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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Ridership Increases Across Subways, Buses, LIRR and Metro-North as On-Time Performance Continues Upward Trajectory

Subway Weekday On-Time Performance Continues to Improve, Up Nearly 20% Compared to September of 2018; Weekday Major Incidents Decreased 29%, to Lowest Number Since Record Keeping Began in 2015

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced robust ridership increases on subways, buses, Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad, coinciding with improvements in performance at all agencies. Subway average weekday ridership of 5.77 million in September was up 4.5% over the prior year, and local bus ridership of 2.25 million was 1.5% over the previous year. Long Island Rail Road ridership increased 2.0% in September, boosting year-to-date ridership to 2.4% increase and putting the railroad on pace to set another modern-day record. Metro-North Railroad's ridership increased 1.0% in September and has risen 0.6% year-to-date. Traffic on MTA Bridges and Tunnels of 29.4 million in August was 0.6% higher than the prior year.

The subway system is carrying nearly 250,000 more trips each weekday than it was a year earlier, while buses are carrying 34,000 more trips per average weekday. The MTA's commuter railroads together have carried nearly 2 million more people in 2019 through Sept. 30 than during the same period a year prior.

"These numbers are the result of a tremendous amount of hard work and dedication," said MTA Chairman Patrick J. Foye. "The MTA's top priority is increasing the reliability of the system and our workforce has been focused on identifying and fixing track defects, fixing signals and switches, and overhauling train cars and buses at a faster rate than at any time in memory. We're also rethinking how we communicate with our customers – and as a result of all of these improvements it's clear New Yorkers are taking notice."

New York City Transit

Weekday subway on-time performance was 82.7% in September – the fourth month in a row it's been above 80% in five years. The SAP, launched by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and then-MTA Chairman Joe Lhota, has provided a surge of additional union personnel, outside contractors, and new tools and methods for the maintaining and improving the system.

Overall, subway performance continued its steady improvement in September 2019 across a host of categories. Major incidents have declined to the lowest number since this record has been kept, while on-time performance has continued to improve and customer-centric performance numbers are also pointing higher as well. The Save Safe Seconds Initiative and Train Speed and Safety Task Force are also working on improving running times throughout the system.

"Once again, I am immensely proud of my brilliant team for relentlessly focusing on the basics and working tirelessly to achieve performance gains for our customers," said Andy Byford, New York City Transit President. "Together, the work of the Save Safe Seconds campaign and the assistance we got from the Subway Action Plan have helped us achieve performance numbers unseen in some time and we look forward to improving our numbers even more in the months ahead."

Weekday major incidents decreased nearly 28.9% from September 2018, dropping from 45 to a record-low of 32 in September 2019. Weekday on-time performance (OTP) for September was approximately 82.7%, up from 69.4% in the same month last year. Seven non-shuttle lines achieved figures in excess of 80% and the CBTC-enabled 7 line experienced a 96% on time performance rate.

Improvements were also realized in many of NYC Transit's customer-focused metrics, including Service Delivered and Customer Journey Time. Performance improved to 84.7%, up from 80.1% a year ago. Meanwhile, customer commendation figures are up 12%.

A contributing factor to the reduction in delays has been the significant progress made in reducing track debris fires, which are down considerably since NYCT focused on this problem with new equipment in 2017. This has included clearing debris at an unprecedented rate using new platform-based mobile vacs, and vacuum trains that move around the system picking up trash. Year to date, track fires are down nearly 31% from the previous 12 months, from 956 to 703.

Long Island Rail Road

LIRR's year-to-date on-time performance of 92.6% through Sept. 30 is 2.4 percentage points higher than it was over the same time in 2018. The LIRR has scheduled 1.3% more trains in 2019 through Sept. 30 than it had over that timeframe in 2018, yet experienced a 0.4 percentage point increase in trips completed, to 99.4%. Trains operating with fewer cars than their normal length plunged 23.6% and trains' mechanical reliability increased 7.4%, with trains traveling 193,667 miles between experiencing a mechanical failure as of Aug. 31. Track circuit failures in 2019, have plunged to 42 through Sept. 30, down by a third from 64 during the prior year.

"This is a testament to the hard work of the men and women of the Long Island Rail Road, who through the LIRR Forward program are taking on every challenge among those aspects of service that we can control, so that we're more prepared to respond to those things we can't control," said LIRR President Phil Eng. "We remain focused on balancing state of good repair and an unprecedented amount of capital work to expand and modernize our railroad that will provide a better customer experience for this generation, and for generations to come."

Metro-North Railroad

Metro-North's year-to-date on-time performance of 94.3% through Sept. 30 is 3.7 percentage points higher than it was over the same time in 2018. Metro-North has scheduled 142 more trains in 2019 through Sept. 30 than it had over that timeframe in 2018, yet experienced a 0.3 percentage point increase in trips completed, to 99.8%. The percentage of trains operating at their full length this year has increased 0.7 percentage points East of Hudson through Sept. 30, to 99.4%, while the improvement West of Hudson was even more pronounced, rising 1.2 percentage points to 98.9%. Trains' mechanical reliability surged 63%, with trains traveling 244,074 miles between experiencing a mechanical failure, up from 149,683 a year prior. Delays related to switch and signal problems have plunged to 741 through Sept. 30, down by more than half from 1,800 experienced during the prior year.

"Metro-North's Way Ahead program is providing a road map for the railroad's future, where we concentrate on increasing train service safety and reliability," said Catherine Rinaldi, President of Metro-North Railroad. "These statistics come roughly after our first year of fulfilling the Way Ahead plan, and all signs point to even more improvement going forward. I thank the hard work and dedication of the entire Metro-North workforce for bringing these results."

MTA Bridges and Tunnels

At MTA Bridges and Tunnels, as traffic volumes increased 0.6% E-ZPass usage reached 94.4%, an increase of half a percentage point over the year prior.