

The Bulletin



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This Month's Cover Photo:

In the twilight of their nearly 40-year career, an 11-car set of R-36s (and single R-33) are seen approaching the 82 St-Jackson Hts station on the 7 Flushing Line on 7/8/2002 (Jeff Erlitz photo)

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CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC CURTAILS RAIL SERVICES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

by Jeffrey Erlitz and Ronald Yee
(Photographs by Subutay Musluoglu)

The world has been gripped by a viral pandemic, the likes of which we have not seen in our lifetimes. The nearest comparison in this country would probably be the 1918 Pandemic, which claimed 675,000 lives in this country alone. As of March 28, the death toll in the United States is 2,112 (with 775 in New York City alone as of the evening of March 29). Still, we are all affected by this in our daily lives. This pandemic has disrupted the global economy and travel of all kinds. Needless to say, it has had a profound negative impact on public transportation here and around the world. Most rail services have settled on a Saturday, or weekend, service. Some services are still charging fares, and some are now fare-free. Read on for all the details and above all, please stay safe.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Until March 24, all rail operations operated by the MTA (the Long Island Rail Road, Metro-North Railroad, New York City Transit (NYCT) subways and buses, Staten Island Railway, and MTA Bus Company) continued to operate on their normal schedules and the trains with their regular consists. However, on March 24, due to a shrinking workforce, some service and route adjustments were made at NYCT Subways and the Staten Island Railway. (Ronald Yee, March 24)

Effective March 17, 2020, in response to the coronavirus crisis, cash was no longer accepted for the purchase of tickets from train crews or ticket offices on the LIRR and Metro-North Railroad. Customers were encouraged to use credit/debit cards or MTA eTix. Lost and Found offices on both railroads were also closed until further notice.

(*CT Post*, March 17)

At the MTA's March 25 Board meeting, MTA Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Patrick Foye reported a series of unprecedented statistics illustrating the coronavirus pandemic's effects on the MTA's network. As of March 24, daily ridership on the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) was down 70%, while on Metro-North Railroad (MNR) it was down a shocking 90%. The numbers at New York City Transit (NYCT) were no less stark, where daily ridership was down 87%. To drive this point home, he stated that on Monday, March 22 there were approximately 700,000 collected fares on the subway. This is a staggering figure, when considering that just this past October the MTA had touted that subway ridership on a typical weekday had climbed back up to 6 million passengers a day, following three years of hard work and effort to improve subway performance. On then on Saturday, March 28, Foye reported that he himself had tested positive for the coronavirus, and was self-isolating at home.

MTA NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT

An operational change was made by NYCT Bus starting Monday March 23, where Select Bus Service (SBS) and regular local buses load and unload all passengers through the rear doors to reduce the exposure of the bus operator to the coronavirus. Only passengers requiring handicapped access will board and disembark via the front door, where the access ramp is located. While fares through a proof-of-payment ticket continue to be required and spot-checked by fare inspectors

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