numerous routes in order to meet ridership demands, including the extension of many rush hour routes until at least 7 p.m., compared to 6 p.m. or earlier, and a significant increase in service offered on Saturdays and Sundays.

The redesigned network, with its additional weekday and weekend trips, also has the ability to reduce local carbon emissions by offering new mass transit choices to travelers who would otherwise take a private car or taxi.

In order to convey to customers that these are entirely new routes, all Staten Island express bus routes are being renamed and renumbered, with the "X" prefix to be replaced by "SIM" ("Staten Island to Manhattan").

New York City Transit conducted extensive community outreach to gather feedback on the redesign, holding six open houses in 2017 and 2018 plus a public hearing in May. The agency also solicited public feedback via surveys onboard buses and at bus stops, and the MTA website. Extensive input and collaboration occurred with riders, local community members, elected officials, advocates, partner agencies like NYC DOT, bus operators, and the ATU

Local 726 bus operators union, led by Danny Cassella. In 2016, NYC Transit, TransitCenter, NYU's Rudin Center for Transportation and Borough President James Oddo hosted a "Staten Island Bus Hackathon" in which about 150 programmers, planners and transit advocates also provided input.

"Our goal for our customers is to improve service by simplifying the network and shortening commutes," said MTA Bus Company President and NYC Transit Department of Buses Senior Vice President Darryl C. Irick. "At every step, we sought feedback from those most impacted by this bus network, and combined with our recommendations, we have a better path forward for our customers on Staten Island."

The study found that nearly all Staten Island express bus riders go to one of two distinct destinations – Downtown Manhattan or Midtown -- but the existing configuration forces nearly half of express bus riders to use routes that serve both areas, creating very long and unreliable trips on congested Manhattan streets. During weekday peak hours, when all routes are operating, each route will provide direct service to one particular area of Manhattan:

- In Downtown Manhattan, five weekday peak hour routes will serve the Church Street/Broadway corridor, and three routes will use Water Street/Pearl Street. Two routes will travel to Greenwich Village, making stops in Battery Park City, Tribeca, and SoHo.
- In Midtown Manhattan, four routes will travel to Midtown via the Gowanus Expressway, Hugh L. Carey Tunnel, and FDR Drive, with two routes using Sixth Avenue/Fifth Avenue and two routes using Madison Avenue/Fifth Avenue. Seven routes will travel to Midtown via the New Jersey Turnpike and Lincoln Tunnel, using 42nd Street and Madison Avenue/Fifth Avenue. In Midtown, buses to Staten Island will use bus lanes newly enhanced by NYC DOT with greater capacity, resulting in more frequent return service.

Nearly 36,000 people use Staten Island express buses each weekday.

Other changes as part of the redesign include:

- Four off-peak and weekend routes have been added, allowing for seven-day service broadly covering all parts of Staten Island.
- Updated bus stop locations to speed up express service and better meet demand
- Non-stop service to Manhattan via four park-and-ride routes

New York City Transit staff will continue to conduct extensive public outreach and marketing in-person and via print and social media before and after the Aug. 19 start date of the new network. Within several days, all express bus riders will receive brochures that outline the redesign. NYC Transit staff will answer questions at key locations and in mobile vans throughout the borough. Extensive detail about the Staten Island express bus network redesign – including maps – is available on the plan website at <http://mta.info/SIExpressBus>. Customers are encouraged to check back frequently throughout the summer for new updates and the addition of a digital trip planner on the website.

As the redesign is implemented, NYC Transit will continue to solicit comments and feedback through surveys and refine the network as needed.

Borough President Oddo said: "Staten Islanders have a hellacious commute, fueled in part by inefficient, outdated bus routes. These routes are decades old. We can do better. We have to do better. After a lengthy process, aggressive outreach, and robust public input, and a series of adjustments and improvements to the plan, this is the best iteration we will have. It's time to implement it and provide the most help to the most people possible. For a long time, many people did nothing, and that is how we got the ugly commutes we have. I thank the MTA, NYC Transit, and Danny Cassella, President of ATU 726, for the partnership and cooperation in trying to return a better quality of life to many Staten Islanders."

Assemblyman Michael Cusick's said: "I am glad to see the MTA is listening to Staten Islanders and amending the originally proposed Staten Island Express Bus Network. With the majority of Staten Islanders utilizing express buses to travel to and from work, the MTA must take into consideration not only amendments to bus routes to minimize travel time but also provide bus stops that are accessible to commuters," said NYS Assemblyman Michael Cusick (D—Mid-Island).

City Council Minority Leader Steven Matteo said: "The bottom line is express bus service on Staten Island needs to improve, and that requires a careful, comprehensive overhaul rather than just piecemeal efforts. This was a thorough process that engaged stakeholders and listened to public concerns. I am hopeful the subsequent end-product will result in a more efficient, more reliable and less stressful commute for our constituents."

ATU Local 726 President Danny Cassella said: "I've lived on Staten Island 55 years; I know this is long overdue, and the customers will be very happy with the change."

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