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Buses could use Holland soon

C train may be back this weekend; E. River ferry to start

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The Holland Tunnel could reopen to some traffic as soon as Monday, a source close to talks between police and transportation officials said yesterday.

Port Authority, NYPD and city Transportation Department officials said buses may be allowed on some lanes of the vital link between the city and New Jersey — but not cars, because that would dump too much traffic in lower Manhattan.

In other mass-transit developments:

■ Subway service could take another step toward regular service this weekend with the return of the C train. Trains would run a regular route to Euclid Ave. in Brooklyn from upper Manhattan. The southbound E train, now running to Euclid Ave., would return to its own tracks and end at Canal St.

■ NY Waterway will begin East River ferry service Monday morning from 90th St., stopping at 34th St. and then Pier 11 near Wall St., spokesman Pat Smith said. The trip to Pier 11 from 90th St. will take about 20 minutes. The downtown ferry will be free Monday morning but $5 each way afterward. All tickets must be purchased at Pier 11. The ferry will run from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. and from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. in both directions.

■ NJTransit will begin running an extra train to Penn Station Monday to ease crowding. The train will leave from Summit at 8:13 a.m., with stops in Short Hills, Millburn, Maplewood, Brick Church and Newark's Broad St. An earlier train, the 7:32 a.m. from Dover, will skip some stops.

Easing pressure on Lincoln

Reopening the Holland Tunnel would help relieve congestion at the Lincoln Tunnel, which has seen delays of two to three hours this week, although yesterday it was lighter. It also would relieve pressure on the Gowanus Expressway, which express buses from Staten Island have been using instead of the Holland Tunnel.

The reopening of the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel to cars is not expected soon, officials said. The tunnel is normally used by 55,000 Manhattan-bound motorists weekdays.

Although express buses now use the Battery Tunnel, authorities do not want cars so close to Ground Zero, and they want the tunnel clear for emergency vehicles and the many trucks carting debris from the site. Prior to the Battery Tunnel's closure to cars - so trucks carting debris from the World Trade Center disaster site and emergency vehicles can have unfettered passage - 55,000 motorists used it Manhattan-bound daily, Triboro Bridge and Tunnel Authority spokesman Frank Pascual said.

Getting over bridge and tunnel crossings into the city yesterday was easier than at the start of the week. "It could still be real bad, but it was a lot closer to a normal rush hour," said Jonathan Kaplan, executive producer of the broadcast service Shadow Traffic.

Manhattan traffic still rough

Trucker Carlos Marques, who used the Lincoln Tunnel to come in from Newark, said it took him 45 minutes — down from more than 90 minutes Thursday.

But getting through midtown Manhattan and streets south of midtown continued to be a hardship.

"Eighth Ave. is terrible," appliance deliveryman Bruno Nicolo said yesterday morning.

It took Nicolo an hour and 20 minutes to get his rig to 33rd St. from 68th St.

"It's pretty bad," added Carl Labriola, an air-conditioning repairman whose commute to midtown from Floral Park, Queens, lengthened by about 45 minutes. "It was bumper to bumper coming down Seventh Ave.," he said.

Closings & security checks

Compounding the delays were a host of closings, including sections of the West Side Highway and the FDR Drive, as well as security checks across the city.

Fifth Ave. near St. Patrick's Cathedral was closed for the funeral of Fire Lt. Dennis Mojica. Police checks of all trucks on 11th Ave. heading to the Lincoln Tunnel snarled traffic, and police were diverting other vehicles to cross streets.

A police lieutenant from the Manhattan Transit Task force said there seemed to be more cars in the city yesterday, as a greater number of workers appeared to return and delivery trucks made weekend dropoffs.

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