

# The Bulletin



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## ***The Bulletin***

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## **MAJOR CHANGES COMING TO THE GRAND CENTRAL SUBWAY STATION COMPLEX by Subutay Musluoglu (Photographs by the author) (Continued from May, 2018 issue)**

We have been examining the ongoing reconstruction of MTA New York City Transit's Grand Central subway station complex, with previous articles in the March and May, 2018 issues of the *Bulletin*. The complex has longstanding capacity issues due to rising ridership and conditions will be exacerbated in the future when the East Side Access project opens and projected commercial office development is built out, which will potentially bring at least 100,000 new commuters to East Midtown. Under a framework developed collaboratively between the City of New York and the MTA, the East Midtown area has been rezoned to allow for denser and taller development, and a key element of the effort calls for private developers to finance a wide-ranging series of public realm and transit improvements. The first new development, One Vanderbilt Avenue, is a 1,401-foot-tall tower currently under construction adjacent to the western side of Grand Central Terminal and its owners are paying for a \$250 million program of various improvements to the subway complex. We will conclude this month with a closer look at the heart of the overall project — the capacity improvements at the Lexington Avenue Line mezzanine and platforms.

Before we get into it, just a quick follow-up to Part 2, in which we described the work that will be taking place at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Shuttle platforms — it should be noted that the Shuttle itself will soon be the focus of a complex multi-year reconstruction effort. While the bulk of the effort will be taking place at the Times Square end of the Shuttle,

there will be some additional changes taking place at Grand Central as well, above and beyond what will be happening as a result of the One Vanderbilt Avenue development, as was reported in the May issue. NYCT has just advertised the Request for Proposals for this project, so assuming that a contract can be awarded before the end of the year, work can begin in 2019 and be completed by the end of 2022.

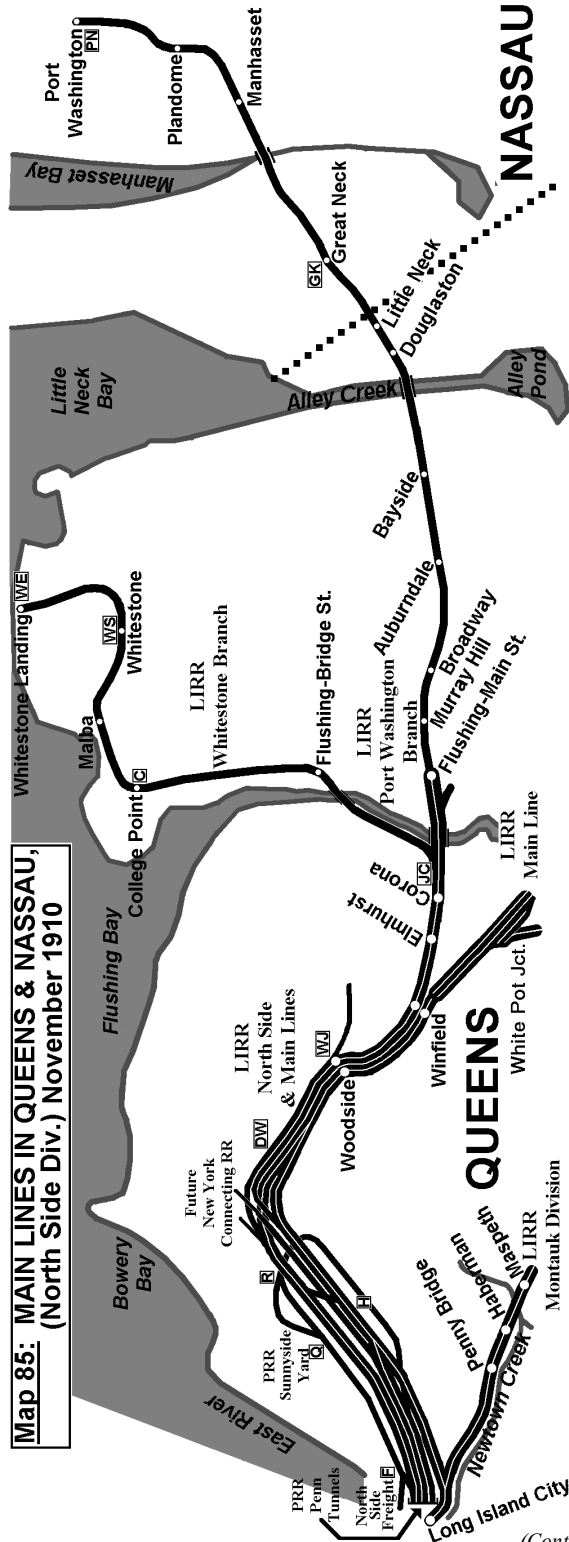
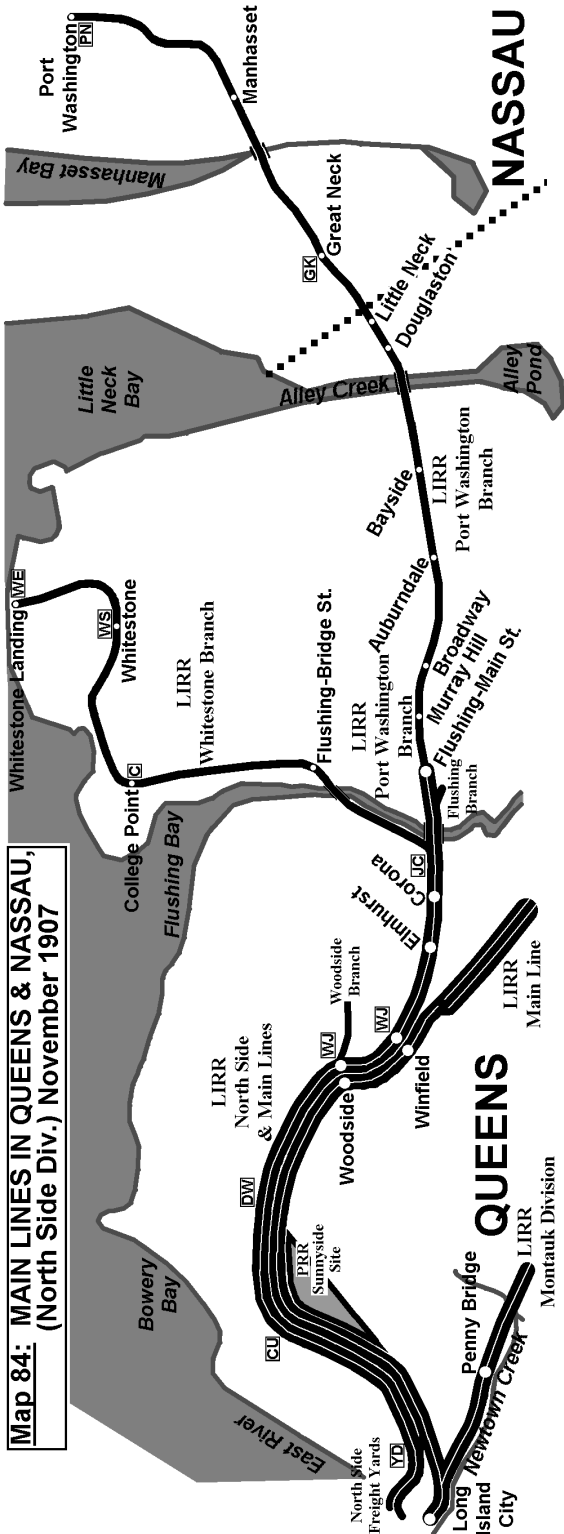
So, now on to Grand Central's Lexington Avenue Line (456) mezzanine and platforms. Currently, the station is extremely challenged with respect to capacity, which stems from a number of interwoven issues that cause inadequate vertical capacity, especially during the AM and PM peak periods, and it takes two distinct forms — between the platforms and mezzanine, and between the mezzanine and street/Grand Central Terminal.

With respect to improving circulation between the mezzanine and Grand Central Terminal and the street, progress has been achieved by the opening of a new stairway from the central part of the mezzanine (Mezzanine "B") to Grand Central Terminal's 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Passage back on August 2, 2017 (this was described in greater detail in the March, 2018 *Bulletin*). Complemented with an expanded fare control area and a reconfiguration of the turnstile arrays, much relief has been attained in this part of the station, which was previously notable for severe overcrowding and conflicting pedestrian

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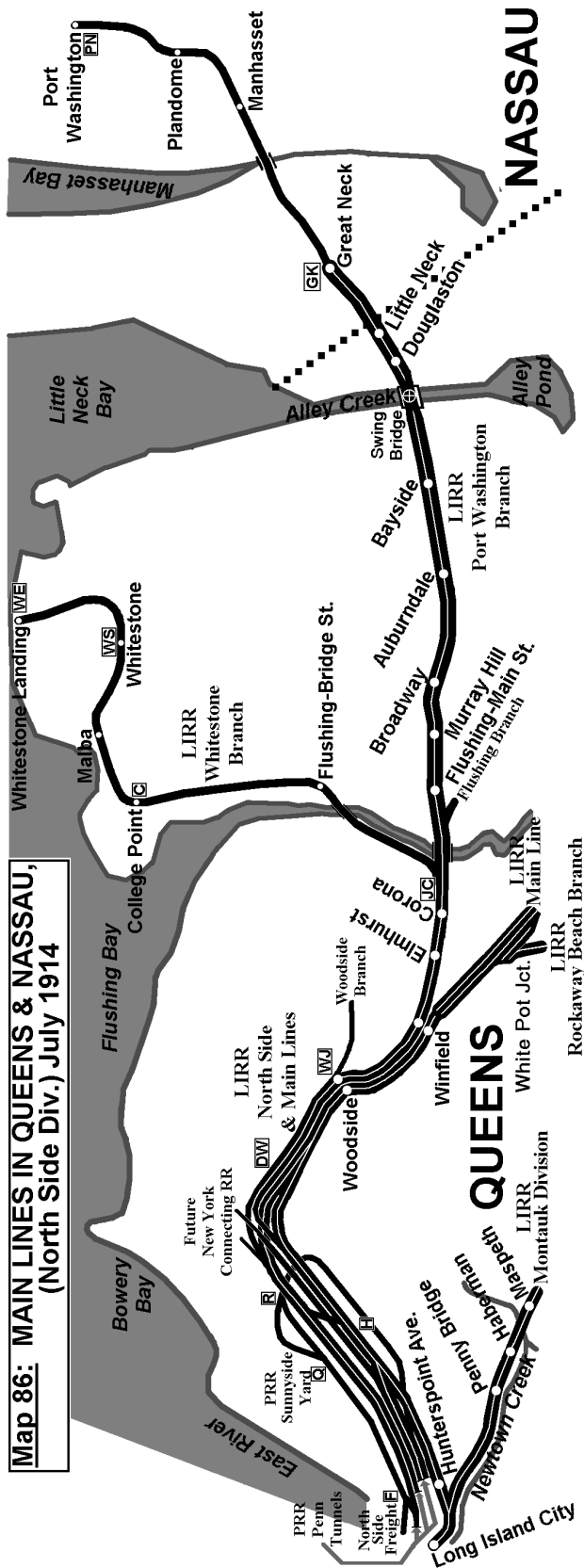
# THE GENESIS OF DASHING DAN — ENTER THE NORTH SIDE DIVISION

by George Chiasson  
(Continued from June, 2018 issue)

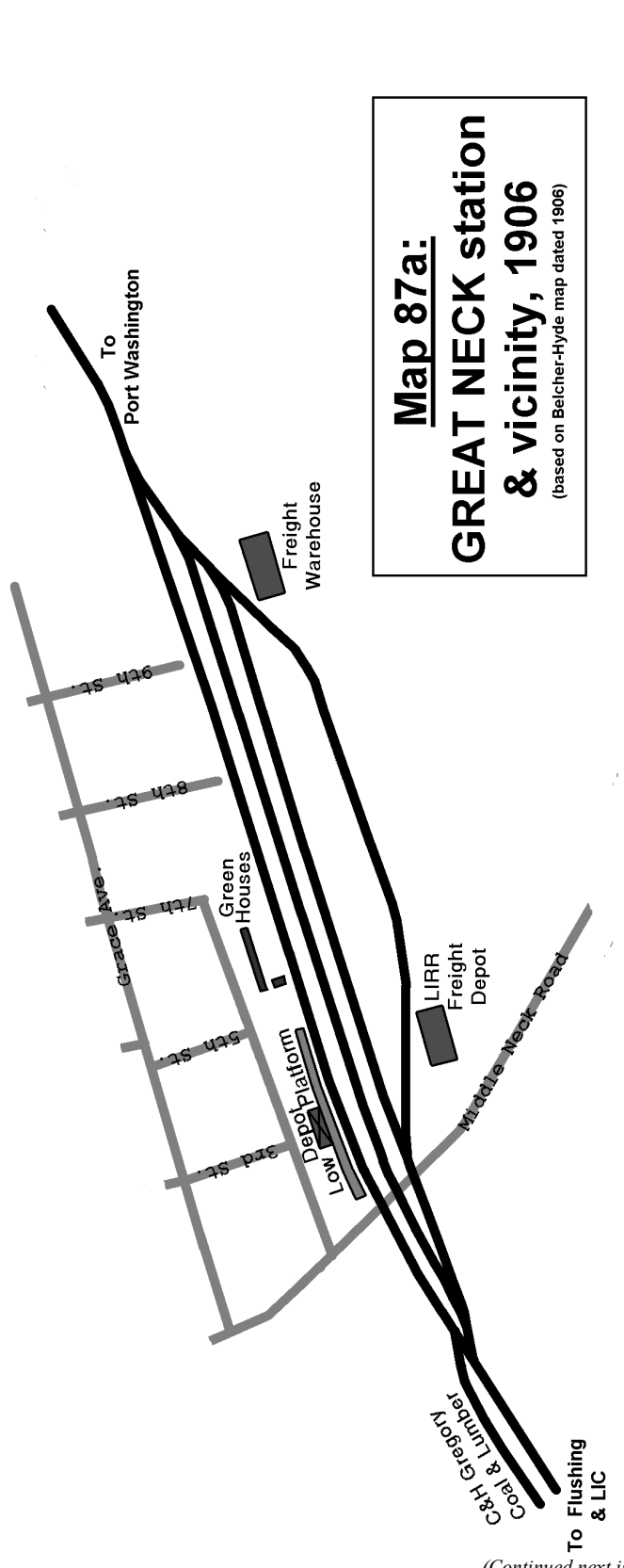


(Continued on page 3)

**The Genesis of Dashing Dan**  
(Continued from page 2)



**Map 86: MAIN LINES IN QUEENS & NASSAU, (North Side Div.) July 1914**



**Map 87a:**  
**GREAT NECK station**  
**& vicinity, 1906**  
(based on Belcher-Hyde map dated 1906)

(Continued next issue)

## Major Changes Coming to the Grand Central Subway Station Complex

flows, conveying an almost chaotic scene.

Additional relief arrived just before last Christmas, when a long-closed and forgotten passageway under Lexington Avenue from the station to the former Mobil Oil Building was reopened on December 22, 2017, with two new street stairways on the south side of E. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, just east of the southeast corner of Lexington Avenue.

And on June 14, 2018, as this article was being prepared, a reconfigured and widened street stairway was reopened from the north mezzanine (Mezzanine “A”) to the west side of Lexington Avenue, within the Grand Hyatt Hotel building envelope, just north of the northwest corner of E. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. Nicknamed the “Strawberry Stair” after the long-closed women’s clothing store that the stairway was adjacent to, the previous stairway at this location was notable for being narrow and having two awkward dogleg bends, causing two-way congestion which frequently backed up into the fare control area of the north mezzanine. The new stair has been doubled in width, and with only one gentle bend, it is a marked improvement over the previous condition and as such should provide much-needed relief at this end of the station. An adjacent ADA elevator, new for this location, is still under construction and should be operational before the end of the year. The other major stairway, at the opposite end of the north fare control area up to Grand Central Terminal’s Lexington Passage, will also be reconstructed. Due to its location and position, there is less flexibility with regards to a potential widening; however, this stairway currently has a slightly-higher-than-standard pitch, and there will be an attempt to ease this a bit, which should improve conditions for ascending and descending customers.

Returning to the situation between the platforms and mezzanine, current conditions are notable that as trains arrive and disgorge their passengers, the stairways are quickly overwhelmed, and it takes a few minutes for them to clear. The situation is complicated by heavy pedestrian traffic flow in multiple directions simultaneously. During the morning rush hour, high levels of passengers arrive from the north (the Bronx, Upper East Side, and Queens) and south (Brooklyn and Lower Manhattan), while a substantial number of Metro-North Railroad (MNR) commuters are entering the station, with a majority of them heading south to Lower Manhattan. This causes a clash every weekday in the AM peak on the southbound stairways as subway passengers struggle to get up the stairways and out of the station at the same time as MNR commuters are trying to get down on to the trains. In the evening rush hour, the situation is reversed — trains arrive on the northbound platform with commuters disembarking to catch their MNR trains home, just as homebound subway passengers are fighting to get down onto those same trains. This daily conflict frequently creates backups on to the trains themselves, which most likely adds to the dwell times of

trains, which in turn reduces line capacity.

Normally, adding additional stairways would alleviate the congestion. However, at Grand Central this is not so easy. The current stairways, dating to the Dual Contracts era, are constructed of concrete, covered in tile and mosaics, and in most cases contain ancillary support spaces underneath the riser, and as such have a substantial footprint taking up real estate on the platform. This situation constricts passenger movement along the platform and contributes to unsafe conditions during the peak hours as passengers try to squeeze past each other in the narrow clearance between the stairways and the platform edge. The sheer bulk of the stairways also imposes a visual barrier, contributing to a claustrophobic feeling to passengers waiting for trains. Adding more stairways would only further aggravate these conditions, creating unintended consequences by reducing the amount space available to passengers to freely move about the platform.

Complicating matters are the transfer stairways down to the Flushing Line (7) platform; their locations must remain fixed, so this reduces the flexibility with respect to repositioning the current stairways, which would be necessary to make room for new stairways.

These are difficult conditions even under ideal circumstances when service is running normally. When there are service disruptions, conditions deteriorate to the point of near gridlock, bordering on the unsafe if not for the presence and attention of numerous NYCT Platform Controllers stationed there during peak periods.

Furthermore, there is perhaps the greatest challenge of all that must be overcome — the unique position of the station itself, lying at an angle skewed to the Manhattan street grid due to the Lexington Avenue Line’s transition from Lexington Avenue to Park Avenue. As such, the central part of the station mezzanine is interrupted by the basement of the Grand Hyatt Hotel sitting directly above. The foundation columns for the hotel go through this space and down through the platforms below. This leaves a narrow connection linking Mezzanine “B” and Mezzanine “A.” This situation has long been recognized as a significant challenge to improving circulation at the station. NYCT has studied for years ways to rectify this, hoping to reclaim this space in order to reframe the hotel’s foundation steel and remove the basement enclosure wall in order to free up space for a continuous, uniform mezzanine. Doing so is an expensive and disruptive proposition, which has discouraged previous efforts. However, the funding made available by the One Vanderbilt Avenue project presents the perfect opportunity to finally achieve this long-sought improvement.

The solution that has been developed at Grand Central is to address all of these issues simultaneously. The Grand Hyatt Hotel basement has been appropriated by NYCT so the foundation columns can now be reframed, which will facilitate repositioning the existing stairways, which in turn provides the space for the additional new stairways to each platform. The continuous mezzanine

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**Major Changes Coming to the Grand Central Subway Station Complex**

will lead to a better-balanced distribution of passengers to and from the platforms and greatly improved overall passenger circulation. All of the 11 current stairways will be reconstructed, with several of them repositioned, making room for four new stairways. The width of each rebuilt stairway will be reduced, with a much more slender profile and reduced footprint, enabled by a light-weight, partially see-through steel design that has been utilized in other station rehabilitations around the city. The reduction of width varies for each rebuilt stairway, typically ranging from two to three feet, and will be matched by the new stairways in design and layout. The reduction of width is more than offset by the gain in new stairways. Overall, passengers will have much more clearance around and under the stairway landings, while experiencing substantially improved visibility, facilitating better movement along the platforms.

Yet more capacity will be gained by the creation of additional mezzanine level space to the north by reclaiming other surplus basement space from the Grand Hyatt. Doing so allows for the substantial enlargement of Mezzanine “A” and the fare control area there, and creating room for two more new stairways, one down to the northernmost end of each platform.

To better illustrate the complete stairway program, see Figure 1. This drawing is a reproduction of the NYCT station plan for the Grand Central station’s Lexington Avenue Line mezzanine, with annotations by this author to identify the specific improvements which have been described in this series of articles. The drawing represents conditions as they were in Spring, 2017, before the opening of the new stairway from Mezzanine “B” to Grand Central Terminal’s 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Passage and the reopening of the passageway under Lexington Avenue, though they are reflected as pending here. Prior to Spring, 2017, there were 11 mezzanine-to-platform stairways, five to the southbound platform and six to the northbound platform, designated as follows:

Southbound platform - P12, P14, P16, P20, P22

Northbound platform - P13, P15, P17, P19, P21, P23

As this *Bulletin* went to press, the situation is as follows:

Southbound platform:

1. P10 - New stairway opened on May 16, 2017
2. P12 - Reconstruction complete - closed in November, 2017, reopened in April 2018
3. P14 - Reconstruction pending
4. P16 - New stairway opened in Spring, 2017
5. P18 - Reconstruction pending (this was the previously designated P16)
6. P20 - New stairway to be built within space reclaimed from the Grand Hyatt Hotel
7. P22 - New stairway to be built approximately in the vacated footprint of previous P20
8. P24 - Reconstruction complete - closed in early January 2018 for repositioning within footprint of previous P22; reopened on April 17, 2018

9. P26 - New stairway to be built within the space reclaimed from the Grand Hyatt Hotel for the expanded Mezzanine “A,” down to the north end of the platform

Northbound platform:

1. P13 - Reconstruction complete - closed on November 28, 2017, reopened on May 10, 2018
2. P15 - Reconstruction ongoing, closed on June 1, 2018
3. P17 - Reconstruction pending
4. P19 - Reconstruction pending
5. P21 - New stairway opened in early April, 2018
6. P23 - New stairway to be built within space reclaimed from the Grand Hyatt Hotel
7. P25 - Reconstruction pending; will be repositioned slightly to the south
8. P27 - New stairway to be built within the space reclaimed from the Grand Hyatt Hotel for the expanded Mezzanine “A,” down to the north end of the platform

Upon the completion of all this work, there will be a net gain of four stairways for the southbound platform and a net gain of two stairways for the northbound platform, for a total of 17 stairways between the mezzanine and platforms. This represents a significant increase in vertical capacity. Taken together with all the other improvements, as well as a new station-wide architectural treatment including new wall and floor finishes, improved lighting, and improved wayfinding, it is clear that a dramatic transformation of the Grand Central subway station will soon be upon us.

After Grand Central, what does the future portend? Working together in the closing days of the Bloomberg Administration, the NYCDOP and the MTA had developed an all-encompassing framework of improvements for Midtown subway stations located within the footprint of the rezoned area. In addition to Grand Central, the other stations that fall within this area are Fifth Avenue-53<sup>rd</sup> Street on the Queens Boulevard Line (E M) and the 51<sup>st</sup> Street (6)/Lexington Avenue-53<sup>rd</sup> Street (E M) station complex. A secondary group of stations just outside the rezoned area are affected as well: Fifth Avenue-42<sup>nd</sup> Street on the Flushing Line (7); 47<sup>th</sup>-50<sup>th</sup> Streets-Rockefeller Center on the Sixth Avenue Line (B D F M), and the Lexington Avenue (N R W)/59<sup>th</sup> Street (4 5 6) station complex. These stations have all been surveyed and preliminary identifications have been made for capacity enhancements, including additional entrances and new and improved stairways.

On February 21, 2018 JP Morgan Chase announced that it is seeking the replacement of its current world headquarters at 270 Park Avenue between E. 47<sup>th</sup> and E. 48<sup>th</sup> Streets with a new 1,200-foot-tall tower utilizing air rights purchased from Midtown Trackage Ventures (Grand Central Terminal’s legal owners; MTA holds a long-term lease on the terminal that expires in 2274) and St. Bartholomew’s Church. *The New York Times* then reported on March 2 that this move would “open

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## Major Changes Coming to the Grand Central Subway Station Complex

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the floodgates” on further East Midtown redevelopment, potentially involving the Grand Hyatt Hotel itself; the Roosevelt Hotel between Vanderbilt and Madison Avenues and E. 45<sup>th</sup> and E. 46<sup>th</sup> Streets; the Pfizer World Headquarters on E. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street between Second and Third Avenues; and the former MTA Headquarters at 347 Madison Avenue between E. 44<sup>th</sup> and E. 45<sup>th</sup> Streets. Some of this redevelopment would presumably utilize additional air rights from Grand Central Terminal.

Since Grand Central is the subway station that is closest to the aforementioned locations, it is safe to say that

additional improvements could be in store. While we can only speculate what these might be, in the past NYCT has studied schemes for widening the transfer passageway leading from underneath the Lexington Avenue Line platforms to the Flushing Line, and for building direct passenger connections to that same passageway from both MNR’s lower level platforms and the East Side Access concourse via Grand Central Terminal’s disused lower level loop track. These changes, if they happen at all, are far off in the future. For now, it is critically imperative that the current program is completed over the next two years so passengers can begin to enjoy some relief at the Grand Central subway station complex. We will continue to closely monitor the program and will provide progress reports in future issues of the *Bulletin*.



Mezzanine level, looking southwest. The construction barrier encloses the Grand Hyatt Hotel basement space. Stairway P23 to the northbound platform was previously located directly behind the construction barrier in the foreground, May 11, 2018.



Behind the construction barrier on May 21, 2018, looking northeast at the space formerly occupied by P23. The stair was demolished and the void has been filled in. A new, repositioned P23 will be constructed to the right.



Former Grand Hyatt Hotel basement space, looking northwest, June 8, 2018. By late next year, this will be part of the new continuous mezzanine.



Northbound platform level looking north at stairway P15. Note the stairway bulk and tight clearance between the stair and the platform edge. This is typical of all of the original stairways on both platforms. Photo taken on the day of closure, May 31, 2018.

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### Major Changes Coming to the Grand Central Subway Station Complex

(Continued from page 6)



The ancillary support space underneath the P15 stairway structure will be relocated off the platform to free up space. May 31, 2018.



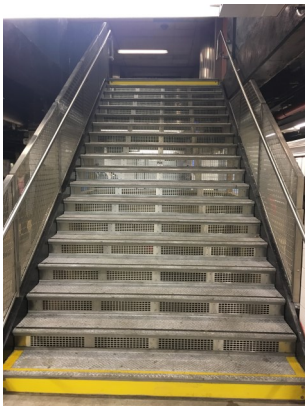
The bulk of P15 is clearly apparent in this photo, looking south, which impedes circulation and creates a visual barrier. May 31, 2018.



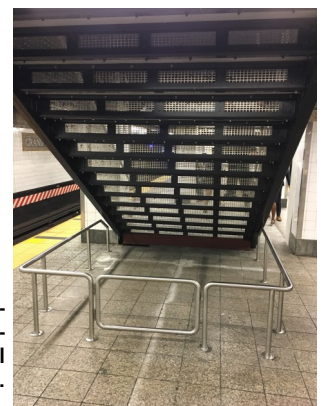
Stairway P24 (formerly P22) from the mezzanine to the southbound platform on the day of reopening, April 17, 2018. The enclosure on the mezzanine level is temporary and will be completed in the future in conjunction with the new station finish.



Looking down P24 on April 17, 2018. Note the narrower width of the new stair structure relative to the original opening.



Stairway P24 at the southbound platform level, looking south, April 17, 2018. Note the see-through steel structure.



The rear of P24, looking north, clearly illustrating the freed space underneath the stair and the overall smaller footprint, on June 21, 2018.

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**Major Changes Coming to the Grand Central Subway Station Complex**

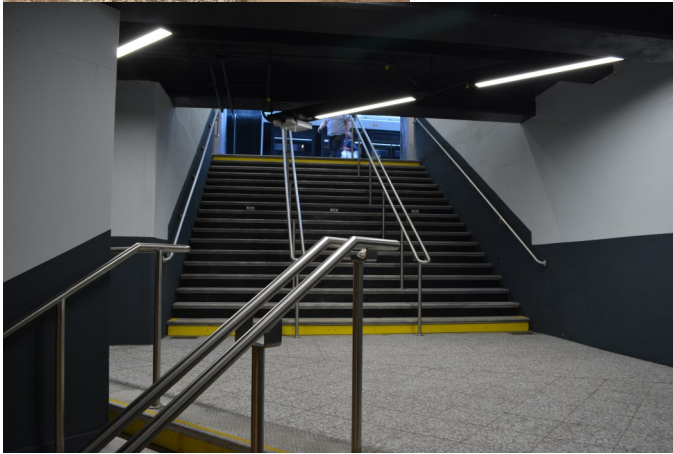
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Note the increased clearance on the platform between P24 and the columns, which will facilitate better passenger circulation and enhance safety. June 21, 2018.



Reconstructed and widened street stairway from the north mezzanine to Lexington Avenue, one day after reopening on June 15, 2018.



The reconstructed street stair is more direct and wider by a third over the previous stairway. Finishes to come later. June 15, 2018.



The street level opening of the reconstructed street stair within the Grand Hyatt Hotel building envelope on the west side of Lexington Avenue just north of E. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street on June 15, 2018. A new ADA elevator is being built to the right.



The mezzanine level landing of the new ADA elevator will be located directly behind this construction barrier, to the left of the rebuilt street stair. June 15, 2018.

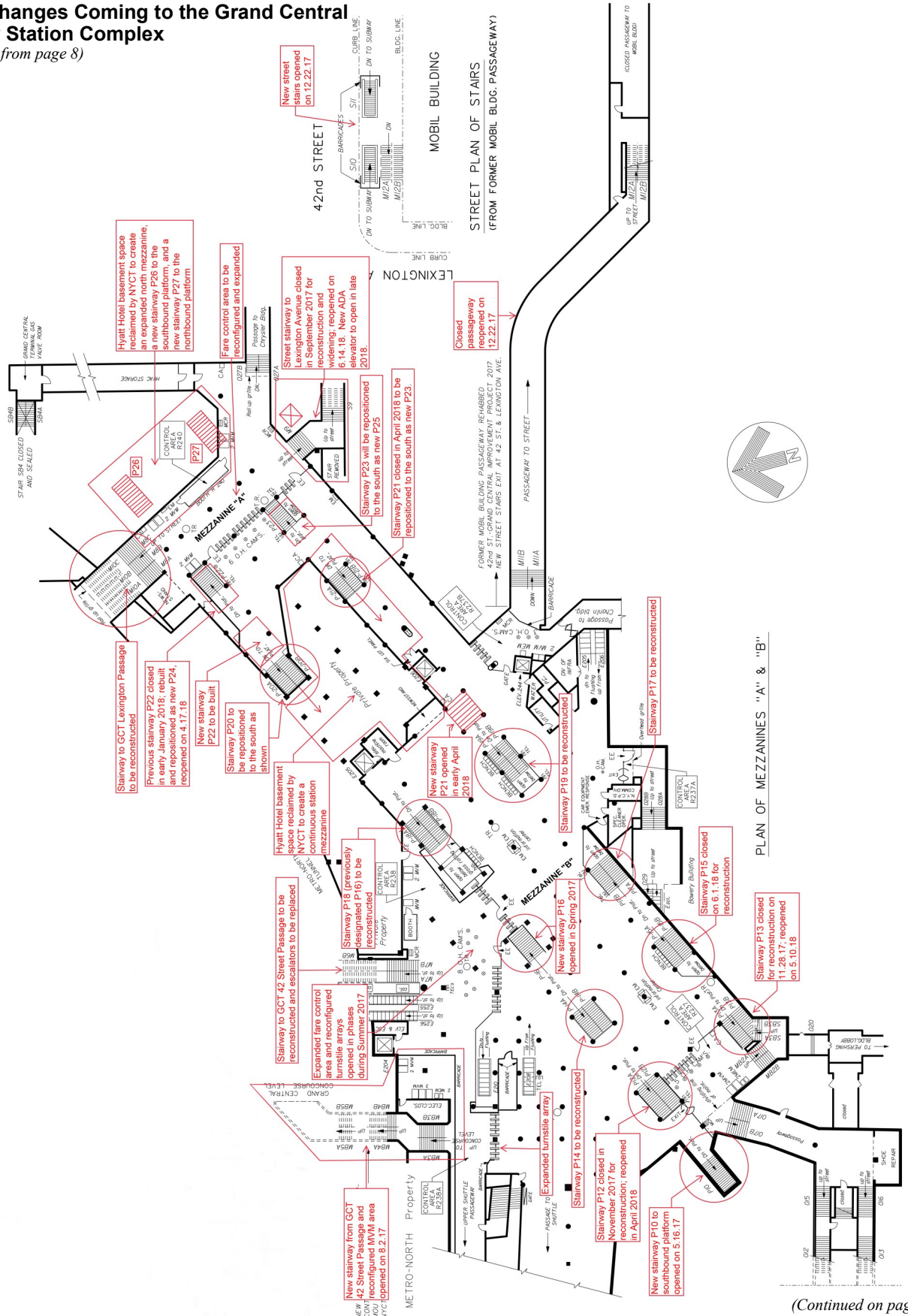


A June 15, 2018 view of the northern basement space reclaimed from the Grand Hyatt Hotel. The wall to the left will be demolished to enlarge the north fare control area.

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**Major Changes Coming to the Grand Central Subway Station Complex**  
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Plan view of the Grand Central subway station mezzanine level. Annotations are by the author based on personal observations conducted over the past year and a half.

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## Major Changes Coming to the Grand Central Subway Station Complex

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Architectural rendering of the new continuous mezzanine looking north. The elevator visible in the middle is the current one down to the northbound platform, and its location is unchanged from the present, which is at the southeast corner of the Grand Hyatt Hotel basement space. The narrow connection currently linking Mezzanines A and B is to the right of the elevator. With the removal of the basement enclosure, the openness of the future continuous mezzanine is clearly apparent. Note that the final floor and wall finishes are subject to change.

Kohn Pedersen Fox rendering

*(Continued on page 16)*

# Commuter and Transit Notes

No. 354

by Ronald Yee and Alexander Ivanoff

## MTA LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD

Waze, a traffic and navigation app, has teamed up with the MTA and Long Island Rail Road to automatically warn motorists about the presence of an upcoming roadway going across railroad tracks. This comes after a spate of driver misinterpretations using app-based navigation tools while driving motor vehicles and accidentally driving or turning onto the train tracks. The pilot program includes ten grade crossings on the LIRR: Commack Road and Executive Drive (both in Deer Park), Main Street (Farmingdale), Ponquogue Road (Hampton Bays), West Broadway (Hewlett), Holbrook Road (actually Main Street, Holbrook), Willis Avenue (Mineola, on the Oyster Bay Branch only), Snedcor Avenue (Sayville), and 18<sup>th</sup> Street (Wyandanch). Eventually, all 296 LIRR grade crossings will be included in the app to warn away motorists. In May, LIRR President Philip Eng announced that the railroad would accelerate its plans to install flexible four-foot-high reflectorized delineators and improved roadway pavement markings to warn motorists who may be misled by GPS-driven navigational aids of the presence of railroad tracks and to avoid driving onto them. *(Editor's Note by Ronald Yee: MTA Metro-North Railroad has also had several similar incidents with wayward motor vehicles where the tracks and a parallel roadway are very close together (Green Lane near Bedford Hills where the Harlem Line parallels the Saw Mill River Parkway just 25 feet away) and it should be remembered that the deadly train and truck collision on February 24, 2015 on Los Angeles MetroLink's commuter rail line at Oxnard was the result of the truck's driver allegedly being misdirected by his GPS onto the tracks instead of a nearby parallel roadway. (MTA press release, June 12)*

## MTA METRO-NORTH RAILROAD

On June 18, as reported by a local newspaper, CTrail ticket vending machines began selling and issuing CTrail tickets between Springfield, Massachusetts, Hartford, Connecticut, and New Haven, Connecticut with an option for continuing onward aboard Metro-North Railroad trains to Grand Central Terminal. *(Editor's Note by Ronald Yee: However, while it can be assumed to be the case, no mention was made regarding whether the Metro-North ticket vending machines at Grand Central Terminal and along the New Haven Line have been programmed to sell tickets for stations east of New Haven on CTrail train services.) (Meriden Record Journal, March 23)*

## CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

On Friday, June 15, Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy, CDOT Commissioner James Redeker, and other state officials conducted an opening ceremony for the new CTrail commuter rail line operating between New Haven and Hartford with select trains continuing north to Springfield, Massachusetts. The line commenced service to the public on Saturday, June 16. No fares were charged on CTrail trains as well as Amtrak trains (except the *Vermont*) during that introductory week-

end. With the startup of CTrail service, weekday service over the 17 miles between New Haven and Hartford increased from 6 round trips to 17 (nine operated by Amtrak and eight by CTrail) with 12 continuing 26 miles onward to/from Springfield. Beginning Monday, June 18, CTrail tickets are valid on all CTrail and Amtrak trains operating over the route with exception of the *Vermont* (Trains #55 and #56). Detailed schedules and fare information are available at the CTrail website: [www.hartfordline.com](http://www.hartfordline.com). The Springfield Line has undergone a transformation over the past two years in preparation for the start-up of this service. The line has been double-tracked, with new station platforms, facilities, and buildings at Berlin, Meriden, and Wallingford and rebuilt facilities at Hartford and Springfield. Amtrak test trains have operated at up to 110 mph from Wood Interlocking (MP 33.4) to Berlin (MP 25.9), 100 mph from Berlin (MP 25.9) to north of Meriden (MP 19.5), and 90 mph south of Wallingford (Tolles Road, MP 10.6) to Cedar Interlocking (MP 7.0). However, only Amtrak trains will be able to take advantage of these stretches of higher speeds while CTrail trains will be limited to 80 mph because they are operated with 16 leased former MBTA push-pull coaches built by MBB, delivered to MBTA in 1987 and powered by rebuilt GP-40-2 locomotives. CDOT found that the MBB coaches could be leased at a far more reasonable rate (\$4.45 million, three-year lease) than for single-level coaches and cab cars from MARC, which are in high demand this year (ten to NJ Transit and eight to Amtrak). Two days before the inauguration of passenger service, a complaint by representatives of the handicapped regarding the inaccessibility of on-board toilets and, therefore, non-compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), resulted in the locking of the toilets in most of the MBB coaches until ADA-compliant toilets could be retrofitted. ADA portable toilets were placed at the six stations of the Hartford Line that do not have ADA toilet facilities and signage was posted there notifying customers of the lack of toilet facilities aboard CTrail trains until the entire fleet can be retrofitted to comply, by early 2019. (Connecticut Department of Transportation, June 15; Al Holtz, June 14; *Hartford Courant*, April 6)

## NJ TRANSIT

The NJ Transit Board of Directors approved a financing agreement with the NJ Economic Development Authority (EDA) for up to \$600 million toward the construction of a new Portal North Bridge, replacing the current Portal Bridge dating back to 1910 that has been the source of countless delays due to mechanical issues stemming from its advanced age. The EDA will issue bonds which will be repaid over a 30-year timeframe from the New Jersey state transportation trust fund. This solidifies NJT's share of the cost of replacing the

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**Commuter and Transit Notes***(Continued from page 11)*

bridge, which is expected to cost more than \$1.5 billion and be jointly financed by NJT, Amtrak, and the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey. The new 2.33-mile-long bridge, already designed and fully permitted, will be a two-track structure with a vertical clearance of 53 feet, high enough to clear current and projected maritime vessels sailing on Hackensack River, eliminating the need for a structure with moving and mechanical parts, permitting higher train speeds and potentially allowing a 10% increase in the number of trains during the peak periods. (NJ Transit press release, June 13)

**AMTRAK**

Amtrak debuted assigned seating for its *Acela* First Class customers on select departures. Customers wishing to reserve their seat assignment in advance can select window or aisle seats or two- or four-person conference table seating using [Amtrak.com](http://Amtrak.com), Amtrak's mobile app, or an Amtrak ticket agent. There is no charge for this service and Amtrak will evaluate customer reaction to this pilot program before deciding whether to expand the program to other departures. Amtrak is hoping that pre-reserved seating will speed and simplify the boarding process and allow passengers to board with the assurance that they will get the seat they want and be able to sit with friends, family and colleagues. *(Editor's Note by Ronald Yee: If this program is expanded system-wide, it will eliminate the mad dash for empty seats when passengers board a train. A few details will need to be worked out. Detailed seating diagrams will need to be provided during the seat selection process of making reservations, similar to airline seat reservations. No one wants to be stuck in a window seat that is actually by a windowless bulkhead, nor do most passengers want to be seated adjacent to the toilet. Aboard the trains, pre-assigned seating needs to be implemented across the board on a route or there will be a lot of confusion. During the recent ERA trip to Germany, it was observed that ICE trains have an on-board system where every seat that was pre-assigned to passengers had a designation above each seat indicating between what two stations that seat was already reserved. For Amtrak, that would become another step in the crew's preparation of a train for passenger service and another line item for maintenance to address daily to keep such a system operative.)* (Amtrak press release, May 30)

Amtrak issued a request for proposals (RFP) aimed at locomotive manufacturers and rebuilders to either replace or rebuild up to 75 passenger locomotives. The current fleet of 200-plus General Electric P-40-DC and P-42-DC Genesis class locomotives are up to 25 years in age and are nearing the end of their expected service lives. Depending on the responses received, Amtrak will decide on whether to rebuild its P-42-DCs and convert them to AC traction or purchase 50-75 new long-distance locomotives. In either case, the goal is to meet the more stringent safety and environmental requirements and regulations governing diesel locomotives as well as increased reliability. (Amtrak, June 1)

Amtrak's *Coast Starlight* has been broken up into two sections: Seattle, Washington to Eugene, Oregon and Sacramento to Los Angeles, California. This was due to the collapse of around 50 feet of tunnel near the town of Oakridge on the Cascades Subdivision of the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) on May 29. Amtrak had been busing passengers between Eugene and Sacramento but has determined after nearly three weeks that this is not feasible to continue until at least June 23, the earliest date that the UPRR has stated that the tunnel can be repaired and service restored. (*Tacoma News Tribune*, June 15)

As part of the *Empire Service* re-route into Grand Central Terminal, Amtrak made some notable changes to the trains operating along the route. One includes the eastbound *Maple Leaf* (#64), whose passengers will require a daily cross-platform transfer at Albany/Rensselaer. Business class service on the *Maple Leaf* and a few Albany-only frequencies have also been cut. In addition, Canadian National (CN) has required Amtrak to lengthen the *Adirondack's* schedule for the summer due to track-related heat restrictions.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

The Manitou Springs City Council approved two tax abatements and other incentives to the Broadmoor-Sea Island Company, the owner of the Pike's Peak Cog Railway, which will clear the way for it to invest the necessary funds to repair the cars, locomotives, and infrastructure of the line, with a goal of restoring passenger service in 2020. One of the tax abatements will be a \$500,000 cap on the amount of excise tax that the railroad would pay the city annually. This cap would remain in place for 50 years with clauses that freeze it at that level for four years, after which an annual increase of 1.5% per year would be allowed. The other tax break comes in the form of the city not taxing the railroad's purchases of equipment and materials needed for the reconstruction efforts. An engineering assessment during the spring had revealed most of the line's infrastructure, facilities, locomotives, and rolling stock had reached the end of their service lives, and would require \$80-95 million in repairs and/or replacement. It projected a three-year shutdown while repairs were made to make the line safe to ride. A national museum with a focus on the Pike's Peak Railway will also be built and dedicated to honor and educate visitors about other cog and incline railways around the world and feature equipment and memorabilia donated by the railroad. The 8.9-mile-long Pike's Peak Railway line, the highest line in North America, has been in operation for 127 years, draws an average of over 300,000 riders annually, and is one of the major attractions in the area. Had the city and the railroad's owners not come to this agreement, the permanent closure of the rail line would have adversely affected the town of Manitou Springs, quite possibly bankrupting it. (AI Holtz, June 13)

**OTHER TRANSIT SYSTEMS****PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA**

PATCO operated its last four unrebuilt cars with the

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**Commuter and Transit Notes***(Continued from page 12)*

famous railfan window and forward-facing seats on Sunday, June 10. The consist was W-272-271-258-257-E. These are four of the cars built by Canadian Vickers in the late 1970s to supplement the original Budd-built cars. At press time, 24 of the 25 Budd-built single cars have been rebuilt into 12 married pairs. All Budd-built married pairs have been rebuilt and only these four Canadian Vickers-built cars remain to be shipped out to Alstom in Hornell, New York for rebuilding. Sadly, the railfan window on PATCO rode off into the history books on June 10. Member Bob Vogel rode and photographed the “Farewell Trips” publicized by PATCO and provided the details of this final consist. From the schedule PATCO posted, it appears that only three four-car sets of equipment are required to provide 30-minute Sunday service on the Lindenwold Line. (Bob Vogel, June 10)

**PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA**

During the fall of 2018, the Port Authority of Allegheny County (PAT) will begin a two-year program that will see the rebuilding of 55 light rail vehicles (LRVs) built by Siemens in the early 1980s. This overhaul program is expected to extend the service life of these LRVs by six years. The 28 LRVs purchased from CAF in the early 2000s are also due for a mid-life rehabilitation and PAT will evaluate whether the work should be performed in-house or contracted out. (*Progressive Railroading*, June 4)

**CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA**

The North Carolina Department of Transportation introduced a third *Piedmont* service round-trip between Charlotte and Raleigh on June 4. Together with the existing *Piedmont* services and Amtrak’s Carolinian, there are now four round-trips between the two cities. Trains depart Charlotte at 6:45 AM, 10:30 AM, 3:15 PM, and 7:00 PM and depart Raleigh at 6:30 AM, 10:00 AM, 3:10 PM, and 5:16 PM. Travel times between the two cities are around three hours ten minutes. As this issue goes to press, train service to the new Raleigh Union Station has been pushed back to at least the end of June due to delays in a storm water improvement project and some minor work still needed for the station platforms. (*Trains Magazine*, June 4)

**MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA**

The Hennepin County Board of Commissioners voted May 31 to increase the county’s funding commitment to the Southwest Light Rail project.

The vote passed 5-2 at a special meeting, where Commissioners first voted as the County Board, then as the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority Board.

The 14.5-mile METRO Green Line Extension connecting downtown Minneapolis to St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie is now likely to cost an extra \$145 million due to higher material prices, a tight labor market, and delays. It brings the Southwest Light Rail project’s total estimated construction tab to \$2 billion.

The county will now fund \$190 million and the railroad authority \$14 million.

Later this summer, the Board is expected to vote to extend funding into 2019. (*Railway Age*, June 5)

**VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA**

A group of high-speed rail enthusiasts in Washington State has opened a chapter north of the border, hoping Canadians and Americans working together to lobby governments can make their dream a reality.

Cascadia Rail would like to see high-speed trains connecting Vancouver all the way to Portland. The northern leg of such a line could transport people between Vancouver and Seattle in just 50 minutes.

A recent study in Washington pegged the cost of the mega-project at close to US \$42 billion and anticipated more than two million annual riders by 2035 and up to three million by 2055. (CTV News, June 9)

**SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL**

São Paulo suburban operator CPTM began operating revenue service on Line 13 to Guarulhos Airport on June 4. Trial operations had started on March 31.

The 12.2-kilometer route runs between the airport and Engenheiro Goulart, where interchange is provided with Line 12, serving one intermediate station. The mostly elevated 1,600-millimeter gauge line includes 4.3 kilometers at grade and is electrified at 3,000 volts d.c.

Service is currently operated by Class 9500 electric multiple units supplied by Hyundai Rotem, but these are to be replaced next year with a fleet of eight, eight-car EMUs from ordered from CRRC Qingdao Sifang in September. Based on Type A metro train design, the 90-kilometer-per-hour sets will consist of four motor and four trailer cars, with capacity for 2,600 passengers.

Plans envisage extensions of Line 13 at both ends. A southwestern extension from Engenheiro Goulart to Chacara Klabin would provide interchange with metro lines 2 and 5, and an extension west from Guarulhos Airport would reach Jardim São João and Bonsucesso. (*Metro Report International*, June 6)

**LONDON, ENGLAND**

Trams in London will become cashless from next month, Transport for London announced on June 4. Ticket machines are to be removed from all tram stops on July 16, leaving contactless payment, Oyster cards, Travelcards, or bus and tram passes as the only ways to pay for tram travel.

Transport for London (TfL) ran a public consultation on the proposals in September and October. The ticket machines were installed when the tram network opened in 2000, and have now reached the end of their useful life. However, their usage is so low — they sell a total of 66 single tickets a day — that their maintenance costs are no longer covered by ticket sales. Furthermore, they are not equipped to top up Oyster cards.

The move to cashless payment will include the installation of more Oyster and contactless validators at some stops, along with a “wider awareness campaign” that will include staff at some stops to advise passengers on how to pay for their journey.

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## Commuter and Transit Notes

(Continued from page 13)

TfL says that passengers would be able to buy paper tickets from rail ticket machines at the East Croydon station and from the nearby London Tram shop.

Cash has not been accepted as a payment for travel on TfL buses since July, 2014. (*Metro Report International*, June 4)

On June 20 TfL showed off the first of its next-generation London Overground EMUs, which are being supplied by Bombardier Transportation. Known as the Class 710, the base order contract was originally awarded in 2015 for 45 four-car sets, with options for an additional 96 sets. TfL exercised an option in December, 2017 for six five-car sets and three four-car sets. From the original base order, 31 trains are equipped for 25,000-volt 50 Hz overhead operation and 14 trains are dual-voltage units which will also draw from 750-volt d.c third rail. The option units will all be dual-voltage. The design of the new trains is based on Bombardier's Aventura platform, which is also being used for the new Elizabeth Line (Crossrail). The initial batch of those trains, known as Class 345, has been in service for over six months now. The new Overground trains will initially be introduced on the Gospel Oak-Barking Line, which was recently electrified with 25,000-volt 50 Hz catenary. Testing of the trains will commence shortly, with introduction into passenger service scheduled for November. The Overground is an amalgamation of former British Rail commuter lines, including the North London Line, and the former Underground East London Line, and has been transformed and branded over the last decade into a modern and highly successful surface metro operation. (*Metro Report International*, June 20)

In other TfL news, it announced on June 15 that Siemens has been selected as the winner of a £1.5 billion contract to build 94 six-car sets to completely reequip the Underground's Piccadilly Line. The current fleet of 86 trains dating from 1975 reportedly comprises some of the oldest passenger railcars currently operating in the United Kingdom and while they have served well, they are past their useful life and entirely inadequate to meet the needs of the ever-increasing demand that is placed on the Piccadilly Line on a daily basis. The larger fleet will allow for a peak hour service increase from 24 to 27 trains per hour, assuming that a complete resignalling of the line is in place by 2026. A purchase of an additional seven trains will allow a rise to 33 trains per hour, and a further eight trains, attaining the maximum fleet size of 109 trains, will enable to Piccadilly Line to provide a service of 36 trains an hour.

The contract could be a major windfall for Siemens, since it is TfL's desire to designate a single builder of trains for the Deep Tube Upgrade Program, which covers new rolling stock and resignalling of four Underground lines: Piccadilly, Bakerloo, Central, and the Waterloo & City Lines. Siemens' success on this order will guarantee it a healthy backlog for years to come. (*Metro Report International*, June 15)

## FRANCE

Ile-de-France Mobilites, the parent authority responsible for overseeing all transportation planning and finance in the Paris region, revealed the design of the next generation of RER rolling stock on June 7. SNCF Mobilites, the passenger service delivery arm of the French national railway, acting on behalf of the Paris regional authority, originally awarded a €3.75 billion contract in January, 2017 to a partnership of Alstom and Bombardier for 125 seven-car sets for RER Line D and 130 six-car units for RER Line E. Both lines are the responsibility of the SNCF. The sets are referred to as RER Nouvelle Generation, and are the product of a hybrid merging of Alstom's Xtrapolis and Bombardier's Regio 2N platforms, and for those who are familiar with the look of these two distinct designs, the renderings released by the involved parties on June 7 certainly reflect it. The trains are also notable for being a blend of single and bi-level cars, with sets of varying lengths, full interconnected gangways, and a variety of interior passenger compartment configurations. The single-level cars will feature extra-wide doors and generous aisles for peak hour, short-distance loading and wheelchair access, while the bi-level cars are arranged for a mix of service needs, with the lower level set up for urban and inner suburban commuters, and the upper level containing more seating for longer-distance travel from the outer suburbs. It will be very interesting to see these units in action when they arrive in 2021. One advantage of the design is that the single-level car will contain the pantographs and the bulk of the electric traction package, which will increase the amount of available interior space in the bi-level cars. These EMUs are just the latest in a series of orders that will transform the Paris RER over the next several years, resulting in a cascade of cars among the five RER lines and the SNCF Transilien suburban services, and the retirement of the first generation of bi-level EMUs, the oldest of which arrived in the French capital over 35 years ago. (*Railway Gazette International*, June 11)

Staying in France, a long-sought comprehensive reform of the French national railway, Societe de Nationale des Chemins de Fer Francais (SNCF), has finally been enacted by the French Legislature. The reform will transform the status of SNCF from a fully state-owned enterprise to a holding company, with the state retaining full ownership. It paves the way for SNCF to relinquish its monopoly on passenger service within France and fulfill the European Union's mandated requirements of open access to other rail operators. It also lays out a plan to deal with SNCF's enormous debt, estimated to be nearly €50 billion. The origins of the debt predate SNCF's creation in 1938, inherited from the "Big Six" private railroads dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, but has appreciably grown in the last few decades as France has invested heavily in high-speed rail and multiple big-ticket projects. The French government will now assume full responsibility for the debt, which will free up SNCF to embark on overdue capital investment to tack-

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## Commuter and Transit Notes

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le a massive state-of-good-repair backlog on the legacy network.

More importantly, the most controversial element of the reform is the change in status for SNCF employees. Known as “cheminot,” which translates as “railwayman,” the term and associated status is a holdover from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, guaranteeing lifetime employment, a variety of generous benefits, and early retirement, which made sense in a time when labor conditions were much harder and riskier, but not practical for a modern railway. The status did not differentiate between those who work in operations or in the field performing infrastructure maintenance and those who work in comfortable office environments. There is little to no flexibility in staff assignments and responsibilities, leading to much over-staffing and redundancy, and much of the staff is eligible to retire with full benefits as early as age 50. As such, the unions have resisted any change to the status of cheminot.

While French rail service is generally still considered among the best in the world, there is a growing increase in state of good repair issues, and the inefficiencies have burdened it with some of the highest operating costs in Europe. Taken together with the debt, it has resulted in a reduction or withdrawal of services from many parts of the country and hindered the ability to expand services where needed. Individual regions have assumed responsibility for local services in some cases, but it is inconsistent at best and wholly inadequate at worst.

The reforms have bedeviled successive French governments going back to the mid-1990s. Historically, just the mere mention of reform would trigger massive strikes and service disruptions that did not sit well with the French public, and the government would always succumb, extracting little to no concessions from the unions. This time around, though, things were different. President Emmanuel Macron vowed to deal with SNCF during his election campaign last year, and when the reform legislation was introduced the unions reacted predictably, engaging in a series of rolling strikes since March. However, since Macron’s party commands an overwhelming majority in the French Legislature, it was

easier to overcome resistance from the unions and convince a public hungry for something different than the status quo. The government has promised that the ownership of the infrastructure will remain with the state, and that competition will ultimately be good for the French public. The workforce reforms will go into effect in 2020 and will only affect staff hired after that date; current staff are guaranteed to retain their existing benefits. (*Railway Gazette International*, June 14)

### LUXEMBOURG

Project promoter Luxtram has selected CAF to supply 12 trams for the next phase of the Luxembourg City tram line. The contract for Urbos 3 trams is worth €40 million.

CAF supplied the initial fleet of 21 trams under a contract signed in 2015. These have been in revenue service since December 10, when the initial section of the tram route opened, linking Luxexpo and Pafendall-Rout Breck. The full route is expected to open in 2021 and would link Luxembourg Airport with Cloche d’Or.

A section of the route between Cloche d’Or and Gare Centrale will be designed for catenary-free operation. The trams are fitted with supercapacitors that will be charged from ground-level rapid charging equipment at stops; this will be supplied by CAF Power & Automation. (*Metro Report International*, June 6)

### FREIBURG, GERMANY

Freiburg public transport operator VAG (Freiburger Verkehrs AG) signed a contract with CAF on June 6 for the supply of five Urbos 100 trams to operate on the city’s meter-gauge network.

Deliveries are due to be completed by mid-2020. The trams are intended to replace the remaining five high-floor DuWag (Dusseldorfer Waggonfabrik) GT8K vehicles. Once those have been withdrawn from service, VAG will have a fleet of fully low-floor trams, apart from 11 partly low-floor vehicles.

The contract includes options for seven more trams, which can be exercised until the end of 2020. The value of the contract was not disclosed, but VAG confirmed that the Land of Baden-Wuerttemberg is contributing €5 million.

VAG had previously signed a contract with CAF in March, 2013 for 12 seven-section trams. (*Metro Report International*, June 7)

## Around New York’s Transit System

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allowing daylight to enter and brighten the entire area and a reconfigured fare control area with new high-tech LED information displays showing the status of the train service in real-time as well as maps of the entire subway system as well as of the local area. Being programmable, they are also capable of advertising displays, a valuable source of additional revenue for the MTA. Next to undergo this degree of rebuilding will be the Broadway and 39<sup>th</sup> (Beebe) Avenue stations starting

July 2 for up to seven months. (*Editor’s Note by Ronald Yee: While lauded by transit advocates, none of these rehabilitated stations will have any degree of handicapped accessibility because of space and engineering limitations with the elevated structures dating back to 1917 which preclude the installation of elevators. NYCT president Andy Byford’s “Fast Forward” plan does include the addition of 180 elevators system-wide with a goal of providing all subway customers with an accessible station not more than two station stops away. That promise would require further modifications to at least one of these four stations that are being rebuilt.*)

## SUBDIVISION “A” CAR ASSIGNMENTS

CARS REQUIRED JUNE 24, 2018

LINE	AM RUSH	PM RUSH	LINE	AM RUSH	PM RUSH
1	10 R-62, 300 R-62A	10 R-62, 300 R-62A	5	350 R-142	360 R-142
2	360 R-142	350 R-142	6	360 R-62A	360 R-62A
3	260 R-62	260 R-62	7	396 R-188	374 R-188
4	180 R-142, 170 R-142A	170 R-142, 160 R-142A	S (42 <sup>nd</sup> Street)	10 R-62A	10 R-62A

## SUBDIVISION “B” CAR ASSIGNMENTS

CARS REQUIRED JUNE 24, 2018

LINE	AM RUSH	PM RUSH	LINE	AM RUSH	PM RUSH
A	60 R-32, 256 R-46	60 R-32, 264 R-46, 8 R-68A	L	184 R-143, 8 R-160	184 R-143, 8 R-160
B	48 R-68, 152 R-68A	40 R-68, 144 R-68A	M	184 R-160	176 R-160
C*	16 R-32, 40 R-46, 88 R-160	16 R-32, 32 R-46, 88 R-160	N/W	24 R-68, 8 R-68A, 290 R-160	24 R-68, 8 R-68A, 290 R-160
D	232 R-68	216 R-68	Q	210 R-160	8 R-68, 210 R-160
E	260 R-160	260 R-160	R	240 R-46	240 R-46
F	64 R-46, 360 R-160	64 R-46, 360 R-160	S (Rockaway)	12 R-46	12 R-46
G	52 R-68	52 R-68	S (Franklin)	4 R-68	4 R-68
J/Z	40 R-32, 32 R-42, 32 R-160, 56 R-179	40 R-32, 24 R-42, 32 R-160, 56 R-179			

\*R-46 trains are 600 feet long; R-32 and R-160 trains are 480 feet long

### Major Changes Coming to the Grand Central Subway Station Complex

*(Continued from page 10)*



Another view of the northern basement space, looking north, on June 15, 2018. Two new stairways will be built from here to the north end of each platform.



View of the north end of the southbound platform on June 21, 2018. By next year there will be a new stairway here up to the enlarged north mezzanine.

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## SWITZERLAND IN THE LATE SUMMER

by Jack May

(Photographs by the author)

(Continued from June, 2018 issue)

In the last issue we left off with me preparing to board the 13:24 train to Solothurn on a sunny Monday afternoon.

It was an Inter-City tilting train from Geneva Airport to St. Gallen via Zurich, and got me to my destination very quickly, at 13:59. Two interurbans serve Solothurn, the Regionalverkehr Bern-Solothurn (RBS) to Bern and the Aare Seeland Mobil (ASm) to Oensingen and Langenthal. The RBS runs from Tracks 9 and 10 inside the station, but more interestingly, the ASm operates from Track 21, which is actually on the street adjacent to the building's main entrance. It then runs in the midst of motor traffic on Roetistrasse, and after crossing the Aare River, strikes out on its own right-of-way. I was able to photograph the arrival of the 14:12 train and its departure at 14:16 alongside the station building.

The ASm interurban, formerly the Solothurn-Niederbipp-Bahn, operates a 30-minute frequency, so rather than waiting for the next train, I chose to ride the SBB to Oensingen in order to have more time for photos on my way back to Solothurn. The predominantly side-of-the-road interurban has a running time of 25 minutes between these two points compared to the SBB's 12 for the 14:33 non-stop, which I rode. I had been to Oensingen twice before, the most recent being in 1985 when I led an ERA group on a traction tour of Switzerland. For our travel from Bern to Basel on this occasion I gave the group the choice of going directly by SBB or traveling aboard a series of interurban lines, including the two I would ride at the end of this day. Quite a few decided to accompany me, despite the fact that we had to carry our luggage and had to endure a half-hour bus ride from the end of the OeBB (Oensingen-Balsthal Bahn) to Waldenburg (to connect with the Waldenburgerbahn, a part of which I rode earlier in this trip). At that time, 33 years ago, the very short (2.5 miles) standard-gauge OeBB seemed to have been owned by a railfan who collected dining cars, which were easily photographable. It ran every half-hour and had some very unusual equipment on its roster, including an ex-SBB "Red Arrow" railcar from 1938 (which I rode) and an SBB 1928-built Crocodile locomotive. Upon my arrival at its station this time, however, the only equipment in sight was a nondescript typical ex-SBB M.U. car awaiting passengers. According to a website, much of the OeBB's historic rolling stock is now preserved at various Swiss railway museums.

The primary reason for my current visit to Oensingen, however, was because the meter-gauge ASm interurban had been extended to that point from the nearby town of Niederbipp, and I wanted to see how that was accomplished. Actually, what I had not realized until I rode it (and followed up with a Google search once I

returned home), was that the line had been cut back between those two points in 1943. Thus little difficulty was involved in re-extending it in 2012, as the right-of-way was essentially intact, and furthermore the distance between the two points is quite short, a mere 1.1 miles — with a two-minute running time. I read that the reason for re-extending it was to allow the line to make better connections, as Oensingen is a major SBB stop.

My recollection from 1985 was that the interurban tracks from both the Langenthal and Solothurn ends of the meter-gauge line merged together and came into a stub terminal adjacent to the SBB in Niederbipp. The operators of through trains would change ends there and head right back out. It is not so different now, except that one of the SBB mainline tracks is now dual-gauge, and interurbans running in both directions use it to access the platform. From there the cars continue on to Oensingen, where they now change ends. Comparing the current timetable to the old one, a total of 4 to 6 minutes has been added to the schedule to allow for these connections, and each train now stops at Niederbipp twice, just a few minutes apart. I guess it is reasonable to assume that there is little through ridership between the Langenthal and the Solothurn ends, so that adding to the travel time for such trips does not really make much of a difference. (I guess the Pennsylvania Railroad equivalent would have been to bring the Blue Ribbon Fleet into 30<sup>th</sup> Street instead of running directly from North Philadelphia to Paoli, something that Amtrak has since adopted for its *Keystone Service* in order to access a more desirable Philadelphia location. Or perhaps shuttling each New York-Washington train into and out of the old Broad Street station. That makes me wonder if ridership on the Keystone Corridor would increase if the trains changed ends at Suburban Station rather than 30<sup>th</sup> Street.)

The line's rolling stock consists of Stadler GTW cars similar to those I sampled on the Frauenfeld-Wil and Dietikon-Bremgarten lines during the previous week. They are a newer, much more substantial version of those used on the Biel-Ins Line; a migration from one generation to the next, similar to a comparison between Stadler's DMUs for the *River Line* and those for Dallas-Denton and Austin.

The company seems to be changing its color scheme, and I observed these ASm cars in both an overall red livery and a new yellow and black one. I stopped over at Niederbipp from 14:49 to 15:19 to observe the new set-up and take a few photos. I then boarded, planning to find a good stopover point on the way back where I could fall back a headway to take a picture. But the line is not that interesting, as all the stations are along the

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**Switzerland in the Late Summer***(Continued from page 17)*

sides of roads, so I rode straight through, arriving at the in-street terminal in Solothurn at 15:42. I should mention that dual-gauge for freight continues from Niederbipp to Oberbipp, and I would not be surprised if it is worked by diesel locomotives. I spent that extra half-hour finding a good location along the line's street running portion, which turned out to be on the bridge over the Aare, where I got a photo of the same car coming back at about 15:50. I waited for the next inbound as well, but the 16:12 never showed up! After I gave up and walked back to the station, I spoke to the starter who told me there was a grade crossing accident on the line.

As a result I missed the 16:19 RBS from Solothurn back to Bern and had to settle for the 16:34. The inter-urban between these points has a base headway of every half-hour, but now it was the beginning of the rush hour, when frequencies increase to every 15 minutes. I rode only as far as Jegenstorf, a 23-minute run, as that is where additional local service to Bern begins, with the through trains running non-stop over the rest of the route, reaching Bern 14 minutes later. With 7 intermediate stations, all-stop locals, which run every quarter-hour all day long, take only 19 minutes (5 more than the expresses), as station dwell times are especially short on this spit-and-polish railway. The bright orange ex-

press train was similar, but not identical to the 3-section Stadler unit that I had ridden from Oensingen to Solothurn (and as mentioned earlier, between other points). The local was a modernized 40-year old suburban unit, like one of those I had ridden from Worb to Bern three days earlier, with a low-floor section added about 25 years ago. As previously mentioned they will be replaced with new low-floor trains. They should start entering service later this year.

In any case, I took a photo of both types at Jegenstorf, and as a result missed the 16:59 local back to Bern. So instead, I rode the 17:12 express and arrived at 17:28 (26). Although the connection was ten minutes tighter, I still made the 17:34 Inter-City to Brig, which I rode as far as Spiez (18:02), where I transferred across the platform to the 18:05 local for Interlaken Ost. I confirmed that the "climate" was still right for trains as I left Bern. The local arrived at Ost at 18:28 and I made a quick connection to the next narrow-gauge BOB M.U., which left at 18:35 and arrived in Lauterbrunnen at 18:55. I had promised Clare to be back by 19:00 and felt good that I was able to keep my commitment — albeit only barely. We had an enjoyable meal at a nearby restaurant and turned in early after a very productive day. I was able to accomplish all I had planned, despite having to start from way up in the mountains instead of in Bern.



The Oensingen-Balthal Bahn's platforms in the forecourt of the SBB's Oensingen station, with one of the two M.U. trains that service the line loading passengers.

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Switzerland in the Late Summer

(Continued from page 18)



The newest interurbans on the ASm are assigned to base service on the Solothurn, Niederbipp (Oensingen)-Langenfeld division. These are the latest version of the Stadler GTW cars whose earlier incarnation were ridden on the Biel-Tauffelen-Ins line a few hours earlier. The right photo presents an especially prominent view of the dual-gauge track alongside the Niederbipp station building.



The bridge along Roetistrasse over the Aare River at Solothurn showing the old and new color schemes of the ASm's line to Niederbipp (Oensingen), Langenthal and St. Urban.



The ASm's single track terminal directly in front of the Luzernstrasse entrance to the Solothurn railway station. Note the height of the platform for the low-floor interurbans.

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## Around New York's Transit System

### Parade of Vintage Trains

NYCT held its fourth annual Parade of Vintage Trains over the weekend of June 16-17. Featured this year was the newest addition to the Train of Many Metals fleet, R-10 3184. This year, while four vintage trains were planned for and made their appearances, only three operated between Brighton Beach and Kings Highway on the Brighton Line. D-Type triplex 6112 had developed some mechanical issues and was forced to stay at Coney Island while its remaining operable mate, 6095, was operated to Brighton Beach with the other vintage trains but remained there only as a static display due to its short length being vulnerable to third rail gaps on crossovers and its passenger capacity being halved. The three trains operated were B.U. elevated cars N-1404-1274-1407-S; BMT B-Type Standards N-2390-2391-2392-S; and the Train of Many Metals N-6387 (R-16)-4280-1 (R-40)-4029-8 (R-38)-3184 (R-10)-S. The R-1 to R-9 consist was not available that weekend as some of them are currently in the shop undergoing repairs. After the last passenger runs at 4 PM, the four different types of trains were lined up in a classic pose just north of Ocean Parkway at 5 PM for a side-by-side lineup in perfect sunshine before being returned to Coney Island Yard and laid up until the next day's parade runs.

Two future scheduled nostalgia rides this summer are Sunday, July 8 at 10 AM utilizing former BMT B-Type Standards and D-Type triplex cars to Coney Island and Saturday, August 4 at 11 AM utilizing the cars of the R-1 to R-9 fleet on a round-trip to and from Rockaway Park/B. 116<sup>th</sup> Street. The exact routings will be determined

near the actual excursion dates due to the numerous General Orders in effect every weekend to allow much-needed maintenance on all of the lines. See the Transit Museum website, [www.nytransitmuseum.org](http://www.nytransitmuseum.org), for further details and ticketing.

### Borough Hall Station Ceiling Collapses

A portion of the ceiling over the Manhattan-bound platform at the Borough Hall station on the **4 5** collapsed around 3:30 PM Wednesday, June 20. One customer was slightly injured. Manhattan-bound **4** and **5** trains bypassed the station for the rest of the day while crews secured the remainder of the ceiling and cleaned up the area before re-opening it for service by late evening. *(Editor's Note by Ronald Yee: Two days afterward, I observed a large work crew at the 61<sup>st</sup> Street-Woodside station mezzanine level using ball-peen hammers to tap at the entire concrete ceiling to detect loose concrete. Other members of the team were busily hammering away at what appeared to be loose concrete they had discovered, knocking it all to the ground. It can be assumed that NYCT was performing an emergency inspection and mitigation effort at all of the stations that could suffer the same issue.)*

### 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue Stations Reopen

The 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue stations on the **N W** Astoria Line reopened as promised after being closed for eight months for rehabilitation at noontime on Friday, June 22. The work included repairs to platforms and platform canopies, stairways to the platform as well as the street level, new lighting and security cameras, a totally re-designed mezzanine with translucent glass windows decorated with abstract geometric patterns

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### Switzerland in the Late Summer

*(Continued from page 19)*



These views show the rolling stock of the Regionalverkeher Bern-Solothurn (RBS). The left photo shows an RBS Solothurn-Bern express train laying up beyond the line's platform at the SBB Solothurn railway station. These "NEXT" three-section articulateds were purchased from Stadler between 2009 and 2013. The right photo shows a train of older RBS interurban cars at Jegenstorf. These cars were built starting in 1974, and then modernized in 1991. They also serve the company's lines to Unterzollikofen and Worb.

*(Continued next issue)*