

Madison Avenue/Commuter Rail Corridor Study:
Frequently Asked Questions

The Train Is Coming!

The Passaic County Planning Department is in the process of developing the Madison Avenue/Commuter Rail Corridor Study, which focuses on the proposed Madison Avenue Station and surrounding area. This Station project is part of the NJ Transit Passaic-Bergen Passenger Service Restoration Project, which is reactivating passenger service from Hawthorne to Hackensack along the pre-existing NYS&W freight line.

A number of Public Meetings (June 2008) and NJ Transit Public Information Meetings (September 2008) pertaining to the proposed passenger rail project were held around the City of Paterson, NJ. As a result, a compilation of Frequently Asked Questions along with answers provided by stakeholders was obtained, and is provided below.

SAFETY

Will there be improved security on and around the station / platform?

Security will be enhanced around the station and on the platform by:

- Increasing lighting;
- Installing live-action cameras which will be actively monitored 24 hours per day with a response team on hand; and
- Providing emergency calling stations on the platform with immediate response from security.

Will there be an increased police presence? Will the police work in conjunction with NJ Transit security?

NJ Transit patrols its own system, and will coordinate with local police to make sure security is at its utmost level.

Will the installation of the Madison Avenue Station increase crime or possibly trigger person-to-person crime?

This train line will actually be a crime deterrent.

There will be live cameras providing active 24 hour per day surveillance.

Once the Station is in place, there will be more lighting as well as increased pedestrian traffic, which means more eyes on the streets.

The operators of the trains will have the ability to report observed illicit or illegal activity at and around stations and platforms, as well as anywhere the train will be running. The operators will be able to alert security personnel via the train's onboard radio.

What about public safety, especially when it comes to schoolchildren, as there are a number of schools in the Study Area?

NJ Transit takes responsibility of school programs and presentations to help educate school children as to the safety and conduct both on and off trains and at stations.

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Education is extremely important especially at a young age to help individuals retain an inherent sense of railroad and train safety.

When the train is stopped at the station, will the gates be down?

When train is at the station, the gates will go down. The train operator can manually lift the gates if necessary.

When the doors close on the train, the operator can manually close the gate to block the intersection.

Each train is equipped with an emergency override if motor vehicles attempt to 'race the train' through the gates, the train operator simply has to push a button.

Are the stations/platforms handicapped accessible?

Yes, there are on-ramps to the platforms that are wheelchair accessible.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

How far apart are the proposed train stations within the City of Paterson?

Each station is approximately a 0.5-mile walk from each other along this phase of the proposed rail line.

What is the proposed length of the Madison Avenue Station?

The Madison Avenue Station platform will be approximately 100 feet in length.

What will the passenger train running schedule look like each day?

The trains will run from 5:30 a.m. until 12:00 a.m.

What will the frequency be throughout the day?

There will be 15-minute headways between 5:30am and 7:30am, and 30-minute headways between 7:30 p.m. and 12:00 a.m.

Is NJ Transit putting another rail line specifically for passenger service beside the existing freight line?

Yes. Historically (around the 1960s), there were 2 (to 3) tracks *within* the pre-existing railroad Right of Way property. NJ Transit will be 'moving' the existing freight rail line to make room for the proposed passenger rail line.

Will the new trains be as noisy as or noisier than the current freight trains that pass through the Madison Avenue Station Area?

No, in fact the passenger trains and the freight trains will be quieter after service begins.

Presently, freight trains are frequent; the existing tracks and crossings are very old and have not been upgraded in a very long time. The introduction of the proposed passenger rail line will allow upgrades to be performed on the rail lines.

These upgrades will significantly reduce the noise, especially of the freight trains that run through the Area:

- The new tracks/upgraded rail will utilize welded joints. This will eliminate the different 'segments' of rail hitting one another and making the characteristic "click-clack" noises associated with passing rail cars.
- Wooden planks will be replaced with stone, thus reducing the noise further.

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How will those properties located adjacent to the rail line(s) be affected?

Adjacent properties in general will *not* be affected but will be contacted as necessary. Some property owners may have encroached on the NYS&W Right of Way, and will be notified that they are on the railroad's property.

The NJ Transit team is working very hard to minimize the legal, and illegal, encroachment issues by adjacent property owners.

All in all, NJ Transit is simply 'putting back' what was there over 40 years ago, that is, reinstalling tracks *within* railroad property.

What is the total length of time that the train will be in the station?

The train will be docked in the station to unload and load passengers for approximately 30 – 45 seconds. If special needs passengers will be boarding, more time will be required at the stop.

The complete cycle, that is, the time the train is stopped at the station to load and unload passengers plus the amount of time required for the train to cross the intersection is approximately 90 seconds (1 ½ minutes), which is the same as the typical traffic signal cycle for intersections in the City of Paterson.

How will the introduction of the proposed passenger rail line affect traffic? What has been done to plan/prepare for present and future traffic concerns?

NJ Transit has compiled a multitude of local traffic studies in order to accommodate current and future traffic issues. The passenger trains will take roughly 40 seconds from stopping at the station to passing through the traffic lights at the proposed Madison Avenue Station.

Will there be park-and-rides at proposed station locations?

No. There will be 'bump ins' to allow safe drop off of passengers at the station/platform. Passenger drop-off areas will be provided and will not interfere with local traffic (circulation, etc.)

GENERAL INFORMATION

What sustainable design or building strategies will be incorporated into the proposed station and surrounding areas?

Will there be any sort of art, and will local artists be able to get involved?

NJ Transit finalized a cost-conscious and simple platform design in order to allow for potential upgrades and beautification that can be phased in later.

When is the construction scheduled to begin?

The Department of Transportation has given the permissive order for construction to begin on the grade crossings. Construction is scheduled to begin as early as January 2009.

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Is there anywhere to find out where the legal property lines of NYS&W are located exactly?

Are the final design plans and drawings available for view by the public, and if so, how can they be accessed?

Copies of the final design plans and drawings can be accessed from the County of Passaic Planning Department and the City of Paterson (Mayors Office, Department of Community Development – Planning Division).

LOCAL EMPLOYMENT AND INVOLVEMENT

Will local residents take precedence over other individuals as far as jobs directly related to the rail line are concerned?

Various businesses and/or contractors may be members of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program (DBE) – which provides opportunities for jobs to residents in the community (www.state.nj.us/njbusiness/contracting/minority/dbe.shtml).

NJ Transit has a mandate to utilize the DBE to provide 20-30% of jobs to local residents. NJ Transit can provide a list of DBE-approved firms within the Madison Avenue Station Area.

Local Paterson companies should be made aware of this proposal so they can bid for this project and be engaged to do the construction and continued maintenance work.

This proposed passenger rail project would provide ongoing opportunities for the community, not just the initial construction or maintenance.

Will the initial construction phases provide jobs for local residents?

The proposed passenger line will create construction as well as maintenance jobs with longevity.

The building, maintaining, and running of the passenger rail system will create employment for the local residents, as it has in the past for other rail projects of similar magnitude (e.g. the Riverline).

What can local citizens do to get involved in this project?

Citizens need to voice their concerns to community leaders in order to incorporate their ideas into the redevelopment plan for consideration. Local residents are advised to speak to planners and community leaders, voice their ideas and concerns prior to the RFP (Request for Proposal) process, and on an ongoing basis.

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If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact

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