

L Train Delays Disrupt Weekend Trips

by Karen Wang

July 15, 2019

Summer's here in the city and people are out enjoying their weekend plans — that is, unless, those plans depend on the L train, which is undergoing planned work and routine delays until summer 2020.

On Friday, April 26, MTA workers were at the subway entrances of major L train stops and handing out flyers to commuters hurrying home from work. The flyers, printed with bright pink headers, announced the first phase of the L project beginning that weekend. From 10pm Friday to 5am Monday, the L train will run every 20 minutes between Brooklyn and Manhattan. Normally, the train runs every 4-6 minutes at peak service on weekends. The delays will occur on weekday nights as well in addition to weekends.

The MTA has provided a number of alternative service options for riders disrupted by the changes. They have added more trips to the M, G, and 7 lines which run through Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. To connect riders between these subway lines, the MTA has extended the M14 bus route to make additional stops.

Nevertheless, subway riders who find themselves on the L train might be in for an inconvenient surprise. One rider, Annie Zhang, recalls a recent Saturday when she decided to go to a volunteering event in Brooklyn. “We took the L, and the L was delayed — it runs every twenty minutes, right?” she says. “So we were late for the dog-walking which starts at ten and we knew that they run out of dogs very often. So we got on the L, it took really long to go.” Because of the tunnel work, the train typically arrives then idles in the station for ten to fifteen minutes, instead of departing immediately.

“[When I got off the subway] I was in a hurry so I wasn't looking where I was walking,” she says. “I managed to tie myself up in a random piece of trash, so I fell and cracked my phone screen. We didn't end up getting a dog either.”

However, Annie says she could forgive delays in favor of cleaner, nicer-smelling cars. “I mean, delays you can live with on the weekends, right?” she says. “But, I just think it makes for a much better of quality of life, you know, if over an hour of each day is spent in a nicer place.”