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Press Release

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[Metro-North](#)

IMMEDIATE

Metro-North Meets Milestones in Way Ahead Plan to Transform the Railroad

Marks Key Accomplishments in Safety, Service, Infrastructure and Customer Communication

MTA Metro-North Railroad President Catherine Rinaldi today announced a series of key accomplishments in implementing the railroad's Way Ahead plan, a roadmap that details actions to enhance safety, service, infrastructure, communications, and transform customers' day-to-day commuting experience. Metro-North launched Way Ahead six months ago as a proactive response to growing ridership, changing demographics and the evolving needs of customers.

Coinciding with benchmarks met in its Way Ahead plan, Metro-North's on-time performance numbers have been above goal. 2019's on-time performance through April 30 has been 95.7%, 2.1 percentage points higher than last year. There's a 74% reduction in cancelled and terminated trains, and a 50% reduction in trains delayed by more than 15 minutes.

The railroad's vision through Way Ahead is to set the standard for safety, reliability and innovation in the delivery of excellent customer service. Metro-North has realized key aspects of its vision, and that means customers can expect safety upgrades, improved communications, reinvigorated stations, renewed infrastructure, which all translates to an overall more positive commuting experience.

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. Way Ahead, a dynamic plan that responds to increased ridership and changes in how customers are using the railroad, sets the foundation for the continued growth and vitality of the railroad.

"The transformation of Metro-North Railroad is no longer a plan, it's happening," said Catherine Rinaldi, Metro-North President. "Operating from our core principles of safety, integrity and innovation, and all the while listening to commuters, we're changing the railroad so that riding Metro-North is a more positive experience for our customers. We won't rest on our laurels, and there's still much work to be done, but we are all well on our way to developing an even stronger Metro-North for the future."

Highlights of Way Ahead Accomplishments:

Safety

- Expanded TRACKS, Metro-North's award-winning free community outreach program designed to educate and promote rail safety, to over 100,000 reached in 2018, with the goal to reach 105,000 in 2019.
- To amplify its safety message, Metro-North launched a poster contest for students in grades K-12 to promote rail safety.
- All Metro-North Railroad crossings are now identified in the WAZE app. As drivers approach a crossing, a safety message will pop up on the screen.
- Enhanced 78 grade crossings with LED lights.
- Enhanced employee personal protective equipment program.
- Expanded communications skills training for employees, with other 1,100 operations employees trained thus far.

Customer Service

- Station ambassadors are now in place at the six busiest Metro-North stations: Stamford, White Plains, Harlem-125th Street, Fordham, New Rochelle and Croton-Harmon.
- Created new Grand Central Terminal customer advocates.
- Opened New Haven Line trains for travel between Fordham and Manhattan, adding the Fordham station stop to an additional 96 weekday trains.
- Delivered major station improvements to White Plains, Riverdale, Crestwood, Port Chester, with Harlem-125th Street soon.
- Improved accessibility by installing new elevators at Grand Central Terminal and a rehabilitated ADA ramp at the Nanuet station.
- Tracksideside clean-up in the Bronx, with the removal of 47 tons of waste.

Communications

- 38 more stations now have real-time monitors.
- New state-of-the-art "big boards" at Grand Central Terminal that are brighter, easier read, can be nimbly updated in response to service changes, and do not compromise the terminal's historical integrity.
- More digital real-time information screens at Grand Central Terminal.
- Hosted eleven "Connect with Us" forums for customers to ask questions and address concerns with Metro-North leadership. Three more "Connect with Us" forums are slated in the months ahead.

Infrastructure

- Metro-North crews replaced the Prospect Hill Road Bridge in Southeast, and the 14th Avenue Bridge in Mount Vernon is underway.
- Through its new SMARTTRACK program, Metro-North crews are undertaking critical infrastructure work by strategically shutting down continuous segments of track, giving multiple work groups uninterrupted access to maintain and improve the system, crews completed a host of track improvements from Mt. Vernon East to Pelham, including: changing ties, rail and insulated joints, cleaning drains, welding joints, picking up garbage and upgrading switches.
- Rigorous track work by Metro-North crews resulted in a 46% decrease in maintenance defects since 2014, and an 86% decrease in safety defects since 2014.

Focusing on the Future, What's Next in the Way Ahead Plan:

- Arrival of more M-8 cars on the New Haven Line.
- More station and accessibility improvements.
- New Grand Central Terminal gate boards and departure boards.
- Digital screen advertising on-board trains.
- Continuation of the trackside clean-up effort.
- Summer SMARTTRACK work in the Bronx.
- Complete New Haven Line catenary replacement.