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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Approves Final Major Contract for East Side Access Manhattan Caverns

Second Contract Will Cover Tunnel Approach and Bridge Reconstruction in Sunnyside

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Board today approved the final major contract for the East Side Access project, which will build and finish four platforms and eight tracks for the new Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) terminal some 100 feet below Grand Central Terminal.

Under another contract awarded last month, a tunnel approach will be built and a bridge rebuilt in Sunnyside, Queens. The total value of both contracts is nearly three-quarters of a billion dollars.

"These are a significant milestones for East Side Access and will turn raw underground caverns into the modern station that LIRR customers will use when they head directly to and from the East Side of Manhattan," said MTA Chairman and CEO Thomas F. Prendergast. "And the Sunnyside contract will make it possible for trains to reach Grand Central Terminal. East Side Access will save Long Island and Queens customers up to 40 minutes a day in travel time, demonstrating why transit expansion is a key element of our 2015-19 Capital Program."

The Manhattan contract will transform two enormous 1,143-foot-long caverns carved out of solid rock into a terminal station, with more than 12 miles of track work from Queens to Manhattan, including eight tracks and four platforms in the station; elevators, escalators and staircases to carry customers to and from the underground station; and all architectural finishes through the caverns.

"With the award of these contracts, the eventual completion of East Side Access is starting to come into view," said Dr. Michael Horodniceanu, President of MTA Capital Construction, which is building the project. "This is the next chapter in the long history of Grand Central Terminal and the growth and development of New York City."

The MTA selected the Tutor Perini Corporation for the 3½-year caverns project at a contract value of \$663 million. During the year-long procurement process, 34 firms requested the RFP documents and seven submitted separate technical and cost proposals. The selection committee unanimously selected low cost proposer Tutor Perini from among three firms that submitted best and final offers.

The contract award was approved on Monday by the Long Island and Finance Committees of the MTA Board and by the full MTA Board today.

The contract to make upgrades to railroad infrastructure in Sunnyside, Queens, was also awarded to Tutor Perini Corp., in December, and is valued at up to \$79 million. The upgrades will enable LIRR trains to access Grand Central Terminal.

The work the contractors will perform in Sunnyside includes excavation and construction of an approach structure that will allow the LIRR's existing tracks to connect to one of the four rail tunnels that have been built below Sunnyside Yard. This will complete the physical connection that will run from the tunnels under Grand Central all the way to daylight in Sunnyside, Queens. Approaches to the other tunnels will be built separately through other contracts.

Workers will also replace one of the five bridges that carry tracks over 48th Street. Additional work that will be performed under this contract includes switch installation; retaining wall construction; installation of electrical utilities; demolition of an electrical substation; and installation of overhead wire support structures.

The contract is structured to take 19 months and is valued at \$53.3 million. If the MTA deems that the work is going well, the contract allows the authority to exercise options valued at approximately \$26.5 million that would expand the scope of work to be undertaken and extend the duration of the contract to a total of 30 months. Construction activities for this contract are planned to be underway in late February.

The award of these contracts closely follows the completion of two other major contracts, one for a subsurface ventilation structure at 55th Street in Manhattan and one for major civil infrastructure work in Harold Interlocking in Queens. This past November, the project made its first leap forward into the public realm when the contract to fit-out the future LIRR concourse broke through to the Lower Level Dining Concourse in Grand Central Terminal, where escalators and a stairway will be installed to connect to the new concourse.

The East Side Access project will increase the LIRR's capacity into Manhattan, and dramatically shorten travel time for Long Island and eastern Queens commuters traveling to the east side of Manhattan. It is projected to reduce crowding at Penn Station and nearby subway stations and provide easier access from East Midtown to JFK International Airport via the AirTrain at LIRR's Jamaica station.

The completion of the East Side Access project will also free up LIRR tracks in Penn Station, allowing trains from the MTA Metro-North Railroad's New Haven Line access to Penn Station through Queens. The Penn Station Access project will construct four new stations in the East Bronx, significantly cutting travel times to and from Manhattan.

Some public benefits of the East Side Access project already have been realized. Sixteen months ago, the MTA opened 50th Street Commons, a comfortable pocket park between Park and Madison Avenues in Manhattan. A year before, the MTA opened a new entrance to Grand Central inside 245 Park Avenue that faces 47th Street between Park and Lexington avenues. The entrance is now the most direct way to access Grand Central's platforms from points east of Lexington Avenue and north of 47th Street.

East Side Access is scheduled to be completed in December 2022.