



Metro-North Railroad

Way Ahead

**How Metro-North
will set the standard
for safety, reliability,
and innovation
in the delivery
of excellent
customer
service.**





Our Mission

to be a safe, reliable and efficient railroad providing regional mobility and excellent service to our customers.

When the MTA took over a neglected and run-down Conrail system in 1983, the railroad was in shambles.

The MTA renamed the railroad “Metro-North” and set out on an ambitious mission that would, over the course of the next 30 years, turn Metro-North into one of New York’s great public-sector success stories. Investing heavily in our core infrastructure dramatically improved service reliability. As reliability improved, ridership more than doubled, spurring population and economic growth throughout our 2,700 square-mile service region.

Then came 2013. Two serious derailments and other major issues during the year revealed deep, systemic problems. The events of 2013 led to a lot of soul-searching and inspired us to take a more targeted look at every aspect of our operations, including our culture, systems, training, inspections, and maintenance.

A lot has happened since then. We restructured our entire leadership team and spent five years carefully reexamining procedures step by step to identify every possible way to make them safer. Ensuring safety as our top priority wasn’t easy, but we’ve emerged far stronger as a result.

We have also been listening to you — in person at our “Connect with Us” sessions, on social media and through our surveys. We know how much you depend on us each and every day, and we understand and care about what is important to you. And we know that improving your day-to-day experience on Metro-North depends on sustainable funding that will enable us to meet our long-term operating and capital needs.

Today, we are determined to be one of the region’s great public sector comeback stories. We’re off to a good start, but we still have a long way to go, and we need a roadmap to get there. This is that roadmap, our Way Ahead. In the pages that follow, we explain exactly how all of our employees will work together to set the standard for safety, reliability, and innovation in the delivery of excellent customer service. You deserve nothing less.

Catherine Rinaldi

President, Metro-North Railroad



Give us your feedback here

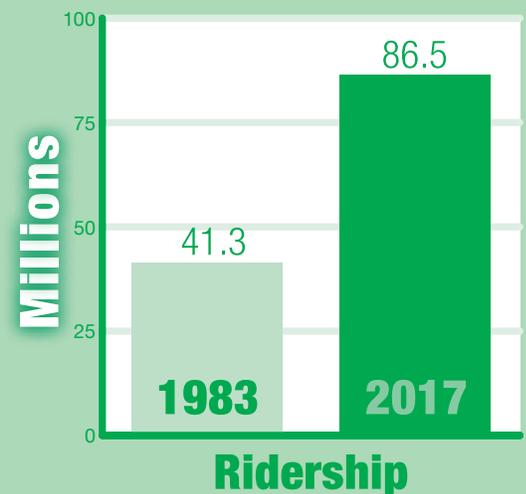
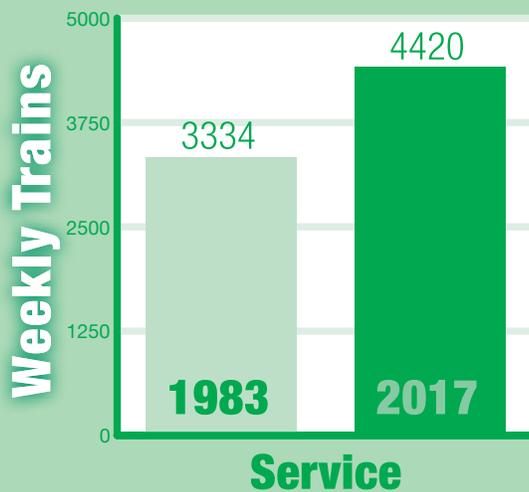
or use #MNRWayAhead on



Introducing **Way Ahead**

Our region has changed dramatically since Metro-North was formed in 1983.

Back then, Metro-North moved just over 41 million customers a year, primarily to and from their “9-to-5” jobs in New York City. In 2017, we moved an all-time high of 86.5 million customers – more than doubling 1983’s ridership and breaking previous ridership records in 2016, 2015, and 2014.

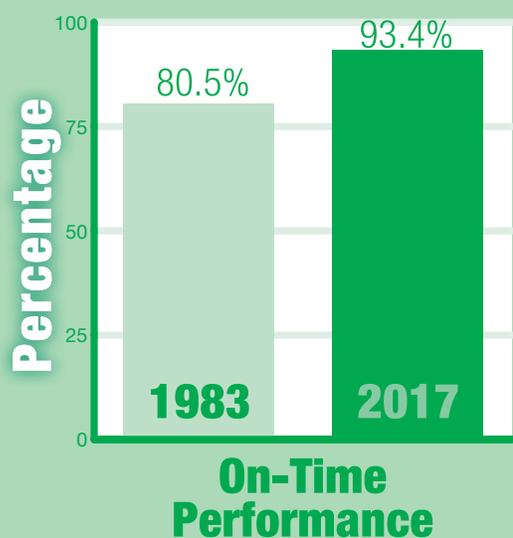


As busy as we are today, planners estimate that more than two million additional people will live in the New York metropolitan region by 2040. Many of these new residents will take advantage of more affordable housing opportunities near Metro-North stations.

In addition to simply having more customers, today’s customers are using our service much differently than they used to; it’s not just people going to Grand Central in the morning and home to the suburbs at night. Customers today use our system at all hours of the day and night, on weeknights and weekends, and they’re far more likely to work part-time or from home.

our plan to proactively respond to a rapidly growing ridership, changing demographics, and the evolving needs of our customers

We're also experiencing a phenomenon that hardly even existed in 1983 – **the “reverse commute,”** where customers use Metro-North to commute to jobs in the suburbs. Today, Westchester County has, by far, the largest reverse commute in the entire nation, and the number of people getting off the train at White Plains in the morning is about the same as the number of people getting on to go to New York City. Stamford, which also has a robust reverse commute, is our second busiest station after Grand Central Terminal.



What's more, many of the young people using our system today grew up with a smartphone in one hand and a tablet in the other. They're demanding more real-time information, more charging stations, more connectivity, more apps, more screens. These aren't luxury items anymore. **Customers expect all this technology, because it's available in every other aspect of our lives.** That's why – even on an older network like ours – we can't ignore these expectations. On the contrary, we must work to exceed them, which is why we're moving forward aggressively with technology investments and improvements across our operation.

At the same time as our customer expectations are evolving and our ridership patterns are changing, the ability of our aging infrastructure to adapt to those changes is increasingly strained. Some of the rail in Grand Central Terminal is more than one hundred years old. The Park Avenue Viaduct – which carries 98 percent of our customers – was constructed in 1893. Our customers' desire for better service, or different types of service, cannot be realized if essential infrastructure investments are not made.

And those investments will require significant funding. We cannot slip backward to 2013. We must move ahead.

How will we evolve to meet those expectations, while at the same time continuing to invest in our infrastructure and providing safe and reliable rail service?

Way Ahead is focused
on these

3
priorities:

**Our
Customers**

who are
the reason
Metro-North
exists

Our
Infrastructure

including
trains, stations,
track, structures,
communications,
signals, power,
shops, and
yards

Our
People

who are
Metro-North's
greatest
resource

Way Ahead

is based
on

3
core

principles:

Safety

which
rests at
the heart
of all our
actions
and
initiatives

Integrity

to maintain
the public's
confidence
in our
decisions

Innovation

to encourage
new ways
of thinking
and doing
business



Our Vision through **Way Ahead**

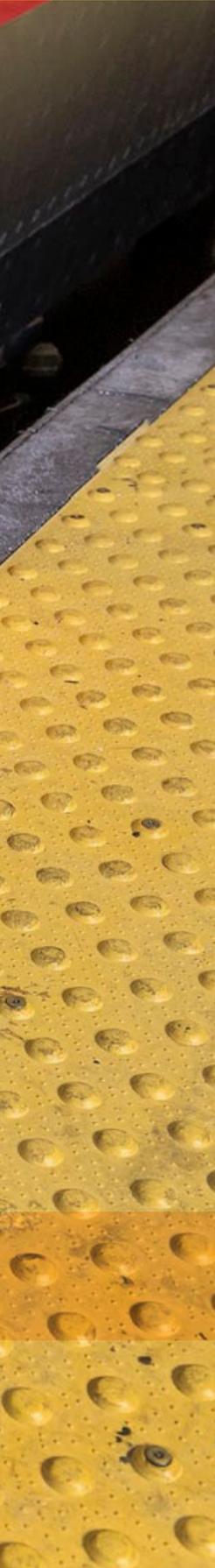
is to set the standard for safety, reliability, and innovation in the delivery of excellent customer service.

We will realize this vision through the following strategies:

- 10 ▶ Continue to put safety first – always
- 14 ▶ Improve our customers' day-to-day experience
- 17 ▶ Improve customer communications
- 20 ▶ Invest in our infrastructure
- 23 ▶ Support our people
- 26 ▶ Focus on the future

We Will Continue to **Put Safety First**





At today's Metro-North, nothing is more important than the safety and security of our customers and employees.

That's why safety will continue to drive all of our actions and decisions. Since 2013, we have significantly upgraded our infrastructure, reinvigorated our cyclical track maintenance program, and bought new technology to help identify track defects. We invested heavily in our Safety Department and developed programs like confidential close call reporting and sleep apnea screening to foster a strong safety culture among our employees.

Building
on this
momentum,
we will
implement
the following
safety
initiatives
through
Way Ahead





- ▶ **Expand TRACKS, our award-winning free community outreach program designed to educate and promote rail safety.** In 2017, we taught rail safety to more than 75,000 people through TRACKS, which won the American Public Transportation Association's Gold Award for safety in 2018. Through Way Ahead, we will expand this life-saving program to reach another 100,000 people by the end of 2018 and will continue to expand the program.

MTA Metro-North Railroad

TRACKS
Together Railroads And Communities Keeping Safe
mta.info/mnr/tracks

- ▶ **Partner with WAZE to improve safety at railroad crossings.** Through this partnership, motorists using the WAZE app will be warned as they approach railroad crossings.
- ▶ **Enhance Grade Crossings.** We will complete our upgrade of Grade Crossing Flashers to LEDs to provide better visibility. We will continue our aggressive Grade Crossing surface replacement program, which has replaced over half of our crossings in the last four years.
- ▶ **Improve emergency signs and lighting** in the Park Avenue Tunnel and Grand Central Terminal's track and platform areas.
- ▶ **Accelerate the installation of security cameras and Help Points at 10 priority stations.** We will introduce security cameras and Help Points – high-tech, connected intercoms, allowing customers to access emergency services – to 10 stations.
- ▶ **Continue to improve and expand the safety training programs** that we provide to our employees, so that they have the skills and the knowledge to perform their jobs safely.

We Will Improve Our Customers' Day-to-Day Experience

We will more rigorously maintain our trains, stations, tracks, and platforms.

We will make them cleaner, safer, more inviting, and generally more pleasant to be on, improving the daily experience customers have on our system.

Through **Way Ahead**, we will

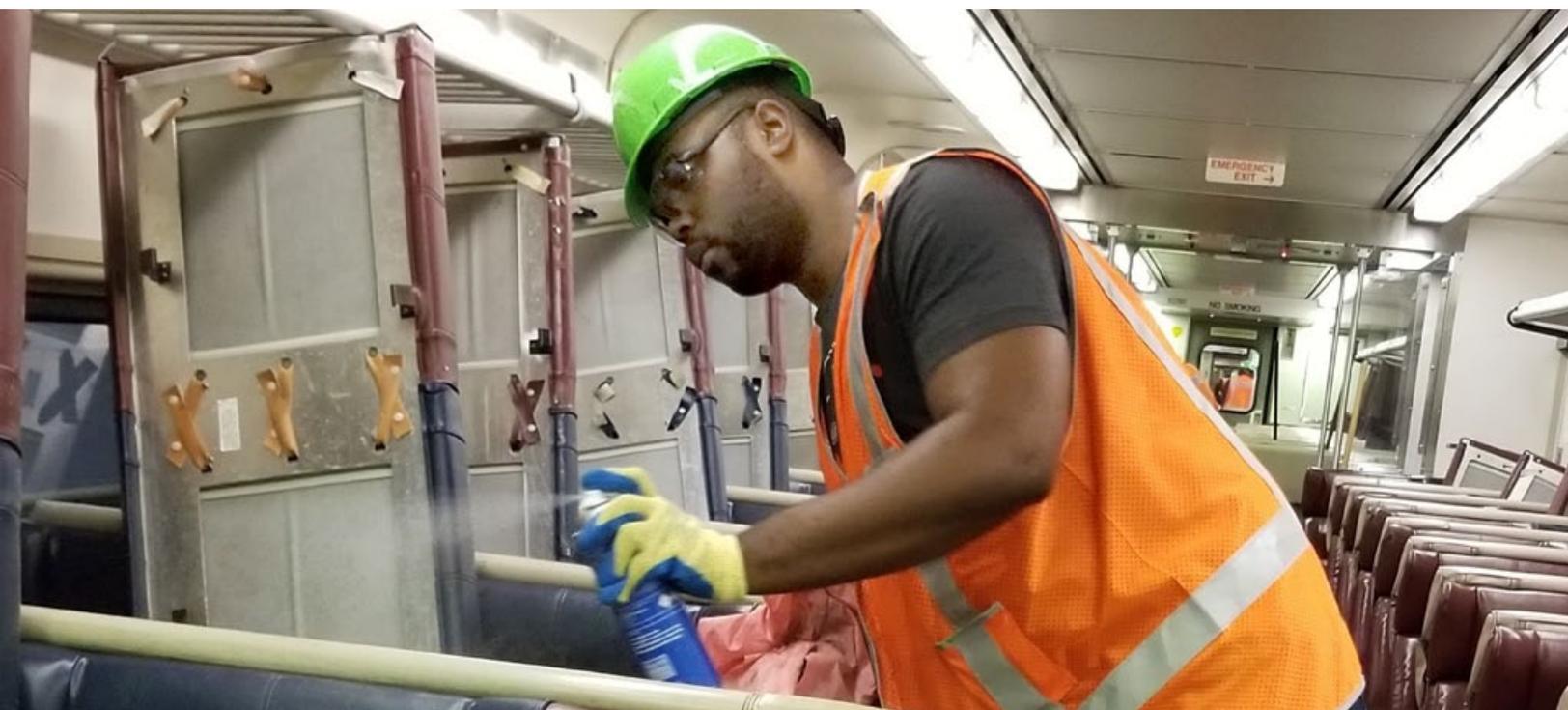
And we'll take this on with a new determination to do this work faster, more efficiently, and at a lower cost.





Improve the customer experience in Grand Central Terminal and in stations through the following:

- ▶ Restructure our custodial forces to increase their productivity, enabling us **to increase the numbers of workers at high traffic stations** and at optimum times of the day.
- ▶ Establish a new Customer Service Station Ownership leadership structure under the direction of a district manager responsible for all customer service functions in a given district, including ticket selling, station cleaning, customer communications, parking and station amenities, and other customer service activities. This will also **strengthen our response to service disruptions** and provide one source for accountability at each station.
- ▶ Improve the customer experience in Grand Central Terminal in the evenings and on weekends by creating new Grand Central Terminal **customer advocates focused on providing customer communications**, terminal information, and customer assistance during both normal operations and service disruptions.



- ▶ Revitalize our aging locomotive-hauled fleet by **replacing seats and floors in more than 100 coaches** beginning in 2019 and continuing for about four years.
- ▶ **Improve our track clean-up program** and work with local governments and community groups to clean more areas around stations and along tracks, including highly visible areas in the Bronx and lower Westchester.
- ▶ Bring **major station improvements** to White Plains, Riverdale, Crestwood, Port Chester, and Harlem-125th St., transforming the customer experience by introducing world-class standards through design innovation and excellence.
- ▶ **Improve accessibility** by installing new ADA elevators and ramps at key outlying stations, including Hartsdale and Scarsdale on the Harlem Line.
- ▶ Continue our **industry-leading energy efficiency practices**. Metro-North is the first railroad in North America to receive the International Organization for Standardization's Energy Management System Certification, in recognition of our many efforts to reduce energy consumption, energy costs, and greenhouse gas emissions.



We Will Improve Customer Communications

Through Way Ahead, we will improve how we communicate with our customers in every way possible – on social media, on the train, on the train platform, and through other avenues.

In July, the MTA introduced **MYmta** – a comprehensive new app

that delivers real-time arrival information, trip planning, and more for Metro-North, subways, buses, and the LIRR. Customers can now buy train tickets anytime, anywhere through our eTix app, and will be able to do so through MYmta by the end of the year.

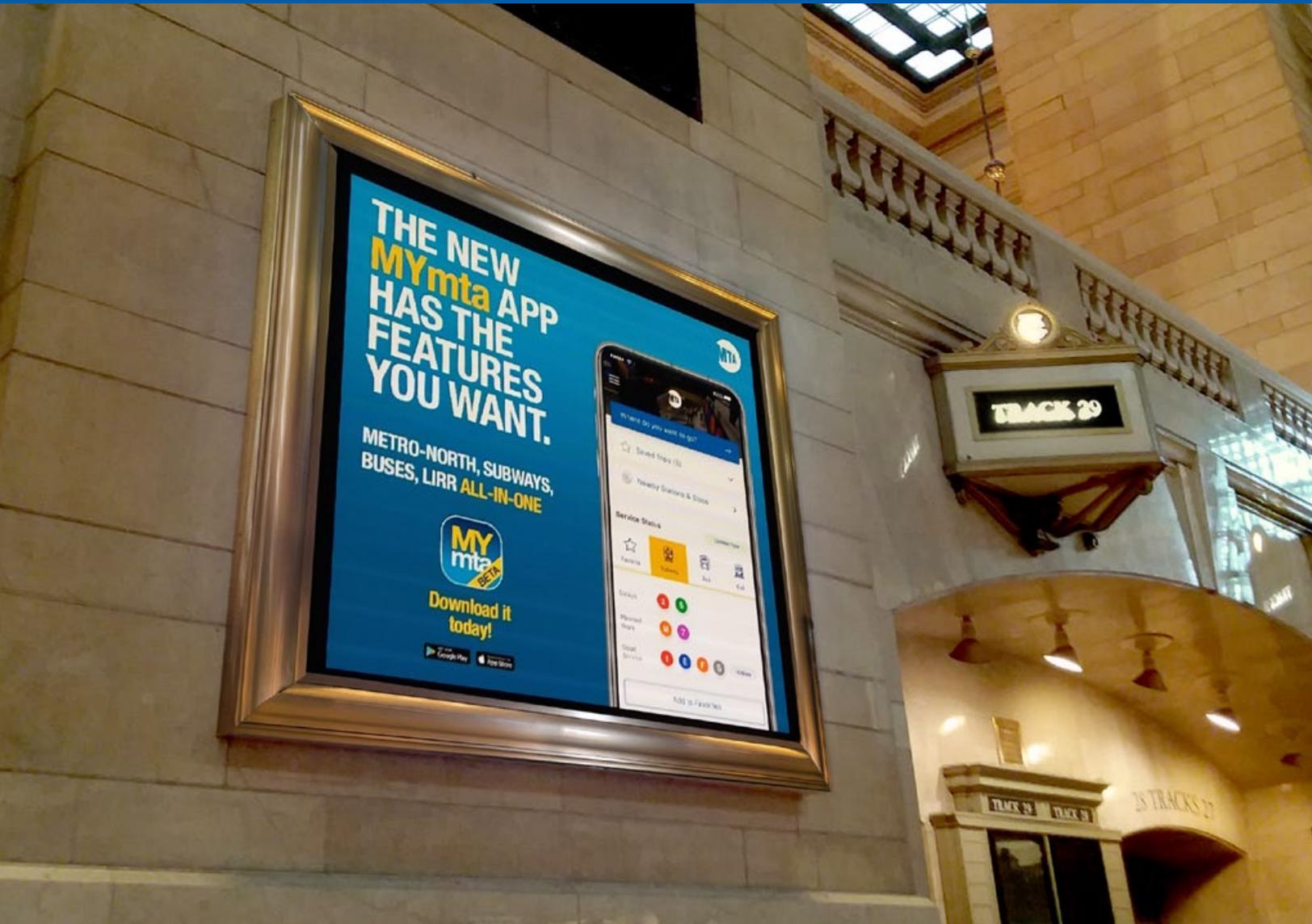
We currently hold monthly **“Connect with Us”** sessions at outlying stations and at Grand Central Terminal to hear directly from our customers. Over the past year, we rolled out a program to help customers during service disruptions at Grand Central Terminal and at outlying stations, as well as a social media unit, on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Way Ahead

includes the following

additional initiatives

to improve the **quality** and **quantity** of the **information** we provide our customers.



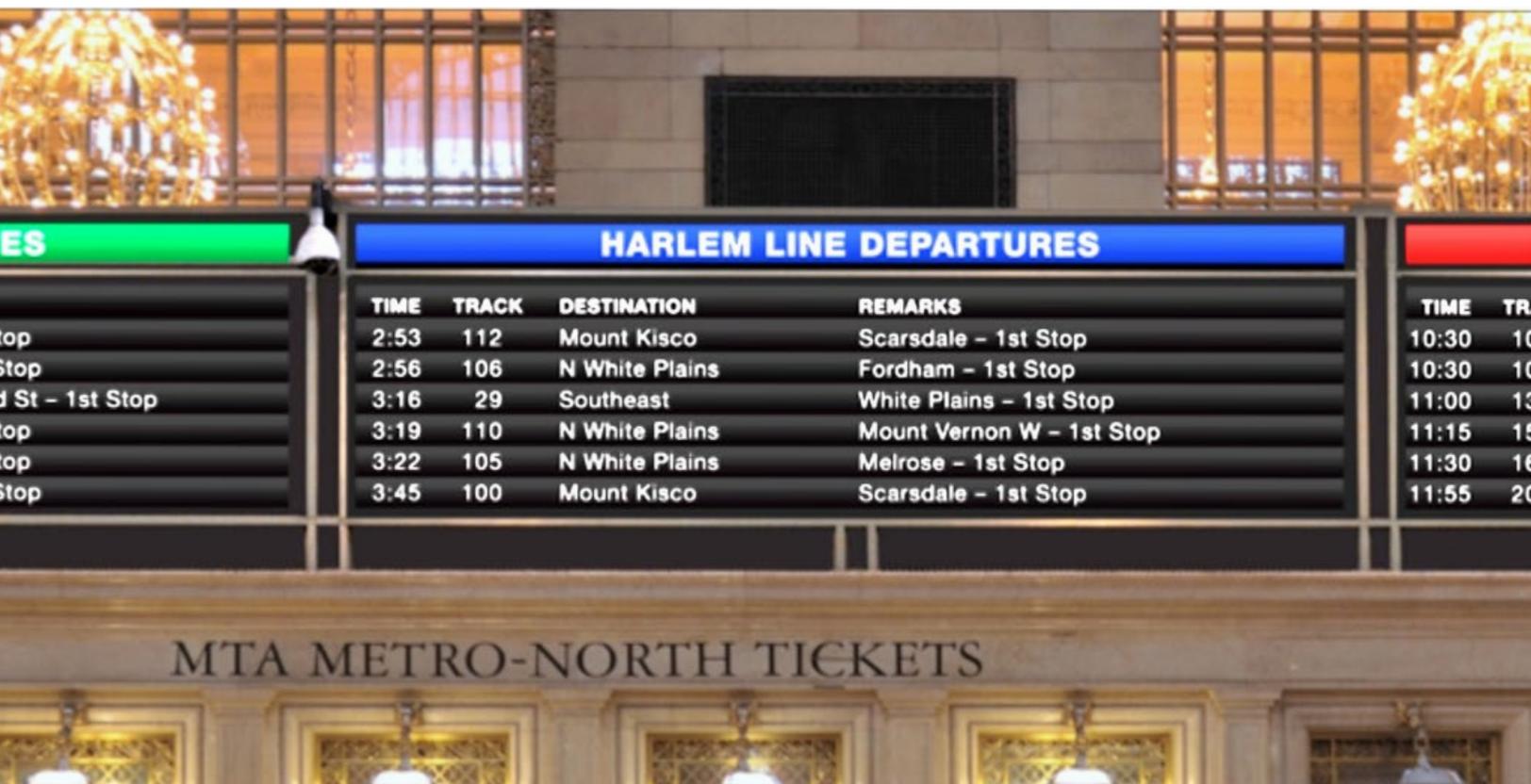
- ▶ Bring new, real-time digital train information displays to Grand Central Terminal, including a **new, state-of-the-art “Big Board”** and new signs at each of our departure gates.
- ▶ **Add even more digital signs**, on an expedited basis, throughout Grand Central Terminal by partnering with our advertising vendor.
- ▶ We recently added **estimated times of arrival** on real-time monitors at 60 stations. Through Way Ahead we will accelerate delivery of **real-time train information to displays at an additional 21 stations.**
- ▶ Improve and upgrade the information we provide to our train crews, via their hand-held ticket machines, so they are **better able to communicate information to customers** during service disruptions.



▶ Replace the antiquated public-address system in Grand Central Terminal and at outlying stations with a **new state-of-the-art system.**

▶ **Improve cell coverage and connectivity** along Metro-North tracks by working with cell carriers.

▶ **Install ADA-compliant signs** on platforms in Grand Central Terminal and at North End Access locations.





We Will Continue to Invest in Our Infrastructure

Like all transit systems, Metro-North's infrastructure requires constant care and attention.

In fact, *most* of our need in the coming years is for what we call **“state-of-good-repair”** projects, which maintain and improve our core infrastructure.

These projects — like **track** and **signal work, power substation replacement, and bridge repair and replacement** — may not be glamorous. But together with the normal replacement of our trains, they are the critical to keeping our system safe and reliable, and the backbone for future expansion.

That's why **Way Ahead** includes the following initiatives to improve our infrastructure



- ▶ Continue our aggressive progress toward completing the installation of **Positive Train Control** across our territory. PTC is a state-of-the-art system for monitoring and controlling trains, and it will dramatically improve safety.
- ▶ Take delivery of **66 new M8 rail cars** to accommodate increased ridership.
- ▶ Begin replacing our locomotive fleet to **improve service reliability** in our diesel territory.
- ▶ Implement a **Wayside Energy Storage System** pilot project using the latest battery technology. If successful, this project will lay the groundwork for deploying this technology more broadly, improving power delivery to trains.

- ▶ Double the budget for our **tree trimming program** to trim or remove trees that can fall onto tracks.
- ▶ Continue to **replace assets near the end of their useful lives** and make targeted improvements, including:
 - ▶ Completing work to fix and fortify our **power and communication infrastructure** damaged by Superstorm Sandy;
 - ▶ Replacing **1,200 power transmission poles** on the Upper Harlem Line;
 - ▶ Completing a one-billion-dollar investment in our **Harmon train car maintenance facility**;
 - ▶ Aggressively improving our **track infrastructure**; and
 - ▶ Completing the replacement of our **overhead power system**.



- ▶ **Develop a SMARTRACK program**, through which we will undertake critical infrastructure work by strategically shutting down continuous segments of track, giving multiple work groups uninterrupted access to maintain and improve the system. Major infrastructure projects can have serious impacts that have the potential to cause major headaches for our customers. Through SMARTRACK, we will be identifying ways to perform multiple projects in specific areas simultaneously, which means fewer and shorter track outages and less inconvenience for our customers.
- ▶ **Replace deteriorated platforms** for a safe and reliable ride. Whenever we do this we will install **heated platforms**. Heating platforms will reduce snow and ice, improving safety for customers and employees. With heat we will not need salt, which will extend the life of these new platforms.

We Will Support Our People

We are proud to have the best employees in the business, and through **Way Ahead**, we will do **everything in our power** to support them.

Way Ahead would not be possible without our diverse and dedicated workforce, which is why this plan includes the following workplace initiatives:





► **Upgrade employee facilities** throughout our territory. Many of these facilities are old and in need of repair, which lowers the productivity and morale of our workforce.

► Create more opportunities for **cross-departmental rotations and mentorships** to encourage young employees to stay at Metro-North and make their careers here.

► Identify creative solutions to help employees balance work and home life to **attract and retain a quality workforce** and improve employee productivity.

▶ Increase outreach to help employees across the railroad **establish development plans** and **connect to courses** or **programs** that support their goals.

▶ Develop a robust **succession planning** and **knowledge transfer program** to strengthen the organization, improve resiliency, and prepare for the departure of employees close to retirement.

▶ Create strategies to attract and retain a **more diverse workforce**, including targeted recruiting and creating professional networking opportunities.



▶ **Expand employee health and wellness offerings** through our Healthy4U! initiative.

▶ Roll-out an **Emergency Notification System** for all employees to improve communications, response, and employee safety during emergencies and major service disruptions.

▶ Establish a dedicated **innovation team** to accelerate the development and implementation of new ideas, technologies, and projects drawn from employees, customer feedback, global peers, and industry best practices.

We Will Focus on the Future

Looking to the future, we will focus on initiatives that further our strategic priorities. The first phase will emphasize projects in the upcoming **2020-2024 MTA Capital Program**.

As the MTA looks to its stakeholders and elected officials for funding for the **upcoming Capital Program**, we must make a compelling case for investments that will make our system safer and our service more reliable.

Chief among those requests will be funding to **replace the 125-year-old Park Avenue Viaduct**, as well as funding to aggressively **repair the Park Avenue Tunnel** and **Grand Central Terminal's track and platform** areas.

Grand Central is the beating heart of the Metro-North network. Ensuring that it is in a state of good repair and ready for the next 125 years and beyond is a key element of...

...our **Way Ahead** strategy. Other priorities will include



- ▶ Continuing to **buy locomotives and rail cars** (including replacing our M3 electric fleet) and upgrading our power and signals infrastructure to support increased ridership.
- ▶ Constructing **new yard facilities** to support our new replacement fleets and to allow for future growth.
- ▶ Investing in **Maintenance of Way and Material Storage facilities** to support the operation of the railroad and future growth.
- ▶ Continuing to **rebuild our passenger stations.**
- ▶ Investing in projects to **increase ADA accessibility** in our system.
- ▶ Completing our Customer Service Initiative, to bring **real-time information, new security cameras, and new public address systems** to outlying stations.
- ▶ Constructing a **mid-point yard and passing sidings** to improve service on the Port Jervis Line.
- ▶ Evaluating the purchase of **multi-level coaches** to handle increased ridership.
- ▶ Completing the **Penn Station Access Project**, which will take Metro-North's New Haven Line directly into Penn Station, while adding four new stations in the Bronx. In addition to giving New Haven Line customers access to Penn Station and Manhattan's West Side, this project will potentially create much-needed capacity in Grand Central Terminal.

We have a lot of work to do,

and there's no doubt the road ahead will be challenging.

But the vision is clear.

By successfully implementing our strategies, we will set the standard for safety, reliability, and innovation in the delivery of excellent customer service.

And we will continue to advocate for sustainable funding for Metro-North's long-term operating and capital needs.

Way Ahead

is a program for where we need to be, and how we propose to get there. Although we are guided by our past experiences, we look forward as we develop innovative strategies for delivering superior transportation and excellent service to our customers.

 Give us your feedback

 WayAhead@mnr.org

  #MNRWayAhead

