

## Montclair Township Public Survey Results April 2026

# NYC Bus and Rail Service

- The Township's **New Jersey Transit Committee** (part of the Montclair Public Transportation Working Group) began discussions in January 2025 and was formally established by Council resolution in May, 2025 (R-25-148). The Working Group and this Committee was tasked with studying and recommending improvements to enhance public transportation, especially for weekend and off-peak travel to New York City.
- A meeting took place with members of the Montclair Township Council (Mayor Renee Baskerville and Deputy Mayor Susan Shin Andersen), Essex County and State elected officials and with New Jersey Transit's Executive Director, Kris Kolluri, to discuss more frequent transit service between Montclair and New York City in the wake of the loss of regular bus service previously provided by DeCamp Bus Company. NJ Transit recommended that the Township survey its residents to determine the level of need felt by Montclair residents for additional peak and off-peak service.
- With input from NJ Transit, the Committee created a survey and announced the availability of the survey in late November, 2025 for residents to complete either on-line or via paper surveys available at Town Hall and other locations. Flyers were posted at strategic locations and the survey was also publicized via local media outlets, Township e-mails, monthly newsletters, and social media channels, and Council member community meetings. Over 2300 responses were received and tabulated. This report summarizes and highlights the results.

The township survey represents the first phase in discussions with NJ Transit to add needed weekday and weekend bus and rail service to and from New York City. The committee's activities included:

## **2025**

- Setting up the working group.
- Documenting the impact of the loss of DeCamp service and the inadequate replacement service provided by NJ Transit.
- Meeting with County and State elected officials and NJ Transit leadership to explain the need for additional service.
- Designing a township survey, with input from NJ Transit.
- Reaching out to Bloomfield and Glen Ridge elected leaders to work together to explore expanded NJ Transit service between our towns and New York City and to advocate for expanded service for our region.
- Distributing the survey.

## **2026**

- Tabulate the results of the survey.
- Widen the coalition by reaching out to other neighboring towns and State and local elected officials.
- Request meeting with NJ Transit to review combined results of the surveys (Montclair, Glen Ridge, Bloomfield) and determine next steps in the process.
- Make recommendations to NJ Transit to design expanded rail and bus service.
- Additional community and stakeholder outreach to address any concerns raised in the Montclair survey.

# Survey: Common Complaints & Issues

Easy and frequent bus and rail service between Montclair and New York City and Montclair's reputation as a walkable/bikeable town are major factors leading families to choose Montclair as a place to live. With six rail stations and frequent bus service along Valley Road and Grove Street, residents could easily walk to rail stations and bus stops prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, knowing that there would always be some way to get into New York City and back home between 6 AM and midnight, 7 days a week. Additionally, whenever train or bus service was disrupted due to storms, labor disputes, or other emergencies, the two modes provided increased reliability.

Post-COVID pandemic service has seen a 41% reduction in peak hour bus service, and a total loss of :

- reverse commute options during morning and evening peaks,
- Grove Street bus service
- mid-day and late-night bus service to and from New York City on weekdays and all day Saturday, Sunday, and holidays.

Peak hour bus service servicing Montclair is currently split between the NJ Transit 101 Route and Boxcar. Boxcar service charges premium fares, requires reserved seating, provides limited pickup locations and does not allow on-board fare collection, limiting the ability to hop on a bus on the spur of the moment. On the positive side, Boxcar provides a one seat ride to the east side of Manhattan.

While weekday train schedules continue unchanged, weekend and holiday service remains inadequate, with trains limited to every 2 hours and stopping at Bay Street. This requires everyone to drive either to Bay Street, the Allwood Park & Ride or to drive into Manhattan, incurring parking lot fees, tunnel tolls and congestion pricing fees.

Key findings from Montclair's survey include the following.

- 50% of respondents travelled to New York City at least once per week.
- 60% of respondents travelled to New York City after the morning rush hour.
- 80% of respondents said they travelled to New York City on weekends.
- Among respondents, weekday commuters to New York City reported that only 23% commuted by bus, 60% by rail, and 6% commute by auto. The other 10% used other means of commuting, including driving to PATH stations.
- This pattern was reversed on weekends and weekday off-peak hours, with 50% of travelers going by car, 14% by bus (mostly via Allwood park and ride), and only 37% using NJ Transit.
- 75% of respondents reported that infrequent or non-existent off-peak service was the primary barrier to using public transit to travel to New York City.
- 63% of the respondents walk to the NJ Transit bus stop or train station; only 33% percent get to the bus or train by car
- Reduced reverse commute and weekend/holiday options limit travelers who would otherwise use public transit who work or attend school in Montclair, visit family and friends in Montclair, or attend personal appointments (such as medical), cultural events, and patronize businesses and restaurants.

# The Survey Said...

## **NJ Transit Train Service**

- 84% of respondents want more frequent weekend trains
- 67% of respondents want weekend train service to MSU
- 41% of respondents want more late night trains
- 17% of respondents more early morning trains
- 20% of respondents want more parking at train stations

## **New Jersey Transit Bus Service**

- 60% of respondents want weekend service restored
- 30% of respondents want Grove St service restored
- 25% of respondents want more late night buses
- 10% of respondents more early morning buses

## **Respondents would use NJ Transit if more service was available...**

- Between 6 am and 10 am weekends – 28%
- Between 10 am – 4 pm weekends – 77%
- Between 4 pm – 7 pm weekends – 64%
- After 7 pm weekends – 45%
- Between 10 am – 4 pm weekdays – 41%
- After 7 pm weekdays - 28%

# Next Steps

- The Committee will continue to work with elected leaders of Glen Ridge and Bloomfield, and with elected representatives on the Essex County Board of Commissioners and in the State legislature to continue discussions with New Jersey Transit for expanded service.
- Combined results of the surveys conducted in the three towns have been provided to senior staff of New Jersey Transit, with an ask for expanded bus and rail service on weekends, during off-peak weekday periods, and restoration of reverse commute buses (NYC – Montclair) on weekdays. The ask includes a request for hourly train service on weekends, extending to MSU.
- While 60% of this Montclair survey respondents support weekend train service to MSU, a significant number of respondents expressed concerns that extending Montclair-Boonton Line trains to MSU on weekends could have some negative impacts on our community. The impacts identified include:
  - Noise
  - Reduced number of available parking spaces in lots used for retail services on weekends
  - Pedestrian safety at Walnut Street Station when the Saturday Farmers' Market is in operation.
  - Traffic delays at grade crossings.

The Committee is committed to working with the Township, NJ Transit, and residents to address and resolve any potential negative impacts as part of planning for new service as proposed by NJ Transit.

# Thanks To

## New Jersey Transit Committee

### Township Council Members

- Susan Shin Andersen, Deputy Mayor
- Eileen Birmingham, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward Councilor

### Working Group/Committee Resident Members

- Bill Beren
- Ashish Jaiswal
- Axel Hellman
- Don Zief
- Jack May
- Levi Siegel

## Township Staff

- Stephen Marks, Township Manager
- Dr. Lisa Johnson, Department of Sustainability
- Janice Talley, Director, Department of Planning & Community Development
- Jacob Nieman, Director, Department of Complete Streets
- Demetria Edwards, Executive Assistant to the Township Manager (for assistance with Committee meeting set-up and logistics)