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Press Release

July 15, 2019

LIRR

IMMEDIATE

Crews to Install LIRR Bridge at Urban Avenue in New Cassel July 20-21

Train Service to Be Suspended Between Mineola and Hicksville for 55 Hours; Crews On Schedule to Reopen Urban Avenue in the Fall with Underpass Replacing Previous At-Grade Crossing

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced that on the weekend of July 20-21, crews working on the Long Island Rail Road Expansion Project will move a new pre-assembled LIRR bridge into place at Urban Avenue in New Cassel. The bridge replaces a previous at-grade railroad crossing at the site that closed to traffic on March 8.

With the work taking place that weekend as planned, the project team remains on pace to reopen Urban Avenue this fall as a two-way underpass with a sidewalk on the west side.

The bridge that will be moved into place and installed on the weekend of July 20-21 will have room for three tracks as well as the two lanes of Railroad Avenue, the adjacent east/west roadway that will go over Urban Avenue. It will have a clearance of 14 feet, a height tall enough to conform with modern DOT standards and essentially eliminate the potential for bridge strikes from over-height vehicles.

As a result of the work to install the bridge on the weekend of July 20-21, there will be no train service between Mineola and Hicksville from 11 p.m. Friday, July 19, through 5 a.m. on Monday, July 22. Special timetables will be available via MTA.info, and train service information will be available via the MYmta app, myLIRR.org, and LIRR Train Time.

To help customers travel during the outage, the LIRR is adding express trains between Babylon and New York City. Elsewhere, trains will operate at normal service intervals, but on adjusted schedules, on the Far Rockaway, Hempstead, Long Beach, Montauk, Port Washington and West Hempstead Branches, and between Ronkonkoma and Greenport. Main Line trains will operate hourly between Mineola and Penn Station, with stops at Merillon Avenue, New Hyde Park and Jamaica. Trains will operate between Oyster Bay and Jamaica every two hours.

Customers Seeking Travel at Carle Place or Westbury

The Carle Place and Westbury stations will be closed, and customers of those stations will be encouraged to consider traveling via Mineola or the Babylon, Hempstead or West Hempstead branches.

Weekend parking is free at all stations of the West Hempstead Branch and the Babylon Branch except Amityville and Babylon. On the Hempstead Branch, weekend parking is free at Floral Park and free and plentiful at the north lot of the Country Life Press station. This lot is accessible by car by driving to 7th Street and Franklin Avenue in Garden City and continuing east along 7th Street. Parking in the south side of the lot leads to a 600-foot walk to the Country Life Press station via the sidewalk alongside St. James Street. At Mineola, parking is available for a modest fee in the Mineola Intermodal Center garage, and the station is served by the N22 and N24 NICE Bus routes. Hempstead is served by the N27, N48, N49, N70, N71, N72 bus routes. The N40, N41 and N43 routes serve Freeport, while the N80 serves Massapequa and Massapequa Park.

Port Jefferson Branch and Ronkonkoma Branch

Travel between New York City and stations east of Hicksville will be possible via shuttle trains operating via Babylon. Customers should anticipate an additional 56 minutes of travel time and are encouraged to consider traveling via the Babylon Branch or Montauk Branch, where weekend parking is free at all stations except Amityville, Babylon, Bay Shore and Patchogue.

Port Jefferson Branch and Ronkonkoma Branch trains will operate to/from Hicksville, where customers will be able to connect to a shuttle train to Babylon, then connect to special express service between Babylon and Penn Station. These trains will make limited stops between Babylon and Penn Station. Customers can connect at Jamaica for service to Brooklyn.

Customers can also consider Suffolk County Transit bus routes to reach the Babylon, Bay Shore, Islip, Great River, Sayville, Patchogue, or Bellport LIRR stations.

Urban Avenue Crossing Elimination

By removing the potential for trains to come into contact with vehicles or pedestrians, the grade crossing elimination is creating a safer environment for motorists, pedestrians and those aboard trains. It is also eliminating the need for trains to sound their horns when traveling through the area, and the sound of bells from crossing gates. Eliminating the railroad crossing will also improve area traffic. When this intersection was an at-grade crossing, gates during rush hours were in the down position up to 35 percent of the time, creating traffic backups and increasing exhaust from vehicles.

For more information about the Urban Avenue underpass construction, please visit this page: <http://amodernli.com/project/urban-avenue-grade-crossing-elimination/>

The LIRR Expansion Project will add a third track from Floral Park to Hicksville, reducing train congestion and delays and enabling true bi-directional service during peak hours. This transformative work includes several related projects, including the construction of additional parking garages and improved station access, retaining and sound attenuation walls, improvements to rail bridges and the removal of the seven street-level railroad crossings in the corridor. Construction is being handled in a way to minimize the impact on daily routines, with extensive mitigation and public outreach efforts being planned in conjunction with local communities.

The LIRR Expansion Project is part of a multibillion-dollar modernization of the Long Island Rail Road, the largest investment the railroad has received in decades. Once the work is complete, the LIRR will have increased its capacity by roughly 50 percent. Together, the upgrades will help transform transportation across the region and provide a reliable, state-of-the-art rail system for Long Islanders.

Many Ways to Stay Connected

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

myLIRR.org - Customers can see real-time positions of upcoming trains in real time, on a smartphone-optimized map that refreshes every 3- to 5-seconds, by logging into myLIRR.org, which is optimized for smartphone screens.

MYmta app & MTA.info – Customers who use the new, comprehensive MYmta app will see real-time travel information for the LIRR and connecting services all in one place, with push notifications when service is not operating normally. As a caution, trains that start out their trips on time may experience delays en route. The LIRR Train Time app also remains available for customers to access LIRR train information. The rail tab of the “Service Status” box at new.MTA.info is always the definitive source for the latest status for each branch, updated every minute.

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 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.