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Press Release

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LIRR

IMMEDIATE

See It: Crews Move Fourth New LIRR Bridge Into Place Over a Former Railroad Crossing This Weekend

Bridge Over School Street on Border of Westbury and New Cassel Replaces Railroad Crossing Where Fatal Accident Occurred in February 2019

[View Time Lapse Video](#) of Crews Moving Bridge Into Place and [Photos](#) From This Weekend

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced that crews working to eliminate the School Street railroad crossing on the border of Westbury and New Cassel successfully installed a new 1,315-ton bridge that will carry the Long Island Rail Road Main Line over the roadway, and an accompanying underpass.

Crews assembled the bridge on site over the past several months and move it into place over a roughly 55-hour period this weekend. The new bridge's structure also includes the 40-foot section of roadway directly underneath it, creating a box-like structure. Simultaneously installing both the railroad bridge and the roadway segment beneath it is [a novel engineering procedure](#) that reduces construction time and cost.

The bridge installation eliminates the School Street railroad crossing, which was the site of a tragic collision on Feb. 26, 2019, in which the three occupants of an automobile lost their lives after driving around a downed crossing gate.

"The work this weekend to eliminate the grade crossing at School Street is another example of our success in advancing critical transportation projects - despite the pandemic," said Janno Lieber, President of MTA Construction & Development. "And the really good news is that by using innovative technologies and construction techniques we are delivering these improvements on time and within budget."

"While we continue to provide safe and reliable service for our customers during the pandemic we are keeping our eye on the future," said LIRR President Phil Eng. "I'm proud of the LIRR workforce working side by side with 3TC to fulfill our commitments in the delivery of The LIRR Expansion Project. While the elimination of the School Street crossing provides enhanced safety, reliability, capacity and flexibility for train service, this particular accomplishment has special significance as we also improve safety for those using School Street and the community." To enable this work, the School Street railroad crossing was closed to vehicular traffic and pedestrians on May 18. Over the past several months, crews installed soldier piles, excavated soil to depress the roadway under the tracks, and built the new railroad bridge and tunnel structure on the north side of the tracks in preparation for this weekend's installation.

This weekend, more than 600 workers "blitzed" the project with more than 34 construction activities across the 10-project corridor. At the School Street grade crossing site, crews removed the tracks at the site and soil beneath them, followed by pushing the bridge approximately 60 feet into place with a series of 12 hydraulic jacks that moved the bridge approximately 20 inches with each push. Once the structure was in place, LIRR workers re-installed the tracks over the bridge and related support systems including third rail, signals and communications conduits to allow for the LIRR's Main Line to be ready for service for this morning's rush hour.

Crews will spend the coming weeks building the roadway underneath the newly installed railroad bridge to allow it to open to vehicles and pedestrians this year.

The new bridge has three bays – two for the existing two Main Line tracks and a third that will accommodate the third track when it is built as one of the final phases of the Main Line Expansion project.

Reconstruction of the roadway is on pace to be completed this year, just six months after it was closed, making it the fourth railroad grade crossing to be eliminated recently as part of the LIRR Expansion Project. Over the past 18 months, crews have replaced the previous railroad crossings at Urban Avenue, one mile to the east of School Street and at New Hyde Park Road and Covert Avenue five and a half miles to the west in New Hyde Park. In the coming months, crews will eliminate four more railroad crossings along the corridor, at S. 12th Street in New Hyde Park, Main Street in Mineola, and two a block away at Willis Avenue in Mineola.

Overview: [LIRR Expansion Project from Floral Park to Hicksville](#)

The LIRR Expansion Project will add a third track from Floral Park to Hicksville, reducing train congestion and delays and enabling true bi-directional service during peak hours. This transformative work includes several related projects, including the construction of additional parking garages and improved station access, retaining and sound attenuation walls, improvements to rail bridges and the removal of the eight 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 to 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%. Together, the upgrades will help transform transportation across the region and provide a reliable, state-of-the-art rail system for Long Islanders.