

*Darienite*

*News for Darien*

*<https://darienite.com>*

---

## **Metro-North Timetable Showing It's Age: You'd Be Slower Too If You Dated Back to the Woodrow Wilson Presidency**

**Author :** David Gurliacci

**Categories :** [Transportation](#)

**Tagged as :** [Cameron on Rail Transportation 2019](#), [Cameron on Trains 2019](#), [Cameron on Transportation](#), [Cameron on Transportation 2019](#), [Jim Cameron's Transportation Column](#), [Jim Cameron's Transportation Column 2019](#), [Metro-North Timetable 2019](#), [Metro-North Train Schedule 2019](#)

**Date :** April 27, 2019

Metro-North rail commuters received a recent spring surprise: a new timetable with slower running times.

Rush-hour trains now leave earlier and arrive later, adding anywhere from 1 to 10 minutes to published running times, depending on the length of the trip.

But what happened to that 30-30-30 plan for faster trains? Why are the trains running slower, not faster? In one word: repairs.

There's no way Metro-North can maintain its old schedule considering the amount of track work planned for this summer. In fact, the on-time performance stats from last summer's construction hit a record low, sometimes reaching just 82 percent.

The new spring timetable more accurately reflects the speed of service the railroad can actually deliver, not the service it would like to deliver.

So instead of trains running late, they'll be on time and the schedule will be more reliable, if slower.

The timetable adjustments have been in the works since the fall, though the railroad clearly could have done a better job explaining the whys and hows of the changes. Big projects like the Atlantic Street bridge replacement in Stamford and the Walk Bridge project in Norwalk are taking one, and in some cases, two tracks out of service.

Necessary "undercutting," removing years of accumulated rock ballast under rail ties, can take out a track for weeks at a time. And all four running tracks will eventually need that undercutting work.

That leaves the railroad trying to run a four-track service with a 25 percent to 50 percent reduction in resources. And that, as Metro-North's computer simulations have shown, means slower service. This also assumes nothing else goes wrong.

If there's an unexpected broken rail, a signal problem or power issue, the railroad will jump on repairs immediately — causing other delays in addition to the planned work. In other words, it's going to be a long summer, folks.

And this is just the beginning. One industry insider tells me these mega-repair projects will continue for about five years, meaning these slower running times will be the new normal.

The farther East you live on the New Haven line, the greater the impact of the slower trains. Take Bridgeport, for example.

The best current running time from Bridgeport to Grand Central is 1 hour and 22 minutes. Under the new timetable, it will be 1 hour and 29 minutes. But in 1963, the old New Haven Railroad could make the run in 1 hour and 14 minutes.

Why? Because the original New Haven Railroad was well maintained. The railroad is now 56 years older and not aging well. The signal system is well past its life expectancy (and can handle speeds no faster than 70 mph).

The overhead power lines still date back to the times of Woodrow Wilson in some areas. And the tracks, as we know are prone to cracking and expansion in the summer heat.

***Darienite***

***News for Darien***

***<https://darienite.com>***

---

Safety should always be the top priority. Remember the Bridgeport derailment and Spuyten Duyvil crash? So if your trains take a few more minutes to get you to work, be grateful. At least you got there safely. I'd always prefer to arrive alive, wouldn't you?

Things will get better. Maybe not 30-30-30, but better ... eventually.