**MTA Joint LIRR and Metro-North Committee Testimony**

**LIRR Survey Says: More Timed Connections and Direct Service Needed!**

**By: Kara Gurl**

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Good morning! I’m Kara Gurl, Planning and Advocacy Manager at the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC.

Today marks the next round of LIRR service changes with the new Summer schedules. LIRR riders have had a rocky year so far, with some ups—a beautiful new station with direct access to the East side—and some downs—issues still being worked out with this major service overhaul.

To help inform the next round of adjustments this Fall, LIRRCC launched a survey last month and gathered feedback from hundreds of riders. The results point to some clear improvements that can be made to improve the rider experience.

Our survey found that since the new schedules began, travel time increased by an average of eleven minutes across all respondents. Many more riders reported needing to change trains now, when they previously didn’t—almost 60% of respondents reported now having to transfer, up from 34% before the schedule changes. This loss of direct service coupled with the end of timed and cross-platform connections is the core issue for many riders. Reinstating timed connections is key to ensuring riders have a smoother trip. Riders also still report crowding on peak trains to and from Penn, which is likely to continue as ridership continues to hit new records. We hope these findings will be helpful for future adjustments.

Better service is the way to show riders that transit is their best and fastest option, and we also hope you’ll be able to solve many of the recurring service issues that have happened near Jamaica lately.

To that end, it’s great to hear that all trains in both Metro-North and LIRR territory are operating with full PTC functionality, including at Grand Central Madison. This is another step towards the 21st century transit system riders deserve, and an example of the improvements that come with proper investment. Not to mention, a model for both railroads to use similar technologies and best practices! We were glad to see new LIRR information screens on the upper level of Grand Central near Metro-North. And with the opening of new escalators between the railroads to help with connectivity— and the great TrainTime app— we’re getting closer to a more unified transit system with more seamless travel. Thank you.