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Press Release

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MTA Headquarters

IMMEDIATE

MTA Announces Overnight Closure of Subway for Deep Cleaning, Launches “Essential Connector” for Heroic Frontline Workers During Ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic

MTA to Close Subway From 1 – 5 a.m. Beginning May 6 to Deep Clean & Disinfect Every Train & Bus Every Night & Further Test Innovative Cleaning Solutions

MTA to Launch “Essential Connector” Service to Continue Moving Heroic Frontline Workers; LIRR, Metro-North, New York City Transit and MTA Bus Service Continue Under MTA Essential Service Plan with Enhancements Along High Ridership Routes

New York City Has Agreed to Deploy Additional NYPD to Ensure Safety and Security of System Overnight

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced the closure of the subway system overnight from 1 – 5 a.m. for daily deep cleaning and a new “Essential Connector” service to continue moving the heroes on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic beginning Wednesday, May 6. During this overnight period, the MTA will intensify disinfecting operations, cleaning its fleet of thousands of cars and buses every night, and further testing new and innovative cleaning solutions, including UV, antimicrobials and electrostatic disinfectants. Essential workers traveling to and from work during the overnight will be connected with for-hire-vehicles through the “Essential Connector” program at no cost to customers. New York City Transit and MTA bus service will continue to run under the MTA Essential Service Plan with enhancements along high ridership routes.

The closure of the system during the overnight period of 1-5:00 a.m. will require significant and sustained NYPD resources. All customers will be required to leave the trains and the stations during this time. The City has agreed to bolster its presence systemwide and deploy additional NYPD resources as the safety and security of the system is paramount during this period.

MTA Chairman and CEO Pat Foye said, “This is an unprecedented time and that calls for unprecedented action to protect the safety, security and health of our system for customers and employees. This closure will enable us to more aggressively and efficiently disinfect and clean our trains and buses than we have ever done before and do it every single day. We are pleased the City has agreed to deploy significant additional resources to the system at this critical time in our history.”

Sarah Feinberg, Interim President of New York City Transit, said: “We need to do everything we can to ensure our system is a clean, disinfected and as safe as possible – and we have to get it right. Closing our system for a limited time overnight will enable us to clean and disinfect every car, every night. We also want to make sure we find a way to do this as efficiently and in as innovative a way as possible to ensure we are maximizing safety of our riders. We need to do this while we continue moving the heroes on the frontlines of this crisis – the doctors, nurses, grocery workers, utility employees and childcare workers. Our new ‘Essential Connector’ service will do just that – providing dedicated service along subway routes overnight and getting our heroes to and from work to save lives.”

During the COVID-19 crisis, ridership on the New York City subway has fallen more than 90 percent. In recent weeks, the MTA has undertaken a line-by-line analysis of ridership data during the overnight period from 1-5:00 a.m. On average, approximately 11,000 customers currently use the subway during this time. Approximately 1,802 customers use the subway between the hours of 1-2:00 a.m., 1,386 customers between 2-3:00 a.m., 2,129 between the hours of 3-4:00 a.m., and 5,692 between 4-5:00 a.m.

Beginning next week, the MTA will launch the “Essential Connector” service between 1-5 a.m. at no cost to essential workers traveling to and from work during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic across the five boroughs. The “Essential Connector” will ensure efficient travel for health care workers, first responders and other essential personnel, including to and from hospitals and other health care services, grocery stores, pharmacies, convenience stores and other essential services.

“Essential Connector” customers will be limited to two trips per night on for-hire-vehicles and must show proof of essential travel with appropriate credentials. Customers who do not have a smart phone will also be able to request a ride through a dedicated number. Rides will also be available to customers requiring wheelchair accessible vehicles. Additional details on the “Essential Connector” will be released shortly.

Bus service will continue to run 24/7 under the MTA Essential Service Plan. Where there are large pockets of riders, additional bus service will be added as necessary. More details on the MTA Essential Service Plan are available [here](#).

The Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad will also begin disinfecting trains daily with service under the MTA Essential Service Plan.

The MTA will resume overnight service between the period of 1-5 a.m. when customer demand returns, and innovative and efficient disinfecting techniques have been successfully deployed systemwide.

