MTA Capital Construction
East Side Access

Queens community newsletter

WINTER 2018

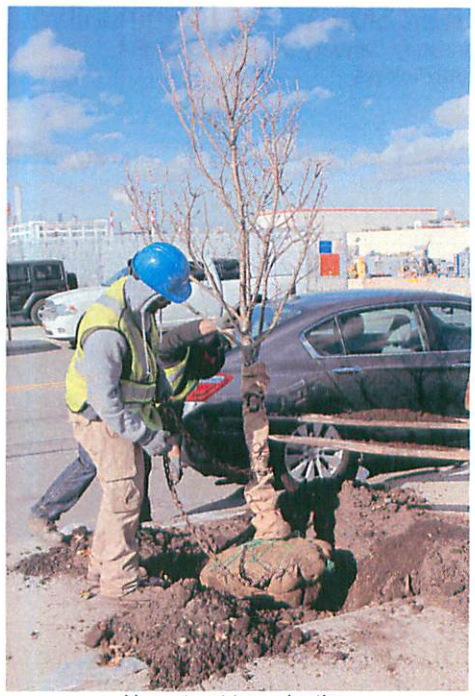
About East Side Access

East Side Access is the largest public transportation infrastructure project currently underway in the United States. The project encompasses work in multiple locations in Manhattan, Queens and the Bronx and includes more than eight 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. East Side Access will deliver quicker commutes, fewer delays, greater reliability, and more options for passengers. Long Island Rail Road riders will now have faster, direct access to the east side of Manhattan, easing overcrowding in and around Penn Station. The project is also expanding and strengthening our regional rail network infrastructure.
For more information, click here.

Queens Construction Operations and Activity

Sunnyside Neighborhood Beautification

Under an MTA/Federal Small Business mentoring program, several neighborhood and site restoration projects were completed near the Sunnyside Gardens neighborhood in Queens this past fall. The selected contractor, under guidance and mentoring from an experienced construction manager, restored the sidewalk in front of 26 active, privately owned garages. The work was performed in phases to have the least impact on garage owners. Additional community improvements and beautification work by the contractor included the planting of seven new Japanese Lilac and Hawthorne street trees, milling and paving of the street and replacement of the temporary plywood fence with 470 linear feet of high security, anti-graffiti fencing.


New street tree planting

Track A Cut and Cover Tunnel


Track A tunnel excavation

The contractor responsible for the construction of the Track A tunnel and approach structure, which will transition trains from surface tracks to the tunnel below ground has made significant progress. Since its award early last year, the contractor has excavated over 21,000 cubic yards of material for the tunnel and approach structure, poured approximately 1,000 cubic yards of structural concrete and installed or modified 13 catenary power structures. The installation of several of the structures under this contract required extended weekend track outages, special equipment and coordination with Amtrak to ensure that the overheard catenary power was back up and running for the Monday morning rush hour.

Midday Storage Yard Begins Construction


Demolition of Montauk Cutoff bridge

Construction of the future midday storage yard is underway. The yard will encompass 33 acres and span 1.5 miles from west to east within Harold Interlocking, north of Sunnyside Yard. This contract is responsible for the construction of 24 layup tracks, 11 miles of new railroad tracks and more than 80 switches. The contractor has been busy clearing the area, demolishing several existing structures including the Montauk Cutoff bridge and old rail maintenance buildings. The contractor has also installed 69 out of the 191 light poles across the yard as well as 700 linear feet of duct bank and 1,130 linear feet of storm sewer piping.

New Signal System Testing Underway

The first half of the testing program for the new, microprocessor-based signal system, which will control

trains moving into and out of Harold Interlocking, was completed successfully and as planned this past fall. The new signal system utilizes modern microprocessor technology, which is faster, has more redundancies and is more reliable than the older relay based system. This means faster commutes and fewer chances for signal problems leading to commuter delays. After extensive coordination efforts with Amtrak and LIRR, the second half of the testing will be underway in February and March of 2018, leading up to two weekends in May when the new system will be placed into service.


Central Instrumentation Location (CIL)

Manhattan Underground Construction Operations

Track Installation

Installation of the permanent low-vibration train track is underway in all passenger service tunnels. Overall, ESA will be installing over 25 miles of track.


Rail installation in the 63rd Street Tunnel

Terminal Progress

The future train terminal continues to take shape approximately 140' below the streets of Manhattan. The largest pieces of pre-cast concrete including beams and deck panels, some weighing over 23 tons and spanning up to 55 feet, have been installed in both caverns.


Completed pre-cast concrete installation

Future Concourse

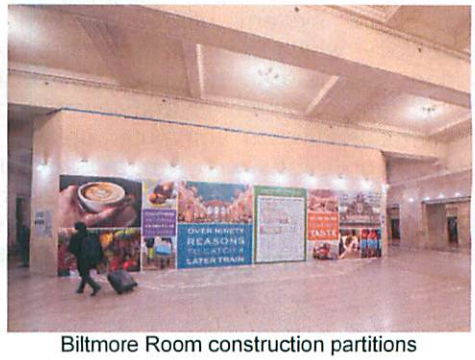
The construction and fit-out of the concourse is steadily progressing. Large mechanical equipment for heating, air conditioning and ventilating the concourse and terminal have been set in place. Throughout the future concourse, the multitude of rooms to support train and terminal operations and for retail tenant space are under construction. Of the four high-rise escalator wellways which will contain 17 escalators, installation of escalators is nearly complete in two wellways while the custom designed ceiling installation is being finished in the other two wellways.


Hi-rise escalator installation

Manhattan Surface Level Operations

Grand Central Terminal

Temporary protective construction partitions have been installed in the Biltmore Room on the upper level of Grand Central Terminal. These partitions separate the area where the contractor is working on floor openings for two future passenger escalators, which will connect directly to the new LIRR concourse below. East Side Access will maintain a worksite in the Biltmore Room until revenue service.



Biltmore Room construction partitions

44th Street Ventilation Facility

Work continues to complete the façade of the 44th Street ventilation facility. The contractor is installing masonry details, which is forecasted to be completed by midyear. A systems contractor will deliver large pieces of equipment including exhaust fans to the site. The site will remain active while all the systems are tested leading up to revenue service.

Installation of exterior finishes

48th Street Entrance

Work to complete the structural framework and utilities for the future entrance planned at 48th Street is pushing toward completion. The contractor has been busily working to build out and reinforce the structure under the active midtown street. Work to construct a new ADA elevator in the plaza on the north side of the street that will serve as a direct access point to the future LIRR passenger concourse is also underway.

Installation of utilities below 48th Street

63rd Street and 2nd Avenue

Three transformers, each weighing 27,000 lbs. were delivered to the facility power substation of the 63rd Street and 2nd Avenue ventilation facility. Con Edison will deliver electricity at 13,800 volts, which will be transformed in the substation to 480 to power the facility.

Six large switchgear units were also delivered to the site and installed in the below ground equipment room. The switchgear, which will protect the power system from overloads (like a circuit breaker in your house), can handle up to 5,000 amps at 480 volts. That is enough to power up to 1,800 houses.

Switchgear delivery

Concrete Operations

Concrete deliveries will ramp up at sites throughout Manhattan including 52nd Street and 55th Street. The concrete drop site at 37th Street that was demobilized in late 2016 will become active again to support construction in the tunnels.

The East Side Access Community Outreach team continues to monitor each of the concrete delivery sites to ensure that they are kept neat and clean.To receive advance notice for concrete deliveries, please **click here.**

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