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Port Washington LIRR shuttle service kicks off

Jack Khzouz, chief executive of NICE Bus, North Hempstead Supervisor Judi Bosworth and Nassau County Legis. Delia DeRiggi-Whitton announce the Port Washington Shuttle service, which began May 22. Photo Credit: Howard Schnapp

By Khristopher J. Brooks

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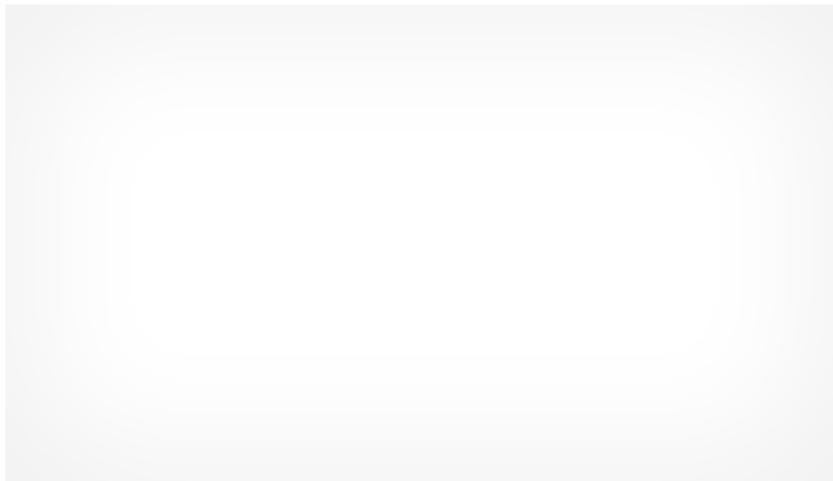
The Nassau Inter-County Express has kicked off a new shuttle service in Port Washington that officials hope will reduce overcrowding at the nearby LIRR station parking lot.

The Port Washington Shuttle departs from Main Street in Port Washington North and travels through the Soundview neighborhood, making stops at Steamboat Drive, Schooner Lane, Sandy Court and other residential areas. Service began May 22 and has received positive reviews, NICE chief executive Jack Khzouz said Friday.

The Port Washington Shuttle will be free through June 10, then become \$2.75 per ride. The shuttle operates weekdays from 6:50 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Khzouz and lawmakers said the shuttle idea came from local civic group Residents Forward.

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"Parking at the railroad [station] has been a problem for years," Mindy Germain, Residents Forward executive director, said. "But we didn't know for sure if the residents would take a shuttle."

Germain said her organization issued a survey that garnered almost 1,000 respondents, of which more than 70 percent said they would take a shuttle if it existed.

Germain said the shuttle has three goals: Getting more cars off Port Washington roads, eliminating stress for LIRR commuters and creating more available parking spaces. The service ideally will free up 20 to 40 parking spaces per day, Khzouz said.

The new shuttle is an extension of a service NICE introduced five months ago. In mid-January, the bus system incorporated a shuttle that travels along Shore Road and takes Port Washington and Roslyn area residents to the Roslyn Long Island Rail Road station. Both shuttles are on a trial basis until year's end, Khzouz said.

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Continuation of the service into 2020 will depend on how popular the route is and available funding, he said.

"It's up to the community to decide what that success is," Khzouz said.

Nassau County Legis. Delia DeRiggi-Whitton, whose district includes Port Washington, said there are 1,100 available parking spaces at the Port Washington station and 1,000 are used every day. The goal is to make the trial

services permanent, she said.

"We think the new ridership will ensure the route," DeRiggi-Whitton said.



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Christopher J. Brooks is a Detroit native turned New Yorker who has covered the Town of North Hempstead since January 2017.

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