



## Metropolitan Transportation Authority

State of New York

July 9, 2019

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Honorable Thomas P. DiNapoli ✓  
Office of the State Comptroller  
59 Maiden Lane, 31<sup>st</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10038

RE: Response to Final Report #2018-S-30 – Unexpected Delays and Events

Gentlemen:

On February 27, 2019, the Office of the State Comptroller issued the above referenced audit report. As required by Section 170 of the Executive Law, I am providing you with the attached response which addresses the recommendations contained in the report.

Additionally, I will be working with staff to ensure that management is following up on and enforcing the audit's recommendations, where appropriate, and requesting regular, interim reports to that effect.

A copy of the final audit report is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Foye  
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer

c: Helene Fromm, MTA Chief of Staff  
Michael J. Fucilli, Auditor General, MTA Audit Services

Attachment

**RECEIVED**  
EXECUTIVE CORRESPONDENCE

JUL 17 2019

OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER  
THOMAS P. DINAPOLI  
COMPTROLLER

*The agencies of the MTA*

MTA New York City Transit  
MTA Long Island Rail Road

MTA Metro-North Railroad  
MTA Bridges and Tunnels

MTA Capital Construction  
MTA Bus Company



June 27, 2019

Mr. Patrick Foye  
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
2 Broadway  
New York, NY 10004

**RE: MTA Long Island Rail Road  
Unexpected Delays and Events  
Report 2018-S-30**

Dear Chairman Foye:

As required by Section 170 of the Executive Law, detailed below are the updated actions that have been taken by the LIRR to address the two recommendations contained in the above-referenced audit report.

While there are numerous variables that can influence the severity of an incident and the nature of a response, the LIRR has a robust program to manage unexpected events efficiently and effectively. At the forefront of any emergency or unexpected event is the safety of our customers and employees. As such, when an event occurs, the focus of the employees filling the roles of the Incident Response Structure (IRS) is on the operation and management of the incident, which can be fluid and requires the responders' full attention.

The LIRR has progressed many initiatives to improve its performance. *LIRR Forward* was designed to expedite critical infrastructure work to proactively reduce service disruptions and streamline internal communications to provide customers with consistent, clear and timely information. Examples of completed LIRR Forward initiatives include:

- ✓ Outfitting of grade crossings with reflective safety delineators reducing the number of cars inadvertently turning onto the right of way from 15 during January to May 2018 to 1 since June 2018;
- ✓ Installing GPS equipment on 952 rail cars allowing the LIRR to deliver the myLIRR train tracking tool to customers;
- ✓ Upgrading 149 track circuits at Harold and Queens Interlockings;
- ✓ Installing 60 snow switch covers;
- ✓ Welding of over 2,000 rail joints; and
- ✓ Upgrading the 10 most problematic switches.

Examples of tangible improvements resulting from *LIRR Forward* include:

<b>Area of Improvement</b>	<b>Q1 2019</b>	<b>Q1 2018</b>	<b>Improvement</b>
<b>OTP</b>	93%	88%	5%
<b>Number of Late Trains over 15 minutes</b>	618	1,422	(804)
<b>Number of Short Trains</b>	919	1,102	(183)
<b>Average Delay (minutes)</b>	12	15	(3)

Other noticeable improvements have also been made to customer communications including the LIRR's:

- ✓ “myLIRR”, a new mobile website enabling LIRR customers to track their train in real-time using GPS data, as well as see the exact position and length of upcoming trains in real time;
- ✓ Installing countdown clocks at 121 stations, which display how many minutes until the next train arrives;
- ✓ Updating procedures for our service alerts to relay news of events before delays begin to occur; and
- ✓ Progressing the completion of wireless connectivity at Penn Station and Atlantic Terminal to allow customers to remain connected and receive real-time alerts.

Additionally, the LIRR has recently implemented enhancements to its IRS, including a new coding system that classifies events by levels based on the incident's anticipated impact to service, documenting by the Incident Commander during major incidents, and a pilot initiative spanning the next six (6) months to one (1) year to evaluate the feasibility of documenting additional IRS roles assumed by personnel during an incident. The coding classifications allow individuals to understand the severity of an event, with the potential impact to service, creating awareness of urgency for all departments. The documentation will allow for a specific point of reference when reviewing post-incident performance.

In 2018, the LIRR developed and completed a new and intensified professional training program of all LIRR Public Information Office (PIO) personnel and ushers. A primary focus has been to provide clearer and more concise customer announcements. Refresher training will be provided in 2019.

As of August 2018, the LIRR's Stations Department was fully staffed in the Movement Bureau (MB), providing newly established 24/7 hands-on coverage and overall support related to bus service during emergency events, including but not limited to calling out buses and recording pertinent information such as the number of buses ordered, number of buses that arrive, release times, and use (i.e., buses used to transport customers or as standby). Bus arrivals are also verified by Stations field personnel and staff in the MB in conjunction with bus company dispatchers, as needed and Transportation personnel dispatched to a disruption site. Also, the PIO currently notifies customers of the availability of bus service as soon it receives the information to relay. The PIO also encourage customers to take alternate branches, as applicable (e.g., if the number of buses available will not accommodate the number of customers affected by a major incident).

The LIRR's response to two recent 2019 events (a grade crossing incident in Westbury and a train derailment in Speonk) are evidence of the LIRR's progress in improving its unplanned emergency response protocols. In both cases, LIRR employees restored service safely and as quickly as possible while at the same time providing clear communication to customers regarding the nature of the incident and alternative service plans.

Below please find detailed responses to the specific findings and recommendations in this report, as well as clarifications to statements included herein.

**Recommendation No. 1**

Work with other constituent agencies (e.g., NYCT, MTA Bus) to develop procedures for cross-honoring, including specific parameters that would require cross-honoring.

**LIRR Implementation Status: LIRR already complies with this recommendation.**

**LIRR Response:**

Procedures that currently exist have been noted to OSC. The LIRR previously provided to the OSC pages from its Winter Storm Operating Procedure (WSOP) detailing the already in-place Reciprocal Emergency Management Procedures updated as of November 2017. The WSOP has since been renamed to Operating Plan for Winter Storms and Other Contingencies. To further ensure appropriate access for customers, LIRR employees are deployed at key transit entrances when events warrant and staff are available. Strategic placement of LIRR staff ensures LIRR cross honored customers enroute to the subway are not turned away immediately upon a completed repair and allows for a smooth transition to normal service.

In addition, there is a longstanding agreement between the LIRR and New York City Transit (NYCT) describing the role of each agency when major service disruptions occur and establishing operating procedures, personnel deployment strategies and alternate service for LIRR customers allowing them to reach their destination. Management from LIRR Transportation Services (TS) and Controller's Office will jointly work with NYCT to review if the agreement should be updated to reflect some of the new processes that have been enacted.

**Recommendation No. 2**

Compile a list of all Lessons Learned recommendations and the status of each. Document when and how each recommendation was implemented and by whom (e.g., department, unit, individual).

**LIRR Implementation Status: LIRR already complies with this recommendation.**

**LIRR Response:**

Specifically, TS:

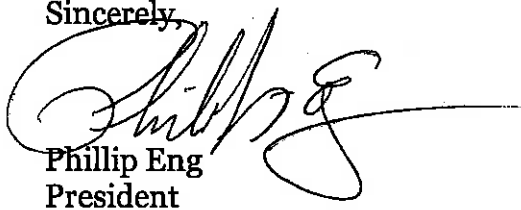
- ✓ Compiles and maintains a list of Lessons Learned to show when and how recommendations are implemented.
- ✓ Includes meeting dates and names of attendees in addition to attending departments in the meeting minutes.

Mr. Foye  
June 27, 2019  
Page 4 of 4

Also, the LIRR conducts weekly operational meetings to review the week's incidents. Included in the weekly operational meetings of the LIRR is the review of public messaging by the LIRR, which ensures on an ongoing basis messaging issues are reviewed and resolved. Finally, the LIRR is in the process of providing real time information to customers of conditions that may adversely affect their commute prior to boarding, instead of waiting until a train is delayed by 10 minutes.

Please contact me should you require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phillip Eng", written over a white background. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Phillip Eng  
President

cc: M. Young  
R. Brooks  
J. Rosado  
M. Fucilli  
D. Jurgens