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Press Release

December 18, 2018

[NYC Transit](#)

IMMEDIATE

### Signal Modernization, Other Maintenance and Repairs to be Performed in 53 Street E M Tunnel

*CBTC Signal, Power Infrastructure and Track Renewal on **E M** Lines Will Also Benefit **F R** Riders;  
Work Planned During Week of Lower Ridership to Minimize Customer Impact*

MTA New York City Transit will be performing signal and power upgrades, and maintenance and repairs on signals, tracks and electrical infrastructure in and around the 53<sup>rd</sup> Street **E M** Tunnel during a period of lower ridership at the end of December as part of long-term capital improvements that include the resignaling project of the Queens Boulevard Line to a Communications-Based Train Control (CBTC) system. The work will ultimately benefit riders of the **E F M R** lines as they all share track on one segment or another on either side of the tunnel.

“This intensive work in the under-river tunnel requires workers to have full access to the tracks, but it’s critical for daily reliability and for upgrading the decades-old signals to the latest modern system,” said MTA NYC Transit President Andy Byford. “We thank our customers for their patience – this work will result in more reliable trips for everyone who uses the **E F M** or **R** lines.”

During the closure of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Street Tunnel, crews will be installing rails, plates, tie blocks and track ties, performing preventive switch maintenance, and upgrading communications, signals and electrical infrastructure, such as installing communications and power cables. Full implementation of CBTC on the Queens Boulevard Line will enable New York City Transit to address overcrowding and heavy subway ridership by operating subway trains more closely together, adding passenger capacity and more frequent service. CBTC is being installed in phases on local and express tracks serving the **E F M R** lines from north of the Kew Gardens/Union Tpke **E F** station to north of the 47-50 Sts/Rockefeller Ctr station on the **F M** lines and south of the 50 St **C E** station.

The 53<sup>rd</sup> Street Tunnel work will be performed between Queens Plaza and 50 St-8 Av in Manhattan, from 4:45 a.m. on Wednesday, December 26, until 5 a.m. on Monday, December 31. Ridership is significantly lower during this holiday week compared to other weekdays, and the schedule’s efficiency means an entire month of weekend work can be accomplished in a single five-day period. Regularly scheduled service – with New Year’s Eve service enhancements – will be in place well before the festivities begin on December 31. A similar service change was in place on these dates last year for intensive Subway Action Plan work.

For service options during this planned work:

- Between Queens and Manhattan, **E** trains will be rerouted along the **F** line between Jackson Heights-Roosevelt Av and W 4 St, where they will continue on their regular **E** route to World Trade Center.
- **M** trains will operate between Metropolitan Av and Chambers St. Customers traveling to and from Forest Hills-71 Av may take the **E F R**. Customers traveling to and from Brooklyn may transfer from the **F** line to the **J**.
- There will be no subway service at Lexington Av/53 St **E M** and 5 Av/53 St **E M**. For 5 Av/53 St, customers can use the nearby 47-50 Sts/Rockefeller Center station, and customers going to the Lexington Av/53 St station can take the **6** to 51 St.
- Customers traveling to and from the city airports may take the **7 E F R** to Jackson Heights-Roosevelt Av for the Q70 LaGuardia Link bus to LaGuardia Airport, or the **A** train to Howard Beach-JFK for the AirTrain to John F. Kennedy International Airport.
- **R** trains will continue to serve Queens Plaza except overnights, when free shuttle buses will provide service by making stops at 21 St-Queensbridge, Court Sq and Queens Plaza.

Station signage has been posted to provide customer information and service alternatives, and extra customer service personnel will be posted at stations to help customers navigate the alternate service. A video detailing the service change is available [here](#):

### 53 St Tunnel Closure 2018

