

Mileposts

A Publication for MTA Metro-North Railroad Customers October 2013



Update: Right-of-Way Improvement Project Continues, Scope Of Work Expands

Our Bronx Right-of-Way Improvement Project has passed an important milestone, reaching 50% completion as of September.

Work has been completed on the second of four tracks in the area between Melrose and Woodlawn. Considerable work still remains in this critical six-mile section of the railroad. We also recently expanded the work we are doing to other areas of the Bronx as well as portions of the railroad to the east and north.

Metro-North has contracted for the use of track equipment that employs state-of-the-art technology to perform a complete and comprehensive assessment of our track. These extraordinary tests are giving us in-depth information on conditions that we should correct – both in the short and long term.

Maintaining the railroad in the best condition possible is not only smart railroading; it is safe railroading. Rather than wait until a problem develops, we are immediately taking the necessary steps to ensure the long-term integrity of our tracks. These are two examples of the new, high-tech equipment we are using to inspect our right-of-way:

- Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR): In the past, railroads have primarily relied on visual inspection and excavation to assess the condition of the track bed. GPR can accurately show potential problem areas in the structural layers below the track's surface before anyone starts digging. This information has been critical in developing the scope of our ongoing track improvement programs, especially in identifying areas of poor drainage that need to be corrected.
- Track Loading Vehicle (TLV): This technology leads the industry's efforts in assessing track conditions. It is designed to apply forces close to the strength limits of the rails, track ties, rail fasteners, and ballast (stone). We are one of the first railroads in the U.S. that is using this technology to test its entire right-of-way.

As of this writing, we have used GPR to inspect 85% of our tracks (620 track miles) while the TLV has analyzed the entire New Haven Line and is now analyzing the Harlem and Hudson Lines. We expect to be completed with this extraordinary analysis this fall. We will then develop prioritized maintenance programs, keeping our right-of-way safe and in a state of good repair.

While this work is essential, we do not minimize the impact it has had on your service. We have tried to minimize delays, despite the fact that track capacity has been reduced by one-fourth to one-half, depending on when you ride our trains.

The most recent schedule change on August 19, to the extent possible, has mitigated these impacts.

We will continue to monitor our service and provide you with updates as to the progress of our maintenance efforts in the Bronx as well as our overall effort.

We appreciate your patience as we continue this critical work along our right-of-way.

They're Baaack... And We're Ready!

No, we're not talking about another installment in the Poltergeist film series. (They buried that franchise decades ago!)

Once again, slippery rail season is upon us. Every autumn, you have heard train crews mention “slip-slide” to explain minor service delays.

This condition is not created by “disembodied spirits” along our tracks, but by a slimy substance left by the crushed “remains” of leaves on our rails that gets even more slippery after it rains.

When a train attempts to speed up or slow down, this “gelatinous slime” can cause the wheels to slip or slide along the rails.

In severe cases the train will automatically make an emergency stop, because the on-board computer system perceives “slip-sliding” as excessive speed. And this slip-sliding and braking can also create flat spots on the train’s wheels, forcing us to take much-needed equipment out of service for repairs.

Over the past several years, we have taken a very proactive approach to “exorcising” this problem (garlic and holy water are not involved), and you’ve been experiencing slippery rail less and less frequently.

Changes we have enacted include:

- Instructing our engineers to report slippery conditions immediately to our Operations Control Center. (We have also provided additional training in how to operate through these “slippery” areas.)
- Enhancing our computerized train-tracking system to allow for automatic reporting of slip-slide incidents and conditions, enabling us to take corrective action more quickly.
- Installing a Wheel Impact Load Detector (WILD) across all four tracks in the Park Avenue Tunnel. This monitors for wheel flat spots that may have developed during operation and allows us to identify and prioritize wheels for repair.
- Installing a tandem Wheel Truing Lathe in Harmon Shop. We built a state-of-the-art wheel true facility in Harmon that can cut both wheels on a truck simultaneously. This allows for proper wheel diameter matching and also helps us return cars to service more quickly so we have enough capacity available for our customers. The Connecticut Department of Transportation is currently building a second identical facility in New Haven to support our M8 Fleet.

Many of you may notice that under extreme conditions, we now reduce speeds through problem areas. While this may result in a slight delay to your service, it ensures a safer operation of our trains and also prevents a greater delay because of wheel damage. And no flat spots on train wheels also means we can operate at regular speeds in non-problem areas, and we don’t need to take the equipment out of service to maintain it.

We have also stepped up our efforts to keep our right of way as “leaf free” as possible. This is no small feat given the number of trees that line our tracks. (And even though we actively trim the trees along our right of way, autumn leaves still manage to fall on our tracks.)

We use rail washers and scrubbers more frequently to remove dead leaves from the tracks. And on-board “sanders” on our diesel trains automatically drop sand on our tracks to help improve traction and reduce wheel slippage when it begins to occur.

We ask that you please keep in mind that while we can reduce the incidents of slippery rail, we cannot eliminate them. (They are like the zombies on the Walking Dead: There’s always a potential for another one popping up somewhere...)

But we will continue our efforts to try to minimize any delays and inconvenience slippery rail may create for you this autumn. And, as always, we appreciate your patience.

Governor Cuomo Announces \$1.8 Billion Award To Build 676 New Metro-North & LIRR Rail Cars

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo has announced that the Board of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority has approved a contract with Kawasaki Rail Car, Inc. for up to \$1.83 billion to design and build the next generation of rail cars for Metro-North and the Long Island Rail Road.

The cars will be used to replace 1980s-era M3 railcars that serve Metro-North’s Harlem and Hudson Lines and the LIRR’s eight electric branches, and to expand fleet capacity for both railroads to allow for ridership growth.

A portion of this contract and related development costs are funded with \$355.5 million from the MTA’s 2010-2014 Capital Plan. The initial contract will provide 92 cars to the LIRR.

If funding is available in the forthcoming 2015-2019 MTA Capital Plan and the railroads choose to exercise future options, Kawasaki will manufacture up to 280 cars for Metro-North and up to 304 additional cars for the LIRR.

The cars will incorporate the most successful and popular features of the railroads’ two recent electric car classes, the M7s that serve the Metro-North’s Harlem and Hudson Lines and the LIRR, and the M8s serving Metro-North’s New Haven Line.

The cars will have larger windows than the M3 cars they are replacing, automated public address announcements in car interiors and exteriors, and single leaf doors for improved reliability. They will also continue the M7/M8 configuration for heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems that has proven to be more resilient in extreme weather and more effective at providing customer comfort in all types of weather conditions.

As with railroads’ previous electric car classes, the majority of cars under this contract will be manufactured as “married pairs” comprised of two nearly identical cars permanently coupled together and sharing a restroom, cabs for engineer or conductor, and electrical systems. Each pair is designed to seat 221 passengers, eight more than the M7 pairs.

The MTA benefited from robust competition for this contract. The proposals for the contract were evaluated on a host of financial and technical criteria, including price, percentage of New York State content going into the cars, and the percentage of U.S. domestically produced steel used in the cars. The winning proposer, Kawasaki, provided the most attractive pricing.

The M3 cars being replaced by the M9 cars entered service between 1984 and 1986. Upon their retirement, they will have served the region for more than 30 years.

It's One Of Their Favorite Haunts

The American Planning Association (APA) has designated Grand Central Terminal as one of 10 Great Public Spaces for 2013 under the organization's Great Places in America program.

APA singled out Grand Central for a range of innovations that influenced American planning, architecture, engineering and culture for decades.

For more information about the other great public spaces, as well as APA's top 10 Great Streets and top 10 Neighborhoods for 2013 and previous years, visit www.planning.org/greatplaces.

Speaking of Favorite Haunts

Those of you who frequent our bar carts will now find award-winning New York State local brews, wines and, yes, spirits (the drinkable kind) on the menu as part of Governor Andrew Cuomo's "Taste New York" initiative.

New "Taste NY" signs have been installed to promote the new choices around the points of sale and on the bar carts at Grand Central Terminal.

In May 2013, Governor Cuomo announced the launch of New York's largest tourism campaign in decades, committing nearly \$60 million to grow New York industries, create jobs and attract even more visitors to the Empire State. "Taste NY" is a key component of this campaign by highlighting New York products at special events, tourism destinations and stores throughout the state.

Wooly "Boo"-ly!

That's what you'll exclaim when you take Metro-North's discount package to the New York State Sheep and Wool Family Festival (Sat. & Sun, October 19 & 20).



The Northeast's thriving sheep industry (yes, we said thriving) is showcased and celebrated each year in this famous festival that draws 30,000 visitors from across the country to the lovely village of Rhinebeck. And there's more here than sheep! There are llamas, alpacas, and, of course, their luxurious fibers.

Plus there's the ever-popular Punkin' Chuckin' competition on Sunday. By the time you add in great food and music (even a fiddler or two), it

will be time to go home and you'll start counting the days until the 2014 Festival.

Metro-North's package gives you discount rail fare and admission to the event and can be purchased at any Metro-North ticket office or full-service ticket vending machine (excluding Poughkeepsie Station) and through WebTicket at mta.info/mnr.

Courtesy Corner



Here's a last minute Halloween costume tip for you: Use sheets!

Drape a crimson one around you and you are Little Red Riding Hood! Use black, and, "viola," you are the Grim Reaper. And of course, cut two eye holes in a white sheet, and you are a ghost.

There are a million cheap (make that fun) ways to conceal your identity this Halloween. But one thing you should never conceal is your monthly train ticket when your conductor asks to see it.

It is part of their job to inspect tickets on a regular basis. So please cooperate, and do not give them a hard time (you don't want to scare them!) or feel you are being singled out.

It's the courteous thing to do!

Safety Rule of the Issue

We've all heard the legends about the "ghost train" appearing suddenly out of nowhere along the tracks, whisking some poor, unsuspecting soul away.

We are here to tell you that the legend is true—not the ghost part, of course. Just the part about trains seeming to appear quickly out of nowhere.

That is why you should always stay off our tracks and use only designated walkways or roadway crossings to get to our stations. And never walk, run, cycle, or drive around a lowered crossing gate!

Remember: electric trains are relatively quiet, so chances are you won't hear one coming, and an approaching train is always closer, moving faster than you think. And they can't stop as quickly as a car.

We bring you these reminders not to scare you, but because your safety is always our first priority.

Throughout our 30th anniversary year, we will be presenting highlights from our history. To see a full timeline, visit mta.info/mnr.

August 2013 On-Time Performance*

Line	AM	PM	Off-Peak Weekday	Off-Peak Weekend	Total	YTD **
Harlem	92.3%	92.8%	94.2%	97.6%	94.3%	96.8%
Hudson	96.6%	97.5%	96.6%	97.3%	97.1%	97.2%
New Haven	81.9%	86.7%	86.7%	94.6%	87.7%	93.7%
System	89.1%	91.5%	91.7%	96.2%	92.2%	95.6%

*Arrivals within 5 minutes, 59 seconds of schedule.
**Year to date.



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