



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

State of New York

April 13, 2026

Hon. Kathy Hochul
Governor
The Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Hon. Thomas P. DiNapoli
Comptroller
State of New York
59 Maiden Lane, 31st Floor
New York, NY 10038

RE: Response to Final Report #2023-S-28 – Implementation of Train Service to Grand Central Madison

Dear Governor Hochul and Comptroller DiNapoli:

On June 18, 2025, 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.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janno Lieber".

Janno Lieber

c: Juliette Michaelson, MTA Chief of Staff
Monica Murray, Auditor General, MTA Audit Services



April 13, 2026

Mr. Janno Lieber
Chair and Chief Executive Officer
Metropolitan Transportation Authority
2 Broadway, 20th Floor
New York, NY 10017

**RE: New York State Comptroller's Request for Response
Implementation of Grand Central Madison Service 2023-S-28
180-Day Follow-up**

Dear Chair Lieber,

As required by Section 170 of the Executive Law, below is the status addressing the recommendations in the above-referenced report. The report contained nine (9) recommendations. LIRR's and MTA's position as reported in our 30-day response dated April 15, 2025 to the Office of the Comptroller's Final Draft report remains unchanged.

The focus of the audit was to determine whether Long Island Rail Road (LIRR):

- implemented train service to Grand Central Madison (GCM) terminal in a manner that addressed customer needs and;
- addressed passenger concerns in General Order 202, effective September 5, 2023.

In January 2026, in addition to successfully achieving the 60/40 split, GCM ridership reached 1,560,880 passengers (based on load weight data). Additionally, 2025 OTP for the year exceeded 96%, above the goal of 94%, the best in recorded history outside of Covid.

The LIRR continues to refine operations and enhance the customer experience, with consistently strong satisfaction scores demonstrating the long-term success of the GCM expansion. Based on the Fall 2025 Customer Count Survey:

- Overall LIRR customer satisfaction was at 80% reflecting continued positive feedback.
- Customers whose destination was GCM or Jamaica reported the highest satisfaction with LIRR. Key drivers included the quality of transfers, which increased to 69% (up from Spring 2025 by 2 points), and strong service reliability at 86%.

Below please find detailed responses to the specific findings and recommendations.

With regard to this report, LIRR has taken action to update the Service Guidelines as noted

in our response to recommendation eight (8).

Recommendation No. 1

Process and close out customer feedback cases within the expected time frame.

Original Response

The MTA acknowledges this recommendation, but no new action will be taken. In response to the initiation of new service to GCM, several public sessions were held to review and address customer feedback, which was concluded within the expected timeframe.

Page 4, 3rd paragraph under Customer Engagement, states “We found that 45 of the 247 cases were not closed up to 78 days after the 14-day timeframe requirement.” It should be noted that 38 of the 45 cases identified as overdue (84.4%), were not relevant to GCM service – See *Attachment C*. These included issues predating its implementation or unrelated matters such as announcement voice quality, elevator outages, fare discrepancies, and parking at Huntington Station. Moreover, the closure rates of the 247 cases sampled were not representative of the department’s overall case closure rate for 2023.

The MTA systems underwent a migration to a new platform in June 2022. For calendar year 2023, the first full year of utilization of the new system, the LIRR closed a total of more than 17,400 cases, with an average case closure rate of six (6) days, and a median case closure rate of three (3) days. Nearly 93% of cases closed within 14 calendar days which was within the established Service Level Agreement (SLA) while managing a substantially higher volume of cases compared to 2022 (17,441 versus 9,486, representing an 83% increase). In 2024, adherence to SLA increased to 98%, accompanied by a 16% increase in volume compared to 2022 (10,968 vs. 9,486), with an average case closure rate of three (3) days and a median case closure rate of one (1) day.

Implementation Status Update

As noted in our original response, no new action taken. Customer Engagement uses a combination of reporting tools, dashboards, and supervisory monitoring to ensure Service Level Agreement (SLA) compliance. SLA adherence has surpassed the 2025 goal of 95% with more than 98% of cases closing within 14 calendar days. Overall case timeliness has also remained stable with cases closing on average within three (3) days, and the median case closure time of one (1) day. We expect these metrics to be maintained for the remainder of 2025 and beyond. All cases in the CRM are automatically time-stamped upon creation in a non-editable field and begin in a “Received” status and continue to run until the case is moved to a “Closed” status. All status changes are captured in the case’s audit log. For LIRR, cases appear in the agency-specific List View, which displays Date/Time Opened and Case Age in Days to provide immediate visibility into case duration.

Recommendation No. 2

Develop a formal mechanism for documenting the receipt and assessment of comments from the public regarding proposed train schedules or other service-planning issues.

Original Response

The LIRR and MTA acknowledge this recommendation, but no new action will be taken. Over the years, the MTA has made remarkable strides in improving its customer feedback tools, harnessing the power of new technology to collect real-time feedback data and gain invaluable insights that can be shared with relevant departments. At the MTA, we understand the importance of customer feedback in shaping our operations and making informed decisions. By investing in the necessary upgrades and resources, we have established a more robust and efficient system that enables us to effectively address public concerns and enhance the overall commuter experience.

Since 2022, the MTA has invested over \$22M in the latest technology to improve the customer experience system. This includes \$14M for our Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) platform, and over \$8M for our Contact Center as a Service System (CCaaS). As a result, we improved the overall customer experience, including shortening and strengthening the customer feedback loop, expanding our ability to respond to customers through multiple input channels, and enhancing self-service opportunities. With respect to the receipt of comments from the public, there is a formal mechanism in place that documents their receipt. Comments submitted through our general online feedback form receive a case number and are logged in our CRM platform. Similarly, cases submitted during a public hearing process are also incorporated into the system, via a custom form pertinent to the hearing. With respect to the assessment of scheduling/service planning feedback conveyed via the online feedback form, Customer Engagement staff typically share that feedback with Service Planning via email, in some instances as information only as a response is not required, and in other instances seeking a response back as to the feasibility of implementing the suggestion. In addition, customer feedback is regularly transmitted to Service Planning in aggregate using the reporting tools available in the CRM so that Service Planning can see which trains and/or branches are receiving the greatest share of feedback. It is not necessarily useful to document responses on a case-by-case basis as many of the schedule changes made were broad-based that addressed a multitude of customer concerns (for example, increasing the frequency of Brooklyn shuttle service in the initial weeks after the rollout of the timetable.)

Implementation Status Update

As noted in our original response, no new action taken. Feedback received by the public, whether through custom forms developed in conjunction with public hearings, through our main feedback form, or other channels such as chat, phone, letter, email, or Social Media are documented in the CRM system. Each submission receives a case number. Once in the CRM, comments are regularly shared with the appropriate department responsible for investigating and assessing that feedback. Feedback submitted directly via an online form automatically receives a unique case number for tracking purposes, with case numbers assigned through manual case creation for other communication channels.

In 2025, LIRR received roughly 700 schedule related comments: over 570 via the online portal, 50+ through chat/social media, 40+ via email or custom forms, and 25+ by letter, comment card, or phone. This reflects a 63% decrease compared to schedule comments received in 2024, and an 88% decrease compared to schedule comments received in 2023. This downward trend demonstrates that LIRR is effectively responding to customer feedback and implementing meaningful schedule changes, resulting in fewer related concerns. The Department exceeded its goal for the year, closing 60% of cases within 1–2

days and 98% within 14 days.

Recommendation No. 3

Document actions taken to revise or adjust service and/or the decision not to take action in response to customer feedback.

Original Response

The LIRR and MTA acknowledge this recommendation but no new action will be taken. The MTA highly values feedback received from its customers. It is important to note that actions taken to adjust service are not solely based on customer feedback. Customer feedback is a valuable input and is just one of the many other critical factors considered in the decision-making process. Feedback is reviewed holistically, considering various factors to ensure the best possible service for passengers given potential infrastructure and equipment availability. Other input includes passenger demand, operational feasibility, resource availability, safety, and system efficiency. This comprehensive evaluation ensures that changes made are well-considered and aligned with the best interests of the entire system. These factors are instrumental in ensuring safe and reliable service. As such, documenting and listing the specific changes made based on feedback can be challenging as there are numerous contributing factors that would have to be carefully weighed. This recommendation seeks to impose additional bureaucratic processes with no clear benefit, and this would be inconsistent with the MTA – and the Comptroller’s – push in favor of increased efficiency and cost savings.

Customer Engagement and Service Planning have a longstanding collegial, productive, and successful relationship with respect to addressing customer feedback on scheduling/service issues. Service Planning recognizes Customer Engagement's role in advocating for the customer, and Customer Engagement recognizes the infrastructure, equipment, personnel, and other logistical issues that may preclude the implementation of a given customer suggestion. Contrary to the following statement, “...*some* passengers may have been required to change their travel time...”(Page 3, 2nd Paragraph under Results of Audit), the recent service adjustments involved schedule changes affecting every LIRR branch and impacting all customers. LIRR serves five (5) western terminals, where the option to transfer was always available to our customers. Part of the September 2024 timetable provided for less customer transfers in addition to more direct service to Atlantic Terminal. Our objective is to provide comprehensive service to all our riders, not just a select group.

Implementation Status Update

As noted in our original response, no new action taken. That said, Customer Engagement shares customer suggestions with Service Planning at least monthly and more frequently when needed either individually or through statistical reporting; annotating the case with respect to Service Planning’s findings; and responding to the customer as appropriate.

When customer feedback results in a revision or adjustment to service, Service Planning documents those changes through General Notices (GN’s), the Employee Timetable, and the Public Timetable. Any such updates are communicated to the Customer Experience team during the weekly overview meetings.

Recommendation No. 4

Revisit the process to identify those that are essential to the service planning decisions and document all essential decisions to ensure the efficiency of future decision-making.

Original Response

The LIRR acknowledges this recommendation, but no new action will be taken. Each department's role within this process is clearly identified, allowing for effective communication and collaboration. The essential departments involved in this process are Engineering and Capital Program Delivery & Oversight. These departments are responsible for coordinating the track and/or station activities. Following a thorough discussion among all concerned parties, and once consensus is reached on the requested track outages, Service Planning marks up the General order to allocate track time for the agreed-upon activities. This track time, as reflected in the General Order, is then documented on the Final Draft General Order Summary page as shown in *Attachment A*. In addition, feedback is required from other departments such as Maintenance of Equipment and Transportation to determine equipment and manpower availability. Additional processes to identify those that are essential to Service Planning decisions can also be found in the Track Outage Plan (TOP) which ensures that relevant departments collaborate and agree on the necessary Service Planning decisions and is reviewed and agreed upon annually.

It is crucial to address the statement in the draft report that "...it is not their practice to document service-planning decisions." as stated in the 1st paragraph on page 5, as it is factually incorrect. Service planning decisions are documented through various means to ensure future efficient decision-making. These documents include General Notice changes, General Orders, Crew Book revisions, and Equipment Manipulation revisions; all of which have been previously provided to the Auditors as evidence of our commitment to documenting service planning decisions. The LIRR produces a document known as the Staff Summary – please see *Attachment B*, which provides information for the Long Island Committee. Timetable changes are noted, as are service improvements and various construction activities. This document is signed by the Senior Vice President-Operations and Chief Transportation Officer. Nevertheless, to further enhance documentation, the LIRR will establish a documented concurrence process amongst departments for information contained in General Orders. More specifically, documented concurrence from Service Planning, Engineering, and Capital Program Delivery & Oversight departments will be required.

Implementation Status Update

As noted in our original response, no new action taken. A corporate decision was made that the information addressed is already captured within the Track Outage Plan. Because of this determination, a separate or additional concurrence process was not developed.

Recommendation No. 5

Communicate service improvements in more details to provide customers with more relevant information such as types of service and branches affected.

Original Response

The LIRR acknowledges this recommendation and is taking an alternative course of action. Information regarding planned service changes is disseminated to the public through accessible online platforms. Customers can consult [mta.info/alerts](https://www.mta.info/alerts) for current and upcoming planned service changes on the LIRR that may impact their journeys. Furthermore, the TrainTime application provides real-time arrival and status updates, including incident notifications relevant to a user's selected branch or line. Revised travel plans can be made via [mta.info/schedules](https://www.mta.info/schedules). Customers are also offered the opportunity to subscribe to real-time service alerts, planned service change notifications, and MTA newsletters. Service changes as a result of GCM were communicated to customers via an information page (<https://www.mta.info/grandcentralmadison>).

Implementation Status Update

As noted in our original response, the MTA had already taken an alternative course of action.

Recommendation No. 6

Document the practices used by Service Planning to prepare the timetables to establish policies and procedures.

Original Response

The LIRR acknowledges this recommendation, but no new action will be taken. We note that the statements in the draft Report that “absence of formal procedure or informal notes about Service Planning practices...new personnel joining Service Planning will not have processes documented.” (Page 5, 1st paragraph) and “there are no written procedures...”(Page 6, 2nd paragraph under Scheduling Process/General Orders) are inaccurate, as demonstrated by other language in the report. As the auditors acknowledged on Page 6, 2nd paragraph under Scheduling Process/General Orders, “LIRR officials gave us their Service Planning General Order Implementation Timeline, which shows the timetable preparation steps, along with the deadlines.” Reference sheets and guides serve as valuable resources for new personnel covering a wide range of procedures related to timetable preparation. Some of these procedures include the Workflow Timeline, TPSS Manual, Production, Train Numbering Scheme, Public Timetable, Travel Time Overview & Reference Guide, Parameters, MU Fleet Operations, Validation, Equipment Manipulations, and Yard Capacities. This documentation, which is privileged and confidential, has already been shared with OSC. Nevertheless, the LIRR will develop a general document noting necessary steps, as well as referencing manuals, reference guides etc... Further, to ensure the continuity of expertise and foster growth, Service Planning maintains a workforce with varying levels of institutional knowledge. Our strategy includes hiring experienced professionals alongside providing thorough on-the-job training for newer staff, facilitated by senior team members. Knowledge sharing and proactive succession planning are integral to this approach.

Implementation Status Update

As noted in our original response, no new action taken. Existing documentation, including the Service Planning General Order Implementation Timeline and a broad set of reference guides and manuals, already outlines the timetable development process and has been provided to OSC. Since the original response, internal procedures specific to the General Order process have been further developed and formalized, reinforcing the structure already in place. Service Planning continues to maintain continuity of expertise through a mix of experienced staff and structured on-the-job training for newer personnel.

Recommendation No. 7

Document the final decision, feedback, and any other information that is due by the Corporate Decision date.

Original Response

The LIRR acknowledges this recommendation but no new action will be taken. The Corporate Decision date is communicated to stakeholders via e-mail in advance of the corporate decision due date and feedback is incorporated into G.O.– please see *Attachment A*. Additionally, please see *Attachment B* as an example of feedback received by the Corporate Decision Date. For proposed Projects/trackwork within a particular timetable timeframe, reviews are conducted with stakeholders. The outcomes of these reviews are documented according to the Track Outage Planning (TOP) process. The TOP document was provided to the auditors on May 6th, 2024.

Implementation Status Update

As noted in our original response, no new action taken. The TOP process serves as the formal mechanism for documenting the track outages incorporated into each General Order, ensuring that these operational decisions are accurately reflected within the framework of corporate decision documentation. This alignment provides a consistent record of planned outages and supports transparency in how operational requirements inform corporate decisions. To maintain accountability and ensure that associated deadlines are met, monthly TOP meetings. Further, the monthly meetings provide a structured forum to monitor the status of outages and related deliverables. In addition, Service Planning issues follow-up emails to reinforce expectations, track outstanding items, and prompt timely completion of required actions.

Recommendation No. 8

Update the Service Guidelines as planned and include new constraints to be considered.

Original Response

The LIRR and MTA agrees with this recommendation. It is important to note that the Service Guidelines utilized did not negatively impact the implementation of GCM schedule. Further, as stated in the Service Guidelines, language outlined “are not a guarantee of the level of service described and do not confer legal rights upon customers or others.” Nevertheless, the process of updating the Service Guidelines has resumed, and

meetings have been conducted to begin the process.

Implementation Status Update

The Service Guidelines have been formally revised to incorporate the new constraints identified during the review process. These updates reflect operational realities, resource considerations, and customer service priorities. Key revisions include:

- Infrastructure and service sections were updated to reflect major station additions and service expansions, including but not limited to GCM and Brooklyn Service.
- Fleet references, vehicle assignments, and accessibility requirements were revised to incorporate new fleet types.
- Customer facing technology and customer experience sections were updated to reflect new applications and tools, eliminating obsolete references.
- Ticket types and fare policies were revised to integrate and align with new station additions and current service offerings.

The updated Service Guidelines have been circulated internally and are now being applied in ongoing service planning discussions.

Recommendation No. 9

Use all available parameters when designing the timetable to better meet the customer demand.

Original Response

The LIRR acknowledges this recommendation, but no new action will be taken, since all available parameters are already used when designing timetables. Since the opening of GCM, and as part of LIRR's on-going process, data analysis is a crucial step to implement necessary changes to meet customer evolving demands. The LIRR has diligently carried out this task and continues to analyze data to adjust service, while also operating within its limitations.

Implementation Status Update

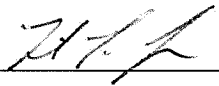
As noted in our original response, no new action taken. Nevertheless, the LIRR would like to point out that based on the Fall 2025 Customer Count Survey, overall LIRR customer satisfaction was at 80%. Key attributes included:

- Peak service frequency, which increased to 78%, up 1 point,
- Off-Peak service frequency, which remained at 73%, and
- Quality of transfer(s), which increased to 69%, up 2 points.

To continue meeting evolving customer needs, the LIRR conducts ridership analysis using multiple data sources, including load-weight data, field counts, and ticket sales data. These analyses help ensure service levels align with actual travel patterns. In addition, the LIRR adheres to established Service Guidelines and incorporates customer feedback by meeting regularly with customer experience teams to identify opportunities for improvement and respond to emerging trends.

Mr. Janno Lieber
April 13, 2026
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Sincerely,



Robert Free
President – Long Island Rail Road

cc: Hector Garcia - LIRR
Paul Dietlin – LIRR
Jenine Mehm – LIRR
Neville Perkins – LIRR
Isabel Ramesar – LIRR
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