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Spring/Summer 2016

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**About East Side Access**

East Side Access is one of the largest transportation infrastructure projects currently underway in the United States. The project encompasses work in multiple locations in Manhattan, Queens and the Bronx and includes more than 11 miles of tunneling. When completed, East Side Access will serve approximately 162,000 customers a day, providing a faster and easier commute from Long Island and Queens to the east side of Manhattan in a new 8-track terminal and concourse below Grand Central Terminal. **For more information, [click here.](#)**

**Construction Operations & Activity**

**Sunnyside Yard/Harold Interlocking**

Yet another significant milestone in the progress of East Side Access has been reached. After several years of planning, thousands of hours of prep work, and extensive Railroad coordination and preparations, the jacked shield has been successfully delivered and assembled right in the middle of Harold Interlocking and Sunnyside Yard west of the Queens Boulevard Bridge, and has begun to mine the 620-foot long tunnel which will one day allow Amtrak to run trains through the interlocking nearly unimpeded. Advancing at approximately 20 feet a week, this operation is scheduled to be complete early in 2017.



Click the photo view a larger version

A jacked shield is one of the simplest forms of tunneling, whereby hydraulic jacks thrust against a steel frame with a cutting edge forward into the earth while workers and machines excavate the soil and rocks from within. As the shield progresses forward, the tunnel walls are constructed behind it. The jacked shield measures 25' tall by 25' wide and weighs upwards of 195 tons.

The operation to deliver components of and assemble the shield began on May 12, 2016, when following excavation and construction of the launch pit and assembly area, a giant 330-ton crane was mobilized in order to assemble the six separate pieces of the jacked shield, the largest of which weighs 50 tons. Over several days, the six pieces of the shield were delivered by truck from a yard in New Jersey and carefully set in place all without incident while train traffic continued uninterrupted through the Interlocking.

## Sunnyside Gardens and Woodside

East Side Access and LIRR forces successfully installed 35 new steel and wood utility poles along the right-of-way from 48th Street to 60th Street. Work to string cables between the poles continues.

At 48th Street and Barnett Avenue, the contractor successfully removed one of the existing steel and concrete bridges which once carried the LIRR's Main Line 2 track. The demolition was a daunting task: ironworkers cut steel spans into six sections which were removed by crane-four short sections and two long sections. Each short section weighed 26,000 pounds (the equivalent of 10 Honda Civics for each crane lift), with each long section weighing 38,000 pounds (the equivalent of 15 Honda Civics). The demolition of the old bridge, which was deemed obsolete due to its low elevation, will be replaced by a new bridge with an elevation high enough to meet the current grade of the adjacent tracks all of which will eventually provide LIRR service to Grand Central Terminal. In the coming months, the contractor will be working on a new retaining wall and continuing with the installation of new concrete bridge abutments which will support the new steel train bridge. The placement of the bridge itself will occur during an overnight operation later this summer. Once complete, the contractor will be installing permanent lighting under the bridge.



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## 63rd Street Tunnel Ventilation Facilities

The five existing ventilation facilities on Roosevelt Island and along 41st Avenue in Queens (Vernon Boulevard, 12th Street, 23rd Street and 29th Street) continue to be utilized as equipment delivery and worker access points by the project while also undergoing modernization and expansion in order to meet the future needs of LIRR service to Grand Central.

## East Side Access Project Progress

### Contract Completions

This past winter, three major East Side Access contracts were completed, including one for the construction of the 55th Street Ventilation Facility in Manhattan and two major heavy civil infrastructure contracts which laid crucial groundwork for the work to modernize, upgrade and expand the 100-year-old Harold Interlocking and Sunnyside Yards in Queens.

### Contract Awards

Major steps forward have been taken in the push to meet the project's revenue service date of December 2022. This winter, the last major contract for work in Manhattan was awarded. Contract CM007 Grand Central Terminal Station Cavens and Track, valued at \$663 million, was awarded to Tutor Perini in January. This massive contract will transform the two enormous 1,143-foot-long caverns carved out of solid rock into a terminal station, with more than 12 miles of track work from Queens to Manhattan, including eight tracks and four platforms in the station; elevators, escalators and staircases to carry customers to and from the underground station; and all architectural finishes throughout the new terminal.

In December, another major contract, this one for work in Sunnyside Yard and Harold Interlocking, was awarded, also to Tutor Perini. The contract, valued at upwards of \$79 million, will excavate and construct the approach structures that will allow the LIRR's existing tracks to connect to one of the four rail tunnels that have been built below Sunnyside Yard. Additional work to be performed under this contract will include replacement of an existing obsolete train bridge; switch installation; retaining wall construction; installation of electrical utilities; demolition of an electrical substation; and installation of overhead wire support structures.



Installation of new track in Harold Interlocking

## New Program Executive

### Judith Kunoff, FAIA, CCM

In February, Judith Kunoff joined East Side Access as Program Executive, overseeing project construction in Manhattan and portions of Queens. Prior to joining ESA, Judith served as Chief Architect of New York City Transit where she was responsible for all architectural work undertaken by the agency including the design and construction of subway expansion projects such as the 7 Line extension and Second Avenue Subway. She has an extensive background and education in the planning, design and construction of large scale infrastructure projects.



Judith Kunoff

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