

# Atlantic Street Bridge swap to impact Metro-North train commuters

IGNACIO LAGUARDA JUNE 26, 2019

## Atlantic Street Bridge Project

Reconstruction of Atlantic Street & Metro-North RR Bridge Replacement  
CTDOT Project Nos. 135-301 & 301-163

### ATLANTIC STREET & SOUTH STATE STREET DETOUR ROUTES



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20f15The Atlantic Street Bridge in Stamford, Connecticut, shown in a photograph taken on June 27, 2019, will be replaced, starting this Friday, with work ending on July 8. During this time, train travel will be reduced along Metro North's New Haven Line. Atlantic Street will remain closed to vehicular traffic as well. The street has been closed since February of this year, as the city continues implementing road and pedestrian improvements in the area. Photo: Matthew Brown / Hearst Connecticut Media



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10of15The Atlantic Street Bridge in Stamford, Connecticut, shown in a photograph taken on June 27, 2019, is being replaced, but work has caused headaches for commuters, as trains are running less frequently, creating overcrowding. On Wednesday, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority announced work will be delayed until early next week, affecting train travel on Monday and Tuesday.Photo: Matthew Brown / Hearst Connecticut Media



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STAMFORD — If you're planning on taking Metro-North Railroad trains next week, transportation officials have a simple bit of advice: check the schedule.

That's because train times and even the frequency of trains will be affected by the replacement of the Atlantic Street Bridge, scheduled to take place over the next 10 days.

The bridge, which hangs over Atlantic Street by South State Street, carries five train tracks. According to the state Department of Transportation, the number of tracks available in Stamford will be reduced from five to two during the 10-day period, which begins late Friday night.

As a result, Stamford will see six fewer morning rush-hour trains and 10 fewer evening rush-hour trains during weekdays, according to the DOT.

During the work, the old bridge will be taken down and the new one put in place. As portions of the old one are demolished, new pieces — constructed off site in movable portions — will be wheeled in and installed, under a method called Accelerated Bridge Construction, the same one used in the recent [Route 1 bridge project over I-95](#).

The new Atlantic Street Bridge will be wider and allow for an additional train track to serve the stations at Glenbrook, Springdale, New Canaan and Danbury.

Jim Gildea, chairman of the [Connecticut Commuter Rail Council](#), said the work is going to create overcrowding on trains next week and will likely upset some commuters, but he supports the project.

“When you upgrade your infrastructure and replace older infrastructure, reliability improves,” he said. “If we as commuters want improvements, we will have to suffer with some inconveniences.”

Gildea said the state has done a good job of communicating the work, and he applauds the DOT for selecting the least busy week of the year, in terms of train commuters, to swap out the bridge.

Ridership drops by about 25 percent during the week of July 4, according to the DOT, as many commuters take vacation during that stretch.

Gildea will be one of those vacationers, choosing to take time off next week, partially to avoid the potentially crowded conditions.

“I’m not sure that there is ever a good time to do work like this,” said Gildea, a Waterbury Branch commuter. “I think you try to limit the impact by picking a week that is slower than other weeks.”

The revised train schedule will not have a major impact on the peak-hour frequency of trains in New York stations. Peak hour trains are defined as weekday trains that arrive in Grand Central Terminal between 6-10 a.m., and leave the station between 4-8 p.m. No stations south of the Connecticut border will see a reduction of more than two trains during peak hours.

In Connecticut, several stations east of Stamford will see no reduction in peak-hour frequencies, while some will have a reduction of no more than three trains, according to the state.

To minimize the impact on customers, the DOT said schedules will be adjusted by adding stops to certain trains. The modification of the weekday schedule means many trains will either be delayed by up to five minutes or will be earlier by no more than five minutes, according to the state.

“Crowding is possible,” reads a press release from the DOT.

[This weekend, local trains](#) departing Stamford will arrive at Grand Central five minutes later than the current schedule, while trains departing Grand Central will arrive five minutes early in Stamford, and along all stations on the route.

On the New Canaan Branch, substitute bus service will be in effect after 10:30 p.m. on Friday through Sunday.

Buses from New Canaan to Stamford will operate up to 20 minutes earlier than normal train times, while buses from Stamford to New Canaan will arrive at branch stations up to 20 minutes later than normal train times.

Metro-North encourages customers to preview schedule changes at specific stations by using the MYmta app [or MTA.info](#).

Following the bridge installation, and continuing until Sept. 8, Atlantic Street, between North State Street and Dock Street, will remain closed. A portion of South State Street will remain closed, while Guernsey Avenue will remain limited to only northbound traffic. During the final two months of the project, the street under the new bridge will be lowered to accommodate a new clearance of 14 feet, 6 inches.

Starting this weekend, drivers on South State Street will be able to drop off people on the north side of the station, but will not be allowed to continue on South State Street past Guernsey Avenue.

Atlantic Street, at the location of the bridge, [has been closed to cars since February](#).

Before the project even began, Stamford's transportation chief heard many South End residents complain that closing a portion of Atlantic Street would be catastrophic, creating a traffic nightmare for residents.

And then, nothing happened.

Jim Travers, chief of Stamford's Department of Transportation, said that ever since the road was closed, his office hasn't received a single complaint from drivers.

"We really have five gateways getting in and out of the South End," he said, adding that closing Atlantic Street at South State Street meant one of those has been inaccessible.

"Given the fact that 20 percent of road capacity has been taken out of commission, I'm really happy with it," he said.

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