



Proposed **F** **M** Swap Subway Route Changes

Sarah Wyss, Acting Chief, Operations Planning, NYCT

Service Issue

NYCT proposes to swap the routing of **F** and **M** subway service between Queens and Manhattan during weekdays, including early evenings, rerouting **F** trains onto the 53rd Street line between Queens Plaza and 5 Av/53 St, and rerouting **M** trains onto the 63rd Street line between 21 St-Queensbridge and 57 St (the “**F** **M** Swap”). This will improve service for customers through increased reliability, decreased delays, and reduced net travel times.

Recommendation

Implement the **F** **M** Swap.


Budget Impact

Implementation of the proposed **F** **M** Swap will cost approximately \$1 million annually.

Proposed Implementation Date

The proposed **F** **M** Swap would be implemented in or about December 2025.

Staff Summary

Subject	Proposed F M Swap Subway Route Changes
Department	Operations Planning
Department Head Name	Sarah Wyss
Department Head Signature	
Project Manager Name	Alyson Bechtel

Date	September 15, 2025
Vendor Name	N/A
Contract Number	N/A
Contract Manager Name	N/A
Table of Contents Ref #	N/A

Board Action					
Order	To	Date	Approval	Info	Other
1	President		X		
2	NYCT/MTA Bus Comm.			X	
3	Board			X	

Internal Approvals			
Order	Approval	Order	Approval
		4	Chief Customer Officer
7	President	3	General Counsel
6	CFO	2	Sr. Dir., External Relations
5	SVP Subways	1	Acting Chief, OP

Purpose:

To obtain Presidential approval and to inform the NYC Transit and MTA Bus Committee of a proposed swap of the routing of **F** and **M** subway service between Manhattan and Queens during weekdays, including early evenings, rerouting **F** trains onto the 53rd Street line between Queens Plaza and 5 Av/53 St, and rerouting **M** trains onto the 63rd Street line between 21 St-Queensbridge and 57 St (the “**F** **M** Swap”). This will improve service for customers through increased reliability, decreased delays, and reduced net travel times.

Discussion

Four subway lines operate along the Queens Boulevard line: **E** **F** **M** **R**. While the proposed **F** **M** Swap focuses on the **F** and **M** routes, it will benefit customers on all four lines by improving net travel times and reliability.

F train service currently operates via the 63rd Street line at all times, serving 21 St-Queensbridge, Roosevelt Island, Lexington Av/63 St, and 57 St. On weekdays, when the **M** train serves the Sixth Avenue and Queens Boulevard lines, it operates via the 53rd Street line along with the **E** train, serving Queens Plaza, Court Sq-23 St, Lexington Av/53 St, and 5 Av/53 St.

This service pattern requires **M** trains to switch tracks near Queens Plaza, diverging from the **R** and immediately merging with the **E** in the Manhattan-bound direction and diverging from the **E** and immediately merging with the **R** in the Queens-bound direction. In addition, **E** and **F** trains must merge in this area in the Queens-bound direction. As a result, a delay on any one of these lines can propagate to the other three lines and negatively impact service reliability. Approximately 15-20% of rush hour **E** **M** **R** trains are delayed at Queens Plaza.

Staff Summary

The **F** **M** Swap will reduce the number of merging and diverging movements required at this key location. Once the swap is implemented, weekday **F** trains will operate via the 53rd Street line (together with the **E**), and weekday **M** trains will operate via the 63rd Street line. This will keep **E** **F** express trains separate from **M** **R** local trains along Queens Boulevard, reducing merge delays and improving reliability and resilience from incidents.

The **F** **M** Swap will be a weekday-only service change, matching the hours of operation of the **M** train on the Queens Boulevard line (approximately 6 AM to 9:30 PM). After 9:30 PM on weeknights and at all times on weekends, **F** trains will continue to provide service on the 63rd Street Line because the **M** train does not run on Queens Boulevard during these periods.

Analysis of travel times indicates the **F** **M** Swap will result in an average of approximately one minute in savings for 47,000 AM peak hour riders. It will also provide a new direct connection between local stations on the Queens Boulevard line and 63rd Street line stations during the hours the **M** operates along Queens Boulevard.

A small number of riders would face longer travel times with the **F** **M** Swap compared to current service. During the AM peak hour, approximately 2% of all Queens Boulevard line riders would experience an increase in travel time of 4 minutes or more. The largest group of riders who would not benefit would be those traveling to and from stations on the 63rd Street line, where there will be slight differences in scheduled train frequency.

Riders at 63rd Street line stations will experience slightly longer wait times with the **M** in place of the **F** due to the **M** running less frequently than the **F**. To reduce the impact of this service change on 63rd Street line riders, AM and PM peak-hour **M** service will be increased, so that the average additional wait time will be reduced to approximately 1 minute on average.

Recommendation

Implement the weekday **F** **M** Swap between Manhattan and Queens, rerouting **F** trains onto the 53rd Street line between Queens Plaza and 5 Av/53 St, and rerouting **M** trains onto the 63rd Street line between 21 Street-Queensbridge and 57 St.

Alternative to the Proposed Service Changes

Do nothing. NYCT would not implement the **F** **M** Swap, leaving the problematic merges between the **E**, **F**, and **M** lines unaddressed.

Budget Impact

Implementation of the **F** **M** Swap will cost \$1 million annually.

Proposed Implementation Date

The proposed **F** **M** Swap will be implemented in or about December 2025.