



MTA Press Releases

Press Release

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LIRR

IMMEDIATE

Governor Cuomo Announces Rail Laying for 13 Mile Double Track Project Completed This Month

Specialized Track-Laying Machine that Lays Rail 10x Faster than Before, Combined with Design-Build Construction, Will Allow for Entire Project to be Completed 16 Months Ahead of Schedule

While Touring Second Track, Governor Announces 24 LIRR Projects

Totaling \$1 Billion to be Completed in 2018; 21 Additional LIRR Projects Will Break Ground This Year, Part of Governor's \$6.6 Billion Transformation of Commuter Rail

Visualization of the New Double Track and Other Infrastructure Projects on Long Island Available [Here](#)

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the Long Island Rail Road Double Track has reached a major milestone and the final five miles of rail being laid this month. The project utilizes Design-Build construction and a specialized New Track Construction machine that lays rail more than 10 times faster than the MTA has ever done before, saving more than \$7 million in construction costs and allowing for an expected project completion of August 2018 - 16 months ahead of schedule. Once complete, the Double Track, extending from Farmingdale to Ronkonkoma, will dramatically reduce delays on the LIRR and enable more off-peak service in both directions by adding nearly 13 miles of parallel track.

While touring the Double Track, Governor Cuomo also announced 24 LIRR projects totaling \$1 billion - including the \$121 million Hicksville Station Transformation and the new Wyandanch Station - will be completed in 2018. Twenty-one additional LIRR projects will break ground this year, including the \$2 billion LIRR Expansion Project that will add a third track to 9.8 miles along the congested Main Line of the LIRR between Floral Park and Hicksville. Together, these projects significantly advance the Governor's \$6.6 billion transformation and modernization of the Long Island commuter rail and \$100 billion Infrastructure and Development Plan for New York.

"For decades, leaders have talked about adding a second track to the Ronkonkoma Branch and today we are moving a major step closer to getting it done," **Governor Cuomo said**. "By pairing design-build contracting with the use of innovative track-laying equipment, we are building a more robust infrastructure faster and at less expense to New Yorkers. This project, along with the 23 other commuter line projects we will complete this year, will ensure LIRR remains the backbone of the region's economy."

Double Track

The \$387.2 million Double Track project, which is bringing a second track to single-track territory, has provided hundreds of construction jobs and, upon completion, will improve service and reliability on the LIRR's Ronkonkoma Branch, while spurring economic activity, and improving LIRR service to Long Island MacArthur Airport. Over the past 25 years, ridership on the Ronkonkoma Branch has doubled - growing in popularity since the line was electrified in 1988.

With just one track along most of the 18-mile route between Farmingdale and Ronkonkoma, the LIRR can operate only a limited number of trains and lacks operational flexibility in the event of a disruption. If one train becomes disabled, all other trains - coming from both east and west - have no way around the problem.

The new Double Track will enable the LIRR to provide more frequent off-peak service to the Ronkonkoma Branch in both directions, with off-peak service going from one train every hour to one train every 30 minutes in both directions. The project will reduce delays associated with service disruptions for the 48,000 weekday riders on the Ronkonkoma Line by giving the railroad flexibility to go around obstacles that it cannot currently in single-track territory.

The project has taken place over two phases. Phase One used the New Track Construction machine to lay the first 3.5 miles of new track between Central Islip and Ronkonkoma, and was completed in August 2016. Phase Two includes laying the rest of the track between Farmingdale and Central Islip. Over the next several months, crews will continue construction that includes stone ballast, tamping, surfacing, and installation of the third rail and new signal system.

2018 LIRR Project Completion List

The Governor also announced 24 critical projects totaling \$1 billion will be completed this year, as part of the complete transformation of the LIRR. The projects include:

- Double Track Project
- 72 New M9 Commuter Rail Cars in Service
- Hicksville Station Rehabilitation and New Platforms
- Systemwide Post-Sandy Substation Restoration on Long Beach Branch (3 substations: Oceanside, Oil City, Long Beach)
- Flushing Main Street Station New ADA Elevators and Station Improvements
- Wantagh Station Platform Replacement
- Buckram Road Bridge Replacement
- Post Avenue Bridge Replacement
- Port Washington substation Replacement
- New Wyandanch Station
- Pinelawn Station New Platforms
- Stewart Manor Station Modernization and New Platforms
- Port Jefferson Station Modernization and Platform Upgrades
- East Hampton Station Modernization
- Ronkonkoma Station Upgrades and Amenities
- Merrick Station Modernization and Platform Upgrades
- Brentwood Station Modernization
- Deer Park Station Modernization and Platform Upgrades
- Farmingdale Station Modernization
- Bellmore Station Modernization
- Syosset Station Modernization
- Stony Brook Station Modernization
- Valley Stream Station Upgrades and Amenities
- Baldwin Station Modernization

LIRR Projects Starting in 2018

An additional 21 LIRR projects will break ground this year, including:

- 3rd Track
- Jamaica Terminal
- Rockville Centre Viaduct
- Lynbrook Viaduct
- Meadowbrook Substation
- Mid Suffolk Yard
- Morris Park Locomotive Shop
- Great Neck Station
- Westbury Station
- Carle Place Station
- Mineola Station
- Merillon Avenue Station
- New Hyde Park Station
- Laurelton Station
- Locust Manor Station
- Nostrand Avenue Station
- Murray Hill Station
- Bayside Station
- Hempstead Station
- Northport Station
- Floral Park Station

New Track Construction Machine

The Double Track project marks the MTA's first-ever use of the New Track Construction machine, which is capable of laying one mile of track per day - more than ten times faster than the 500 feet of track per day that the MTA manually laid previously. By speeding up this process, the MTA is significantly improving productivity, increasing safety and reducing the potential of construction disruption to local communities. To see the New Track Construction machine in action, click [here](#).

The machine is pulled from the front end by a bulldozer along the route of the new track. It automatically handles the flow of materials, negating the use of overhead cranes for track construction. The machine's ability to bring in supplies by rail negates the need for trucking supplies in. The MTA plans to use the machine in future projects in response to the Governor's challenge to increase efficiency in its projects.

MTA Chairman Joseph J. Lhota said, "The Double Track Project is a crucial piece of the many current infrastructure initiatives that bolster MTA's commitment to deliver better service and more capacity, while limiting service disruptions and delays. By having this second, parallel track on our Ronkonkoma Branch, customers traveling both eastbound and westbound throughout all times of the day will see the benefits this project brings."

MTA Chief Development Officer Janno Lieber said, "The MTA is always looking to adopt state-of-the-art practices when it comes to new construction projects. Our deployment of the New Track Construction machine shows that with innovative thinking, projects can be completed ahead of schedule with

cost savings in the millions. We will use this same approach when it comes to other major infrastructure projects the LIRR is taking on, like the LIRR Main Line Expansion Project, to deliver the capacity customers need as quickly and cost-efficiently as possible."

Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone said, "The Governor's commitment to invest billions of dollars into the expansion of LIRR stations and tracks is the leadership Long Island has been waiting on for years. By addressing travel congestion and safety concerns, and focusing our efforts on reducing and eliminating travel delays - this significant undertaking will transform the way Suffolk County residents commute across the island and to the City. I thank Governor Cuomo for recognizing the need to tackle this infrastructure challenge and look forward to the creation of hundreds of new construction jobs for men and women throughout our community as these projects move forward this year."

Long Island Association President and Chief Executive Officer Kevin S. Law said, "I am proud to support the Governor's efforts to transform the way our residents commute. This administration's investments in LIRR enhancements are critical to the safety of riders, workers and visitors - and by expanding tracks and offering more off-peak service in both directions, we are truly laying the groundwork for easier travel and an improved quality of life for everyone. I look forward to our residents securing well-paying jobs on-site and helping New York complete these massive projects to ensure a better, stronger Long Island for all."

SMART Transportation Division General Chairman Anthony Simon said, "New York knows that in order to provide the best service for all passengers, investments in safety and capacity are crucial. I am thrilled Governor Cuomo has committed historic funding to the modernization of LIRR stations and expansion of tracks to deliver more efficient, expanded service to residents and visitors. Once complete, these projects will help our conductors, service attendants, and track repair workers ensure the highest quality service is provided to everyone."