



**From:** *Palm Beach Post*, Saturday, February 23, 2013  
**Subject:** **Starting Saturday, Tri-Rail to double weekend, holiday service in Palm Beach County**  
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<http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/news/state-regional-govt-politics/tri-rail-to-double-weekend-and-holiday-service-for/nWSsf/>

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## **Starting Saturday, Tri-Rail to double weekend, holiday service in Palm Beach County**

*By Jennifer Sorentroue*

Tri-Rail plans nearly to double the trains it runs on weekends and holidays, an expansion officials say will provide more frequent service for riders in Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties.

Beginning Saturday, Tri-Rail will expand its weekend schedule to 30 trains from 16.

As a result, trains will pick up passengers at stations every hour and run later into the evening, Tri-Rail officials said. Trains now run every two hours on weekends and holidays.

The last southbound train leaves Mangonia Park at 8:30 p.m. on weekends and holidays. Under the new schedule, the last train will depart at 9 p.m.

“That was a missing link in the system,” Palm Beach County Mayor Steven Abrams said. He is chairman of the governing board of the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority, which runs Tri-Rail.

“People work on the weekends and were asking for more regular service,” Abrams said. “It was too sporadic. You couldn’t count on it.”

Weekend riders who use the service often wait long periods for a train to return them home, said Abrams, who rides Tri-Rail from his Boca Raton home to his office in West Palm Beach.

“You’d be stuck,” Abrams said. “People want a quicker turnaround.”

Ridership on the Feb. 16-17 weekend was 5,786 and 5,068, officials said. Those numbers are expected to grow when the new schedule takes effect.

Tri-Rail runs 50 trains on the weekdays, averaging between 15,000 to 16,000 passengers per day. Ridership is expected to increase as gas prices rise, officials said.

*To view Tri-Rail's expanded weekend schedule, go online to [www.tri-rail.com](http://www.tri-rail.com).*