



MTA Press Releases

[Select Language](#) ▼

Press Release

December 27, 2019

LIRR

IMMEDIATE

MTA Rounds Out a Successful Year of LIRR Construction Projects and Expansion Milestones

25 Major Projects Completed in 2019 and a Dozen More in the Works for 2020

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) ended 2019 having completed almost two dozen Long Island Rail Road construction projects – a massive increase in the pace of work to transform and modernize the railroad. The *LIRR Modernization Program*, a comprehensive program of 100 projects to rebuild the LIRR and foster economic growth, made great strides this past year with 14 station enhancements, five major bridge replacements and two grade crossing eliminations. While many of those projects were directly related to the *LIRR Expansion Project*, to build a third track from Floral Park to Hicksville, the accomplishments span across the entire LIRR system.

“The ability for the Long Island Rail Road to improve service for today’s riders while building for the future needs of Long Island is paramount. These expansion projects coupled with our LIRR Forward initiatives will give us the flexibility we need to provide more robust service and get our customers where they need to go on time,” **LIRR President Phil Eng said**. “Our Operation and Engineering staff and the entire LIRR workforce really worked hard to make sure projects were continued with as little interruption to customer service as possible and completed on time. We appreciate the patience of our customers and the communities that we serve throughout this critical work.”

“The LIRR Expansion Project is moving forward at a remarkable pace, and it is now about one-third complete, and is on schedule and under budget,” **MTA Chief Development Officer Janno Lieber said**. “This project is the model project for how we are changing the way we manage capital projects to do them better, faster and cheaper.”

The following capital projects were completed in 2019:

All projects noted with an **asterisk (*)** are part of the *LIRR Expansion Project* which will

add a third track from Floral Park to Hicksville, reducing train congestion and delays and enabling true bi-directional service during peak hours with a more reliable rail network. This transformative work, which began at the end of 2018, includes several related projects, including the construction of parking garages, retaining walls, improvements to rail bridges and the removal of eight street-level grade crossings.

Station Enhancements

The following stations received enhancements and upgrades including new LED lighting, USB charging ports, free public Wi-Fi, interactive digital kiosks and related improvements.

- **Baldwin Station** on the Babylon Branch -- completed in June 2019. Benches have also been added, new trash receptacles have been installed, and new tactile strips have been placed on the platform.
- **Bayside Station**, on the Port Washington Branch -- completed March 2019. Historic photos, wayfinding signage and new benches were also added.
- **Bellmore Station**, on the Babylon Branch – completed June 2019. Platforms and the waiting room were also rehabilitated with canopies new windows, doors, wall tiles and new HVAC system, and an art installation.
- **Brentwood Station**, on the Ronkonkoma Branch – completed June 2019. Shelter sheds and railings were added to the platforms, a new ADA-compliant ramp has been added, as well as an art installation.
- **Deer Park Station**, on the Ronkonkoma Branch – completed April 2019. Sidewalk and curb improvements, new bike racks and an art installation were among other improvements.
- **East Hampton Station**, on the Montauk Branch – completed April 2019. The station interior was renovated to preserve its 19th century charm, wood paneling was repaired and historic photos of the station are on display.
- **Farmingdale Station** on the Ronkonkoma Branch – completed April 2019. Other upgrades for this station, originally built in 1890, include a new waiting room with terrazzo flooring, new ADA accessible restrooms and a rehabilitated pedestrian underpass with wayfinding signage.
- **Great Neck Station** on the Port Washington Branch – completed April 2019. The station also received an historic plaque and historic photos.

- **Merrick Station** on the Babylon Branch – completed January 2019. The plaza area and sidewalks were also rehabilitated and a mosaic art piece was installed in the waiting room.
- **Northport Station** on the Port Jefferson Branch – completed January 2019. The station underwent a full historic restoration including a new waiting room with terrazzo flooring, new restrooms and new wall and ceiling finishes.
- **Port Jefferson Station** on the Port Jefferson Branch – completed March 2019. The station building exterior was also renewed with new signage and the installation of an outdoor sculpture in the plaza and a reconfigured plaza area to improve customer flow. Parking improvements were added as well.
- **Stewart Manor Station** on the Hempstead Branch – completed January 2019. New platforms are now equipped with shelters, MTA help points, new signage and permanent artwork.
- **Syosset Station** on the Port Jefferson Branch – completed June 2019. The station building was completely rebuilt and the plaza area around the station entrance was rehabilitated. A 21-foot stainless steel and plexiglass sculpture was installed at the entrance of the station building.
- **Valley Stream Station** on the Far Rockaway Branch – completed February 2019. Historic photos and a commemorative plaque were added to the building. New wayfinding signage and trash receptacles were also added.

Bridges

Bridges below 14 feet are especially vulnerable to overheight vehicles striking them. In 2016, there were 20 bridge strikes in Nassau County, alone. Each time a bridge is struck by a vehicle, speed restrictions are put on trains while a team of specialized LIRR personnel are dispatched to the scene to inspect the bridge to ensure its continued safety. Only when a bridge is determined to be safe for full-speed train travel is the restriction lifted; in the interim, the result is cascading delays that can affect train service across the immediate branch and sometimes other branches as well. Replacing low-hanging bridges improves the safety and reliability for both vehicles and LIRR passengers.

In June 2019, **Cherry Lane Bridge***, located in the Town of North Hempstead along the LIRR Main line, was removed and replaced with a taller three-track structure. The original low-hanging bridge had been in service since 1953 and the site of many accidents over the years due to trucks striking the bridge. This bridge was also replaced using the method successfully employed at LIRR's Post Avenue Bridge in Westbury, which was completed over a single weekend in October 2017.

The **Nassau Boulevard Bridge*** in Garden City was struck 16 times in 2018 and 2019 alone. The 11' 6" bridge overpass was assembled in place adjacent to the site, and LIRR crews inched it into place over one weekend in October 2019, following the demolition of the old bridge. After the new bridge was firmly set in place, crews rebuilt the track atop the bridge, while reconnecting the existing two tracks. The 14-foot has a bay for a third track.

In November 2019, the LIRR installed new single span steel bridge structures at **Accabonac Road and North Main Street Bridges** in East Hampton, replacing two aging lower clearance structures. These low-hanging bridges, first constructed in 1895, were the site of many accidents over the years caused by trucks striking the bridges, resulting in train delays in both directions. The large bridge components, which were fabricated in Lancaster, PA, were transported from Pennsylvania by road, then via barge through the Long Island Sound, around the tip of Orient Point, through the North and South Forks to Shinnecock Inlet, then via road again to East Hampton.

The 61-year-old **South Tyson Avenue Bridge*** in the Village of Floral Park was modified and a new two-track bay bridge was installed in September 2019. It took 2,000 hours to construct and install the bridge which was replaced using a self-propelled modular transporter just like with Cherry Lane and Post Avenue.

The **Flushing Main Street Bridge**, built in 1913, in Flushing, experienced years of deterioration, and rehabilitation was necessary to the structure that carries two Port Washington Branch tracks over five lanes of vehicular traffic. Repairs were made to the steel composition and removal of loose concrete from the deck underside. A center median has been constructed beneath the bridge, providing safety for traffic flow. The work was completed in November 2019.

Work on the 100-year-old **Springfield Boulevard Bridge** in Queens Village was completed in August 2019. The replacement of the bridge, which is served by the Hempstead Branch, included repairs on existing concrete platforms, light poles and conduits, as well as limited underdeck concrete repairs.

Grade Crossing Eliminations

Covert Avenue Grade Crossing* in New Hyde Park was eliminated and reconstructed to provide a two-lane grade-separated underpass with a pedestrian sidewalk on the east side of the underpass. After crews removed the existing rail tracks and dug down 25 feet, the concrete box structure was moved incrementally more than 50 feet into perfect position. The roadway beneath the underpass was officially opened in October 2019.

The **Urban Avenue Grade Crossing*** in the Town of North Hempstead is one of eight street-level crossings that was eliminated as part of the LIRR Expansion Project. This new bridge installation, where there was no bridge before, eliminated the railroad crossing. The bridge was put into place using an approach called "box-jacking" that reduces the length of time the tracks must be taken out of service to just one weekend. In fact, the first time this method was successfully used on a major railroad project in the United States was during this installation in July 2019.

Infrastructure and Track

The new **Port Washington Substation** replaces an earlier brick-and-mortar substation that had been in service more than 30 years and was beyond its useful life. Located at the intersection of Davis Avenue and Bayles Avenue, the new substation ensures the continued reliability of Port Washington Branch train service by maintaining a robust power system for the electrified third rails. With greater capacity, the new substation enables the anticipated growth in train service that is expected to coincide with the start of LIRR service to Grand Central Terminal.

Nassau Switch* in Mineola is one of the most highly trafficked areas with over 200 train traverses every day. The switch installation, which allows trains to be guided from one track to another, was upgraded over several weekends this past fall to prepare for the future third track between Floral Park and Hicksville. These switch upgrades, among many other initiatives, have resulted in 43% fewer cancellations, 22% fewer short trains and 30% fewer trains delayed over 15 minutes.

LIRR Expansion by the Numbers

9.8 -- track length, in miles, of the LIRR Expansion project between Floral Park and Hicksville

40 – the footage of roadway between the Covert Avenue Bridge and the side walls

55 – the number of hours it took to successfully replace Nassau Boulevard Bridge

320 – the tonnage of the new Cherry Lane Bridge

481 – the net increase of parking spaces when Westbury North Parking Structure is complete

800 – number of lighting fixtures to be installed at Mineola Harrison Parking Structure

2,000 -- number of hours to construct and install South Tyson Avenue Bridge

16,000 – a little less than the amount, in cubic yards, of material excavated at Urban Avenue

18,000 – amount of linear feet of wall that has been constructed along LIRR Expansion corridor

107,000 – approximately the number of daily commuters who travel across South Tyson Avenue Bridge

Looking Ahead at LIRR Expansion in 2020

- **Floral Park Station** will get three new ADA-compliant elevators being installed in the north, south and central part of the station.
- **Plainfield Avenue Bridge**, near Floral Park Station, will get an additional bay and be widened and reinforced.
- **Glen Cove Road Bridge** will be removed and replaced with a three-track structure.
- **Meadowbrook Parkway Bridge**, in the Village of Carle Place, Town of North Hempstead, will be widened.
- **Merillon Avenue Station** in Garden City, will receive station enhancements including platform removal and replacement to accommodate 12-car trains; and ADA compliant improvements.
- **Mineola Avenue Station** will receive upgrades including platform removal and replacement; a refurbished station building; and a new pedestrian overpass, including two elevators.
- **Willis Avenue Grade Crossing**, in the Village of Mineola, and **New Hyde Park Road Grade Crossing**, in the Village of New Hyde Park, and **School Street Grade Crossing** will be eliminated.
- **New Hyde Park Station**, will receive modernized station upgrades including platform replacement and digital information displays.
- **Westbury North Parking Structure** – a new four-level 683-space parking garage -- will be completed to accommodate a future increase in capacity on the LIRR in Westbury.

For more information on LIRR's capital projects, visit [amodernli.com](https://modernli.com)