

November 2020

*Way Ahead*

**MOVING**

**FORWARD**

**TOGETHER**



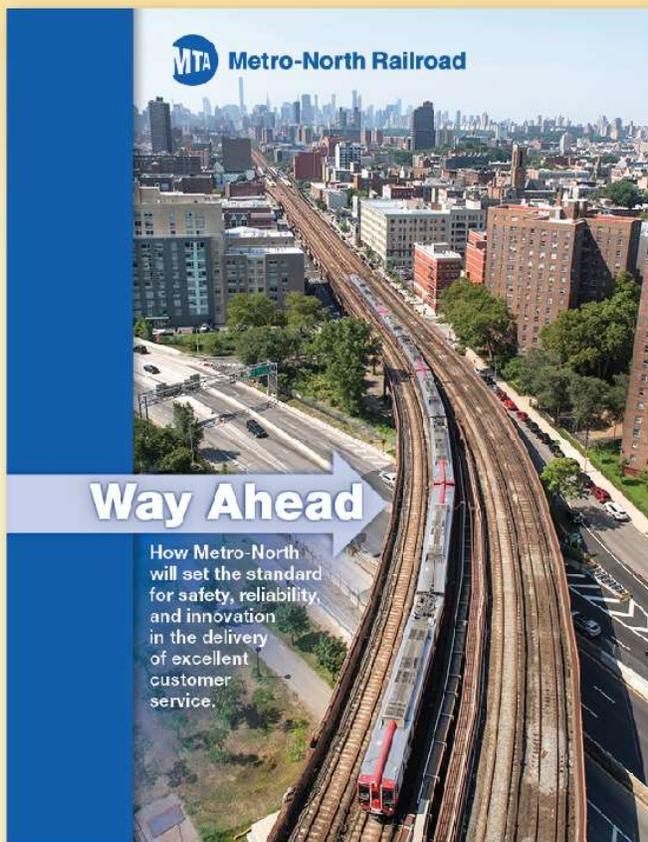
*2nd Year Accomplishments*



**Metro-North Railroad**

***Our Vision* through *Way Ahead***  
is to set the standard for safety,  
reliability and innovation in the delivery  
of excellent customer service.

**We are realizing this vision through  
the following strategies:**



- ✔ Putting customer and employee safety first
- ✔ Improving our customers' day-to-day experience
- ✔ Improving customer communications
- ✔ Investing in our infrastructure
- ✔ Supporting our people
- ✔ Focusing on the future



## Our Mission

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

We launched MTA Metro-North Railroad's Way Ahead strategic plan in October of 2018 as a roadmap for the railroad's future.

But in March of this year, our expectations for the future were upended with the advent of COVID-19, which dramatically impacted daily life and ridership patterns throughout the region. At the lowest point this spring, Metro-North carried only 3% of our normal weekday ridership. Currently, Metro-North is only carrying approximately 23% of our pre-COVID weekday ridership – and we are facing additional uncertainty with rising infection rates as we head into this winter. It is unclear when and if Metro-North will ever see the ridership that it had before the pandemic, and once customers start to return in greater numbers, whether they will be riding the same trains with the same frequency.

Even before the pandemic, our customers' expectations were evolving. And now, as they return to the system, our customers expect more and better communication. Through Way Ahead, Metro-North is making improvements to how we communicate with our customers in every way possible - social media, on the train, on platforms, and through other avenues, like the newly updated TrainTime™ app. And we are in the process of developing and implementing new tools to help customers decide when to travel, by giving them information about which trains are more or less crowded.

At today's Metro-North, nothing is more important than the safety and security of our customers and employees. We continue to ensure that our trains and stations are cleaned and disinfected, and, like the rest of the MTA agencies, Metro-North is exploring new technologies for disinfecting our system, improving air filtration on board our railcars, and keeping our customers safe. Since 2013, Metro-North has significantly upgraded our infrastructure, reinvigorated our cyclical track maintenance program, and acquired new technology to help identify track defects. Metro-North 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. Way Ahead builds upon this momentum with new safety initiatives.

Way Ahead is our roadmap to continue to provide the best possible service to our customers. Our vision is clear, to set the standard for safety, reliability and innovation in the delivery of excellent customer service. More than ever, guided by our past experiences, we look forward to developing an even stronger Metro-North for the future.

In the pages that follow, we are happy to report on what Metro-North's employees have been doing to implement our Way Ahead strategic plan. Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, we continue to work hard every day to provide the service you deserve.

*Catherine Rinaldi*

Catherine Rinaldi

President, Metro-North Railroad

## Safety

We continue to put the safety of our customers and employees first - always.

### COVID-19 Response Measures for Customers

- **Implemented unprecedented 24/7 cleaning and disinfecting** across train cars and at stations. All train cars are sanitized at least once a day and all station touch points continue to be sanitized at least twice daily.
- Installed **hand sanitizer stations** at all New York State and Connecticut passenger stations.
- **Distributed masks to any customer who needs one** through the TRACKS (Together Railroads And Communities Keeping Safe) Program, Station Ambassadors, GCT Ushers, and Conductors onboard trains. Our most widely recognized safety ambassador and robotic superhero **Metro-Man** has also made appearances at stations, including Grand Central, to distribute masks. **Mask compliance** remains extremely high and is estimated at more than 93% on Metro-North trains, and in our stations and waiting areas. While this is a positive number, we are focused on bolstering mask compliance.
- Rolled-out **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) vending machines** at 22 passenger stations, where customers can purchase masks, bottled hand sanitizer and gloves.
- **Advancing innovation through piloting a New Technology Solution called the Merak 3 Stage Air Filtration System for Rolling Stock from Knorr-Merak.** The system will filter and purify air inside rail cars using an electrical field to generate a wave of ionized particles that destroy airborne viruses, bacteria and particulate matter, including COVID-19. Metro-North was the first transit agency in North America to install this technology on board our fleet. The pilot follows a successful proof-of-concept conducted by Metro-North over the summer. The air filtration and purification system, which was developed by Westminster, Md.-based Knorr Brake Company and its Merak North America division, is incorporated into the railroad's existing ventilation systems. It enhances in-car air filtration – which already filters air 30 times an hour or once every 120 seconds, exceeding CDC standards for certain medical facilities and far surpassing standards for classrooms and restaurants.

### COVID-19 Response Measures for Employees

- Provided **COVID-19 and Antibody testing** opportunities for our employees at select Metro-North facilities and through the MTA's partnership with Northwell Health's 52 Go Health Urgent Care locations.
- Deployed a **Temperature Brigade at key employee work locations.** Temperature screening is taking place throughout all three shifts, 7 days a week in the shuttle passage of GCT; 5 days a week from 6:30am to 5pm in the Harmon Yard and in the New Haven Yard; in the morning in Springdale and Bridgeport; 6am-3pm at 525 North Broadway and prior to all Training classes.
- **Issued personal thermometers to all employees** to monitor their temperature prior to coming to work in order to reduce the potential for employee exposure to COVID-19.
- Researched, procured and distributed a variety of **facial coverings and masks** for all employees to suit different types of working environments.
- **Enhanced cleaning at 400 work locations in our employee facilities including** routinely sanitizing and disinfecting offices, cubicles, bathrooms, locker rooms and common spaces throughout the territory to prevent the spread and transmission of the virus.
- Utilized extensively a new **Emergency Notification System** to communicate COVID-19 related safety messages to all employees via text messages and email.
- Introduced a **Coming Back from COVID-19 Online Resource Center** as well as a **COVID-19 hotline** to address employee health concerns and issues.
- Limited the occupancy of certain work locations and performed contact tracing to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

## **Positive Train Control (PTC) Advances**

- Remain **on target to implement PTC** across our territory by December 31, 2020.
- Total route miles in full PTC – 244.3 miles (100%)
- All trains for Hudson, Harlem, and New Haven Lines are operating with full PTC functionality except M8 fleet.
- Over 132,000 Revenue Trains ran in full PTC mode from August 2019 – September 2020 (Over 39,000 during the 3rd quarter 2020).
- Waterbury Branch is currently operating under PTC Main Line Track Exclusion Addendum
- Amtrak, CSX, P&W and CDOT trains are interoperable on the Hudson & New Haven Lines and Danbury Branch using onboard Rev 10 software.
- Over the Air Security using HMAC deployment is completed for MNR trains except M8 fleet, Tenant trains to be activated over the next two months.
- Wayside boundaries at New Rochelle, Poughkeepsie and Spuyten Devil with Amtrak are commissioned, New Haven Boundary is expected in Nov 2020.
- Office to Office TSR (STS-STS) interface with Amtrak is undergoing lab testing, commissioning is scheduled for November 2020.

## **Additional Safety and Security Actions & Enhancements**

- Completed the **Rapid Deploy Video Surveillance Enhancement** (PODS) initiative under budget and four months faster than anticipated by installing **cloud-based Security Camera Pods and Help Point Kiosks**. The Help Points connect customers directly to MTA Police in emergency situations. These new systems provide increased safety and security for customers and additional video capabilities for MNR security and operations, including the ability to assess platform crowding conditions during times of operational incidents. The following twelve (12) passenger stations are completed:
  - Harlem Line: Katonah, Bedford Hills, Mt. Kisco, Chappaqua, Pleasantville, Hawthorne, Valhalla, and North White Plains
  - Hudson Line: Bronxville, Woodlawn, Marble Hill, University Heights
  - An additional two stations, Southeast and Beacon, will be completed in Q1 2021.
- Completed **Enhanced Grade Crossing** upgrades by replacing six grade crossings pads and installing delineators at 30 crossings.
  - At **Hudson Avenue Crossing in Peekskill**, an additional six lights were added to provide better sight line to all roads leading to the crossing, and fencing was added to guide pedestrians from going around the gates. We also added additional warning bells and advanced the time they ring to allow for more warning.
  - Completed grade crossing renewal work at **Jay Street in Katonah**, including advance work for future pedestrian crossing and safety enhancement project in cooperation with NYSDOT.
  - Installed a new **Grade Crossing at City Water in Mt. Kisco** to enhance safety for our employees, customers, and the township personnel. In addition, the obsolete S20/S40 gate mechs in Hudson Ave, Lakeview Ave, Stevens Ave, Green Lane, and Jay Street were upgraded to new S60 gate mechs.
  - Completed pre-emption project at **Roaring Brook Road in Chappaqua**.
- Continue to see **positive trends in reducing customer and employee injuries**.
  - **Customer Reportable Injuries:** For the current 12-month period (October 2019 – September 2020) the reportable customer injury rate is 1.01 per one million customers, a decrease of 1.9 % from the previous 12-month period (October 2018 – September 2019) when the rate was 1.03 per one million customers.
  - **Employee Lost Time Injuries:** For the current 12-month period (October 2019 – September 2020) versus the previous 12-month period (October 2018 – September 2019), employee lost time injuries per 200,000 working hours were reduced by 5.3%.
- The **Grand Central Terminal (GCT) Fire Brigade**, our first line of defense for fire and life safety emergencies inside GCT, was awarded the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) 2020 Rail Safety Certificate of Merit for Commuter/Intercity Passenger Rail.
- Conducted enhanced safety training with **over 1700 Operations employees** completing the **Critical Communications Skills for Operations Employees** training module.

## Improving Our Customers' Day-to-Day Experience

We continue to focus on improving our customers' day-to-day experience.

- Reliability is rising, with East of Hudson **YTD On-Time-Performance reaching 97.9%** (as of October), 3.6% better than in 2019.
- Launched an in-house **Real-Time Crowding Data feature within TrainTime** app which will enable passenger counts of our M7 rail cars, allowing riders to more efficiently social distance. We will bring this functionality to our M8 fleet by end of 2020, and then followed by our coach fleet in 2021.
  - Later this year, the app will enable passenger counts of each car, allowing riders to more efficiently social distance on trains.
  - Integrated a real-time train tracking map into the app with a one-tap link to view and purchase tickets via **MTA eTix®**, and the ability to bookmark favorite trips and stations.
  - Customers can also now use the app in languages other than English: Chinese, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Yiddish.
- Expanded our **Customer Service Station Ambassador Program in June 2020** by redeploying Ticket Sellers as Station Ambassadors. Sixty-three Station Ambassadors are deployed across 23 passenger station platforms and Grand Central Terminal to monitor ridership, assist with loading and customer information, distribute masks and disinfect customer touch points in stations several times a day.
  - On the Hudson Line, Ambassadors are located at Yonkers, Tarrytown, Cortlandt, Beacon and Poughkeepsie, Croton-Harmon, and Harlem/125<sup>th</sup> Street.
  - On the Harlem Line, Ambassadors are now stationed at Fordham, Mt. Vernon West, Crestwood, Scarsdale, White Plains, North White Plains, and Mt. Kisco.
  - And on the New Haven Line, Ambassadors are located at Stamford, Mt. Vernon East, New Rochelle, Rye, Port Chester, South Norwalk, Bridgeport and Westport.
- Accelerated work on the **Enhanced Station Initiative at White Plains station** including demolition of the side platform and completion of tactile replacement work at four rail car lengths of the boarding edge on the south end of the island platform on tracks 1 & 2.
- Completed **Crestwood station** upgrades, including installation of ADA ramp, benches, USB lean bars, side platform of shelter, overpass dashboard and counters, cameras, Wi-Fi and new canopy.
- **Upgraded our Center Door Coaches** by replacing the vestibule flooring, with now over 1/2 of coaches in this fleet completed.
- **Launched a new Accessibility Task Force** that will provide a forum for the exchange of information about Metro-North services and facility accessibility as they relate to persons with disabilities and their transportation needs. The Task Force will have representatives from NYC Mayor's Office, each of the counties in which MNR serves, New Jersey Transit, Connecticut DOT, Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee (PCAC), MNR Commuter Council and MNR leadership.

## Improving Customer Communications

Communicating effectively with our customers has never been more important as we all navigate the impacts of COVID-19.

- Completed installation of the **Grand Central Terminal Big Board and 96 Gate and Departure Boards** in June which has increased messaging capabilities and reliability.
- Advanced Metro-North's multi-year **Customer Service Initiatives (CSI) Project** to upgrade customer communications in Grand Central Terminal and at outlying passenger stations:
  - Completed CSI stations: Mount Vernon East, Pelham, Harrison, Larchmont, New Rochelle, Port Chester, Mamaroneck, Harlem/125<sup>th</sup> Street, Melrose, Wakefield, Riverdale and Morris Heights.
  - Tarrytown and Spuyten Duyvil are nearing substantial completion.
  - The remaining six stations, Rye, Tremont, Ossining, Poughkeepsie, Nanuet and Harriman, anticipate completion in April 2021.
- **Enhanced Public Address (PA) System in GCT and Outlying Stations** with new communication links to passenger stations and replacement of all wayside PA systems.
- Installed **366 Advertising Screens, 292 Track Information Screens and 59 MNR Agency Message Screens** at Metro-North passenger stations, including within Grand Central Terminal.
- Integrated security camera feeds to **Customer Advocates in the Operations Control Center** to enhance incident response communications.

## Investing in Our Infrastructure

Throughout 2020, we took advantage of reduced service levels due to COVID-19 to provide extended work access to multiple work sites across our territory to improve our infrastructure. This critical work continues to increase rail service reliability by reducing infrastructure-related train delays.

- **Continued to expand our SMARTRACK Program** in which 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. The results include:
  - Replaced 18,000 railroad ties on the New Haven Line, 14,000 on the Danbury Branch and 8,000 on the Waterbury Branch
  - Installed six (6) miles of new rail
  - Welded 1,308 rail joints
  - Replaced 30 track switches
  - Resurfaced 71 miles of track
  - Expedited and replaced four track switches at a critical interlocking directly south of the Scarsdale Station (CP119) in less time than originally planned, resulting in less impact on train service and an increased improvement in the reliability of Harlem Line train service.
- **Completed Grand Central Terminal track rehabilitation work**, including replacing and laying new rail, bracket ties, and block ties at Track 13, 15 and 16.
- **Reduced Safety (FRA) and Maintenance exceptions** considerably between the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 due to the exceptional efforts of our Production Tie Gang's work.
  - **Track Geometry Inspection Services (TGIS) scans** results indicate we reduced Maintenance Exceptions from 1667 to 1519 (9% decrease) and reduced Safety (FRA) Exceptions from 34 to 30 (12% decrease) during this same period.
    - Hudson Line Maintenance Exceptions decreased 6%.
    - Harlem Line Maintenance Exceptions decreased 3%.
    - New Haven Line Maintenance Exceptions decreased 15%.
  - **Reduced Switch Failure Incidents** by 10% (monthly average) from the prior year.
- Deployed the game-changing **Brandt Road Rail Powered Continuous Work Platform (CWP) with Steel Track Excavator**.
  - The custom-built CWP is a multi-functional, versatile nine platform articulated consist which vastly enhances deployment efficiencies and performance of a wide-range of necessary tasks and work productivity in hauling and distributing maintenance of way materials, such as ballast and rails up to 250 ft. in length without interference to operations. It has also increased our ability to keep the right-of-way clean of maintenance and construction debris.
  - The Steel Track Excavator is heavy construction equipment consisting of a boom, dipper (or stick), bucket and cab on a rotating platform which sits atop an undercarriage with tracks or wheels and the PCWP to operate and work in the MNR locations with minimum disruption to railroad traffic, be capable of negotiating all of MNR's track, tunnels and structures, and stay within the dynamic envelope.

## Investing in Our Infrastructure - Continued

- **Accelerated the Tree Trimming Program** along our right-of-way to trim or remove trees that can fall on our tracks to mitigate against extreme weather events, such as the August 4<sup>th</sup> Tropical Storm Isaias - the worst storm in the region since Superstorm Sandy back in 2012.
  - As always, our awesome and dedicated workforce quickly responded to this storm, working day and night to successfully overcome the devastation of Isaias which blew over 300 trees across Metro-North's tracks and catenary systems with almost 100 downed trees on the Harlem line alone, causing more damage than Sandy.
  - Trees and branches on the line were ensnared in utility wires that run alongside the tracks. Clearing the trees and restoring the utility poles and wiring requires coordinated, concentrated, multidisciplinary team efforts.
  - Additionally, we are proactively and systematically removing diseased trees to combat a new tree foe, the emerald ash borer, an invasive beetle that infests and kills North American ash trees, which are very prevalent along our right-of-way.
- **Waterbury Cab Signal Project** has installed 27 miles of Communications and signal cable, taking advantage of bussing the branch line due to COVID-19. Taking advantage of the long-term outage, 24 of the 48 signal houses have been set on their respective foundations.
  - Work on setting houses continues as they are delivered.
  - Our Forces are actively working on terminating signal cables and fiber optic cable as contractors turn over cables after testing.
- Installed new 144 strand **fiber from Fordham station to Woodlawn station** to support PTC project.
- Recently cut over to the **new power substation at Riverdale**, which is now elevated after the original substation suffered damage during Superstorm Sandy.
- Completed the reconstruction of the **6th Avenue Bridge in downtown Mount Vernon**, a month ahead of schedule. The completion of the 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge is a symbol of our commitment to the people and City of Mount Vernon to have a safe bridge that serves as an artery to get downtown.
  - The new bridge is now open for pedestrians and vehicular traffic to safely travel over our New Haven Line tracks.
  - The 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge in Mount Vernon opened in July 2019.
  - The 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge is being rebuilt and is expected to open in summer 2021.
  - Construction began on 3rd Avenue Bridge back in April and is expected to be completed next summer as well.

## Supporting Our People

In an extremely challenging year, we are thankful for our talented and dedicated workforce, who continue to go above and beyond for our customers and each other. It is important to recognize their work and contributions which we do in several ways including presenting three awards where employees and teams are nominated by their peers and thoroughly vetted by employee-led committees:

- **President's and Team Excellence Award** recognizes exemplary employees who were cited for their excellent work, willingness to help coworkers, and overall dedication to their jobs, and one work group was highlighted for its display of extraordinary interdepartmental teamwork.
- **Customer Service Spotlight Award** recognizes employees who contribute in a positive way to the overall customer experience. These employees, across all departments, provide exemplary customer service to both customers who ride our trains as well as internal customers within our organization.
- **Safety Excellence Award** highlights individuals, groups, and company-wide initiatives that create a safer environment for all of us. On any given day, we transport thousands of customers, including many of our own employees, safely to their destinations, so they can later enjoy the comfort of their own homes and families. If not for our dedicated – and intensely safety focused – workforce, it would not be possible.

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

- Complete delivery of **M8 rail cars** on the New Haven line in 2021 to allow more fleet options in electrified territory on all three main lines.
- Procure **Dual Mode Locomotives** to replace the existing aging fleet.
- Install initial **Onboard Digital Screen** on M7 rail cars in Q4 2020 and throughout 2021. These screens will deliver railroad and advertising messaging and communications in a more efficient and flexible format.
- Receive initial delivery and then deploy **OMNY and Cubic Vending Machines** at Metro-North passenger stations for the benefit of MNR customers. The OMNY project will replace aging Ticket Vending Machine equipment and create more seamless fare collection methods across the MTA.
- Complete **White Plains station renovation and Port Jervis station improvements**.
- Expand marketing of **MTA eTix®** to increase the number of customers using contactless fares electronically through the app.
- Complete installation of **Rapid Deploy Video Surveillance Enhancement (PODS)** initiative at additional stations to provide increased safety and security for customers and additional video capabilities for MNR security and operations.
- Complete roll-out of tools to enable customers to **monitor crowded conditions** on trains so that they can plan their travel accordingly.
- Go-Live with the **Centralized Train Scheduling System (CTSS) using TrainPlan** which will link all the rail scheduling operations processes under one program, seamlessly transferring data from the scheduling system to downstream customer service and signaling systems, including pre-written schedules for unusual but anticipated conditions.
- **Rollout of significantly enhanced inspection methods and equipment in 2021 including:**
  - **Introduction of mobile technology** utilizing handheld devices for track and signal inspections. Inspectors will be able to perform their duties with a work order system, logging defects and other critical asset information. Once the data is submitted electronically, managers and supervisors will be able to better prepare for maintenance activities and more reliable service, and store information to the cloud.
  - Deployment of the **Shoreliner Autonomous Track Geometry Inspection Services (ATGIS) unit** to cover and provide more frequent inspections in non-electrified territory - the Upper Hudson (north of Croton Harmon) and Upper Harlem (north of Southeast) regularly and the Danbury and Waterbury as needed. With more frequent inspections, like we do with the M7 and M8 ATGIS units, we will locate and repair issues before they impact train operations.
  - Deployment of the **new Track Geometry Inspection Car**, which will allow us to perform the system-wide track geometry inspections at our own pace, inspect blocks after long term outages prior to returning to service, and remove our dependence on third-parties for system-wide inspections.