



MTA Press Releases

[Select Language](#) | ▼

Press Release

July 26, 2007

[Metro-North](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA Metro-North Railroad Announces Service Initiatives for 2008

MTA Metro-North Railroad, with its ridership on target to set a new record of 79.5 million rides in 2007, is seeking new ways to improve service for its diverse and growing customer base.

The railroad continues to meet this challenge of providing more service in more time periods to more customers without significant staffing increases. For 2008, ridership is projected to grow another 2.4% to 81.5 million. To serve these additional customers, the number of trains operated in 2008 is projected at 204,437--an increase of 2,214 trains over 2007. Yet the number of employees, or operating positions, per million riders is projected to decrease to 70.8 positions, down 1.3% from 2007.

Here's what the expanded train service for 2008 will look like:

On the Hudson Line: On weekends, additional express service will be provided with three new round-trip trains on Saturdays and two on Sundays.

On the Harlem Line: The frequency of peak and off-peak service to customers will be improved.

On the New Haven Line: A new off-peak, round-trip express train will be added.

On the Pascack Valley: For the first time, thanks to the completion of passing sidings on this single track line, off-peak and weekend service will be added. This will effectively double the number of weekly trains on the Pascack Valley Line, which serves three stations in Rockland County.

The importance of off-peak and weekend service improvements is illustrated by this statistic: Today, just 49% of Metro-North's ridership is comprised of commuters traveling into Manhattan during the traditional morning commute.

The remaining 51% of Metro-North customers are reverse commuting out of New York City to suburban employment centers, traveling during midday, nights and on weekends, or taking day trips in the region without ever setting foot in Grand Central Terminal. This changing demographic makes Metro-North not just a commuter railroad, but a full-time means of transportation that is more vital to the region and its residents than ever before.

Metro-North is also seeking to improve its ability to sell tickets. To improve the efficiency of its on-board ticket sales, the railroad will purchase hand-held devices including wireless printers to issue clearly printed receipts. In addition to calculating all fares, the application allows conductors to download daily sales information to improve fare collection data and eliminate manual calculations and data entry. This information will help Metro-North to better forecast ridership and revenue. Metro-North is also spearheading the region-wide effort to create a one-ticket ride for anyone who uses more than one of the commuter railroads in the tri-state area.

Other improvements include:

ROLLING STOCK INVESTMENTS

Metro-North Railroad has committed significant funding toward the continued revitalization of its fleet, purchasing new equipment and remanufacturing select cars, coaches and locomotives.

In conjunction with the State of Connecticut, Metro-North is purchasing 300 M-8 cars at a cost of \$733 million, which will greatly improve reliability and customer satisfaction on the New Haven Line. Review of final design mock-ups takes place during the first half of 2008.

During the latter part of 2008, "first article inspection" of components, including environmental testing, will be made, paving the way for full production. Delivery of the first M-8s is expected in 2009.

The overhaul of 140 M-3 electric cars for the Hudson and Harlem lines will continue through 2008 and be completed in early 2009.

The remanufacture of 104 end-door coaches for service in non-electrified areas in New York and Connecticut will be completed 2008.

The remanufacture of 31 Dual-Mode Locomotives will continue through 2008, and be completed in 2012.

The New Haven Line's aging M-2 fleet of 240 cars is undergoing a "Critical System Replacement" that will improve reliability and extend their useful life by a decade and will continue through 2008.

The delivery of 11 new diesel locomotives for branch line service and to haul work trains will conclude in early 2008.

Seven rebuilt F-40 locomotives will be put into service in the West-of-Hudson territory, with six to eight more to be rebuilt in the coming years.

STATION INVESTMENTS

Stations are not only the "front door" to the railroad. They are part of the communities we serve.

The Hudson Line Stations Improvement Project Phase II will see inbound platforms at Irvington, Hastings-on-Hudson and Dobbs Ferry finished in 2008, completing renovations at those stations that also added elevators making them fully accessible to the disabled.

With those stations complete, reconstruction of the platforms and overpasses at Phillipse Manor, Scarborough and Ossining will begin, starting with the inbound platforms.

Construction of a new station at Yankee Stadium will continue through 2008 for an opening in the second quarter of 2009.

In addition, the railroad will increase maintenance of the new ADA improvements on the New Haven Line and elevator door replacement will begin at Harlem and Hudson Line stations. SHOPS AND YARDS

The railroad cannot maintain a state-of-the-art fleet in outdated shops. Facilities must continually be upgraded.

In Croton-Harmon, the replacement of 100-year-old facilities continues in 2008 with the construction of new Coach and Locomotive shops with completion in 2009.

Construction of a new, \$16.4 million drive-through Train Wash at the Highbridge Yard in the Bronx is set for completion in September 2008. This will enable the railroad to keep its fleets clean and improve the customer environment.

A new Rail Impact Detection System will be purchased to measure the impact of a wheel to the rail. The railroad will use the impact detector to quickly identify and categorize damage to train wheels, which happens frequently during slippery rail season in the fall. Equipment will be removed from service based on severity of the measured wheel damage for correction. This allows the railroad to manage defects as they occur to improve equipment availability and reduce the number of "flats" in service.

Finally the railroad intends to hire more than 20 mechanics to staff the newly constructed New Haven Line Running Repair Shop to improve routine maintenance of the fleet.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS

Next year, Metro-North employees will install more than 35,000 wooden ties, resurface 200 miles of track, install 45 switches, and replace 35 miles of rail, in addition to installing 25,000 new concrete ties as part of its cyclical track maintenance program.

A major signal study that will help Metro-North design and start construction on a new signal system on all three lines in both New York and Connecticut will continue in 2008.

In 2008, construction will start on a new Operations Control Center to replace all control hardware. Software upgrades will provide for state-of-the-art rail traffic technology.

In support of the Long Island Rail Road's East Side Access Project, new signal equipment will be installed on the lower level of Grand Central to accommodate changes in track layout.

As part of Amtrak's high-speed interlocking project at New Rochelle, 2008 will see the completion of the third and final track switch, which will enable Amtrak trains to more efficiently switch from Metro-North's New Haven main line onto and off of the Hell Gate line, which takes trains down through Astoria, Queens and into Penn Station. These track improvements also give Metro-North better operating flexibility.

Design and construction of signal improvements along the Danbury Branch Line Construction will begin in spring 2008 with completion expected by mid-2010.

Construction on up to 10 new electrical substations to increase capacity and service on the Upper Harlem Line is scheduled to begin next year.

The railroad will purchase a pantograph monitoring system to monitor and measure the interaction of pantograph shoes and the catenary wire, which should increase the reliability of New Haven Line service.

On the Port Jervis Line, the rehabilitation of the Woodbury and Moodna viaducts begins in 2008. Track improvements continue with the installation of 13.25 miles of new continuous welded rail and 61,000 wooden ties. Also on the Port Jervis Line, signal upgrades will begin with the replacement of two old interlockings with new solid state equipment.