

2007 LIRRCC PRESIDENT'S FORUM

March 7, 2007

5:00 - 7:00 pm

MTA Headquarters, 347 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10017

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES EXPRESSED BY RIDERS

(12 members of the public and 2 LIRRCC members)

Customer Service Relations/Communication

- Communication
 - Why are there still “testing in progress” signs on the Audio-Visual Paging System displays?
(Acting LIRR President Raymond Kenny said that problems with this system have been corrected and that these signs will be removed.)
 - An LIRRCC member commended the Rail Road for implementing email alerts, but asked if they could be made in a more timely fashion.
(Mr. Kenny responded that the existing system is not designed for the heavy use that it is getting and that the Rail Road is investigating other systems for delivering email alerts.)

Station / Facility Conditions/Improvements

- Station Facilities
 - A customer remarked that Penn Station needs more clocks.
 - Can the volume, frequency, or hours of announcements at the Country Life Press station be reduced to minimize disruption to the surrounding neighborhood?
(Mr. Kenny said that he would look into the matter.)
- Station Maintenance
 - The toilet seats in the LIRR Penn Station restrooms will not stay up and seem to have been modified to always fall down.
(Mr. Kenny said that he would look into the matter.)
 - The bathroom at the Locust Valley station has been out of order since last Thanksgiving.

(Mr. Kenny said that it had been difficult to get bids to repair a water line needed for the operation of the bathroom, but the Rail Road is actively seeking to engage a contractor to complete the work.)

Safety and Security

- Gap Issues

A customer stated that the platform gaps at Syosset are very large and that the platform cameras and monitors create a false sense of security for riders. *(Mr. Kenny stated that the Rail Road is working on the gap issue and that he recognizes that the platform cameras and monitors will not prevent falls from occurring, but they will be useful to give train personnel a better view of any customers in distress.)*

- A customer asked how the effort to reduce platform gaps is progressing. *(Mr. Kenny said that the program is on track, and the Rail Road is addressing 32 of the worst gaps. The LIRR continues to look for innovative solutions to deal with the remaining cases.)*

- Stations

- A rider said that the security in Penn Station is the best in 15 years and that he feels very safe in the station.
- Walking between the Hunterspoint Avenue station and the 7 subway line is difficult because of traffic on neighboring streets. Crosswalks or other traffic control devices would improve safety. *(Mr. Kenny said that he would contact the City of New York regarding steps that could be taken to improve pedestrian safety at the station.)*
- An LIRRCC member expressed concern about the number of pedestrian incidents at the Bethpage station. *(Assistant Deputy Chief Terrance Culhane of the MTA Police Department responded that the Department's first approach is to educate about railroad hazards, but to begin enforcement if education does not have an impact. Chief Culhane noted that the Rail Road has made many physical improvements to improve pedestrian safety, but ultimate responsibility to avoid accidents lies with the individual.)*
- Are there programs to work with local police to increase security at stations? *(Chief Culhane responded that the MTA Police works with local law enforcement organizations to coordinate coverage of stations and that they seek to vary their patrol schedule so that officers' actions are not predictable.)*

- Can gates be installed to completely block off grade crossings to vehicles and pedestrians?
(Mr. Kenny said that the Rail Road does not use four quadrant gates because it does not want motorists to perceive that they are trapped on the tracks, although the gate arms can easily be pushed aside by a vehicle in case of emergency.)

Service Issues

- Train Fleet
 - Why do some train whistles appear to be louder than others?
(Mr. Kenny said that the Rail Road will correct whistles that are louder than standards, and that the LIRR is testing devices to reduce the impact of whistles on surrounding properties.)
- Service/Schedule
 - A customer said that he appreciated the half-hourly service on the Port Jefferson Branch on weekends.
 - A customer said that she appreciated the half-hourly service on the Port Washington Branch on weekends.
 - Why do so many trains stop at the Hillside Maintenance Facility?
(Mr. Kenny said that trains do not stop there in rush hours and that many people are employed there.)
 - Could the Rail Road schedule more late Friday and Saturday trains on the Port Washington Branch to serve persons coming to New York City for entertainment?
(Mr. Kenny said that the Rail Road will look at ridership trends and consider additional service.)

LIRR Capital Improvement Projects and Plans

- Train Fleet
 - Little updated information on the Main Line Corridor Improvement Project has been presented to the public through the LIRR website. Can the material that has been presented to public officials in briefings be made available on the website?

(Susan McGowan responded that that further hearings will be held when the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the project is completed and released at the end of 2006 or beginning of 2007. She said that the project website will also be updated substantially at this time.)

- Will the Main Line Corridor Improvement Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement include a feasibility study addressing the need for a third track and will it address other alternatives for increasing system capacity?
(Mr. Kenny stated that there will be discussion of both the purpose and need for improvements and a range of alternatives to increase system capacity)
- Will the Main Line Corridor Improvement Project include grade separations between tracks and intersecting roadways?
(Albert Cosenza of the LIRR said that grade separations similar to the one at Mineola Boulevard would be created.)
- Will the Main Line Corridor Improvement Project include sound barriers in Floral Park?
(Mr. Cosenza replied that any possibilities of sound barriers are still being discussed with local officials.)

Miscellaneous

- A member of the public commented that he had been approached by MTA Police officers when sitting on benches on the lower level of the Flatbush Avenue station. The individual said that he was asked whether he had a ticket and said that this questioning was discriminatory.
- A speaker asked whether the LIRR would fund research and development of products to deal with the gap issue.
(Mr. Cosenza stated that given the LIRR's limited resources, the Rail Road is looking at existing products before developing new ones.)
- A customer asked why customers were being surveyed at Ronkonkoma about east of Ronkonkoma ridership.
(Ms. McGowan said that this was probably a part of the Rail Road's origin-destination survey that it conducted last year.)
- A customer asked about cables being laid along the tracks between Ronkonkoma and Riverhead.
(Brian Finn stated that these are fiber-optic communication cables.)