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Press Release

October 5, 2017

LIRR

IMMEDIATE

Governor Cuomo Announces Post Avenue LIRR Bridge Replacement in Westbury Moving Third Track Project Forward

New Bridge 13 Feet Wider to Allow for Future Third Track

Increased Height Prevents Bridge Strikes That Cause Extensive Train Delays - Photos [Here](#)

Use of Design-Build Contract Expedites Project Timetable; Work Being Performed On Time, and On Budget

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced that on October 21-22, the Long Island Rail Road will replace the railroad's 103-year-old bridge that carries the Main Line over Post Avenue at the Westbury train station, allowing the Main Line Expansion Project to move forward. The new bridge will be 13 feet wider than the existing bridge in order to accommodate the Third Track and will mark the first completed Third Track-related project since the Main Line Expansion Project was approved in July after 70 years of stagnation. The \$9.7 million bridge project utilizes a design-build contract to expedite the timetable of the project, which is on track to be on time and on budget.

The new bridge will also be two feet, two inches higher than the current bridge, allowing trucks of up to 14 feet to safely pass underneath without bridge strikes, preventing a major cause of LIRR delays. The current low height of the bridge causes between five and nine bridge strikes per year that lead to extensive train delays, including one this morning that delayed 11 trains and an estimated 11,000 people.

"After 70 years of stagnation, New York is regaining its building spirit and transforming the LIRR into the 21st century commuter rail that Long Island deserves," **Governor Cuomo said.** "By rebuilding the Post Avenue bridge and paving the way for the historic Third Track project, we are showing that it's possible to upgrade the LIRR on time, on budget, and with community input at every step of the way. While others talk about infrastructure, New York is getting it done."

In April 2017, just five months ago, workers began assembling the new bridge in the parking lot at the Westbury station to minimize traffic and rail disruptions. The project's culmination will take place on the weekend of October 21-22, when workers will use cranes and an industrial-grade movable hydraulic lift to remove the existing bridge and replace it with the new bridge, all timed down to the minute to ensure that all the work is wrapped up before the first train of the Monday morning rush hour.

Post Avenue will be closed between Railroad and Union Avenues from 8 p.m. on Friday, October 20 until 6 a.m. on Monday, October 23. Buses will substitute trains between Mineola and Hicksville from shortly after midnight on Saturday morning, October 21, until the early morning hours of Monday, October 23, with the overall outage expected to last 48 hours.

On Monday morning, the first LIRR trains will begin rolling over our newly built bridge, effectively bringing this complex, challenging project to a completion in less than a year since it was approved by the MTA Board.

Continuing site work will occur until early spring, including adjustments to the station platforms, installation of stairs and concrete painting and sealing work. The roadway underneath the bridge is also being re-graded to provide improved sightlines for motorists, enhancing safety and meeting the latest design standards and requirements of the New York State Department of Transportation.

Bridge Strikes

The existing bridge has been struck by trucks between five and nine times per year in each of the past six years, resulting in extensive train delays. In fact, this morning at 6:40 a.m., an over-height 18-wheeler struck the bridge and became wedged underneath. LIRR structural engineers were summoned to ensure that the bridge remained safe for trains, and as a precaution, in the interim the railroad placed a temporary speed restriction on the bridge. The bridge was pronounced safe for full-speed travel at 7:30 a.m., but during the 50 minutes that elapsed, 11 morning rush hour trains carrying an estimated 11,000 people were delayed between 7 and 23 minutes.

The MTA Police issued summonses to the driver for disobeying the posted height and traffic control devices. The truck remained wedged and blocking auto traffic until about 12:30 this afternoon, or about six hours after the strike.

The new bridge will have a clearance of 14 feet above the roadway, or two feet, two inches higher than 11-foot, 10-inch clearance of the old bridge. The increase in clearance will improve train service by significantly reducing bridge strikes.

Third Track

The wider Post Avenue Bridge is critical to accommodating the new Main Line Third Track, which is moving forward at the Governor's direction after 70 years of stagnation. The new bridge will be 50 feet wide, or 13 feet wider than the 37-foot-wide old bridge, and is one of several bridges that are being expanded to accommodate a third track.

Under the Third Track project, seven similar bridge projects will renew and/or raise the heights of bridges along the Main Line over the three-to-four-year duration of the project.

The \$2 billion Third Track project will add a third track to 9.8 miles along the congested Main Line of the LIRR between Floral Park and Hicksville, and eliminate all seven street-level grade crossings within the project corridor. With 40 percent of LIRR passengers going through the Main Line, and the project corridor's critical central position in the LIRR system, delays in the project corridor have rippled across the entire LIRR and impacted thousands of commuters.

The transformative Third Track plan differs significantly from past proposals and incorporates the considerations of the community throughout the entirety of the project. The plan takes no residential properties and eliminates seven street-level grade crossings, including two in Westbury. Additionally, five new energy-efficient parking facilities with the capacity for 3,500 vehicles are being built in coordination with the Villages of Mineola and Westbury and the Town of Oyster Bay.

Janno Lieber, MTA Chief Development Officer, said, "The new Post Avenue LIRR Bridge is an important project that is going to be followed by seven other bridges that are going to be upgraded or replaced as part of the historic Third Track project - which will deliver Long Islanders more frequent and reliable service and huge safety and economic benefits. I'd like to thank Governor Cuomo for making this long deferred dream a reality. This is yet another example of the Governor and the MTA's commitment to the community and to our customers."

Village of Westbury Mayor Peter I. Cavallaro said, "After decades of delays and false starts, the LIRR is moving forward with historic projects to strengthen service and improve communities all along the railroad, including the Village of Westbury. From expanding parking to eliminating dangerous grade crossings to ensuring sound protection for our residents, the LIRR has taken the community's input into consideration at every step of the way. This is why I was the first mayor and the Village of Westbury was the first village to sign onto the third track plan. I want to thank Governor Cuomo for his leadership and for his commitment to rebuilding our infrastructure on Long Island."

The Post Avenue Bridge reconstruction is being performed by Halmar International, Inc., an engineering and construction firm based in Nanuet, New York. The MTA Board approved the design-build contract with Halmar in November 2016, after receiving proposals from five major competitors responding to a call for proposals released by the railroad the prior August.

This bridge replacement follows the LIRR's on-time, on-budget replacement of the roadway bridge four-tenths of a mile to the west that carries Ellison Avenue over the LIRR Main Line. The newly built Ellison Avenue Bridge was put into place in October 2015 and was reopened to the public in April 2016.