

MILEPOSTS

A Newsletter for MTA Metro-North Railroad Customers September 2019

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The Big Boards Are Here!

After more than three years of planning, the new Big Boards at Grand Central Terminal (GCT) have finally come “on board.”

Replacement of the Big Boards and Gate Boards are part of a Customer Service Initiative, which includes:

- A New Public Address System (*audio*)
- A Visual Information System (*content you can see*)
- A New Cable Plant Infrastructure (*the conduits and wires that provide power and enable information to travel over distance*).



At the end of the project, all these different elements will be run from one central system, consolidating those systems in GCT with the outlying stations to drive visual information and announcements consistently across all information modalities.

The new boards didn’t come a day too soon: the old boards were obsolete and the supplier was no longer making replacement parts. Plus, it couldn’t function in real-time.

The new system provides greater redundancy, flexibility, and just a better overall customer experience.

With the older system, when there was a last-minute track change, customers might have to enact what some now nostalgically describe as a ‘cross-terminal dash’ — not terribly practical for most.

Customers can now see in advance where their train is leaving from, and get up-to-the minute updates, such as track assignments, track changes, and canceled train information.

That’s thanks to a new feature, a real-time train data system (RTTDS) which uses digital train data to provide a calculated prediction of train arrival times.

Before we could settle on the final look of the display of Big Board information, we had to work with the New York State Division for Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

For one, the new boards had to look like they were historic in context — but from which part of history? Though there is nostalgia for the old “flip” motion, we haven’t been using those since 1998 when we last upgraded the boards from their 1960s–era electro–mechanical, flap style version. And when GCT was built in 1913, there weren’t any boards at all!

Before

After

Still, in trying to preserve historic context

our experts selected a full cap Garamond font to display on the big boards in an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant height and size, and the red, green, and blue colors reflecting the New Haven, Hudson and Harlem lines respectively.



New Gate Boards which will flank the entrances to our tracks at GCT

are also in the process of being replaced. Metro-North will complete the Gate Board installations in GCT before the summer of 2020, and completing the outlying station



installation and communication and signal work by early 2021.



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Metro-North Schedule Changes Coming in September



New Schedules in Effect

East of Hudson
September 29, 2019

- Hudson Line
- Harlem Line
- New Haven Line

West of Hudson
September 8, 2019

- Pascack Valley Line and
- Port Jervis Line

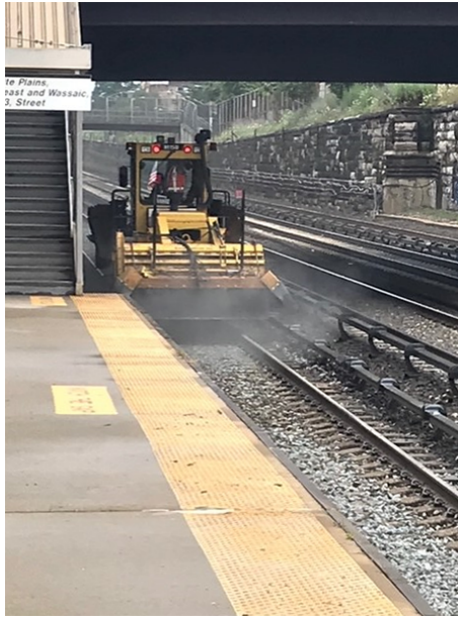
Schedule details will be available shortly:

Pick up a new timetable at Grand Central Terminal or at outlying stations with a ticket office.

The new schedules will also be available at mta.info/mnr or www.New.MTA.info for daily schedule information.

Metro-North's SMARTRACK Program Makes Progress in the Bronx

After completing work in Mount Vernon on the New Haven Line earlier this year, our SMARTRACK program moved over to the Bronx this summer.



where multiple work groups have had uninterrupted track access to get work done.

Part of our **Way Ahead** initiative, our SMARTRACK program enables Metro-North to undertake critical infrastructure work by strategically shutting down continuous segments of track, giving multiple work groups uninterrupted access to maintain and improve the system.

This allows us to improve our infrastructure expeditiously with minimal outages, and in turn, provide a better ride for our customers.

We've made great strides in the Bronx.

And even though it has meant temporary busing for our customers at Melrose and Tremont stations, ultimately it means fewer and shorter track outages and less inconvenience overall.

The work was undertaken in the 7-mile section from Melrose to Woodlawn in the Bronx.

By early August we had:

- Installed over 700 new ties,
- vacuumed over 169 tie cribs in fouled ballast locations,
- installed new switches at Melrose,
- installed 17 new insulated joints and 10 – 80-foot plug rails,
- removed more than 128 concrete ties,
- completed 44 rail welds, and
- distributed 4 cars full of new ballast.

Our work crews also surfaced Track 4 between Melrose and Fordham and surfaced switches within the Melrose interlocking.

Do you recall all those rainstorms we have been experiencing?

To meet the hurricane season (which is right now) head-on

our crews cut down large or dangerous trees along Tracks 3 and 4 between Melrose and Fordham, with more to be completed north of Fordham soon.



Then our crews got to work on the Right-of-Way

cleaning up trash and debris, and disposing of four loads of a 20 cubic-yard container.

To help secure our right-of-way, our crews made plans for a new security fence at Botanical Garden, and repaired multiple fence openings along Track 1.

Taking advantage of the outage, contract workers started the work to lay important PTC (Positive Train Control) related fiber optic cables, by completing test pits, and starting cross-track digs. They are currently installing cable trays with fiber

optic cable for the implementation of PTC along Track 3 between Fordham and Woodlawn.

Woodlawn "Connect with Us" Results in Better Schedule

This summer, one of Metro-North's **Way Ahead** initiatives included **SMARTRACK work** between Mott Haven and Woodlawn Stations, where our workforce has been fixing drainage, removing damaged ballast and replacing hundreds of crossties — all of which improves our infrastructure and your experience!

Other than the Park Avenue Viaduct, this is the busiest segment of track on Metro-North.

During this work — with one track out of service and reduced capacity — we had to cancel one of our local trains.

Although we had added stops to other Harlem Line trains, at our "Connect with Us" event at Woodlawn Station on July 25, some customers voiced their concerns about crowded conditions on the 8:01 AM inbound train to Grand Central Terminal.

We Looked into the matter and...

although we found that enough seats were scattered throughout the substitute train we provided, because Woodlawn Station features a short platform that only accommodates four car-lengths for boarding, crowding ensued in those cars.

We took your comments to heart and worked to fix the issue.

Metro-North planners went back to the drawing board and by Monday, August 12, we had added an 8:11 AM stop at Woodlawn Station to an existing train with minimal impact to our overall service.

We thank you for voicing your concerns

at our "Connect with Us" and hope to see more of you at our next "**Connect with Us**" Customer Forum at Ossining on September 17.

Here are some upcoming events...

Connect with Us!

Metro-North's Series Of Informal

Customer Forums

Talk with

Metro-North Customer Service Representatives & Management

Ossining Station

Wed., Sept 17
7 AM – 8:30 AM
Inbound Platform

Mount Kisco Station

Wed., Oct 16
7 AM – 8:30 AM
Sidewalk near Overpass Staircase

South Norwalk Station

Tues., Nov 13
7 AM – 8:30 AM
Inbound Platform

Ask questions! • Give us your input! • Share your comments, concerns and suggestions!



Metro-North Railroad



Way Ahead

You can also keep up with us online at:



mta.info, our



Facebook,



Twitter

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42nd Street NYC Transit Shuttle Two-Year Renovation Starts



In mid-August, work began on a major renovation of the NYC Transit's 42nd Street Shuttle, which carries some 100,000 riders daily between Times Square and Grand Central Terminal, two of the MTA's busiest stops.

Many of those riders are Metro-North customers (*that's you!*)

traveling on to work after coming into the Terminal, or making your way back to a Metro-North train after a long day.

The renovations will replace the existing Times Square end with a roomier, ADA-accessible terminus, reconfigure platforms at

the Grand Central end, and modernize the train operations.

The result will provide more passenger capacity, full accessibility, and a more pleasant, accommodating station environment.



Construction will be scheduled in multiple phases to minimize service impacts and customer inconvenience.

Throughout the project, some crowding is expected during peak travel times in the morning and afternoon.

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Ready to Hit the Grid Iron? Take the Train to the Game!®



“Big Blue” and “Gang Green” are at it again this September, and you can take **Metro-North Train® to the Game** from any station to see them!



From Hudson, Harlem or New Haven Stations:

Once at Grand Central Terminal, you can take the subway with a separate **MetroCard**, using the **7** or **S** and the **1 2 3** or you can walk one mile over to Penn Station, about 20 minutes away by foot.



At Penn Station-NY, using your **Train to the Game** ticket, you'll hop on a NJ Transit train to Secaucus Junction. Once in Secaucus, you can take the shuttle train service with your ticket to the Meadowlands.

The Metro-North ticket will cover the rail portions of your ride from your station to Grand Central Terminal, and from Penn Station-NY to the Meadowlands. Thru-rail tickets are only available at outlying stations, not at Grand Central Terminal.

From the Port Jervis and Pascack Valley Lines:

Purchase your round trip rail ticket to the **Meadowlands Sports Complex station from NJTRANSIT.**

Take a train from either of these West of Hudson Lines, and transfer at Secaucus to the Meadowlands Rail (Sports) Line shuttle to the Stadium. Train shuttle service will run frequently starting approximately three hours before each game and up to two hours after the game.

Please verify your itinerary at njtransit.com/meadowlands for schedules to Meadowlands from New York Penn Station or Secaucus Junction (SEC).

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Safety Rules of the Issue

WARNING: PLEASE DO NOT STAND OR WAIT ON THE BRIDGE PLATES



For your safety, please wait for the train to **stop** and doors to **open** before boarding bridge plates.

We bring you these rules because your safety is always our first priority all year long!

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Metro-North Getaway News: Take the Train, Get Special Offers at Grand Central Terminal



Your ticket to ride is your ticket to **SHOP & DINE**

Introducing Rail Rewards,
now Metro-North customers can show
their train ticket to get exclusive offers at
Grand Central shops and restaurants.

grandcentralterminal.com/railrewards

We can make sure you have something to do every weekend this summer!
See a [complete list of our Getaways](#).

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Courtesy Corner



The #MostOftenHeardComplaints on the Railroad

What bothers our riders most about their fellow traveling companions? Here's a new addition to our dictionary of #MostOftenHeardComplaints:

5. (NEW!) #Loudgrouping!

It's great when you get together with your friends and classmates for a cool ride on the train to and from school, an outing or sports event. You may be oblivious to all the other riders in your car, but we can be sure of this: If you're talking loudly, they're not oblivious to you!

So, please keep your friendly chatter down to an agreeable level when traveling together.

It's the courteous thing to do!

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