



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Anna M. Kaplan

Officials Fight to "Save Our Express Trains" After Drastic Proposed Service Changes by Long Island Railroad; Urge Public to Get Engaged and Make Voices Heard on Proposal

SENATOR ANNA M. KAPLAN July 12, 2022

| ISSUE: **LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD, MTA, COMMUTERS, PROTECTING COMMUTERS**



NYS Senator Anna Kaplan, Assemblywoman Gina Sillitti, and Town of North Hempstead Officials fight back against a plan to eliminate express train service to the communities of Great Neck, Manhasset, Plandome and Port Washington

Commuters are urged to take a survey and attend a virtual public hearing on July 13th to make their voices heard on the proposal



Photo caption: left to right: Town of North Hempstead Councilman Peter J. Zuckerman, NYS Assemblywoman Gina Sillitti, T.O.N.H. Councilwoman Mariann Dalimonte, T.O.N.H. Supervisor Jennifer DeSena, NYS Senator Anna M. Kaplan (at podium), LIRR commuters Ariana Parasco and Ian Rasmussen, T.O.N.H. Councilwoman Veronica Lurvey. [Click here to download hi-res image.](#)

PORT WASHINGTON, NY (July 12, 2022) -- Today, New York State Senator Anna M. Kaplan (D-North Hills) and Assemblywoman Gina L. Sillitti (D-Port Washington) held a press conference at the Port Washington LIRR station with Town of North Hempstead officials and local commuters to fight a proposal by the Long Island Railroad that would dramatically impact commuters who use the Great Neck, Manhasset, Plandome, and Port Washington LIRR

stations. The changes are being proposed to allow commuters to use the new Grand Central Madison Terminal on the East Side of Manhattan, but under the proposal, the new service is coming at the expense of existing service to Penn Station.

Senator Anna M. Kaplan said "At a time when we're trying to get people safely back to the office and using mass transportation, we should be working to make commutes easier, but this proposal by the Long Island railroad does the opposite, and we're not going to accept it. I've been working with MTA leadership and the Governor's office to make sure they understand how this proposal will impact our community, because we need to find a solution to this problem that saves our express train service to Penn while opening up the new opportunities created by East Side Access. I urge all impacted residents to join us in the fight, fill out our survey, and show up to the MTA's virtual public hearing to be heard."

Assemblywoman Gina L. Sillitti said "The Port Washington Train Line is the heart of our community. The proposed schedule changes and elimination of peak services will negatively impact thousands of commuters who rely on the Long Island Rail Road for their daily commute. We've heard from countless residents who decided to move to North Hempstead because of the fast and easy commute to Manhattan, which is why we've seen such an overwhelming response to these proposed changes. In the past three weeks, we've had over 2,200 residents fill out our survey in opposition to these proposed changes and we are now asking the MTA to listen to the commuters and try and work out a compromise to save our express trains."

Under the proposed schedule changes, all current morning and afternoon express trains between Penn Station and Great Neck, Manhasset, Plandome, and Port Washington will be eliminated, and travel times will be increased by as much as 8 minutes each way. Under the current schedule, there are 4 express trains to Penn Station serving the four local stations during the AM rush, and 6 during the PM rush. Under the proposal, there are none.

Senator Kaplan and Assemblywoman Sillitti have been speaking to commuters at local train stations during morning rush hour service for several weeks in order to inform residents about the proposed changes, and get residents engaged in pushing back on the proposal. All residents are urged to [click here](#) to take a survey by Senator Kaplan and Assemblywoman Sillitti, the results of which will be shared directly with leadership at the Long Island Railroad and MTA. Additionally, all residents are urged to attend a virtual public meeting being held on Wednesday, July 13 at 6pm to speak on the record about how they will be personally impacted by the proposal. Residents can register for the hearing by [clicking here](#).

So far, over 2,200 local residents impacted by the proposal have filled out the survey, and nearly all of those commenting are opposed to the changes.

Town of North Hempstead Supervisor Jennifer DeSena said “It’s vital that our communities make their voices heard about our displeasure with the loss of peak express service. As a Manhasset resident for 22 years whose family has relied on the Port Washington branch daily, I believe that these recently announced proposed changes are totally unacceptable. I want to thank Senator Kaplan and Assemblywoman Sillitti for hosting today’s press conference. These service cuts will impact thousands of riders across the Town, and will potentially lead to decreased home values, increased congestion, and an overall decreased quality of life.”

Town of North Hempstead Councilmember Mariann Dalimonte said “I would like to applaud both Senator Kaplan and Assemblywoman Sillitti for their continued advocacy. Together, we have made it abundantly clear to MTA/LIRR officials that the draft schedule needs to be revisited. It is imperative that we continue working collectively to develop a solution that is best for the residents who depend on these trains every day.”

Town of North Hempstead Councilmember Veronica Lurvey said "If there is one thing we need to remember is this: there's always room for compromise. We must work with the MTA towards a pragmatic solution that serves the residents' best interests -- this isn't about the government agencies involved, but it's about the residents who reside in these communities."

Town of North Hempstead Councilmember Peter J. Zuckerman said "The Port Washington line is a very important line to residents in my district. As someone who commuted into the city for many years, I understand how upsetting it can be that the previous schedule has been changed. Many of my constituents have relied on this schedule for a number of years and have moved to our community because of the convenience of the LIRR to New York City."

Village of Thomaston Mayor Steven Weinberg said "Express service from Great Neck has been an intrinsic part of the fabric and infrastructure of our community on the Port Washington line for over 100 years. Thomaston residents continue to shoulder the burden of higher fares and endure the extended pocket track with the storage of trains for real improvements in service to NYC, not longer train commutes."

Village of Kensington Mayor Susan Lopatkin said "Great Neck has been the hub for express service to and from Manhattan for decades. In fact, as far back as 1915, Kensington Village archival literature touts a trip to New York City taking just 26 minutes. Currently there are six trains to New York between 7:30 and 8:30 AM. Under the proposed schedule there would be only two. This is totally unacceptable. Likewise, reducing the off-peak service to Penn station to hourly only is equally problematic to our residents. East side access should not mean a wholesale reduction of train service to the Great neck community."

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