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Press Release

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LIRR

IMMEDIATE

March 24-25: LIRR to Test Upgraded Signal System, Perform Port Washington Branch Positive Train Control Tests and Advance Ronkonkoma Branch Double Track Project

Significant Service Changes Planned for Port Jefferson Branch, Port Washington Branch and Ronkonkoma Branch; Customers of All LIRR Branches Should Check Special Timetables

Long Island Rail Road crews will perform testing on a new signal system this weekend, March 24-25, at Harold Interlocking, an important step furthering progress on the East Side Access project that will connect the LIRR to Grand Central Terminal.

At the same time, LIRR crews will perform critical tests needed for Positive Train Control (PTC) between Woodside and Bayside on the Port Washington Branch. Positive Train Control is a major safety enhancement for the LIRR that is designed to eliminate the potential for human error to contribute to a number of types of derailments and train-to-train collisions.

LIRR crews will also advance the Ronkonkoma Branch Double Track project during this same timeframe by installing structural steel at the Wyandanch overpass/elevator tower, testing signals, performing track work, and removing an old signal gantry that is being retired.

The new signal system at Harold Interlocking will ensure smooth and improved train service through the interlocking, an integral piece of infrastructure containing numerous switches that route trains across the tracks that lead to Penn Station. The new system is based on microprocessor technology, which has built-in redundancies and replaces an older hard-wired relay-based signal system.

"The signal work taking place this weekend will help modernize our signal system at Harold Interlocking and bring it into a state of good repair, which will improve reliability and flexibility," said LIRR President Patrick Nowakowski. "Even more importantly, this coming weekend's work is a big step toward making the entire LIRR fundamentally safer via Positive Train Control."

To allow for the East Side Access, Positive Train Control and Ronkonkoma Branch Double Track projects, from 10 p.m. Friday night, March 23, until 5 a.m. Monday, March 26, some LIRR train departure times may be altered, and train service on some branches will be adjusted. The LIRR urges customers to view special timetables found at <http://web.mta.info/lirr/Timetable/> for a complete listing of train schedules for this weekend.

The Ronkonkoma Branch Double Track Project will improve service and reliability on the branch by adding a second track to the busy 18-mile stretch between Ronkonkoma and Farmingdale, which now has only one track available to both directions of train traffic. Currently, when an issue arises with a train, this disrupts all other east and westbound trains because there is no way to circumnavigate the stalled train.

The Port Jefferson Branch, Port Washington Branch, and Ronkonkoma Branch will experience the most notable service changes. Details are below:

Port Jefferson Branch

Electric train service to and from Huntington will operate hourly, instead of every 30 minutes. Trains will make all local stops between New Hyde Park and Huntington. Diesel trains between Huntington and Port Jefferson will operate every two hours instead of every 90 minutes.

A special Port Jefferson Branch timetable is available [at this link](#).

Port Washington Branch

Port Washington Branch trains will operate every hour instead of every 30 minutes.

A special Port Washington Branch timetable is available [at this link](#).

Ronkonkoma Branch

Customers looking to travel from all stations from Ronkonkoma through Bethpage will board buses that will be timed to travel to Hicksville for connecting train service. Buses will depart 45 minutes **earlier** than normal train schedules.

Eastbound customers for these stations will be able to take trains as far as Hicksville, where they will connect with bus service serving Bethpage through Ronkonkoma. Eastbound customers should expect up to 45 minutes of additional travel time.

Train service at all stations from Greenport through Medford will operate normally, but connecting service at Ronkonkoma will be different from the norm.

Westbound customers detraining at Ronkonkoma will connect with buses that will travel to Hicksville for a connection with continuing train service. Customers will arrive at New York City terminals one hour later than normal.

Eastbound customers for these stations should board trains **one hour earlier than normal**, then connect at Hicksville for bus service to Ronkonkoma, where buses will meet regularly scheduled diesel service at Ronkonkoma.

A special Ronkonkoma Branch timetable is available [at this link](#).

All Other Branches

Train arrival or departure times for specific trains on all other LIRR branches may change by up to seven minutes. The LIRR encourages customers to check special timetables and/or the LIRR Train Time app for details before setting out for travel.

Special timetables are available at these links:

[Babylon Branch](#)

[Far Rockaway Branch](#)

[Hempstead Branch](#)

[Long Beach Branch](#)

[Montauk Branch](#)

[Oyster Bay Branch](#)

[West Hempstead Branch](#)

Many Channels for Services Updates

Information about the service change noted in this press release, and all planned service changes, is available through the LIRR's real-time service information sources:

Email and text message service updates – Customers are urged 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 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.

MTA.info – The rail tab of the "Service Status" box at the left side of [www.MTA.info](#) is always the definitive source for the latest status for each branch, updated every minute. In addition, customers can visit [www.mta.info/lirr](#) to see special service notices in the upper center of the page.

@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.

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.

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.