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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Announces Brooklyn-Queens LIRR Fare and Ticketing Field Study

By Introducing New “Atlantic Ticket,” Agency Seeks to Determine if Lower LIRR Fares Influence Ridership Habits and Operations of LIRR, Subways, Buses

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced that starting on June 6 it will introduce “Atlantic Ticket” field study, which will offer discounted Long Island Rail Road fares for customers traveling between Brooklyn and seven stations in Queens on a temporary basis. The study will be designed to measure what impact the lower fare will have on ridership on the LIRR and New York City subways and buses.

The study is being conducted for travel to and from Atlantic Terminal, Brooklyn, where the LIRR has more seating capacity on existing trains than it does on trains to Penn Station. It applies to seven stations in Queens that are listed below and offer service to and from Brooklyn and where customers often use bus service provided by the MTA. Customers at eligible stations can board either Atlantic Terminal-bound trains (or Penn-bound trains and transfer to an Atlantic Terminal-bound train at Jamaica). The Atlantic Ticket field study builds upon a program first proposed by the New York City Transit Riders Council.

“Many of our customers from eastern and southeastern Queens live near enough to the LIRR to use it regularly, but because of our existing fare structure they’ve historically chosen to commute using a combination of MTA subways and buses,” said MTA Chairman Joseph Lhota. “This study will let us gauge whether lowering LIRR fares has an effect on ridership of the LIRR, subway and express buses. We also want to see how the policy change affects existing LIRR operations.”

Andrew Albert, MTA Board Member and Chair of the New York City Transit Riders Council said: “I am extremely gratified that our proposal is being given a thorough and well publicized test for southeast Queens and Brooklyn. We believe this will change travel patterns and give people a lot more of their personal time back at a reasonable rate. It may also reduce overcrowding on several overcrowded subway lines.”

Under the study, the fare for a one-way LIRR ticket between Brooklyn and the seven Queens stations will be \$5.00, a reduction of 51% from the current peak fare of \$10.25, and a reduction of 33% from the current off-peak fare of \$7.50.

The combined one-way fare covering the LIRR and NYC Transit portions of a trip will be \$7.75 (\$5 for the LIRR Atlantic Ticket and \$2.75 for NYC Transit pay-per-ride fare). “This one-way fare is intended to attract customers traveling occasionally, or interested in trying out LIRR before purchasing the weekly pass,” Chairman Lhota said.

For commuters interested in more frequent travel on LIRR, the MTA will also offer a \$60.00 joint weekly unlimited-ride ticket valid for LIRR travel between the selected stations and transfers to NYC subways and buses. (This amount is almost the same as the \$59.50 current express bus weekly unlimited fare, which also offers unlimited trips on subways or local buses.)

Compared to the current fares in Southeast Queens, the special \$60 weekly ticket will offer a 42.5% discount over the combined current two-system fare of \$104.25.

The 10 LIRR stations listed below are covered under the field study. The stations with convenient subway connections are noted below.

Brooklyn

- Atlantic Terminal **B D N Q R 2 3 4 5**
- East New York **L** at Atlantic Av
- Nostrand Avenue **A C**

Queens

- Hollis
- Jamaica **E J Z**
- Laurelton
- Locust Manor
- Queens Village
- Rosedale
- Albans

Customers can purchase the discounted LIRR tickets at ticket machines or from ticket sales offices and will have the option to add a \$5.50 New York City Transit fare to their one way or round trip tickets. The tickets for this field study will not be available via the MTA's eTix app.

The tickets offered in this field study will also not be available for purchase from conductors on board trains. Customers requesting tickets on board trains will be charged the existing higher on board sales rates: \$16 for a peak-hour one-way rail-only ticket, or \$14 for an off-peak one-way rail-only ticket. Weekly tickets are not sold aboard trains.

The \$60 weekly tickets, like current LIRR weekly tickets, will be valid from 12:01 a.m. every Saturday through midnight on the following Friday for travel on LIRR and valid for 7 days after first swipe for travel on local buses and subway. The \$5.00 one-way ticket, like the current CityTicket, will be valid on the day of purchase only.

From Hollis, Laurelton, Locust Manor, Queens Village, Rosedale and St. Albans, the LIRR offers rush hour service roughly every 20 minutes and hourly off-peak service. Off-peak trains serve Brooklyn stations directly. For some peak-hour trains, customers will need to change trains at Jamaica.

Between Brooklyn and Jamaica, the LIRR offers direct rush hour service of roughly every 10 minutes, and off-peak service every 30 minutes.

As part of the metrics it evaluates, the MTA will seek to evaluate whether existing LIRR customers who travel to Penn Station will switch their travel to Atlantic Terminal. The LIRR last offered discounts to Atlantic Terminal in summer 2017, when service to Penn Station was affected by track reconstruction work being conducted by Amtrak.