

THE LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD REPORT CARD

2002

Results of the Annual, Independent Rider Survey Conducted by the
Long Island Rail Road
Commuter's Council

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1987, the Long Island Rail Road Commuter's Council¹(LIRRCC) has undertaken an annual survey of Long Island Rail Road riders to rate Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) train service and station conditions, and gauge rider perceptions, opinions and concerns about specific topics. The result is a riders' "report card" on LIRR performance and feedback on railroad accomplishments, issues of concern, and suggestions for improvement.

This year, 1198 riders from the eleven branches of the LIRR system participated. Slightly more women (51%) are represented than men. More than half of the riders are between the ages of 30-49 (57%). Eighteen percent are between the ages of 20-29 and 14 percent are 50-59.

Surveys were conducted by LIRRCC members aboard peak-period, peak-direction trains between May 9, and June 20, 2002. The sample represents roughly one percent of the total fall 2001 LIRR ridership. To ensure that the sample size for each branch is proportional to the overall LIRR ridership, branch responses were weighted in the analysis of the systemwide results.

As was done in previous years, survey respondents were asked to provide basic demographic information; grade the railroad on 47 performance indicators² on a scale from "A" to "F" relating to train and station conditions, service, schedules, and personnel; and to rank five service improvements in order of importance. Riders were asked to identify one aspect of the railroad they would most like to see improved and to make additional comments or suggestions. The report card survey included two special topic questions concerning the LIRR's communication to riders.

SYSTEMWIDE RESULTS 2002

Long Island Rail Road riders feel that the LIRR has improved. Riders who think the LIRR has gotten better (46%) increased by 10 percent from 2001 and those who think it has worsened (10%) declined by 10 percent. Those who think no change has occurred (45%) remain the same as last year.

Long Island Rail Road riders gave higher marks for performance to the railroad this year. The 2002 Report Card results show statistically significant improvement in 27 out of 47 performance indicators and rising grades in 15 categories.³ Only three indicators show statistically significant worsening with grades declining in one category (Jamaica Avenue Station Security). Riders assigned grades of C and C+ to 62 percent of the 47 categories and grades of B- and B to 32 percent. Only 4 percent of the categories received grades of C- and 2 percent received a grade of D+.

¹ The New York State Legislature created the Long Island Rail Road Commuter's Council (LIRRCC) in 1981 to represent the interests of MTA Long Island Rail Road riders. The Governor appoints the 12 volunteer members upon the recommendation of the County Executives of Nassau and Suffolk and the Borough Presidents of Brooklyn and Queens. The Council is an affiliate of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC). For more information about us, visit our website: www.pcac.org.

² Home station maintenance was not evaluated in 2002.

³ Statistical significance refers to changes that were determined through statistical analysis to be significant. A 95 percent confidence level was selected. Statistical significance was determined if the variation between the means of scores from 2001 and 2002 was 0.05 or less. The two-tailed probability score was used as the measure of the variation between the means. If the two-tailed probability score was less than or equal to 0.05, it was determined that the change in scores between 2001 and 2002 was statistically significant.

This year's results improved markedly over last year's scores, which declined in statistical significance in 18 performance indicators and improved in four. In 2001, grades went down in 21 categories and rose in two.

This year, the three highest grades and rider levels of satisfaction (grade B) were given to morning and evening train crews and morning on-time performance. This represents an increase in rider satisfaction with morning and evening train crews since last year and continues the trend of placing one of the two indicators in the top position since 1994.⁴

Riders assigned the lowest grades and levels of satisfaction to cleanliness of restrooms on-board trains (D+), at Jamaica Station (C-) and at Flatbush Avenue Station (C-). While the numerical scores show a slight improvement, restroom cleanliness continues to be a concern to riders.

Statistically Significant Performance Indicators: Better⁵

The following indicators improved significantly in 2002:

Overall Service. Riders gave railroad service a grade of C+ overall. While the letter grade for this indicator remains the same as last year, the numerical score represents a statistically significant improvement—up .79 of a point.

On-Time Performance. Riders see marked improvements in on-time performance in morning and evening service. This year, morning on-time performance received a grade of B, compared to a B- in 2001. Evening on-time performance went up to a B- from a C+ last year. These improved grades are not surprising given the fact that the Rail Road has achieved its best ever on-time performance rankings in nine of the 17 months between January 2001 and May 2002.

Schedule Adequacy. Riders are happier with morning (B-) and evening (C+) train schedules this year. Satisfaction with morning train schedules improved by .38 of a point and a C+ grade from last year. Satisfaction with evening schedules went up .51 of a point from last year despite the fact that the grade remains the same.

Train Crews. Morning (B) and evening (B) train crews received more favorable ratings this year from riders. While the grade for morning train crews remained the same as last year, rider satisfaction rose by .50 of a point. Rider satisfaction with evening train crews rose in grade (B-) and score (.43).

Announcements. Riders feel announcements have improved in three areas this year: on-board evening trains (C+); at Penn Station in the evening (B-); and at home stations in the morning (C). While the grades have remained the same as last year, the numerical scores represent statistically significant increases.

Cleanliness. Riders see that cleanliness has improved significantly in five areas: on-board trains (C+); at home station waiting areas (B-) and restrooms (C+); and at the Flatbush Avenue Station waiting area (C) and restroom (C-). Letter grades remained the

⁴ With the exception of the 2000 LIRR Report Card.

⁵ Only changes determined through the statistical analysis described in footnote 3 are reported as better. Grade changes which are determined not statistically significant are not discussed because there is no valid way to prove that these grade changes did not occur solely by chance.

same as last year, but saw significant score point increases for on-board trains (.99), home station waiting areas (.27) and restrooms (.52).

Cleanliness at the Flatbush Avenue Station waiting area and restroom improved both in letter grades and score points. Letter grades rose this year for the waiting area, from a C- in 2001 to a C, and for the restroom, from a D+ in 2001 to a C-. Numerical scores also improved significantly for the Flatbush Avenue Station waiting area - by .77 of a point- and for the restroom (1.16).

Management Performance. Riders are more satisfied this year with LIRR management (C+). The letter grade for management performance went up from a C in 2001 and represents a numerical increase of 1.13.

Escalator Reliability. Riders feel better about the reliability of escalators systemwide this year (C+). While the letter grade remains the same as last year, the numerical score represents a statistically significant increase (.43).

Climate Control. Riders gave improved letter grades to winter heating (B-) and summer air conditioning (C+) in 2002, up from last year's C+ and C. Numerical scores rose by .81 and .94 of a point, respectively. This is not surprising given the railroad's concerted efforts to improve climate control and its achievement of 97-99 percent of monthly climate control compliance between January 2001 and May 2002.

Seating. Riders are more satisfied with morning (B-) and evening seating availability (C) and with the condition of their seats (C+) this year compared with last year. Seating availability grades increased from last year's grade of C+ in the morning and C- in the evening. While seating availability in the evening shows substantial improvement, it is still only of average satisfaction to riders. The letter grade for seat condition improved from a C in 2001 and the numerical score significantly increased by .37 of a point.

Service. Riders are significantly more satisfied with train service during the morning (B-) and evening peak (C+); midday (C+); late night (C); and weekend (C+). The letter grade for weekend service improved from a C in 2001.

Statistically Significant Performance Indicators: Worse⁶

The following indicators declined significantly in 2002:

Security. Riders are less satisfied in 2002 than in 2001 with security on-board trains (B-); at Jamaica Station (C+); and at their home stations (C+). While the letter grades for these indicators remain the same as last year, the declines in numerical scores were statistically significant. The numerical score for security on-board trains declined by .29 of a point. Security at Jamaica Station fell by .35 of a point. Security at home stations fell by .49 of a point.

It is probable that riders' dissatisfaction with security has been influenced in part by the events of September 11, 2001. Riders have a new awareness and an increased desire for security in public spaces, and on public transportation in particular.

⁶ Only changes determined through the statistical analysis described in footnote 3 are reported as worse. Grade changes which are determined not statistically significant are not discussed because there is no valid way to prove that these grade changes did not occur solely by chance.

BRANCH RESULTS 2002

Riders on ten of the eleven branches feel that the LIRR is getting better rather than worse. The West Hempstead branch is the only branch where riders feel less definite -- the greater percent feel that no change has occurred (43%). Alternatively, riders on the Port Jefferson branch feel the most satisfied, with 75 percent indicating that they think the LIRR is improving.

Overall Service. In 2002, riders assigned their highest grades (B-) for overall service to four branches: Port Washington, Long Beach, Far Rockaway, and Babylon. This is a distinct improvement over last year, when Port Washington was the only branch to receive a grade of B-. Of the four branches, Port Washington branch received the highest numerical score, followed by Long Beach, Far Rockaway, and Babylon.

Riders assigned their lowest grades (C) for overall service to the Ronkonkoma and Montauk branches. Although Ronkonkoma received the lowest numerical score of the two branches, this year's C grade and numerical score are a significant improvement over the C- grade it received in 2001. Overall service satisfaction on the Montauk branch remained the same as last year, with no significant increase in numerical score.

All other branches received letter grades of C+. The C+ given for overall service on the West Hempstead branch this year (up from a C in 2001) is a positive sign that riders feel service has improved. This is despite the higher percent of riders' on the West Hempstead branch who indicated that they feel no change has occurred on the LIRR, as mentioned above.

On-Time Performance. The grades for morning and evening on-time performance show notable improvements on all branches this year. In 2002, morning on-time performance grades rose on eight of the eleven branches with all grades achieving a B. Grades rose for evening on-time performance on nine of the branches with all but two ratings making it to a B. The only grade decline occurred on the West Hempstead branch in evening on-time performance.

Riders gave their highest grades (B+) for morning on-time performance to the Port Washington, Port Jefferson and Long Beach branches. Lowest grades (C+) went to evening on-time performance on the Ronkonkoma and West Hempstead branches.

Train Crews. Train crews received good marks from riders on all branches. Train crews received particularly high marks (B+) from riders in the morning on the Far Rockaway, Long Beach, Oyster Bay, Port Washington, and West Hempstead branches, and in the evening on the Far Rockaway, and West Hempstead branches.

On-Board Restrooms. Riders identified on-board restrooms as a problem on all but two branches -- Oyster Bay and Port Jefferson. Riders on nine of the branches assigned a range of below average grades (D, D+ and C-, respectively) to on-board restrooms. On-board restrooms on the Oyster Bay and Port Jefferson branches received average grades of C. Port Jefferson and West Hempstead riders gave grades of D+ for the restroom at Jamaica Station.

Security. Riders on the Montauk branch were particularly dissatisfied with security at home stations (D+) and parking lots (D+). This year's grades declined from last year's grades of C and C- respectively.

Home Station Access. Home station building and ticket selling hours received lower grades from riders. Home station building hours received low grades from riders on the Oyster Bay (C-), Port Jefferson (C-), Babylon (C) and Far Rockaway (C) branches. Grades for ticket selling hours were lowest on the Montauk (D+) and Port Jefferson branches, followed by Far Rockaway (C-) and Oyster Bay (C-) branches. Riders on the remaining branches gave a C to home station ticket selling hours.

Train Service. Train service is an issue for riders on certain branches. Below average grades were given for the midday service on the Montauk branch (D+), late night service on the Montauk branch (D+), Port Jefferson (D+), and Oyster Bay (D) branches, and weekend service on the Oyster Bay branch (D+).

DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS

Systemwide, riders assigned the most important priority to more frequent peak and off-peak service among a list of five service improvements.⁷ This year's priority is a change from 2001, when riders indicated on-time performance as their top preference. This change can be linked to the Rail Road's improved record for on-time performance. Riders see the need for more available seats as a second priority followed by better on-time performance, and better air conditioning. Home station security ranked as the least important service improvement.

Rank priorities differed somewhat by branch. Riders on eight branches listed more frequent peak and off-peak service as a top priority this year, compared to four of those same branches in 2001. Riders on the Babylon, West Hempstead, and Ronkonkoma branches listed better on-time performance as a top priority this year compared to five branches last year.

Riders' written comments also identified increased frequency of peak and off-peak service as the one aspect of service they most want the railroad to improve (22%). The availability of seats was identified as the second highest aspect of service to be improved (12%) – a desire which has been listed consistently within the top three most wanted improvements on every Report Card since 1996. On-board cleanliness (8%) and on-time performance (8%) were listed as third and fourth most wanted improvements.

Riders' most desired improvements specified by branch indicated additional improvements, such as improved LIRR communication (on the Babylon, Hempstead, and Montauk branches), a one-seat ride to Penn Station (Port Jefferson and Oyster Bay branches), and increased speed between stations (Oyster Bay).

SPECIAL TOPIC: COMMUNICATION

In 2002, riders were asked about the performance of the LIRR's communication to riders on specific issues and the preferred means of communication by which they would like to hear about these issues.

Systemwide, riders assigned C+ grades to LIRR communication about customer courtesy policies, service improvement plans, and customer service issues. LIRR communication

⁷ Riders were asked to determine priorities among a list of five service improvements: better on-time performance, more available seats, better air conditioning, more frequent peak and off-peak service, and home station security. All of these improvements, except home station security, were identified by customers as desired service improvements in the Council's 2000 Report Card survey and were included in a question on the 2001 survey.

about capital project planning and the cause and nature of service disruptions received grades of C.

Riders on the West Hempstead, Port Washington, and Long Beach branches gave higher grades to LIRR communication about capital project planning (B-) than riders systemwide. West Hempstead and Port Washington branch riders gave higher marks to communication about customer courtesy policies (B-). West Hempstead riders additionally feel more satisfied about their communication about service improvement plans (B-).

Riders on the Ronkonkoma and Montauk branches are the least satisfied with LIRR communication. They gave their lowest marks (C-) to communication about service disruptions and average marks (C) to service improvements, capital project plans, and customer courtesy policies.

Systemwide, riders' most frequent choice for communication is through on-board and station announcements (40%). Next preferred methods are through a Long Island Rail Road publication (20%), followed by a banner or poster in Penn, Jamaica, Flatbush, or their home stations (18%). Suggestions for other ways of communication include the web or internet, e-mail, television news, and printed flyers or posters on-board trains or at stations. Riders' communication choices by branch mirror those systemwide.

CONCLUSIONS

The positive results of the 2002 Report Card survey clearly show that riders feel conditions have improved on the Long Island Rail Road. This year, riders assigned good grades (B- and B) to a third of the performance indicators. This is a marked improvement. The majority of the grades, however, continue to reflect average levels of satisfaction (C and C+).

Systemwide, LIRR riders gave higher marks --in areas such as morning and evening on-time performance, morning seating availability, morning schedule adequacy, winter heating, summer air conditioning, seat condition, and weekend service -- which reflect the Rail Road's efforts to improve on-time performance and institute proactive maintenance procedures.

Proactive maintenance procedures have included reducing the number of cars out of service, adding to inventories of spare parts for repair, and increasing the number of tests done of car air conditioning and heating equipment. Instituting these procedures has reduced the incidence of short trains, provided more available seats, and improved the ongoing functioning of air conditioning and winter heating for customers.

The new M7 cars will continue to advance the Rail Road's positive trend of proactive maintenance through the institution of a life cycle maintenance program to replace car components before they fail. The train car interiors, including the restrooms, have been designed for easier cleaning and to withstand longer wear and tear. More seats will be available for riders in the long-term due to the greater number of cars being purchased.

As this report is being written, the first set of M7 cars has been put into revenue service. The full order of 678 M7 cars will be phased in over five years to replace the M1 fleet. By 2007, the LIRR has plans to increase the electric fleet to 1,088 cars -- up from the current 900 cars. M7 cars will eventually make up 75 percent of the entire LIRR rolling stock.

The LIRR still has more work to do. One area of concern raised this year has to do with security. Riders' sense of security significantly declined on-board trains, at Jamaica Station, and at home stations. Riders consider their personal security at the Flatbush Avenue Station and at home station parking lots to be at an average level. The tragic events of September 11, 2001 have made riders more aware and more concerned about security.

Cleanliness continues to be an issue. On-board restroom cleanliness is the worst. Some of this will be addressed with the M7 cars over the next five years, but efforts need to be made in the short-term to improve conditions in the cars that continue to be in service. The cleanliness of restrooms in Penn, Jamaica and Flatbush Avenue Stations are still below average and the waiting areas at Jamaica and Flatbush Stations are at average satisfaction levels. Special efforts should be made with Jamaica Station given the high volume of passengers who pass through the station daily and the fact that passengers are already and will continue to be inconvenienced due to construction activities through 2005.

Accessibility at home stations is another area of concern. The problem of limited ticket selling hours could be improved with the provision of additional ticket vending machines outside station buildings or on platforms. Extended station building hours – perhaps in conjunction with a local taxi service or the presence of a café or newspaper vendor- not only provides added areas to sit, keep warm, or make a telephone call, but can serve as “eyes” on the parking lot and improve riders, sense of security at home stations.

Many riders identified greater frequency of peak and off-peak service, additional express service, and changes to service schedules as desired improvements systemwide. This is not a new issue and the Rail Road is aware of it, but riders themselves may not be aware that the LIRR is trying to address these issues in long-term plans and projects.⁸

As was indicated in riders' systemwide responses, improved LIRR communication ranked sixth in the list of most wanted improvements. Riders on the Babylon, Hempstead, and Montauk branches identified this issue within their top three desired improvements. Riders on the Ronkonkoma and Montauk branches were the least satisfied with current communication levels.

While responses to the LIRRCC's 2002 LIRR Report Card survey demonstrate that riders feel positive about the improvements the Rail Road has made since the last Report Card, the LIRR must do even better. The Council commends the improvements the LIRR has made since the 2001 Report Card, yet urges the LIRR to take bolder steps to solve many of the identified service problems in the short-term. Responsiveness in the short-term builds confidence and broad support for long-term plans and goals. The Council will continue to monitor and work with the LIRR to help ensure that Rail Road service and policy remain responsive to the needs and interests of LIRR riders.

⁸ As was stated in the 2001 LIRR Report Card, the railroad's rising ridership is increasing the need and pressure to provide additional service. The LIRR is aware of this issue and is addressing it through ongoing work on the East Side Access project, which is expected to increase the Rail Road's operating capacity by 40 to 45 percent. Problems with the new dual mode locomotives have delayed the start of additional service on the Oyster Bay, Montauk, and Port Jefferson branches and the provision of additional one-seat ride service to Penn Station.

METHODOLOGY

Survey Sample

Long Island Rail Road Commuter's Council members collected a total of 1198 report card surveys distributed aboard peak-period, peak-direction LIRR trains between May 9, and June 20, 2002.

The number of surveys completed by riders of each branch as a percentage of the total fall 2001 LIRR Branch ridership is shown in Table 1. The sample represents roughly one percent of the total fall 2001 LIRR ridership. The method used to ensure that the sample size for each branch is proportional to the overall LIRR system ridership is discussed under data analysis and shown in Table 2.

Table 1. LIRR Fall 2001 Ridership, 2002 Sample Sizes and Percentages

BRANCH	FALL 2001 RIDERSHIP	2002 REPORT CARD SURVEY SAMPLE	SAMPLE SIZE AS % OF BRANCH RIDERSHIP
Babylon	27,420	238	0.87%
Far Rockaway	4,290	75	1.75%
Hempstead	4,960	78	1.57%
Long Beach	9,270	94	1.01%
Montauk	3,180	56	1.76%
Oyster Bay	2,230	69	3.09%
Port Jefferson	4,880	87	1.78%
Huntington/ Hicksville	14,850	87	0.59%
Port Washington	16,140	153	0.95%
Ronkonkoma	17,870	245	1.37%
West Hempstead	1,550	16	1.03%
TOTALS	106,640	1,198	1.12%

Survey Content

As was done in previous years, the survey asked respondents to provide basic demographic information (home station, gender, age, and number of years riding the LIRR); grade the railroad on 47 performance indicators⁹ relating to train and station conditions, service, schedules, and personnel; and to rank five service improvements in order of importance (better on-time performance, more available seats, better air conditioning, more frequent service, and home station security).

Categories of performance indicators included: on-time performance and train crews; management, escalator reliability and on-board climate control; and public announcements on trains and at stations, train and station cleanliness, personal security, home station conditions, and overall and specific time period train service. Riders graded the railroad using the following scale: A = Excellent; B = Good; C = Average; D = Below Average; F = Failing; and N/A = Not Applicable.

Riders were also asked to identify one aspect of the railroad they would most like to see improved and to make additional comments or suggestions.

⁹ Home station maintenance was not evaluated in 2002.

As it does every year, the report card survey included a few questions designed to solicit input on current issues facing the railroad and its riders. Respondents were asked two topical questions this year concerning the LIRR’s communication to riders. One question asked respondents to use the system of grading described above to rate the LIRR’s communication to riders about service disruptions, service and capital project planning, customer courtesy policies and service issues. A second question asked riders to select their most preferred ways of receiving communication from the LIRR about these issues. A copy of the 2002 Report Card survey is provided in Appendix A.

Data Analysis

Data for all but the two written response questions were analyzed using SPSS statistical software. Written responses were analyzed using qualitative methods and Microsoft Excel software.¹⁰ Percentages were rounded up or down to the nearest percentage point.

To ensure that the effective sample size for each branch is proportional to its contribution to the overall LIRR system ridership, branch responses were weighted in the analysis of the systemwide results. Branch weights used to adjust the survey sample to similar proportions to the overall system branch ridership are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. LIRR Branch Ridership Percentages, Pre-Weighted Branch Sample Percentages and Branch Weights.

LIRR BRANCH	BRANCH RIDERSHIP AS % OF SYSTEMWIDE RIDERSHIP	PRE-WEIGHT SURVEY SAMPLE AS % OF SYSTEMWIDE SAMPLE	WEIGHT BY BRANCH
Babylon	26%	20%	1.29
Far Rockaway	4%	6%	0.64
Hempstead	5%	7%	0.71
Long Beach	9%	8%	1.11
Montauk	3%	5%	0.64
Oyster Bay	2%	6%	0.36
Port Jefferson	5%	7%	0.63
Huntington/ Hicksville	14%	7%	1.92
Port Washington	15%	13%	1.19
Ronkonkoma	17%	20%	0.82
West Hempstead	1%	1%	1.09
TOTALS	100%	100%	N/A

With a few exceptions, data entered into SPSS were assigned numerical values. The grades circled by respondents were assigned the following values: A=12, B=9, C=6, D=3,

¹⁰ In past years, written responses to the question: “What one thing would you most like to see improved?” were analyzed using SPSS.

F=0 and N/A = missing.¹¹ Descriptive statistics, frequencies and cross tabulations were run for systemwide and branch data. Results were averaged for each performance indicator. The average values (or means) were then assigned to a letter grade according to the numerical ranges listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Letter Grades with Assigned Mean Value Ranges

LETTER GRADE	ASSIGNED MEAN (AVERAGE) VALUE RANGE
A	12.00 to 11.50
A-	11.49 to 10.50
B+	10.49 to 9.50
B	9.49 to 8.50
B-	8.49 to 7.50
C+	7.49 to 6.50
C	6.49 to 5.50
C-	5.49 to 4.50
D+	4.49 to 3.50
D	3.49 to 2.50
D-	2.49 to 1.50
F	1.49 to 0

A statistical independent groups t- test between means was performed to compare performance indicator results between 2001 and 2002 and to determine significant changes in mean values. A confidence level of 95 percent was selected and statistical significance was determined if the variation between the means was 0.05 or less.¹²

¹¹ These numerical values represent recoded values from those the data were first input with (A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, and F=1) to allow for a greater range of mean values to assign letter grades.

¹² The two-tailed probability score was used as the measure of the variation between the means. If the two-tailed probability score was less than or equal to 0.05, it was determined that the change in scores between 2001 and 2002 was statistically significant.

SYSTEMWIDE RESULTS

Rider Sample Characteristics

The sample of 1198 riders who participated in the survey come from the eleven branches of the LIRR and are fairly evenly split between men (49%) and women (51%). Those surveyed represent a wide range of ages. More than half are between the ages of 30–49 (57%) and 18 percent are younger-- between the ages of 20 – 29. Another 14 percent of the riders are between 50-59.

Many riders are relatively new to the railroad, traveling on the LIRR only within the past 5 years (41%), or 6 and 10 years (21%). Another group of commuters are longer term, indicating that they have been using the railroad between 11 and 15 years (15%) or twenty or more years (13%). A smaller percentage of riders have been traveling on the LIRR for 16 to 20 years (10%).

Perception of Change in LIRR Service

Rider perceptions of change in the provision of LIRR service have improved in 2002 (See Table 4). Riders who think LIRR service has gotten better (45%) increased by 10 percent from 2001 and riders who think service has gotten worse (10%) declined by 10 percent. Percentages stayed roughly the same for those who think service has not changed (45%). These findings positively reinforce the Rail Road’s efforts to improve service.

Table 4. Perception of Change, Systemwide

YEAR	THE LIRR IS GETTING BETTER	THE LIRR IS GETTING WORSE	NO CHANGE IS OCCURRING
2002	45%	10%	45%
2001	35%	20%	44%
2000	25%	25%	50%

Performance Indicators

While the railroad’s grade for overall service remains unchanged from 2001 (C+), the actual numerical score represents a statistically significant increase. The increased score shows some improvement in customer satisfaction with LIRR service since last year and positively reflects the Rail Road’s efforts toward service improvement. The grade results for the systemwide performance indicators are presented in Table 5. (for numerical scores, see Appendix B, Table 19.)

In 2002, actual scores rose significantly in 27 categories and declined significantly in only three categories. These results strongly contrast with last year’s scores, which significantly worsened in 18 categories and improved in four. Significant increases and decreases in 2002 are summarized in the boxes below.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS WITH SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN 2002:	
• Overall Service	
• On-Time Performance (morning and evening)	
• Schedule Adequacy (morning and evening)	
• Train Crews (morning and evening)	15
• Announcements	

Grades improved in 15 categories due to rising scores in 2002, and declined in only one category. In 2001, grades declined in 21 categories and improved in two categories.

Table 5. Results for Performance Indicators, Systemwide¹³

INDICATOR	2000	2001	2002
Overall Service	C+	C+	C+
On-Time Performance AM	B-	B-	B
On-Time Performance PM	C+	C+	B-
Seating Availability AM	B-	C+	B-
Seating Availability PM	C+	C-	C
Schedule Adequacy AM	B-	C+	B-
Schedule Adequacy PM	C+	C+	C+
Train Crews AM	B	B	B
Train Crews PM	B	B-	B
Announcements: On-Board AM	C+	C+	B-
On-Board PM	C+	C+	C+
Penn Sta. AM	NA	B-	B-
Penn Sta. PM	B-	B-	B-
Jamaica Sta. AM	B-	C+	C+
Jamaica Sta. PM	C+	C+	C+
Flatbush Av. AM	NA	C+	C+
Flatbush Av. PM	B-	C+	C+
Home Sta. AM	C+	C	C
Home Sta. PM	C+	C	C
Cleanliness: On-Board	C+	C+	C+
On-Board Restroom	C	D+	D+
Home Sta. Wait Area	B-	B-	B-
Home Sta. Restroom	C+	C+	C+
Penn Sta. Wait Area	B-	B-	B-
Penn Sta. Restroom	C+	C	C
Jamaica Sta. Wait Area	C+	C	C
Jamaica Sta. Restroom	C	C-	C-
Flatbush Av. Wait Area	C	C-	C
Flatbush Av. Restroom	C-	D+	C-
Management Performance	C+	C	C+
Escalator Reliability	C+	C+	C+
Winter Heating	C+	C+	B-
Summer A/C	C	C	C+
Seat Condition	C+	C	C+
Security: On-Board	B-	B-	B-
Penn Sta.	B-	B-	B-
Jamaica Sta.	C+	C+	C+
Flatbush Av.	C+	C+	C
Home Sta.	B-	C+	C+
Parking	C+	C	C
Home Sta. Hours	C+	C-	C
Home Sta. Ticket-Selling Hours	C+	C	C
Home Sta. Maintenance	C+	C+	N/A ¹⁴
Peak-Hour Service AM	C+	B-	B-
Peak-Hour Service PM	C	C+	C+
Midday Service	C+	C+	C+
Late-Night Service	C	C	C
Weekend Service	C+	C	C+

Similar to last year, riders considered the majority (94%) of the performance indicator categories to be between average and good. Riders assigned grades of C and C+ to 62 percent of the 47 categories and grades of B- and B to 32 percent. Only 4 percent of the categories received grades of C- and 2 percent received a D+.

¹³ The arrow symbol indicates that a statistically significant change has occurred since the previous year and denotes the direction of the change. Grades with numerical scores that represent statistically significant changes in 2002 are further indicated in bold.

¹⁴ Home station maintenance was not evaluated in 2002.

The three highest numerical scores (grade B) in the 2002 survey were given to morning and evening train crews and morning on-time performance (see Table 6). These findings represent an increase in rider satisfaction with morning and evening train crews since last year and continue the trend of placing one of the two indicators in the top position since 1994.¹⁵ The presence of morning train on-time performance within riders' highest levels of satisfaction is a significant achievement and is, once again, reflective of the Rail Road's efforts to improve on-time performance over the past two and a half years.

Table 6. Three Highest-Scoring Categories, Systemwide

YEAR	HIGHEST-SCORING CATEGORY	GRADE/CHANGE	SECOND HIGHEST SCORING CATEGORY	GRADE/CHANGE	THIRD HIGHEST SCORING CATEGORY	GRADE/CHANGE
2002	Morning Train Crews	(B)	Evening Train Crews	(B)	On-Time Performance-Morning (AM)	(B)
2001	Morning Train Crews	(B)	Evening Train Crews	(B-)	Perceived Security at Penn Station	(B-)
2000	Bi-level Coaches	(B+)	Morning Train Crews	(B)	Perceived Security at Penn Station	(B-)

Riders were the most dissatisfied with restroom cleanliness. On-board restrooms received a grade of D+. The grades for the Jamaica Station restroom (C-) and the Flatbush Avenue restroom (C-) were also low. While the numerical scores show a slight improvement over 2001, restroom cleanliness continues to be an area of needed improvement (see Table 7).

Table 7. Three Lowest-Scoring Categories, Systemwide

YEAR	LOWEST-SCORING CATEGORY	GRADE/CHANGE	SECOND LOWEST SCORING CATEGORY	GRADE/CHANGE	THIRD LOWEST SCORING CATEGORY	GRADE/CHANGE
2002	On-Board Restroom Cleanliness	(D+)	Jamaica Station Restroom Cleanliness	(C-)	Flatbush Avenue Restroom Cleanliness	(C-)
2001	On-Board Restroom Cleanliness	(D+)	Flatbush Avenue Restroom Cleanliness	(D+)	Flatbush Avenue Waiting Area Cleanliness (C-)	(C-)
2000	Flatbush Avenue Restroom Cleanliness	(C-)	On-Board Restroom Cleanliness	(C)	Jamaica Station Restroom Cleanliness	(C)

¹⁵ With the exception of the 2000 Report Card.

Desired Improvements

As in 2001, desired improvements to LIRR service were elicited from riders in three different questions. The first question asked riders to rank a list of five service improvements from most to least important to determine priority. The second question asked riders to write in responses to the question “What one thing would you most like to see improved?” The third question asked riders to write in additional comments or suggestions. Rider responses to this last question are discussed in the Customer Comments section of the report.

Riders were first asked to determine priorities among a list of five service improvements. The list of improvements were: better on-time performance, more available seats, better air conditioning, more frequent peak and off-peak service, and home station security. All of these improvements, except home station security, were identified by customers as desired service improvements in the Council’s 2000 Report Card survey and were included in a question on the 2001 survey. This year, home station security replaced no more short trains in the list of desired service improvements.

In 2002 riders assigned the most important priority to more frequent peak and off-peak service (see Table 8). This year’s top priority is a change from 2001, when riders indicated their top preference for improvement to be for better on-time performance. This change reflects the railroad’s improved record for on-time performance.

Consistent with last year, riders in 2002 identified the need for more available seats as the second most important priority, indicating that this issue is one that the railroad has yet to address. Riders identified better on-time performance as the third most important priority for service improvements, indicating that the railroad could do even better in this area. The priority for better air conditioning slipped to fourth position for riders this year, compared to third position in 2001. A positive reflection of the Rail Road’s efforts to improve air conditioning on-board trains over the past year.

Table 8. Priority Ranking of Service Improvements¹⁶

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT	RANK (1 is highest/ 5 is lowest)	
	2001	2002
More Frequent Peak and Off-Peak Service	4	1
More Available Seats	2	2
Better On-Time Performance	1	3
Better Air-Conditioning	3	4
Home Station Security	N/A	5
No More Short Trains	5	N/A

The second question asked riders to identify the aspects of service that they would most like the railroad to improve. These improvements were as an open response. A list of the 951 written responses was sorted and tabulated by theme. The top twenty most-wanted improvements identified by riders are summarized in Table 9.¹⁷

¹⁶ Possible service improvements represent four of the most-desired service improvements identified in the Council’s 2000 Report Card Survey Report.

¹⁷ Number one, two and four in the list of most wanted improvements mirror the top three service improvement priorities riders’ chose in the previous question (See Table 8). While the five service improvements listed in the

Increased frequency of peak and off-peak service was identified by the highest percentage of riders (22%). Improving the availability of seats was also seen as a significant need by riders (12%), and as was noted in 2001, has consistently been listed in the top three desired improvements on every Report Card since 1996.

The need for additional seating remains an issue for riders despite the Rail Road's reduction in the numbers of short trains - one of the factors impacting seat availability. This year, only a small percent of the riders (1%) identified the elimination of short trains as a desired improvement compared to a larger percent last year (4%). Riders' less frequent mention of the need to eliminate short trains conveys the fact that they have noticed the Rail Road's efforts to improve car reliability. On-board cleanliness (8%) and on-time performance (8%) were the third and fourth highest desired improvements, indicating that these remain key issues for riders despite improvements the LIRR has undertaken. This year, greater numbers of riders expressed a desire for more on and off-peak express non-stop service (5%); improved efforts to communicate with riders in the form of clear announcements and more on train flyers (5%); increased presence of security at home stations (4%); and a reduction in air conditioning temperatures (4%).

Table 9. Top 20 Most-Wanted Improvements, Systemwide

MOST-WANTED IMPROVEMENT	# OF RESPONSES	% OF TOTAL RESPONSES TO THIS QUESTION
Frequency of Peak and Off-Peak Service	212	22%
Seat Availability	118	12%
On-Board Cleanliness	75	8%
On-Time Performance	74	8%
Express Service (Peak and Off-peak)	48	5%
LIRR Communication to Riders (Announcements/ On-board flyers)	45	5%
Home Station Security	38	4%
Air-Conditioning (Reduce Temperature)	37	4%
Service Schedule Adjustments	36	4%
Newer Trains	31	3%
Seat Maintenance and Comfort	29	3%
One Seat Ride to Penn Station	28	3%
Station Improvements	26	3%
Train Crew	23	2%
Home Station Cleanliness	17	2%
Fare Reductions	15	2%
Increase Speed between Stations	15	2%
Reduce Cell Phone Noise	13	1%
Parking Availability at Home Station	11	1%
Eliminate Short Trains	8	1%

previous question were drawn from the top most wanted improvements identified by riders in the 2000 Report Card survey, the position of this second question directly after the priority-ranking question may have affected riders' responses.

As shown in Table 10, more frequent peak and off-peak trains and on-board cleanliness have become new top issues this year for which riders desire improvements compared to the past three years.

Table 10. Comparison of Top Three Most Wanted Improvements, Systemwide

YEAR	FIRST MOST-WANTED IMPROVEMENT (%)	SECOND MOST-WANTED IMPROVEMENT (%)	THIRD MOST-WANTED IMPROVEMENT (%)
2002	More Frequent Peak and Off-Peak Trains (22%)	Seat Availability (12%)	On-Board Cleanliness (8%)
2001	Seat Availability (13%)	On-Time Performance (10%)	Parking (9%)
2000	On-Time Performance (11%)	Seat Availability (8%)	Eliminate Short Trains (7%)

Special Topic: Communication

Each year, riders are asked a set of questions to determine their views on topical issues. In 2001, riders were asked about capital expenditures, service improvements, and home stations. In 2002, riders were asked about the performance of the LIRR’s communication to customers on specific issues and the preferred means of communication by which they would like to hear about these issues.

The first question asked riders to rate the railroad’s communication to customers about: the cause and nature of service disruptions as they are occurring; service improvement plans; capital project planning; customer courtesy policies; customer service issues; and other (to be identified by rider). Riders were asked to use the same grading method used in the performance indicators.

Among the five issues identified, three received grades of C+ and two received grades of C. Riders feel communication by the LIRR is above average about customer courtesy policies, followed by service improvement plans and customer service issues. Riders have average satisfaction levels with the LIRR’s efforts to communicate with them about capital project planning and the cause and nature of service disruptions. Written in responses for other issues of communication were minimal. Results are shown in Table 11.

Table 11. LIRR Communication to Riders

TYPE OF LIRR COMMUNICATION TO RIDERS	GRADE
Customer Courtesy Policies	C+
Service Improvement Plans	C+
Customer Service Issues	C+
Capital Project Planning	C
Cause and Nature of Service Disruptions as They Occur	C

The following question asked riders about their preferred way to hear about the above issues. Riders were asked to select two choices without the need to specify a priority. The most frequently chosen form of communication is on-board and station announcements (40%). Next preferred methods are through a Long Island Rail Road publication (20%), followed by a banner or poster in Penn, Jamaica, Flatbush, or their home stations (18%). Suggestions for other ways of communicating to riders include the Worldwide Web or Internet, e-mail, television news, and printed flyers or posters on-board trains or at stations. Results are shown in Table 12.

Table 12. Preferred Means of Communication

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION	PERCENT PREFERRED
On-board / Station Announcements	40%
LIRR Publication	20%
Banner/ Poster in Penn/ Jamaica/ Flatbush/ Home station	18%
Long Island/ Regional Newspaper	11%
Local Radio Station	9%
Other	2%

BRANCH RESULTS

Results were analyzed by branch to determine trends and changes. Rider sample characteristics were not analyzed by branch since riders who participated in the survey encompass a small, non-representative demographic segment of branch ridership.

Perception of Change in LIRR Service

Results for the question regarding perception of change on the LIRR show a strong trend towards customer satisfaction when analyzed by branch (See Table 13). Riders on ten of the eleven branches feel that service is getting better rather than worse.

Riders on the West Hempstead branch feel less definitive about service-- the greater percent feel that no change has occurred (42.9%). Comments received from West Hempstead riders indicate dissatisfaction with train car cleanliness and short platforms. A man from Westwood wrote: “The trains are dirty, walls and ceilings too.” Another woman from West Hempstead wrote: “West Hempstead is a short platform and I’m not always sure what car I’m in.”

Alternatively, riders on the Port Jefferson branch feel the most satisfied, with 75 percent indicating service is improving. Comments received from Port Jefferson riders support this trend. A woman rider wrote: “From Northport nice train! Overall LIRR is very clean and have nice service.” A man from the Kings Park station remarked on service differences between the Port Jefferson and the Ronkonkoma branches: “Ronkonkoma service is weak. Since I began taking the Port Jefferson branch, I am quite pleased.”

Customer satisfaction on the Montauk and Oyster Bay Branch has declined somewhat from last year. Oyster Bay riders expressed dissatisfaction with frequency of evening peak service, such as a comment from one woman from East Williston: “Add a train between 6:35 and 7:30 pm in the evening.” Another woman expressed dissatisfaction with the slowness of trains between stations: “Faster service on the Oyster Bay LIRR. Why should it take 15 minutes from Albertson to Mineola, when it is less than three miles?”

Table 13. Perception of Change, by Branch

BRANCH	THE LIRR IS GETTING BETTER	THE LIRR IS GETTING WORSE	NO CHANGE IS OCCURRING
Babylon	47%	10%	44%
Far Rockaway	39%	11%	50%
Hempstead	43%	14%	43%
Long Beach	54%	5%	41%
Montauk	52%	2%	46%
Oyster Bay	54%	8%	39%
Port Jefferson	75%	1%	24%
Huntington	45%	10%	45%
Port Washington	45%	7%	48%
Ronkonkoma	32%	18%	50%

West Hempstead	29%	29%	43%
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Performance Indicators

Overall Service. In 2002, riders assigned their highest grades (B-) for overall service to four branches: Port Washington, Long Beach, Far Rockaway, and Babylon. This is a distinct improvement over last year, when Port Washington was the only branch to receive a grade of B-. The highest numerical score went to the Port Washington branch (8.36), followed by Long Beach (8.14), Far Rockaway (7.63), and Babylon (7.57). While Port Washington's grade of B- has remained unchanged since 2000, the numerical score it received represents a significant statistical increase.

The B- grades for Long Beach, Far Rockaway, and Babylon in 2002 are also significant increases compared to 2001. Grades for Long Beach and Far Rockaway were C+ last year, while Babylon was an average C.

Riders assigned their lowest grades (C) for overall service to the Ronkonkoma and Montauk branches. Although Ronkonkoma received the lowest numerical score (6.26) of the two branches, both the C grade and the score represent a significant improvement over the C- grade it received in 2001. Overall service satisfaction on the Montauk branch remained the same as last year, with no significant increase in score (6.40). All other branches received a C+, including the West Hempstead branch whose performance improved from last year's grade of C. Results for the branch performance indicators are presented in Table 14.

On-Time Performance. On-time performance in the morning and evening show notable improvements on all the branches this year. In 2002 morning on-time performance grades rose on eight of the eleven branches with all grades in the B grade range. Grades rose for evening on-time performance on nine of the branches with all but two ratings making it to the B grade range. The only grade decline occurred on the West Hempstead branch with evening on-time performance.

Riders gave their highest grades (B+) for morning on-time performance to the Port Washington, Port Jefferson and Long Beach branches. Lowest grades (C+) went to evening on-time performance on the Ronkonkoma and West Hempstead branches.

Train Crews. Train crews received good marks from riders on all branches. Train crews received particularly high marks (B+) from riders in the morning on the Far Rockaway, Long Beach, Oyster Bay, Port Washington, and West Hempstead branches, and in the evening on the Far Rockaway, and West Hempstead branches.

Table 14. Results for Performance Indicators, by Branch

INDICATOR		BAB.	FAR ROCK.	HEMP.	LONG BEACH	MONTAUK	OYSTER BAY	PORT. JEFF.	HUNT/HICKS	PORT. WASH	RONK.	WEST. HEMP.
Overall Service		B-	B-	C+	B-	C	C+	C+	C+	B-	C	C+
On-Time Performance	am pm	B B-	B B-	B- B-	B+ B	B- B-	B- B-	B+ B	B- B-	B+ B	B- C+	B C+
Seating Availability	am pm	B- C+	B- C	C+ C	B C	B B-	B C+	B C+	C+ C	B C+	C D+	B C
Schedule Adequacy	am pm	B B-	C+ C+	C+ C+	B- B-	C C	D+ D+	C+ C-	B- C+	B- B-	C+ C+	B- C
Train Crews	am pm	B B	B+ B+	B B-	B+ B	B B	B+ B	B B	B B-	B+ B	B B-	B+ B+
Announcements: On-Board	am pm	B- C+	B B-	B- B-	B- B-	C+ C	C+ C+	C+ C+	C+ C+	B B-	C+ C+	B- B-
Penn Sta.	am pm	B B-	B B	B B	B B	B- B-	B- B-	B- B-	B- B-	B B	B- B-	B B
Jamaica Sta.	am pm	C+ C+	B- C+	B- C+	B- B-	C+ C+	C+ C+	C+ C+	B- B-	B+ B+	C+ B-	C+ C+
Flatbush Av.	am pm	C C+	C+ C+	B- C+	B- C+	C C	B- C+	C+ C+	C+ C	B+ B	C+ C+	C C+
Home Sta.	am pm	C C	C C-	C- C	C C	C- D+	C- C-	C- C-	C C	B- B-	C C	C C
Cleanliness: On-Board		C+	C	C+	C+	B-	B-	B	C+	C+	C	C
On-Board Restroom		D+	D+	C-	C-	C-	C	C	D+	D+	D+	D
Home Sta. Wait Area		B-	B-	B-	B-	C	B	B	B-	B	C+	B
Home Sta. Restroom		C+	C	B-	C+	C	C+	B-	B-	B-	C	B
Penn Sta. Wait Area		C+	B-	B-	B-	B-	B-	C+	B-	B-	C+	B-
Penn Sta. Restroom		C	B-	C+	C+	C	C	C	C+	C+	C	C+
Jamaica Sta. Wait Area		C	C+	C	C+	C+	C	C	C	C+	C	C+
Jamaica Sta. Restroom		C-	C-	C	C	C-	C-	D+	C	C	C-	D+
Flatbush Av. Wait Area		C	C	C-	C+	C-	C+	C-	C	C+	C-	C+
Flatbush Av. Restroom		C-	C-	C	C	C	C	C-	C-	C	C-	D
Management Performance		C+	C+	B-	B-	C+	C+	C+	C+	B-	C	B-
Escalator Reliability		C+	B-	C+	C+	C+	C	C+	C+	B-	C	B
Winter Heating		C+	B	B-	B-	C+	B-	B-	C+	B	C+	B
Summer A/C		C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	B-	C	B-
Seat Condition		C+	C+	C+	C+	B-	B-	B	C+	C+	C	C
Security: On-Board		B-	B-	C+	B-	C	B-	B-	C+	B-	C+	C+
Penn Sta.		B	B	B	B	B-	B-	B-	B-	B-	B-	B-
Jamaica Sta.		C	C	C+	C+	C	C	C+	C+	B	C	C+
Flatbush Av.		C	C	B-	B-	C	C+	C	C+	B-	C-	B-
Home Sta.		C+	C+	C+	C+	D+	B	C+	C+	B-	C-	C+
Parking		C	C	C+	C+	D+	C+	C+	C	C+	D+	C+
Home Sta. Hours		C	C	C+	C+	D+	C-	C-	C+	C+	C	C
Ticket-Selling Hours		C	C-	C	C+	D+	C-	D+	C	C	C	C
Peak-Hour Service	am pm	B B-	B- C+	B- C+	B B-	B- C+	C+ C	B- C	B- C+	B B-	C+ C+	B- C+
Midday Service		C+	C+	C	B-	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	C	C
Late-Night Service		C	C	C	C+	D+	D	D+	C	C+	C-	C-
Weekend Service		C+	C+	C+	B-	C	D+	C-	C	C+	C	C

On-Board Restrooms. Riders identify on-board restrooms as a problem on all but two branches – Oyster Bay and Port Jefferson. Riders on nine of the branches assigned a range of below average grades (D, D+ and C-, respectively) to on-board restrooms. On-board restrooms on the Oyster Bay and Port Jefferson branches received average grades of C. Port Jefferson and West Hempstead riders gave grades of D+ for the restroom at Jamaica Station.

Security. Riders on the Montauk branch were particularly dissatisfied with security at home stations (D+) and parking lots (D+). This year’s grades declined from last year’s grades of C and C- respectively.

Home Station Access. Home station building and ticket selling hours received lower grades from riders. Home station building hours received low grades from riders on the Oyster Bay (C-), Port Jefferson (C-), Babylon (C) and Far Rockaway (C) branches. Grades for ticket selling hours were lowest on the Montauk (D+) and Port Jefferson branches, followed by Far Rockaway (C-) and Oyster Bay (C-) branches. Riders on the remaining branches gave a C grade to home station ticket selling hours.

Train Service. Train service is an issue for riders on certain branches. Below average grades were given for the midday service on the Montauk branch (D+), late night service on the Montauk branch (D+), Port Jefferson (D+), and Oyster Bay (D) branches, and weekend service on the Oyster Bay branch (D+).

Desired Improvements

Priority lists of the five service improvements by branch differed somewhat from the systemwide results. This year, riders on eight branches listed more frequent peak and off-peak service as a top priority, compared to four of those same branches in 2001. Riders also listed better on-time performance as a top priority on three branches -- Babylon, West Hempstead, and Ronkonkoma -- compared to five branches last year. Ronkonkoma riders changed their top priority to better on-time performance this year from last year’s need for more available seats (see Table 15).

Table 15. Top-Ranked Service Improvements, by Branch

BRANCH	TOP POSSIBLE SERVICE IMPROVEMENT
Babylon	Better On-Time Performance
Far Rockaway	More Frequent Peak and Off-peak Service
Hempstead	More Frequent Peak and Off-peak Service
Long Beach	More Frequent Peak and Off-peak Service
Montauk	More Frequent Peak and Off-peak Service
Oyster Bay	More Frequent Peak and Off-peak Service
Port Jefferson	More Frequent Peak and Off-peak Service
Huntington	More Frequent Peak and Off-peak Service
Port Washington	More Frequent Peak and Off-peak Service

Ronkonkoma	Better On-Time Performance
West Hempstead	Better On-Time Performance

In answer to the open response question about aspects of service that they would most like the railroad to improve, riders on ten of the eleven branches restated their desire for more frequent peak and off-peak service as one of three top choices. Interest in more train service was expressed by four of the branches in 2001.

Seating availability was a common theme raised by riders on seven of the branches, compared with eight branches last year. On-board cleanliness was also an issue – identified as important on five of the branches this year, compared with only one branch in 2001.

The need for improved LIRR communication was a new theme this year. This concern was seen as particularly important on three branches: Babylon, Hempstead, and Montauk. Once again this year, riders expressed their desire for a one-seat ride to Penn Station on the Port Jefferson and Oyster Bay branches. Riders also asked for increased speed between stations on the Oyster Bay branch. Results are summarized in Table 16.

Table 16. Top Three Most-Wanted Improvements, by Branch

BRANCH	MOST-WANTED IMPROVEMENT	# OF RESPONSES	% OF TOTAL RESPONSES TO THIS QUESTION
Babylon	Seat Availability	34	16%
	On-Board Cleanliness	24	12%
	LIRR Communication to Riders	16	8%
Far Rockaway	More Frequent Peak and Off-Peak Service	24	40%
	Seat Availability	6	10%
	On-Board Cleanliness	5	8%
Hempstead	Express Service (Peak and Off-peak)/	10	14%
	More Frequent Peak and Off-Peak Service/	10	14%
	On-Time Performance (tie)	10	14%
	Seat Availability	7	10%
	LIRR Communication to Riders/	4	5%
	Service Schedule Adjustments/ Newer Trains (tie)	4	5%
Long Beach	More Frequent Peak and Off-Peak Service/	1	33%
	On-Time Performance/	1	33%
	Limit Alcohol Consumption (tie)	1	33%
Montauk	More Frequent Peak and Off-Peak Service	15	29%
	Home Station Security	5	10%
	LIRR Communication to Riders/	4	8%
	Station Improvements (tie)	4	8%

Oyster Bay	More Frequent Peak and Off-Peak Service	27	36%
	One Seat Ride to Penn Station	13	17%
	Increase Speed between Stations	6	8%
Port Jefferson	More Frequent Peak and Off-Peak Service	26	29%
	Service Schedule Adjustments	10	11%
	One-Seat Ride to Penn Station	9	10%
Huntington	More Frequent Peak and Off-Peak Service	11	17%
	Seat Availability	10	15%
	On-Board Cleanliness	7	11%
Port Washington	More Frequent Peak and Off-Peak Service	49	42%
	On-Board Cleanliness	19	16%
	Seat Availability	9	8%
Ronkonkoma	Seat Availability	37	17%
	More Frequent Peak and Off-Peak Service/	30	14%
	On-Time Performance (tie)	30	14%
	Newer Trains	24	11%
West Hempstead	More Frequent Peak and Off-Peak Service	4	27%
	Seat Availability	3	20%
	On-Board Cleanliness	2	13%

Special Topic: Communication

Riders on the West Hempstead, Port Washington, and Long Beach branches gave higher grades to LIRR communication about capital project planning (B-) than riders systemwide. West Hempstead and Port Washington branch riders gave higher marks to communication about customer courtesy policies (B-). West Hempstead riders feel more satisfied with communication about service improvement plans (B-).

Ronkonkoma and Montauk branches are the least satisfied with LIRR communication. Riders on both branches gave their lowest marks (C-) to communication about service disruptions and average marks (C) to service improvements, capital project plans, and customer courtesy policies. Montauk branch riders gave a slightly higher mark for communication about customer service issues (C+). Results are detailed in Table 17.

Table 17. LIRR Communication to Riders, by Branch

BRANCH	TOPIC OF COMMUNICATION TO RIDERS				
	CAUSE AND NATURE OF SERVICE DISRUPTION	SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLANS	CAPITAL PROJECT PLANNING	CUSTOMER COURTESY POLICIES	CUSTOMER SERVICE ISSUES
Babylon	C	C+	C+	C	C
Far Rockaway	C+	C+	C+	C+	C
Hempstead	C+	C+	C+	C	C+
Long Beach	C+	C+	C+	C+	C
Montauk	C-	C	C	C	C+
Oyster Bay	C	C+	C+	C	C+
Port Jefferson	C	C+	C+	C+	C

Huntington	C	C+	C+	C+	C+
Port Washington	C+	C+	B-	B-	C+
Ronkonkoma	C-	C	C	C	C
West Hempstead	C	B-	B-	B-	C+

Riders preferred choices for communication methods by branch mirror those indicated by riders systemwide. Preferred means of communication are: announcements on-board and at the station, through a LIRR publication, and by a banner or poster in Penn, Jamaica, Flatbush or at home stations. Results are detailed below in Table 18.

Table 18. Preferred Means of Communication, by Branch

BRANCH	MEANS OF COMMUNICATION TO RIDERS				
	ON BOARD/ STATION ANNOUNCEMENTS	LIRR PUBLICATION	BANNER OR POSTER IN PENN/JAMAICA/FLATBUS H/ HOME STATION	LONG ISLAND/ REGIONAL NEWSPAPER	LOCAL RADIO STATION
Babylon	41%	20%	16%	12%	10%
Far Rockaway	42%	18%	24%	7%	6%
Hempstead	41%	20%	16%	11%	9%
Long Beach	35%	20%	18%	8%	8%
Montauk	43%	20%	17%	9%	9%
Oyster Bay	40%	19%	20%	10%	10%
Port Jefferson	33%	28%	17%	13%	6%
Huntington	40%	18%	23%	10%	8%
Port Washington	38%	18%	20%	11%	10%
Ronkonkoma	39%	20%	16%	14%	10%
West Hempstead	41%	19%	19%	15%	7%

CONCLUSIONS

The positive results of the 2002 Report Card survey clearly show that riders feel conditions have improved on the Long Island Rail Road. This year, riders assigned good grades (B- and B) to a third of the performance indicators. This is a marked improvement. The majority of the grades, however, continue to reflect average levels of satisfaction (C and C+).

Systemwide, LIRR riders gave higher marks --in areas such as morning and evening on-time performance, morning seating availability, morning schedule adequacy, winter heating, summer air conditioning, seat condition, and weekend service -- which reflect the Rail Road's efforts to improve on-time performance and institute proactive maintenance procedures.

Proactive maintenance procedures have included lowering the mean distance between car failures (MDBF), adding to inventories of spare parts for repair, and increasing the number of tests done of car air conditioning and heating equipment. Instituting these procedures has reduced the incidence of short trains, provided more available seats, and improved the ongoing functioning of air conditioning and winter heating for customers.

The new M7 cars will continue to advance the Rail Road's positive trend of proactive maintenance through the institution of a life cycle maintenance program to replace car components before they fail. The train car interiors, including the restrooms, have been designed for easier cleaning and to withstand longer wear and tear. More seats will be available for riders in the long-term due to the greater number of cars being purchased.

As this report is being written, the first set of M7 cars has been put into revenue service. The full order of 678 M7 cars will be phased in over five years to replace the M1 fleet. By 2007, the LIRR plans to increase the electric fleet to 1,088 cars -- up from the current 900 cars. M7 cars will eventually make up 75 percent of the entire LIRR rolling stock.

The LIRR still has more work to do. One area of concern raised this year has to do with security. Riders' sense of security significantly declined on-board trains, at Jamaica Station, and at home stations. Riders consider their personal security at the Flatbush Avenue Station and at home station parking lots to be at an average level. The tragic events of September 11, 2001 have made riders more aware and more concerned about security.

Cleanliness continues to be an issue. On-board restroom cleanliness is the worst. Some of this will be addressed with the M7 cars over the next five years, but efforts need to be made in the short-term to improve conditions in the cars that continue to be in service. The cleanliness of restrooms in Penn, Jamaica and Flatbush Avenue Stations are still below average and the waiting areas at Jamaica and Flatbush Stations are at average satisfaction levels. Special efforts should be made with Jamaica Station given the high volume of passengers who pass through the station daily and the fact that passengers are already and will continue to be inconvenienced due to construction activities through 2005.

Accessibility at home stations is another area of concern. The problem of limited ticket selling hours could be improved with the provision of additional ticket vending machines outside station buildings or on platforms. Extended station building hours -- perhaps in conjunction with a local taxi service or the presence of a café or newspaper vendor- not

only provides added areas to sit, keep warm, or make a telephone call, but can serve as “eyes” on the parking lot and improve riders’, sense of security at home stations.

Many riders identified greater frequency of peak and off-peak service, additional express service, and changes to service schedules as desired improvements systemwide. This is not a new issue and the Rail Road is aware of it, but riders themselves may not be aware that the LIRR is trying to address these issues in long-term plans and projects.¹⁸

As was indicated in riders’ systemwide responses, improved LIRR communication ranked sixth in the list of most wanted improvements. Riders on the Babylon, Hempstead, and Montauk branches identified this issue within their top three desired improvements. Riders on the Ronkonkoma and Montauk branches were the least satisfied with current communication levels.

While responses to the LIRRCC’s 2002 LIRR Report Card survey demonstrate that riders feel positive about the improvements the Rail Road has made since the last Report Card, the LIRR must do even better. The Council commends the improvements the LIRR has made since the 2001 Report Card, yet urges the LIRR to take bolder steps to solve many of the identified service problems in the short-term. Responsiveness in the short-term builds confidence and broad support for long-term plans and goals. The Council will continue to monitor and work with the LIRR to help ensure that Rail Road service and policy remain responsive to the needs and interests of LIRR riders.

¹⁸ As was stated in the 2001 LIRR Report Card, the railroad’s rising ridership is increasing the need and pressure to provide additional service. The LIRR is aware of this issue and is addressing it through ongoing work on the East Side Access project, which is expected to increase the Rail Road’s operating capacity by 40 to 45 percent. Problems with the new dual mode locomotives have delayed the start of additional service on the Oyster Bay, Montauk, and Port Jefferson branches and the provision of additional one-seat ride service to Penn Station.

APPENDIX A

LIRR 2002 Report Card Survey Form

APPENDIX B

Numerical Scores for Performance Indicators, Systemwide

Table 19. Numerical Scores for Performance Indicators, Systemwide¹⁹

INDICATOR	2000	2001	2002
Overall Service	6.65	6.58	7.37
On-Time Performance AM	8.18	8.10	8.81
On-Time Performance PM	7.02	6.76	8.05
Seating Availability AM	7.76	7.46	7.77
Seating Availability PM	6.28	5.33	6.30
Schedule Adequacy AM	7.71	7.39	7.77
Schedule Adequacy PM	7.22	6.77	7.28
Train Crews AM	9.04	8.75	9.25
Train Crews PM	8.62	8.41	8.84
Announcements:			
On-Board AM	7.47	7.42	7.65
On-Board PM	7.14	7.02	7.41
Penn Sta. AM	NA	8.11	8.48
Penn Sta. PM	7.86	7.80	8.36
Jamaica Sta. AM	7.59	7.33	7.37
Jamaica Sta. PM	7.39	7.23	7.41
Flatbush Av. AM	NA	6.74	6.92
Flatbush Av. PM	7.33	6.53	6.85
Home Sta. AM	6.85	5.81	6.13
Home Sta. PM	6.99	5.98	6.26
Cleanliness:			
On-Board	6.71	6.52	6.86
On-Board Restroom	5.57	4.06	4.38
Home Sta. Wait Area	8.16	7.79	8.08
Home Sta. Restroom	7.35	6.65	7.27
Penn Sta. Wait Area	7.78	7.69	7.84
Penn Sta. Restroom	6.74	6.38	6.34
Jamaica Sta. Wait Area	6.52	6.32	6.33
Jamaica Sta. Restroom	5.89	4.73	5.18
Flatbush Av. Wait Area	6.03	5.30	6.07
Flatbush Av. Restroom	5.45	4.13	5.29
Management Performance	6.59	6.17	7.30
Escalator Reliability	7.01	6.56	6.99
Winter Heating	7.09	6.86	7.67
Summer A/C	6.05	5.64	6.85
Seat Condition	6.91	6.45	6.82
Security:			
On-Board	7.92	7.90	7.61
Penn Sta.	8.09	8.15	8.30
Jamaica Sta.	6.82	6.86	6.51
Flatbush Av.	6.88	6.82	6.34
Home Sta.	7.74	7.26	6.77
Parking	6.91	5.91	5.82
Home Sta. Hours	6.84	6.48	6.34
Home Sta. Ticket-Selling Hours	6.77	6.05	6.17
Home Sta. Maintenance	7.49	7.00	N/A ²⁰
Peak-Hour Service AM	7.44	7.63	8.21
Peak-Hour Service PM	6.34	6.66	7.46
Midday Service	6.86	6.60	7.00
Late-Night Service	6.25	5.40	6.07
Weekend Service	6.67	6.12	6.66

¹⁹ Numerical scores are the mean (average) values calculated for each indicator. The arrow symbol indicates that a statistically significant change has occurred since the previous year and denotes the direction of the change. Numerical scores that represent statistically significant changes in 2002 are further indicated in bold.

²⁰ Home station maintenance was not evaluated in 2002.

APPENDIX C

Analysis of Customer Written Comments Systemwide and by Branch

CUSTOMER WRITTEN COMMENTS

Additional customer preferences and concerns are identified in a final survey question that asks riders for comments or suggestions. A total of 312 written comments were received.²¹ Responses were grouped by theme and type of comment (likes and compliments, dislikes and complaints, and suggestions). The nature of these comments are discussed thematically systemwide and by branch.

Responses were grouped according to the following broad categories and themes:

SERVICE DELIVERY

- **Service Requirements** (frequency of service, type of service -such as express service or a direct one-seat ride to Penn Station, short car trains, and general comments about how the railroad is doing overall)
- **Scheduling of Trains** (specific changes in train timetables and references to the punctuality of train service -on-time performance)
- **Communications** (on-board and station announcements, leafleting and other ways the LIRR communicates with customers)

CUSTOMER COMFORT AND SAFETY

- **Air-Conditioning, Heating and Ventilation** (temperature and air flow on-board trains)
- **More Comfortable Seating** (condition and comfort of seating on trains)
- **On-Board Cleanliness** (cleanliness of train car interiors and restrooms)
- **Station Cleanliness and Condition** (cleanliness in stations including waiting areas and restrooms)
- **Cell Phones** (customer behavior related to cell phone use)
- **Alcohol Policy** (concerns with the drinking of alcoholic beverages in the train and at stations)
- **Home Station/ Parking Lot Security** (safety and security at home stations and home station parking lots)

WESTERN TERMINALS AND HUB STATIONS

- **Penn Station** (issues pertaining specifically to Penn Station)
- **Jamaica Station** (issues pertaining specifically to Jamaica Station)

MANAGEMENT

- **Train Equipment** (the condition and use of the cars and other train equipment)
- **Employee Conduct** (train conductors and other LIRR staff)
- **Fares** (railroad fares and pricing)
- **Miscellaneous** (responses that did not fit into any of the above categories)

SYSTEMWIDE

Roughly 250 of the comments received from riders discuss service requirements (77), scheduling of trains (46), train equipment (30), heating, ventilation and air conditioning (21), on-board cleanliness (20), communications to customers (19), home station and parking lot security (17), and LIRR employee conduct (17).

²¹ Many riders chose not to respond to this question.

The majority were suggestions for improvement (203), followed by dislikes and complaints (85). Likes and compliments make up the remaining 24 comments. Numbers of riders' comments by category and type are presented in Table 19.

Table 20. Number of Systemwide Comments, by Category and Type

CATEGORY	LIKES/COMPLIMENTS (#)	DISLIKES/COMPLAINTS (#)	SUGGESTIONS (#)	TOTAL COMMENTS (#)
Service Requirements	14	17	46	77
Scheduling of Trains	1	3	42	46
Train Equipment	0	2	28	30
Heating, Ventilation and Air- Conditioning	0	16	5	21
On-Board Cleanliness	2	12	6	20
Communications	1	4	14	19
Home Station/ Parking Lot Security	0	8	9	17
LIRR Employee Conduct	3	2	12	17
Cell Phones	2	1	8	11
Parking/Station Improvements	0	2	9	11
Fares	0	4	6	10
On-Time Performance	1	4	2	7
Station Cleanliness	0	5	2	7
Seating Comfort	0	0	5	5
Penn Station	0	1	4	5
Miscellaneous	0	0	5	5
Alcohol Policy	0	3	0	3
Jamaica Station	0	1	0	1
TOTALS	24	85	203	312

BY BRANCH

Of the 312 written comments received, the largest number came from riders on the Ronkonkoma branch (95), followed by the Babylon (60), Port Jefferson (35) branches. Riders on the Hempstead (12), West Hempstead (4) and Long Beach (1) branches submitted the fewest comments. The following is a brief discussion focusing on riders' most prominent concerns by branch. Table 20 shows numbers of branch comments by category.

Table 21. Number of Branch Comments, by Category

CATEGORY	BAB.	FAR ROCK.	HEMP.	LONG BEAC H	MONTAUK	OYSTE R BAY	PORT. JEFF.	HUNT/ HICKS .	PORT. WASH .	RONK.	WEST . HEMP .
Service Requirements	20	7	7	1	3	8	9	7	1	14	0
Scheduling of Trains	0	0	0	0	2	4	14	0	3	21	2
Train Equipment	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	3	22	0
Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning	3	1	0	0	3	7	3	1	0	3	0
On-Board Cleanliness	8	4	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	4	0
Communications	3	0	0	0	1	4	1	3	3	4	0
Home Station/ Parking Lot Security	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	11	0
Employee Conduct	1	2	0	0	3	1	4	0	2	4	0
Cell Phones	7	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0
Parking/Station Improvements	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	0	3	1
Fares	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	5	0

On-Time Performance	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
Station Cleanliness	4	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
Seating Comfort	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0
Penn Station	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Miscellaneous	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Alcohol Policy	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jamaica Station	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BRANCH TOTALS	60	20	12	1	23	26	35	20	16	95	4

Babylon Branch

Commuters on the Babylon branch are most concerned with service requirements (20). Their main concerns are for more frequent train service and available seating during peak hours. Some riders complimented the Rail Road on the improvements in levels of service. In 2001, Babylon branch riders were more concerned with lack of parking and the conditions of local stations (19) and equipment and maintenance (13). Service concerns were a top concern of riders in 2000 (21).

On-board cleanliness of car interiors and restrooms account for eight comments by riders. Concerns about cell phones (7) focus on noise, rider courtesy, and a desire to institute “quiet” or “no cell phone” cars. Station cleanliness issues (4) identify problems with odors, trash, and homelessness.

Table 22. Majority of Babylon Branch Comments by Category and Type

CATEGORY	LIKES	DISLIKES	SUGGESTIONS	TOTAL # OF BRANCH COMMENTS BY ISSUE
Service Requirements	4	6	10	20
On-Board Cleanliness	0	5	3	8
Cell Phones	1	1	5	7
Station Cleanliness	0	3	1	4
TOTAL	5	15	19	39

Far Rockaway Branch

Far Rockaway riders have similar concerns to Babylon branch riders. Their two primary concerns are: service requirements (7) and on-board cleanliness (4). Service concerns include requests for more frequent peak and off-peak service and more available seating. Comments pertaining to on-board cleanliness specify needs for cleaner restrooms, regular provision of toilet paper and bathroom supplies, and poor car interior condition and smell.

Seating comfort is another issue for Far Rockaway branch riders (2). Comments on seating includes requests for new seat cushions and new seats similar to the ones in the bi-level trains.

Riders also gave positive feedback and compliments to the train crews (2).

Table 23. Majority of Far Rockaway Branch Comments by Category and Type

CATEGORY	LIKES	DISLIKES	SUGGESTIONS	TOTAL # OF BRANCH COMMENTS BY ISSUE
Service Requirements	0	4	3	7

On-Board Cleanliness	0	4	0	4
Employee Conduct	2	0	0	2
Seating Comfort	0	0	2	2
TOTAL	2	8	5	15

Hempstead Branch

Hempstead branch riders focused on service requirements (7). Requests for more frequent peak and off peak service -particularly between 5:13 and 5:38 pm from Penn, additional express service, and more available seating in the morning represent the majority of the comments. Last year, riders expressed the need to eliminate short trains.

This year, other issues included reducing cell phone noise, the need for better on-time performance, particularly on the 5:59 pm train, improving the waiting area at Penn Station, and the lack of staff with actual train status information at Jamaica Station. Last year, riders were also concerned about local stations and parking.

Table 24. Majority of Hempstead Branch Comments by Category and Type

CATEGORY	LIKES	DISLIKES	SUGGESTIONS	TOTAL # OF BRANCH COMMENTS BY ISSUE
Service Requirements	0	1	6	7
Cell Phones	0	0	1	1
On-Time Performance	0	1	0	1
Penn Station	0	0	1	1
Jamaica Station	0	1	0	1
TOTAL	0	3	8	11

Long Beach Branch

The response received from riders on the Long Beach branch was extremely low this year—only one comment, compared to a substantial response in 2001, 63 comments. The one rider who took the time to write a response requested more frequent peak and off-peak service.

Table 25. Majority of Long Beach Branch Comments by Category and Type

CATEGORY	LIKES	DISLIKES	SUGGESTIONS	TOTAL # OF BRANCH COMMENTS BY ISSUE
Service Requirements	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	0	0	1	1

Montauk Branch

Montauk branch riders are as concerned as other branch riders about the frequency of peak and off-peak service (3), requesting additional service after 5:00 pm, especially. Riders also identify problems with moderating the air-conditioning on the bi-level cars

(3), and home station and parking lot security (3). Comments regarding train crews express the desire for conductors to tell commuters to remove their feet from seats and to allow extra time for train door closings for elderly passengers to exit. Additional rider comments suggested limiting alcoholic consumption on trains.

Table 26. Majority of Montauk Branch Comments by Category and Type

CATEGORY	LIKES	DISLIKES	SUGGESTIONS	TOTAL # OF BRANCH COMMENTS BY ISSUE
Service Requirements	0	1	2	3
Heating, Ventilation, and Air-Conditioning	0	2	1	3
Home Station/ Parking				
Lot Security	0	1	2	3
Employee Conduct	0	0	3	3
Alcohol Policy	0	3	0	3
TOTAL	0	7	8	15

Oyster Bay Branch

Oyster Bay branch riders’ concerns focus on service requirements (8), heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (7), scheduling (4), and communications (4). Last year, customer comments had a higher number of scheduling related issues (10).

This year, service requirement related comments include suggestions for more direct service to Penn Station; express trains from Greenvale, Oyster Bay, and Mineola; and increased speed between stations. Riders’ comments about air-conditioning state that temperatures on-board trains are too cold.

Scheduling suggestions include a request for a 7:10 pm train to Oyster Bay, ensuring a connection between the 5:33 pm Penn to Hicksville Station train and the Jamaica to Oyster Bay Station train; and a need for more seats on morning trains from Jamaica Station to New York City.

Communication comments identify high noise levels on trains, a lack of announcements on trains before departures, the infrequency of announcements of train destinations by conductors, and problems with the ability of the new voice activated telephone information line to properly read caller responses.

Table 27. Majority of Oyster Bay Branch Comments by Category and Type

CATEGORY	LIKES	DISLIKES	SUGGESTIONS	TOTAL # OF BRANCH COMMENTS BY ISSUE
Service Requirements	0	0	8	8
Heating, Ventilation, and Air-Conditioning	0	7	0	7
Scheduling of Trains	0	0	4	4
Communications	1	2	1	4

TOTAL	1	9	13	23
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Port Jefferson Branch

Commuters on the Port Jefferson branch are most concerned with scheduling of trains (14) and service requirements (9). Last year, scheduling (4) and heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (4) were the top concerns.

This year, commuter issues with scheduling and service requirements include the need for more frequent peak and off-peak service, a one-seat ride express service to Penn Station, earlier evening peak period express trains, and one more express train from Penn Station to Port Jefferson, after 5:00 pm. One commuter identified habitually overcrowded conditions on 4:19 and 4:49 pm trains from Penn to Kings Park and the 6:13 am train from Kings Park to Penn Station. Several positive comments from riders include one from a man from Northport: “Service has improved dramatically in the last ten years, Thank you.” Another man from Kings Park wrote: “The LIRR appears to be significantly improved in the last 15 years.”

Comments regarding employee conduct (4) focus on the need for a program for conductors on public relations and a reasonable solution for forgotten monthly tickets, and the inability of staff and a plan to accommodate riders when equipment breaks down. Other suggestions are for staff to encourage the use of racks over seats for carry on items and for conductors to check restrooms for customers who avoid paying the fare.

Customers also specify that the temperature of the air-conditioning is too cold in the bi-level coaches (3).

Table 28. Majority of Port Jefferson Branch Comments by Category and Type

CATEGORY	LIKES	DISLIKES	SUGGESTIONS	TOTAL # OF BRANCH COMMENTS BY ISSUE
Scheduling of Trains	1	3	10	14
Service Requirements	4	0	0	9
Employee Conduct	0	1	3	4
Heating, Ventilation, and Air-Conditioning	1	0	0	3
TOTAL	6	4	13	28

Huntington/Hicksville Branch

Huntington/Hicksville branch riders’ key issues pertain to service requirements (7), communications (3), and parking and station improvements (3). Last year, comments about parking and station improvements (19) were slightly more numerous than comments about scheduling of trains (18).

This year, main concerns with service requirements focused on the need for more frequent peak and off-peak service. Other specific issues included an express train from Mineola, the need to enforce handicapped seating for disabled, consistent short train and

delay problems with the 6:08 pm train to New Hyde Park. Riders also expressed positive comments about the Mail ‘n Ride program.

Comments having to do with communications included the need for better communication with passengers through a better public address system, more signs, and timely announcements about delays. Other requests were for “objective reports on train and track condition and maintenance.” Positive comments were expressed for the Cell Phone Courtesy campaign.

Riders also expressed the need for more parking at the Huntington Station. One rider from Hicksville noted that a public storage building was constructed on a prime location to the station.

Table 29. Majority of Huntington/Hicksville Branch Comments by Category and Type

CATEGORY	LIKES	DISLIKES	SUGGESTIONS	TOTAL # OF BRANCH COMMENTS BY ISSUE
Service Requirements	1	1	5	7
Communications	0	0	3	3
Parking/Station Improvements	0	0	3	3
Train Equipment	0	0	2	2
Fares	0	1	1	2
Cell Phones	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	2	2	14	18

Port Washington Branch

Top issues for riders on the Port Washington branch include scheduling of trains (3), train equipment (3) and communications (3). While scheduling remains a top issue from last year (8), equipment and communications are more prominent this year. Scheduling comments include a request for an additional morning peak hour train from Broadway to Penn Station between 7:20 and 8:07 am, an additional morning train between 6:33 and 7:27 am leaving from Manhasset, and more frequent service in the evening peak.

Comments related to train equipment include a request for newer and bi-level trains, as well as an automated ticket machine (or additional ticket selling hours) at the Bayside Station.

Comments related to communications suggest the need for more announcements, less pamphlets on the seats, and a request for more pertinent travel information to be posted on TV monitors at stations.

This year, customers also commented on on-board cleanliness (2), which seems to be a problem in the morning, and would like to see conductors remind riders not to use more than one seat (employee conduct- 2).

Table 30. Majority of Port Washington Branch Comments by Category and Type

CATEGORY	LIKES	DISLIKES	SUGGESTIONS	TOTAL # OF BRANCH COMMENTS BY ISSUE
Scheduling of Trains	0	0	3	3
Train Equipment	0	0	3	3
Communications	0	1	2	3
On-Board Cleanliness	0	1	1	2
Employee Conduct	1	0	1	2
TOTAL	1	2	10	13

Ronkonkoma Branch

Train equipment (22), scheduling of trains (21), and service requirements (14) top the list of Ronkonkoma branch riders’ concerns this year. Scheduling of trains was also a concern last year (18).

Train equipment related comments express interest in the scheduled start date for the new trains and reiterate the desire for new trains.

Scheduling and service requirement remarks refer to non-existent service from Smithtown, long gaps in evening service to Patchogue after 5:40 pm, the need for more express trains from Deer Park to Penn Station and from Stony Brook to Deer Park, more express trains on weekends, more frequent peak and off-peak service, and more available seats. A woman from Farmingdale wrote: “Why does Massapequa have twice as many trains and twice as many seats?” Another woman from Deer Park suggested: “Service has improved and Penn Station is much cleaner and safer, but it could be better.”

Another issue is frequent confusion about the stops made on the 5:22 pm train from Penn Station. A woman from Ronkonkoma wrote: “Is there any way the 5:22 pm train from Penn Station can stop at only scheduled stops. The main conductor constantly stops the train for people who get on the wrong train.”

Riders are also concerned about home station and parking lot security (11). Comments identified the need for better lighting and an increased security presence in home stations, parking lots, and on-board trains. Specific issues include the presence of men loitering and drinking on the platform at the Brentwood Station, the need for better lighting at night at the Deer Park Station, more security in the Ronkonkoma and Wyandanch parking lots, and the need for a security presence on late night trains to control drunken behavior.

Table 31. Majority of Ronkonkoma Branch Comments by Category and Type

CATEGORY	LIKES	DISLIKES	SUGGESTIONS	TOTAL # OF BRANCH COMMENTS BY ISSUE
Equipment	0	1	21	22
Scheduling of Trains	0	0	21	21
Service Requirements	4	3	7	14
Home Station/Parking Lot Security	0	4	7	11

TOTAL	4	8	56	68
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West Hempstead Branch

West Hempstead riders submitted few comments. Scheduling of train concerns (2) focus on overcrowding on the 5:33 pm train from Penn Station to West Hempstead and the need for additional service on the weekends. Parking and station improvements comments (1) deal with not knowing which car one is in due to short station platforms. The need for improved on-time performance (1) was also identified. Last year, communication issues (4), scheduling of trains (3), and cleanliness (3) were on the top of riders' list of concerns.

Table 32. Majority of West Hempstead Branch Comments by Category and Type

CATEGORY	LIKES	DISLIKES	SUGGESTIONS	TOTAL # OF BRANCH COMMENTS BY ISSUE
Scheduling of Trains	0	0	2	2
Parking/Station Improvements	0	0	1	1
On-Time Performance	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	0	0	4	4