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Press Release

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LIRR

IMMEDIATE

LIRR Forward Update: Railroad Crossing Safety Initiative Complete Five Months Ahead of Schedule

Flexible Delineators, Reflective Pavement Markings and Painted Roadway Lines Installed at All 296 LIRR Railroad Crossings in Effort to Increase Safety and Reduce Delays By Preventing Vehicles-on-Track

MTA Long Island Rail Road today announced the completion of its visible railroad crossing safety initiative, as LIRR engineers installed safety enhancements all 296 railroad crossings system-wide -- five months ahead of schedule.

In May, as part of his *LIRR Forward* initiative, LIRR President Phillip Eng announced an accelerated plan to install flexible, four-feet high reflective delineators as well as extended roadway markings and additional reflective devices to better alert drivers, who may become confused by GPS directions while driving in darkness or inclement weather, that they should not make a turn onto the tracks. At the time, President Eng announced that this effort was scheduled to be complete at all 296 grade crossings throughout the LIRR system by the end of this year.

Over the past three months, LIRR engineering crews worked tirelessly to implement this important safety initiative well ahead of schedule, and successfully installed the safety enhancements at the last crossing at Hortons Lane in Southold on Saturday, July 28, 2018.

"Keeping our customers and our employees safe is at the forefront of our minds in everything that we do at the Long Island Rail Road. We are consistently implementing innovative approaches -- both high-tech and low-tech -- to enhance safety, including when it comes to those locations where motorists may encounter our railroad crossings," LIRR President Phillip Eng said. "I am pleased to say that it appears that these efforts are paying off, and I want to thank the hardworking LIRR staff who ensured this was done quickly and efficiently."

To further the railroad's crossing safety efforts, the LIRR in June announced its groundbreaking partnership with the GPS navigation app Waze, with a first-ever feature of its kind to debut on the app that alerts motorists using it that they are approaching a LIRR railroad crossing. This initiative was launched using Waze's Connected Citizens Program -- a free, two-way data share of publicly available traffic information. Metro-North has also since announced its own similar partnership with Waze.

These efforts came after an aggressive review of railroad crossing incidents and potential safety enhancements by the MTA. The delineator project and Waze program were developed as the railroad began to see vehicles on tracks as a growing problem as distracted or confused motorists, some using GPS devices, inadvertently turn onto tracks instead of parallel roadways.

To date, incident data provides evidence that the initiative is having a positive impact. In 2017, the LIRR recorded 29 reports of cars on tracks, in addition to 17 grade crossing accidents involving the LIRR and motor vehicles. Through May 22 of this year, there were 2 grade crossing accidents and 21 reports of cars on tracks.

Since this accelerated effort began in May, the LIRR has recorded only three incidents of vehicles-on-tracks. In the first two, there were no delineators installed at those locations. In the third incident, a motorist at Tuckahoe Road Crossing in Southampton experienced a medical emergency, which inadvertently caused the car to enter the railroad's right-of-way.

All 296 railroad crossings are expected to be live on the Waze app by the end of this year. At this time, 30 LIRR railroad crossings are live on the Waze app, including:

- Bayport - Snedcor Avenue
- Bay Shore - 3rd Avenue
- Bay Shore - Windsor Avenue
- Bellport - Station Road
- Cedarhurst - Washington Avenue
- Central Islip - Lowell Avenue
- Deer Park - Commack Road
- Farmingdale - Elizabeth Street
- Farmingdale - Main Street
- Farmingdale - Segatogue Avenue
- Garden City - Willis Avenue
- Glen Cove - Duck Pond Road
- Glen Head - Glen Head Road (Glenwood Road)
- Hampton Bays - Ponoquogue Avenue
- Hewlett - West Broadway
- Huntington - Pulaski Road (McKay Road)

- Islip - Holbrook Avenue
- Kings Park - Indian Head Road
- Kings Park - Lawrence Road (Mile-Lawrence Road)
- Kings Park - Old Commack Road
- Mineola - Willis Avenue
- New Hyde Park - New Hyde Park Road
- Oakdale - Oakdale Avenue
- Pinelawn - Wellwood Avenue
- Port Jefferson - Main Street (Rte. 112)
- Syosset - Syosset Woodbury Road
- Westbury - School Street
- Westbury - Urban Avenue
- Wyandanch - 18th Street
- Wyandanch - Little East Neck Road

Key railroad safety reminders:

- Everyone, including pedestrians, **must** stop when a train approaches a grade crossing.
- Failing to stop a vehicle at a railroad grade crossing not less than 15 feet from the nearest rail, when an audible or clearly visible electric or mechanical signal device gives warning of the immediate approach of a train (e.g., bells and/or flashing red lights), or when a crossing gate is lowered, is illegal. If convicted of such an offense, the violator faces (for a first violation) a fine of not more than \$150 or imprisonment for not more than 15 days or both (with higher penalties for subsequent violations).
- Driving through, around or under any crossing gate or barrier at a railroad crossing while such gate or barrier is closed, or being opened or closed, is also illegal. If convicted of such an action, the violator faces a fine (for a first violation) of not less than \$250 nor more than \$400, or imprisonment for not more than 30 days, or both (with higher penalties for subsequent violations).
- Pay attention to the roadway and its surroundings at all times, while driving. Stay alert for warning bells, red flashing lights, train horns and lowering crossing gates.
- Never stop in the middle of a railroad crossing. Always finish crossing to the other side.