



Third Quarter 2013

**Dear Neighbor,**

Welcome to the new East Side Access Quarterly Queens Community Newsletter. In this publication we will bring you information and notable news about the largest transportation infrastructure project currently underway in the United States. This is a massive project, both in scale and complexity, which upon completion will relieve congestion, ease rail transportation and reduce commuter travel time in the New York metropolitan area. This publication will not replace the regular notifications you already receive about construction activities. If you or your neighbors would like to receive additional project communications, please click [here](#).

Thank you and enjoy!

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**Did you know?**

When Grand Central Terminal first opened, an estimated 150,000 people came through its doors to see the structure and marvel at its beautiful sculptures and frescos.

**Project Milestones**

**Harold Interlocking:** *Over the summer, ESA completed a nearly unprecedented 30-day construction initiative, coordinated with LIRR and Amtrak within Harold Interlocking in Queens. This outage allowed a vital piece of work to be completed when a concrete slab, that will support existing tracks, was installed within North America's busiest interlocking (click [here](#) to read more)*



**39th Street & Skillman Avenue:** *The B-13 power substation at the corner of 39th Street and Skillman Avenue is complete. The*

*construction zone in the street and sidewalk around the facility has been returned to public use. Fit out of the facility interior with equipment and other elements will be performed by the follow on systems contract (CS179) after it is awarded in early 2014. Construction of civil elements in the surrounding area will continue.*

**Queens Tunnels:** *Two major tunneling contracts in Queens are complete. The Northern Boulevard Crossing contract (CQ039) and Queens Bored Tunnels and Structures (CQ031) have finished both the final load transfer of the mined*

100 years later, ESA will ferry 162,000 daily commuters into the heralded Terminal via LIRR service.

## Get to know ESA



**Andy Thompson,**  
**Senior Construction Program Manager**

Andy began his career in the construction industry over 25 years ago in the gold mines of South Africa. Since that time he has worked not only throughout the US, but also in Denmark; Hong Kong; Istanbul; and England.

During his career he's seen many firsts. For example, Andy worked on the Round Hill tunnel project in the U.K., which was the first road tunnel in the country to use the New Austrian Tunneling Method, which is similar to the Sequential Excavation Method used by ESA for the Northern Boulevard Crossing section of work.

In 2004 Andy came to the U.S. to work and in 2006 joined ESA as the Package Manager for CM019. As for his thoughts on ESA: "It's an immensely challenging project. You will not find anything in the U.S. like it. The challenge of working in Manhattan and around a live-rail environment makes this memorable. Pulling all the pieces together is sometimes difficult and the pace never seems to stop here. There are so many different parties involved all

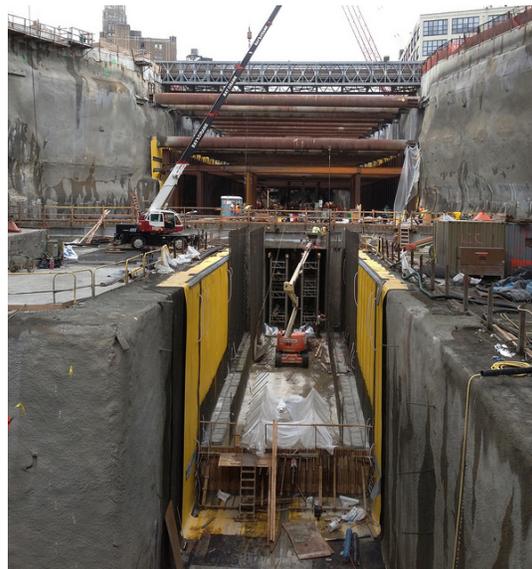
*tunnel under Northern Boulevard, as well as the digging of the four tunnels beneath Sunnyside Yard and Harold Interlocking. Click [here](#) to read more about the engineering feat that is the Northern Boulevard Crossing.*

**Manhattan Tunnels:** *Excavation of the tunnels under Grand Central Terminal and along the project alignment from 63rd Street to 37th Street in Manhattan is complete. This work marks the completion of contracts CM009 and CM019.*

## Project News

### Northern Boulevard and 41st Avenue

Significant progress has been made on the construction of the B10 power sub-station adjacent to Northern Boulevard. Once operational, this building will provide power to the trains traveling through the underground interlocking, as well as in the planned Mid-day storage yard. Construction of the sub-station facility is forecasted for completion by the end of the year while work on the second facility in the area, which will be home to LIRR offices, will begin in early 2014.



Below ground, work to build out the walls and floors of the Plaza Interlocking is underway. This work includes installation of structural steel, waterproofing and pouring of permanent concrete floors and walls. The Plaza Interlocking is where the four

tunnels from Sunnyside Yard and Harold Interlocking will converge into two for the trip to and from Manhattan.

Further north along the 41st Avenue track alignment, work to refurbish three of the four vent facilities at Vernon Boulevard, 12th Street and 29th Street is nearing completion. Originally built as part of the 63rd Street Tunnel project for the F Line in the 1970's and 1980's with an extra tunnel for future LIRR service, these facilities will be turned over to the systems contract (CS179) to install and update the ventilation, communication and power equipment.

### Sunnyside and Harold Interlocking

Over the last several months great progress has been made in removing the older bridge supports and replacing them with new concrete structures where the new LIRR tracks will cross

with their own concerns and there's so much going on at any given moment. But we have a good team of people in place so we're able to make it work. It's a testament to the team that's been built."

We couldn't agree more.

### Stay in touch

As work on this vital transportation infrastructure project continues, MTA Capital Construction is committed to keeping the community informed of its progress and strives to minimize construction related impacts.

For additional information on our project, or if you have community related questions or concerns please [email](#) the East Side Access Community Outreach Team, or call us at **(855) 4MTAESA**.



48th and 43rd Streets. The excavation and subsurface construction for the retaining wall which will support the new tracks running along Barnett Avenue is nearly completed. This work is all in

preparation for the eventual placement of the new steel bridge spans later this year. Work to replace and refurbish the tracks and switches in this area will continue through 2014.

### Projectwide

**East Side Access Awards New Contract:** In July 2013, Michels Corporation was awarded the contract for CM005 Manhattan South Structures. This contract is responsible for building out the permanent concrete structures and lining of the caverns and tunnels below Grand Central Terminal south to 37th Street. The tunnels and caverns were excavated under a previous contract. This contract will access their work site via the bellmouth adjacent to Northern Boulevard.

### Marvels of Engineering and Coordination

#### Load Transfer at the Northern Boulevard Crossing

In 2010, contract CQ039 Northern Boulevard Crossing began work on one of the more challenging construction activities for East Side Access. The task was to mine a tunnel approximately 120 feet long and 40 feet tall which would connect the new tunnels and tracks in Sunnyside Yard and Harold Interlocking with an open access area and the existing 63rd Street tunnel from Manhattan. The tunnel would need to be excavated in soil that was extremely soft and wet, making the work slow and potentially dangerous. In order to mitigate this danger and progress the work, engineers simply froze the ground surrounding the area to be excavated. How cold did the ground get? Cold enough that nearly 250 days after turning off the freeze and allowing it to defrost naturally, the ground has still not fully thawed.



After nearly four years and \$100 million the mining was completed. This past summer, the load transfer, whereby the nearly 7,000 ton weight of the existing street

**Removal of temporary supports during the load transfer** and train structures above is transferred onto

the permanent tunnel, was successfully completed. Meticulous coordination between the NYC Transit Authority, NYC DOT and a slew of engineers ensured there were no issues during the transfer.

### **Coordinating the Harold Summer Outage**

Over the summer, ESA completed a nearly unprecedented 30-day construction initiative, coordinated with LIRR and Amtrak within Harold Interlocking in Queens. This outage allowed a vital piece of work to be completed when a concrete slab, that will support existing tracks and is a crucial part of the Westbound Bypass, was installed within North America's busiest interlocking.

The outage took various tracks out of service over the course of 30 days for a limited period of time during which service was maintained on the other tracks. Once out of service, the project team removed the track, excavated down, poured the concrete slab, backfilled it with soil, and then reinstalled the tracks. All of this was done with laser like speed and precision in order to restore the tracks and not further interrupt service.

Planning for this work began over a year earlier when the team held weekly risk and scheduling workshops with representatives of both Amtrak and LIRR, as well as other transportation experts. Coordination was complex because the work affected operations of both the agencies and thus, their customers.

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