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Press Release

October 1, 2020

LIRR

IMMEDIATE

MTA to Move New LIRR Bridge Into Place This Weekend at School Street in Westbury and New Cassel

Major LIRR Expansion Project Milestone to Take Place Oct. 3-4

This Weekend There Will Be No LIRR Service from Jamaica to Hicksville Stations

Other Service Changes, Timetable Adjustments for All LIRR Branches; Details Below

This weekend, Oct. 3-4, MTA Construction & Development will install a new bridge that will carry the Long Island Rail Road over School Street, on the border of Westbury and New Cassel, replacing a railroad crossing that was the site of a collision on Feb. 26, 2019, that claimed the lives of the three people in an automobile that had been driven around downed gates. The crossing elimination is another major step forward for LIRR safety as part of the LIRR Expansion Project. The bridge installation will be the project's fourth bridge to be built over a previous railroad crossing as the MTA aims to eliminate eight crossings by 2022.

Over the past several months, crews have assembled the new bridge adjacent to the tracks, in preparation for this weekend's installation. The bridge will be installed using an innovative engineering approach known as box-jacking that dramatically cuts down on the length of time required for this project.

As trains approach Westbury Station, grade crossing gates are in the down position 27 to 35 percent of the time during AM and PM peak periods, respectively. The School Street project was accelerated due to the fatal accident in 2019. The need for grade crossing elimination is further illustrated by the six fatal crashes at grade crossing locations in the LIRR Main Line corridor between 2007 to 2017.

The elimination of the grade crossing has been designed in conjunction with the Village of Westbury and Town of North Hempstead, with feedback from residents, commuters, and elected officials. The project will strengthen the reliability of LIRR infrastructure and support the growth and development of Long Island and the wider region and will enhance safety and provide for a quieter and more livable community along the railroad.

The crossing at New Hyde Park Road was eliminated in August, and the nearby S. 12th Street crossing is scheduled to be eliminated before the end of the year. The MTA bridged over the former railroad crossings at Urban Avenue in New Cassel and Covert Avenue in New Hyde Park last year. Three crossings in Mineola, two at Willis Avenue and one at Main Street, are slated to be eliminated sequentially in the fall of this year through 2021.

To allow this work to take place, weekend service changes along the LIRR's Main Line, along with other adjustments on other branches, are necessary. Service details can be found below. NICE buses will cross-honor LIRR tickets on the N22/N24 routes for service between Hicksville and Mineola and N40/41 service between Mineola and Hempstead. For more information, including travel tips, alternate station options, a map detailing the service changes, and parking details, [please see this page at the LIRR website](#).

Hempstead Branch – [Special Timetable Here](#)

Service on the Hempstead Branch will operate on an hourly basis, and trains will operate to and from Penn Station for the majority of the weekend, with some trains operating between Hempstead and Brooklyn during the late night and overnight hours. At all other times, transfer at Jamaica for service to and from Brooklyn.

Oyster Bay Branch – [Special Timetable Here](#)

Service will operate every two hours. All trains terminate/originate at East Williston Station. Take free LIRR shuttle buses between East Williston, Mineola and Hempstead, where hourly train service will be available, or use the Port Washington Branch.

Huntington/Port Jefferson/Ronkonkoma Branches – [Port Jefferson Special Timetable Here](#) [Ronkonkoma Special Timetable Here](#)

Revised train routes will require westbound customers from Huntington, Port Jefferson and Ronkonkoma to transfer to a shuttle train at Hicksville stopping at Bethpage and Babylon, then connect with a train from Babylon to Penn Station. Eastbound customers traveling to Huntington, Port Jefferson and Ronkonkoma will reverse the process and take a train from Penn Station to Babylon, transfer to a shuttle train stopping at Bethpage and Hicksville, then transfer again to an eastbound train from Hicksville to points east. Please allow up to 60 minutes of additional travel time. As alternatives, consider traveling via the Babylon, Montauk or Hempstead branches.

Bethpage Station

All train service will be provided by the diesel-powered shuttle trains with bi-level cars that will operate between Hicksville, Bethpage and Babylon. Electric trains will not stop at Bethpage Station. Westbound customers should wait on the eastbound platform (Track 2, Platform B), and board a shuttle train to Babylon. At Babylon, transfer to westbound express trains to Penn Station that make limited stops, including Jamaica. Eastbound customers should wait on the westbound platform (Track 1, Platform A), and board a shuttle train to Hicksville. At Hicksville, transfer to an eastbound electric train for service to stations Farmingdale through Ronkonkoma.

All Other Branches

Departure and arrival times for all weekend trains will be adjusted, as will departure times for connecting trains at Jamaica. In addition, some service changes will begin Friday evening and continue through early Monday morning.

Special timetables will be in effect for all branches the weekend of October 3-4. Please see special timetables by branch below:

[Babylon Branch](#)

[Far Rockaway Branch](#)

[Long Beach Branch](#)

[Montauk Branch](#)

[Port Washington Branch](#)

[West Hempstead Branch](#)

Safe Travel Reminder

Masks or face coverings must be worn on LIRR property, including at stations and on trains. While onboard, masks or face coverings must remain on for the duration of your travel, including while on LIRR shuttle buses. Please practice social distancing by remaining six feet apart from other riders whenever possible.

Many Channels for Services Updates

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

LIRR Train Time app - Customers can see real-time positions of upcoming trains in real time, on a smartphone-optimized map that refreshes every 3- to 5-seconds. Most trains also provide North America's first real-time estimate of seating availability for upcoming trains using weight sensors on trains.

MYmta app – Customers who use the new, comprehensive MYmta app will see real-time travel information for LIRR and connecting services all in one place. 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.

Email and text message service updates – Customers are urged to sign up to receive the alerts by visiting [MyMTAAlerts.com](https://mymtaalerts.com). To avoid unwanted messages, a user can tailor the messages to the specific branch, and the specific times of day.

MTA.info – “Service Status” on the homepage of new.mta.info, and at the left side of [www.MTA.info](https://www.mta.info) is always the definitive source for the latest status for each branch, updated every minute. In addition, customers can visit www.mta.info/lirr to see special service notices in the upper center of the page.

@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.