



## MTA Press Releases

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Press Release

April 14, 2019

LIRR

IMMEDIATE

### MTA Begins Major Construction at Covert Avenue in the Village of New Hyde Park to Eliminate Street-Level Railroad Crossing

*Project Includes New Roadway Underpass for Motor Vehicles, Improving Safety and Railroad Reliability;*

*Project Will Alleviate Train Congestion and Vehicular Traffic, Which Can Be Halted More Than 40% During AM and PM Rush Periods While Crossing Gates Are Down;*

*Covert Avenue to Reopen in Fall With New Two-Lane, Depressed Roadway and Pedestrian Sidewalk; Vehicular Detour Starting Monday, April 15;*

*Avenue to Reopen in the Fall With Railroad Crossing Removed*

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced that Covert Avenue, between 1st Avenue and 5th Avenue, in the Village of New Hyde Park will be temporarily closed beginning Monday, April 15th, 2019, as part of the Long Island Rail Road's Main Line Expansion Project that will make the railroad safer and more reliable.

Preliminary construction at the site began in October, as crews readied the area for the extensive work that will completely eliminate the need for cars to cross over the railroad tracks. This railroad crossing is one of seven such grade-crossing elimination projects that will be completed under the ongoing LIRR Expansion Project, also known as "Third Track," set for completion in 2022.

Following robust consultation with the Village of New Hyde Park, the MTA is rebuilding the railroad crossing at Covert Avenue as a two-way grade separated underpass with a sidewalk on the east side. The MTA expects the crossing reconstruction to be completed in the fall. Fines can be levied against the contractor if it fails to abide by the construction completion timelines.

"This temporary road closure will enable us to reopen the safer, reconfigured roadway in just a matter of months," said MTA Chief Development Officer Janno Lieber. "There have been seven fatal grade crossing accidents in the last 12 years on this section of the Main Line, including the tragic crash in Westbury just a couple of months ago. Eliminating this railroad crossing and six others between Floral Park and Hicksville will make the area safer for everyone and improve convenience for commuters, drivers, and pedestrians."

"Each piece of the LIRR Expansion Project is a vital element to the success of the Long Island Rail Road, and also to the communities that our trains travel through," said LIRR President Phil Eng. "Every measure that can help our trains operate safely and on-time, while offering relief to communities plagued by traffic congestion, is a win in our book."

Once the grade crossing is eliminated, trains will no longer need to blast their horns, and bells from crossing gates will become unnecessary, significantly reducing noise pollution in the surrounding area. Currently, crossing gates during rush hours are in the down position nearly half the time, creating traffic backups and increasing exhaust from vehicles.

As part of an unprecedentedly robust community outreach program, MTA, LIRR, and the design-builder have held hundreds of meetings in advance of the closure. Most recently, the project team has hosted multiple public information sessions in addition to targeted stakeholder meetings with Covert Avenue residents, school districts, chambers of commerce, civic associations, and more. Businesses along the detour route will remain accessible throughout construction.

For more information about the Covert Avenue underpass construction, please visit this page: <http://www.amodernli.com/project/covert-avenue-grade-crossing-elimination/>.

Detour routes have been established in cooperation with Nassau County, the Villages of New Hyde Park and Floral Park, and other localities. The detour plans encourage the use of New Hyde Park Road and Tulip Avenue as alternatives. Detour routes will be clearly marked by signage. For more information, including detour details and maps, visit: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M\\_cIDACFnADZRhpmTkjdjmrL\\_ZrPDn59/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M_cIDACFnADZRhpmTkjdjmrL_ZrPDn59/view).

Heavy construction began in fall 2018 on 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 for the first time in LIRR history. This transformative project includes several related elements, including the construction of additional parking garages and improved station access, retaining and sound attenuation walls, improvements to rail bridges, as well as the elimination of the seven street-level railroad crossings in the corridor. Construction is being handled in a way to minimize the impact on daily routines, with extensive mitigation and public outreach efforts being planned in conjunction with local communities.

The LIRR Expansion Project is part of a multibillion-dollar modernization of the Long Island Rail Road, the largest investment the railroad has received in decades. Once the work is complete, the LIRR will have increased its capacity by roughly 50 percent. Together, the upgrades will help transform transportation across the region and provide a reliable, state-of-the-art rail system for Long Islanders.

For more information on the 100+ projects set to transform the LIRR, visit [aModernLI.com](https://www.mta.info/press-release/lirr/mta-begins-major-construction-covert-avenue-village-new-hyde-park-eliminate).