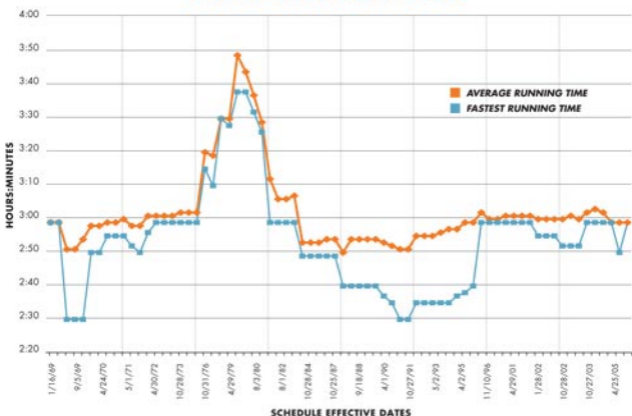


## METROLINER RUNNING TIMES 1969-2006 NEW YORK-WASHINGTON



Amtrak into Strategic Business Units led to a restructuring of service, eliminating many of the increases added during the previous decade, including the peak-hour expresses that left on the half-hour. In the 2000s the introduction of Acela Express finally brought the curtain down on Metroliner service, with the unexpected Spring 2005 reprieve due to brake problems resulting in a temporary “grounding” of the Acela.

A glance at the Metroliner Running Times reveals the typical running time between Washington and New York was just under three hours. The significant running time increase in the late 1970s and early 1980s was due to the deteriorating infrastructure conditions on the route and the extensive rebuilding of the railroad under the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project (NECIP).

During most of the 1980s, after the NECIP work was completed, 2 hour and 49 minutes express Metroliners brought the average trip time down to under 2 hours and 55 minutes. Nonstop trains

could make the end-to-end journey in 2 hours 30 minutes, but as pointed out in the main text, it had to be a “perfect run” with no interfering trains or inattentive dispatching.

Because the nonstop trains were never commercially successful, their fast runs were soon discontinued. Amtrak had more success with limited-stop expresses in the 1980s and 1990s, but when financial pressures increased, it made the most sense to run services that fit into the “civilized” 2 hour 49 minute to 2 hour 59 minute “sweet spot.”

### RIDERSHIP HISTORY

The same factors which affected Metroliner fares, running times and frequencies also directly affected the number of riders over the 38 years of Metroliner service. Metroliner handled more than 62 million passenger trips in the Northeast Corridor. During the initial growth years, Metroliner ridership peaked at just under 2.5 million passengers in 1974.