

To Our Neighbors

Winter 2015

Dear Homeowner:

The MTA Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) strives to be a good neighbor in the communities where our service operates by keeping you informed of track programs.

To protect the safety of both the public and train crews, and to ensure the reliability of train service, the LIRR must manage vegetation on the track right-of-way (ROW). Overgrown trees, shrubs, and bushes oftentimes interfere with safety and train service reliability in a number of ways:

- It is common for tree branches and limbs to grow into and among our signal and communication lines. Just like utility lines, signal and communication lines must remain free of vegetation entanglements to ensure that during ice, wind, rain, and snow storms the lines are not brought down by the adverse weather elements
- One problem in particular for trains is caused by blowing, scattered and crushed leaves during the fall. Leaves create oily residue on the tracks, resulting in wheel slip-slide conditions (similar to driving on an icy road) that may impact keeping train service reliable.
- Removing overgrown tree limbs, bushes and shrubs also ensures a clear line of sight for our train engineers and reduces fire hazards.

During the next few weeks, LIRR representatives will be in your neighborhood to identify and remove overgrown trees and vegetation as part of our right-of-way cleanup effort. The LIRR uses licensed and insured tree service professionals to carry out this program of trimming and/or removal of trees along our property. This may also include removal of some branches overhanging the right-of-way from trees located on private property. We need to complete this work as soon as possible.

Please note that the LIRR carefully limits vegetation removal to what is required for operational and safety reasons, as well as Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) standards. Our ROW forces must maintain more than 700 miles of track, and we are obligated to remove invasive species, including but not limited to ailanthus, black locust, Norway maple, and bamboo. We estimate that these species account for approximately 2/3 of vegetal growth along our right-of-way.

Being a good neighbor is important to us. We will be working hard to clean up the right-of-way including vegetation and other train debris. If you have any questions or specific concerns regarding your property and the program, please call the LIRR's Public Affairs Department at (718) 217-5477 (say "More Options", then "Public Affairs" at the prompt). Again, we thank you for your patience as this important track work program progresses.

Sincerely,
Robert Brennan
Director - Government & Community Affairs