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Press Release

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[NYC Transit](#)

IMMEDIATE

Multiple Critical Projects on 7 Line Move Ahead as Major 2016 Work Scheduled

2015 Accomplishments Include Track Panel Replacements near 33 St, New Steinway Tunnel Infrastructure and Duct Bank

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) has scheduled critical work in 2016 on the Flushing **7** Line that will require weekend service shutdowns between Manhattan and Queens. The necessary work in 2016 requires fewer shutdowns than in previous years as reconstruction progresses and improvement projects near completion. Most of the track panel replacement work scheduled for 2016 will be on the three-track segment of the line, which will not require full suspensions of service since the presence of three-tracks allows trains to safely bypass work zones. This means fewer significant disruptions while track panel replacement continues.

MTA New York City Transit (NYCT) has been making capital improvements on the **7** Line over the past several years to increase the line's capacity and reliability as ridership demand rises. Nearly every element of the line is being improved, from tracks through the replacement of entire panels of elevated tracks, to signals through the implementation of an updated communications-based train control system (CBTC), to the reconstruction and fortification of the storm-damaged Steinway Tunnel that links Queens and Manhattan.

The extensive nature of the work on the Flushing Line necessitates service shutdowns to allow crews to access and work on equipment that is critical to safe train operation. The subway system's around-the-clock operation and record ridership, particularly on the **7** Line, make it challenging to restrict work to times of low ridership. NYCT is aware of the inconvenience caused by such disruptions and therefore makes every effort to schedule work around major community events such as Lunar New Year celebrations. The 2016 schedule takes into account the 2016 Lunar New Year celebration in early February and the Mets' home game schedule when there is extra demand for service.

"The growth of the Flushing Line matters greatly to the growth of Queens, and these projects are critical to the future of the line," said James L. Ferrara, Interim President of New York City Transit. "Replacing old tracks means a smoother, faster ride for customers, and installing a modern signal system means less crowded and more reliable commutes. Improvements to any part of our infrastructure allows us to better serve all of our customers. This work may be a short-term inconvenience now, but every repair or improvement we make is a step toward a better Flushing Line and a more reliable subway system for all."

The major projects on the Flushing Line include the implementation of CBTC, a modern signaling system that is scheduled for completion in 2017. This multi-year \$774 million capital improvement project replaces the existing 50- to 90-year-old signal system and allows for trains to run more reliably and frequently, thereby increasing line capacity and preventing problems associated with old equipment. In 2015, crews continued to install new wayside equipment including signal equipment, antennas, radio units, transponders, fiber-optic distribution panels and cable, telephone cable, and cable distribution boxes. Software was tested and installed for use at the 1st Avenue Interlocking; maintainer panels and cable servers were installed; new signal equipment along the track right-of-way was tested, and additional signal locations were prepared for future equipment installation. Workers also installed new electrical conduits, performed circuit breaker repairs, and removed old cables and signal equipment.

In 2016, contractors will continue installing and testing CBTC equipment throughout the line. Much of the work in 2016 will involve the testing of installed equipment to prepare for the system's 2017 launch. Once completed, the new system will interface with subway cars to allow for countdown clocks, increased operational flexibility and reliability, system safety improvements and increased capacity to run more trains per hour.

NYCT also is replacing segments of tracks on elevated portions of the **7** Line that are reaching the end of their useful lifespan. In 2015, NYCT replaced tracks east of 33 St-Rawson St and at certain points between Queensboro Plaza and Flushing-Main St, primarily working on three-track segments of the elevated line. In 2016, NYCT will continue this work between 46 St-Bliss St and 52 St, and outside Flushing-Main St. Such work is part of the recurring maintenance of the subway system as NYCT periodically checks every mile of track on every line and replaces tracks nearing the end of their useful lives.

A major project affecting the Flushing Line that is scheduled for completion in 2016 is the reconstruction and fortification of the Steinway Tunnel, which was flooded by Superstorm Sandy's record surge in October 2012. In 2015, crews continued to rebuild the tunnel's deteriorated duct bank and bench walls, waterproofed the structure against future storms, replaced discharge lines with higher capacity pipes, raised drains and elevated pump rooms, replaced tracks and related infrastructure and other saltwater-damaged components, and built new supports for an emergency power generator. In 2016, crews are scheduled to complete the reconstruction of the duct bank, which will house new power and communications equipment for the **7** Line. The completion of the Steinway Tunnel repairs will significantly reduce the need for future non-CBTC related service suspensions between Manhattan and Queens. The 121-year-old tunnel, however, is one of the oldest portions of the subway system and its narrow width cannot accommodate both trains and work crews, so any work in the tunnel necessitates service suspensions.

The 2016 schedule included below represents scheduled weekend service shutdowns of the **7** Line between Queensboro Plaza and Times Sq-42 St in both directions. Shuttle service between Times Sq-42 St and 34 St-Hudson Yards will be provided. During these disruptions, customers should be aware of alternatives that may involve service diversions, station bypasses, back-riding or longer wait times. Free shuttle buses will make all stops at

Queensboro Plaza, Court Sq, Hunters Point Av, and Vernon Blvd-Jackson Av. NYCT also will operate regular  service, and increase  service between Queens and Manhattan on certain weekends.

This schedule is subject to change due to inclement weather, which prevents crews from working safely on exposed, elevated segments of the Flushing Line. In winter 2014-2015, snowy and icy conditions resulted in work cancellations, delaying construction progress and forcing the rescheduling of work weekends to later dates as availability allowed. As a result of unusually harsh weather conditions in early 2015, two weekends of service suspensions between Queens and Manhattan were added to the 2015 schedule, and a third has been added to the 2016 schedule.

For more information on  Line work, visit the [MTA website](#).

Dates

January 22-25

March 18-21

April 1-4

April 15-18

October 21-24

October 28-31

November 11-14

November 18-21

Between 11:30 p.m. Friday to 5 a.m. Monday, no  trains between Queensboro Plaza and Times Sq-42 St in both directions

NYCT will post notices in the subway system informing customers of the temporary service changes. Personnel will make announcements on trains and in stations throughout the subway system about the service changes and be on hand at all affected stations and along the substitute shuttle bus route to assist customers. Notices about the diversions will be posted on the [service advisory page](#) of the MTA website as well as on mta.info/weekender.