



New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers

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It's time for Amtrak to stop ignoring 1,413,981 potential customers!

1,413,981 is a significant number! Say, for argument's sake, that everyone (based on 2010 census data) in 64 New Jersey communities and 12 New York communities decided to board a train at the nearly 90 rail stations that serve these communities along the Morris & Essex, Gladstone, Montclair-Boonton, Main, Bergen, Port Jervis, and Pascack Valley lines. Say they wanted to use New Jersey Transit (or MTA West of Hudson) railroad service to connect to Amtrak's national network. All of these folks would have to ride all the way into New York City to catch an Amtrak train, or as Amtrak might prefer, drive down the Garden State Parkway to park one or more days at Metropark. Who cares?

NJ-ARP does! We have an imposing railroad station right here in New Jersey that was built at considerable cost: the Senator Frank R. Lautenberg Rail Station at Secaucus Junction. Surely, an edifice named after one of Amtrak's staunchest supporters would have an Amtrak ticket office, or at least an Amtrak ticket vending machine and several trains in each direction on the Northeast Corridor stopping at this magnificent station to serve passengers on America's national rail network.

Sadly, before the Feb. 2, 2014 Super Bowl® XLVIII, the only Amtrak train that ever stopped at Secaucus Junction was the funeral train that bore the late Senator's body back to Washington, DC to lie in state. Even sadder is that although we've complained about lack of Amtrak service at Secaucus Junction multiple times over the past several years to Amtrak officials, they continue to ignore us.

Since on-line ticketing is readily available on the Amtrak Web site, it wouldn't be necessary to have a staffed ticket office at Secaucus Junction. One or two automated ticket vending machines (TVMs) would readily suffice. The time has come for Amtrak to remedy this situation. If Amtrak thinks it's important enough to honor one of its biggest supporters, and thinks that it's important enough to stop a dozen or so trains at Secaucus Junction for those fortunate enough to have had tickets for the Super Bowl®, then it's also time to stop ignoring the 76 markets that are home to over 1.4 million people, who, through their federal tax dollars, help fund Amtrak.

NJ-ARP is not asking for *Acela* trains to stop at Secaucus Junction, but surely, some *Regional* and/or *Keystone* trains in each direction could stop there. It would save those 1.4 million potential passengers from those 76 markets the time required to detour into New York City or Metropark to connect to Amtrak thereby making it that much more attractive to use Amtrak.

The cost to provide a couple of TVMs would be negligible as would the cost of allowing a few trains to stop at Secaucus Junction. We would recommend through-tickets be made available that could be honored by NJT on their connecting trains. Of course, marketing the availability of through service via Secaucus Junction within those 76 communities via local media or even on in-station billboards would be beneficial in providing new customers to both Amtrak and NJ Transit and/or MTA.

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