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IMMEDIATE

Metro-North Unveils 'Way Ahead' Plan, Outlining Transformative Future for the Railroad

Way Ahead Details Actions to Enhance Safety, Service, Infrastructure, Communication

MTA Metro-North Railroad today announced *Way Ahead*, a roadmap for the railroad's future that details actions to enhance safety, service, infrastructure, communications, and transform customers' day-to-day commuting experience. *Way Ahead* is a proactive response to Metro-North's growing ridership, changing demographics and the evolving needs of customers.

Way Ahead lays the foundation for the continued growth and vitality of the railroad. Since Metro-North was formed in 1983, ridership has boomed from just over 41 million customers a year, primarily to and from "9-to-5" jobs in New York City, to an all-time high of 86.5 million customers in 2017. In addition to higher ridership numbers, with reverse commuting and customers taking trips at all hours of the day and night, the system is being used much differently than it was back in the early days of Metro-North.

At the same time as Metro-North's customer expectations are evolving and our ridership patterns are changing, the ability of our aging infrastructure to adapt to those changes is increasingly strained. Some of the rail in Grand Central Terminal is more than one hundred years old. The Park Avenue Viaduct – which carries 98 percent of Metro-North's customers – was constructed in 1893. *Way Ahead* tackles ways to renew infrastructure so that Metro-North can meet our customers' desire for better service.

At today's Metro-North, nothing is more important than the safety and security of our customers and employees, and safety drives all *Way Ahead* actions. Since 2013, Metro-North has significantly upgraded its infrastructure, reinvigorated its cyclical track maintenance program, and bought new technology to help identify track defects. Metro-North invested heavily in its Safety Department and developed programs like confidential close call reporting and sleep apnea screening to foster a strong safety culture among our employees. *Way Ahead* builds upon this momentum with new safety initiatives.

Through *Way Ahead*, Metro-North will enhance the day-to-day experience of commuting for our customers, including making improvements to how the railroad communicates with its customers in every way possible - social media, on the train, on platforms, and through other avenues, like the new Mymta app. The railroad will more rigorously maintain its stations and platforms, making them cleaner, more inviting, and generally more pleasant to be on, improving the daily commute.

Way Ahead is our roadmap to continue to provide the best possible service to our customers," said Catherine Rinaldi, Metro-North President. "Its vision is clear, to set the standard for safety, reliability and innovation in the delivery of excellent customer service. Guided by our past experiences, we look forward to developing an even stronger Metro-North for the future."

Highlights of Way Ahead:

Safety

- Expand TRACKS, Metro-North's award-winning free community outreach program designed to educate and promote rail safety.
- Enhance grade crossings. Metro-North will complete its upgrade of Grade Crossing Flashers to LEDs to provide better visibility and its aggressive Grade Crossing surface replacement program.
- Improve emergency signs and lighting in the Park Avenue Tunnel and Grand Central Terminal's track and platform areas.
- Accelerate the installation of security cameras and Help Points at 10 priority stations.
- Continue to improve and expand the safety training programs that Metro-North provides to its employees.

Customer Service

- Improve the customer experience in Grand Central Terminal in the evenings and on weekends by creating new Grand Central Terminal customer advocates.
- Revitalize Metro-North's aging locomotive-hauled fleet by replacing seats and floors in more than 100 coaches.
- Improve the track clean-up program and work with local governments and community groups to clean more areas around stations and along tracks.
- Bring major station improvements to White Plains, Riverdale, Crestwood, Port Chester, and Harlem-125th Street.
- Improve accessibility by installing new ADA elevators and ramps at key outlying stations.
- Continue our industry-leading energy efficiency practices.

Communications

- Bring new, real-time digital train information displays to Grand Central Terminal, including a new, state-of-the-art "Big Board" and new signs at each of the departure gates.
- Add even more digital signs, on an expedited basis, throughout Grand Central Terminal.
- Accelerate delivery of real-time train information to displays at an additional 21 stations.
- Improve and upgrade the information given to train crews via their hand-held ticket machines, so crews are better able to communicate information to customers during service disruptions.
- Replace the antiquated public-address system in Grand Central Terminal and at outlying stations with a new state-of-the-art system.
- Improve cell coverage and connectivity along Metro-North tracks by working with cell carriers.
- Install ADA-compliant signs on platforms in Grand Central Terminal and at North End Access locations.

Infrastructure

- Continue the aggressive progress toward completing the installation of Positive Train Control across the railroad's territory.
- Take delivery of 66 new M8 rail cars to accommodate increased ridership.
- Begin replacing our locomotive fleet to improve service reliability in Metro-North's diesel territory.
- Double the budget for trimming and removing trees that can fall onto tracks.
- Replace 1,200 power transmission poles on the Upper Harlem Line.
- Complete a one-billion-dollar investment in the Harmon train car maintenance facility.
- Continue aggressive improvements to the track infrastructure.
- Complete the replacement of Metro-North's overhead power system.
- Complete work to fix and fortify the railroad's power and communication infrastructure damaged by Superstorm Sandy
- Replace deteriorated platforms with heated platforms for a safe and reliable ride.
- Develop a SMARTRACK program, through which Metro-North will undertake critical infrastructure work by strategically shutting down continuous segments of track, giving multiple work groups uninterrupted access to maintain and improve the system.

For a look at the complete *Way Ahead* plan, please visit: <http://www.mta.info/mnr>