

The Bulletin



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The Bulletin

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(Continued)
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BROOKLYN PCC CARS' 80TH ANNIVERSARY (Continued from October, 2016 issue)

The smooth-riding, fast, and quiet PCC cars appeared after several years of research and development. In 1929, senior executives of large street railway companies discussed methods of building a car that could compete with automobiles. They decided to expedite the development of a new type of urban railway car.

While the executives were deliberating, BMT's subsidiary, Brooklyn & Queens Transit Corporation, ordered a demonstrator. It was constructed specially for B&QT on a Twin Coach bus body equipped with experimental automotive control apparatus and was mounted on standard trolley trucks. The car, 5200, was placed in service on November 12, 1929 and usually operated on Flatbush Avenue. PCC trucks with different types of springs, motors, control equipment, gears, brakes, and wheels were installed under the car. It was described as a rail bus in the 1931 roster and was retired on June 30, 1939. The company continued testing the demonstrator while the railway executives met frequently. In December, 1929, they met in Chicago and formed the Presidents' Conference Committee, whose initials formed the name PCC. Dr. Thomas Conway, Jr., President of the Cincinnati & Lake Erie Railroad, was instructed to study and report to the executives. Each participating company agreed to contribute funds for research. Because of the large sums spent, the PCC was nicknamed the Million Dollar Trolley Car. When the plans were completed, the committee ordered a prototype, 5300, from Pullman in 1934. The car was exhibited at Albee Square on October 18, 1934, where borough and transit officials agreed the car was a success. After your Editor-in-Chief started working for the Board of Transportation in 1947, his supervi-

sor told him that the car lost its brakes, which were energized by 600 volts, when the pole derailed under the structure, probably at DeKalb Avenue and Broadway. The car performed just as poorly when its brakes were energized from the battery, probably because of low battery voltage. The car was retired on December 31, 1938.

The design was perfected on the streets of Brooklyn and in the Ninth Avenue Depot. Acceleration and braking tests were performed on McDonald Avenue between 10 PM and 5 AM when there was no service.

About 1948, your Editor-in-Chief's supervisor told him that the twelve busiest trolley lines were to be retained indefinitely. We were ordered to keep the tracks and overhead in a state of good repair. But in 1947 and 1948 buses were substituted on ten lines, six of which were converted to trolley coach when construction was completed. Several more trolley coach lines were planned, but never built. When the trolley coach overhead was under construction, buses were operated. The following lines were operated for less than twelve years:

TROLLEY COACH OPERATION		
LINE	BEGUN	DISCONTINUED
B-23/Cortelyou Road	July 23, 1930	October 31, 1956
B-45/St. Johns Place	September 16, 1948	March 25, 1959
B-65/Bergen Street	October 17, 1948	July 27, 1960
B-47/Tompkins Avenue	November 19, 1948	July 27, 1960

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NEXT TRIP: NYCT E. 180TH STREET SHOP—SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12

FROM RECOGNITION TO DOMINANCE: THE NEW YORK CONNECTING RAILROAD (BRIDGING THE BAY AND CONNECTING THE PIECES)

by George Chiasson

(Continued from October, 2016 issue)

Map 69:
Long Island Rail Road
Manhattan Beach Division
showing
Improved Right-of-way
and
Temporary Track Alignment
in
Brooklyn and Queens
December 1914

(No Scale)



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From Recognition to Dominance

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Map 70:
Long Island Rail Road
Bay Ridge Division
showing
Improved Right-of-way
and
Final Track Alignment
in
Brooklyn and Queens
January 1930
(AC Electrified)

(No Scale)

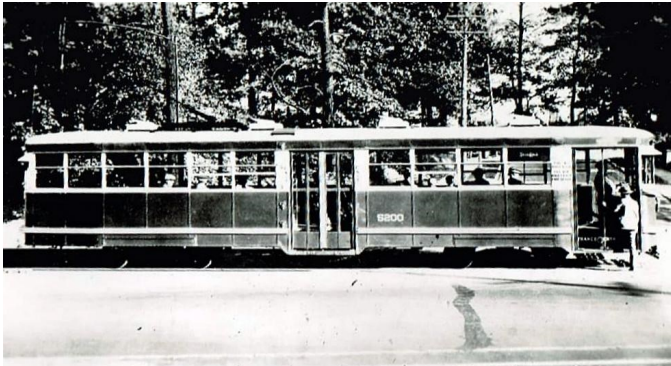
QUEENS



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Brooklyn PCC Cars' 80th Anniversary

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Twin Coach railbus 5200.
Bernard Linder collection



Car 5300 exhibited at Albee Square, October 18, 1934.
Bernard Linder collection



Car 5300 at East New York Depot.
Bernard Linder collection



Trolley coach 1000 at 62nd Street and New Utrecht Avenue, March 31, 1946.
Bernard Linder photograph



Trolley coach 1004 at 62nd Street and New Utrecht Avenue, March 31, 1946.
Bernard Linder photograph



Trolley coach 3024 at 62nd Street and New Utrecht Avenue, November 11, 1948.
Bernard Linder photograph

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Brooklyn PCC Cars' 80th Anniversary

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Interior of trolley coach 3123, 62nd Street and New Utrecht Avenue, October 3, 1956.
Bernard Linder photograph



Troy Avenue end of Bergen Street Depot, May 16, 1960.
Bernard Linder photograph



Trolley coach 3144, Flushing Avenue and Rust Street looking east, May 16, 1960. Note the inverted "V" trolley wire at the LIRR grade crossing.
Bernard Linder photograph



Trolley coach 3128, LIRR crossing at Flushing Avenue and 56th Street, May 16, 1960.
Bernard Linder photograph



Siding on Empire Boulevard near Flatbush Avenue, May 17, 1960.
Bernard Linder photograph



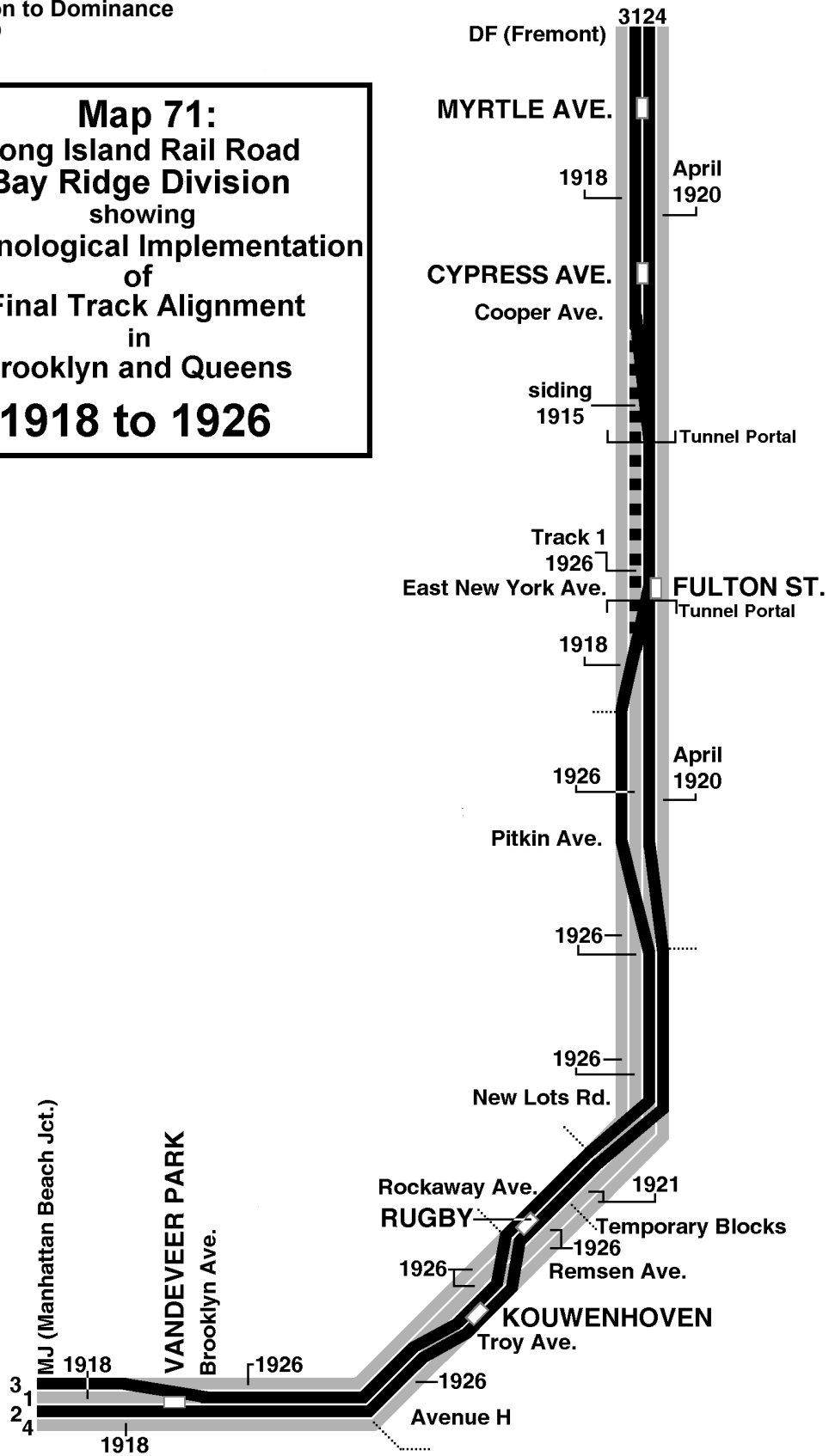
Trolley coach 3019, siding on Empire Boulevard near Washington Avenue, May 17, 1960.
Bernard Linder photograph

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From Recognition to Dominance

(Continued from page 3)

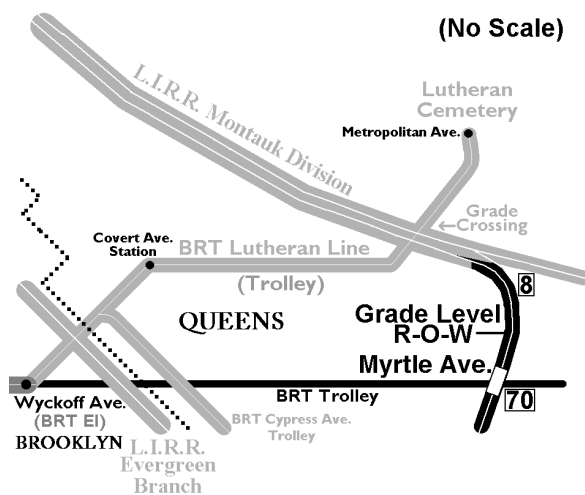
Map 71:
Long Island Rail Road
Bay Ridge Division
 showing
Chronological Implementation
 of
Final Track Alignment
 in
Brooklyn and Queens
1918 to 1926



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From Recognition to Dominance

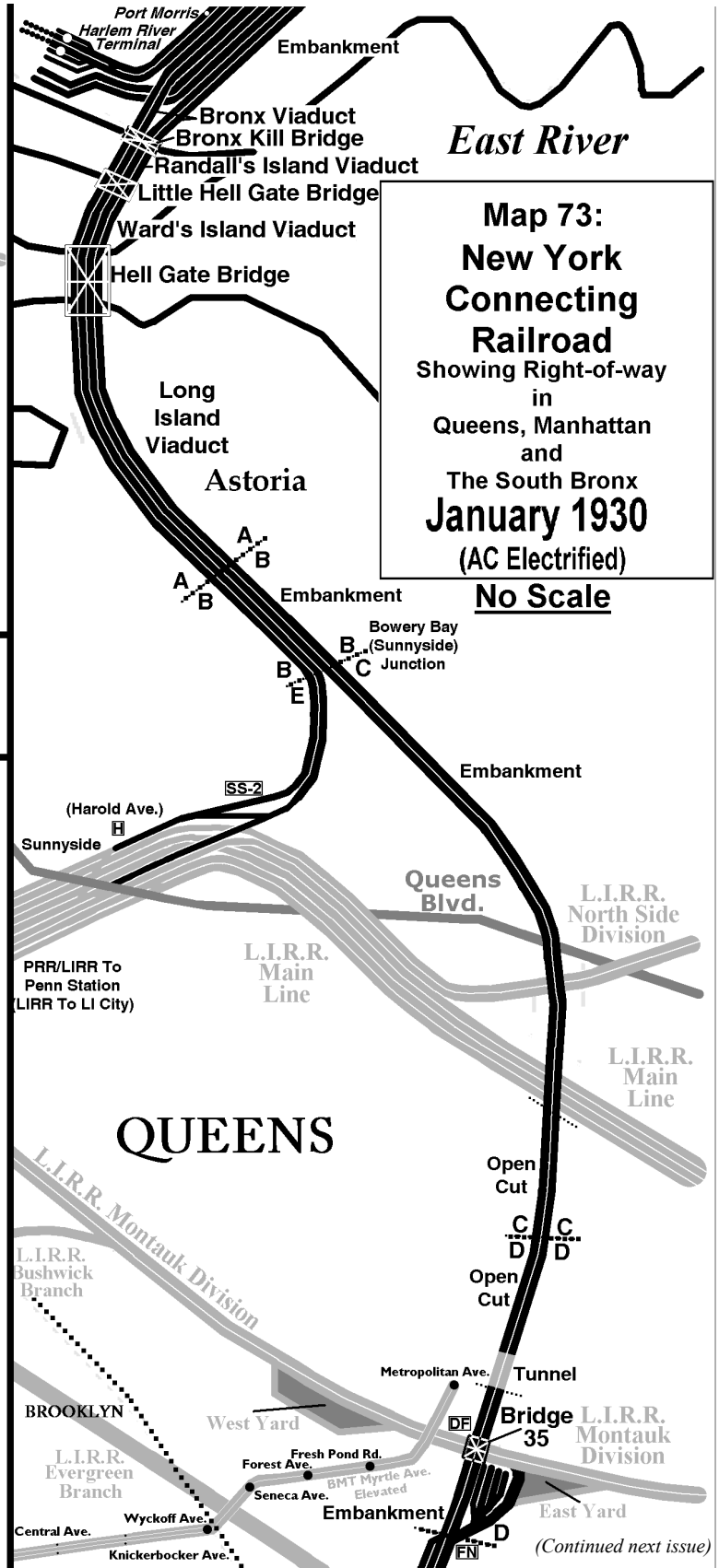
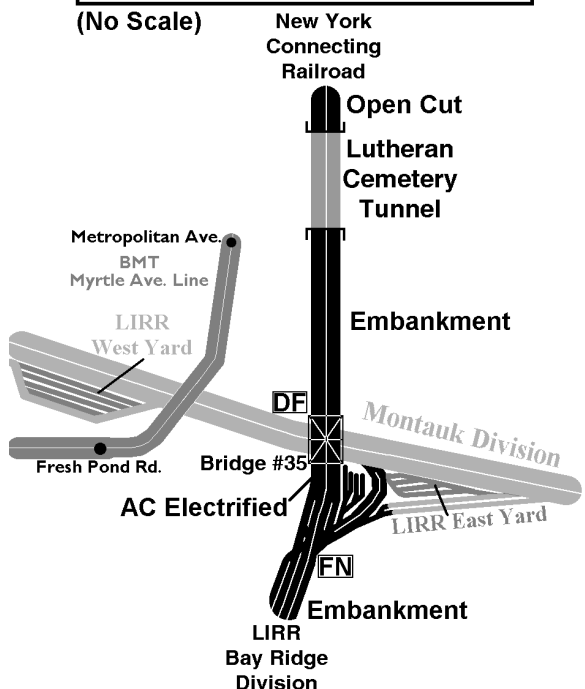
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Map 72a:
Vicinity of
Fresh Pond Junction
(March 1905)

The Evolution of
Fresh Pond Junction

Map 72b:
Vicinity of
Fresh Pond Junction
(January 1930)



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Commuter and Transit Notes

No. 336

by Ronald Yee and James Giovan with Alexander Ivanoff

MTA LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD

At around 9:10 PM Saturday, October 8, a half-mile east of the New Hyde Park station, the 8:22 PM out of Penn Station to Huntington carrying 600 passengers was sideswiped by work equipment on an adjacent track. The collision sent at least three cars of the passenger train off the rails, tilting them but not tipping them over. 33 people were injured, 4 seriously, in the wreck. While the lead car of the 12-car M-7 electric multiple unit train was not struck by the work equipment, the three cars behind it were derailed by the sideswipe impact. News video showed the F-end of car 7044 derailed with severe corner post damage, crushing in the area with the two seats opposite the mid-consist cab. Cars 7033 and 7034 appeared to be the other two cars derailed, with 7034 sustaining some corner post damage to the B-end. Service on the LIRR mainline was suspended all day Sunday, October 9 while MTA and LIRR personnel performed post-incident investigations and later allowed LIRR crews to re-rail the derailed cars, remove the train from the scene, and repair the tracks. Westbound passengers on the Port Jefferson and Ronkonkoma Branches rode trains to Hicksville, where they were directed to a diesel shuttle train operating to Babylon via the Central Branch. At Babylon, passengers would travel west to Jamaica and points west on Babylon and Montauk Branch trains. Eastbound passengers rode to Babylon and connected with the diesel shuttle to Hicksville, where they resumed their eastward journeys to Huntington and Ronkonkoma with connections to Port Jefferson and Greenport. Limited substitute bus service to and from Jamaica was offered for Oyster Bay Branch customers as well as those served at New Hyde Park, Merrillon Avenue, Mineola, Carle Place, and Westbury. LIRR also advised customers to use the Hempstead Branch if at all possible. Early on October 10, a single track was restored in time to allow limited AM peak service. Several trains were cancelled and combined with others to reduce the number of trains passing over the restored tracks, which had severe speed restrictions. Attempting to operate the usual number of peak direction trains would only result in trains being back up for miles, exacerbating the already heavy delays. LIRR advised customers to expect at least 30-minute delays for the AM peak on Monday, October 10. Mid-morning, eastbound service was restored with the first train being the 9:35 AM out of Penn Station to Huntington. By the PM peak, both tracks had been restored and normal PM peak service in both directions was operated. *(Editor's Note by Ron Yee: Using the M-8 that was damaged in a similar manner in the May, 2013 Metro-North derailment and wreck at Fairfield on the New Haven Line as an example for these newer generation cars built to a heavier standard to withstand and absorb the forces of a crash, car 7044 may be a write-off if the frame was distorted. Car 7034 "appears" to be repairable. This*

Editor has also heard unofficial reports from an anonymous LIRR operations supervisor that the work equipment, a large track tamper which was also traveling eastward to clear off the mainline track after completing its work assignment that day encountered a switch that was misaligned and directed it into the side of the passenger train. They had been doing switch testing and someone involved may not have restored the interlocking characteristics properly, leading to the crash.) (New York Daily News, October 9)

MTA METRO-NORTH RAILROAD

Fares will increase by an average of 6% on December 1 for travel to and from as well as wholly within the State of Connecticut on Metro-North's New Haven Line and Shore Line East. The 2% Mail and Ride discount will be discontinued and the combination *MetroCard* and Commuter Rail ticket discount will be reduced from 4% to 2%. Following a series of six public hearings where fare hikes were balanced against maintaining the current fares with a menu of service reductions to compensate, the Connecticut Department of Transportation will proceed with the fare hike, enabling the state to continue financing the current level of rail services. (WestportNOW.com, October 3)

NJ TRANSIT

At around 8:45 AM September 29, Pascack Valley Line Train #1614, with four push-pull coaches and the locomotive at the rear, slammed through the bumping post on Track 5 at Hoboken Terminal, slid one-and-a-half car lengths beyond, and came to rest at the wall of the historic terminal building. While the building was not damaged, the canopy over the concourse collapsed as vertical and horizontal support beams were knocked out by the errant train. One bystander who had been walking across the platform concourse was killed and 114 in the concourse as well as aboard the train were injured. The lead car was Comet V Cab Coach 6036 and the locomotive pushing the train was GP-40-PH-2B 4214, acquired by NJT in 1994 as part of the locomotive fleet additions that replaced the U-34-CHs. The other coaches were also 2002-4-vintage stainless steel Comet Vs built by Alstom. All train service into and out of Hoboken was suspended until October 10 while the wreckage of the collapsed canopy was removed, the event recorder in the lead car removed for analysis, and the wrecked train moved to the NJT Meadowlands Yard. Subsequent analysis of the data from the recorder shows that the train entered the platform Track 5 at 8 mph and the bell activated, the normal sequence of events. However, 38 seconds before the train impacted the bumping post, the throttle was advanced to the #4 position and the train sped up to 21 mph before impacting the bumping block. At around one second before impact, the throttle was placed in idle and the brakes applied in emergency by the Engineer. It is expected to take around one year

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Commuter and Transit Notes

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for NTSB to issue a report on the probable cause of this wreck. The Engineer stated he passed through the yard interlocking at 10 mph, activated the cab car's bell as he entered the platform track, and has no recollection of anything until he regained consciousness on the floor of the operating cab after the train had crashed. From September 30 through October 7, weekday service over the Main, Bergen, Pascack Valley and Port Jervis Lines was operated on a weekend schedule only as far east as Secaucus Junction. All passengers were required to transfer there for trains to New York or Newark. Service into and out of Penn Station New York and Penn Station Newark operated on a normal weekday peak and off-peak schedule. Partial service to Hoboken Terminal was restored for the morning peak period on Tuesday, October 11 with Tracks 10-17 re-opened to passenger service. Tracks 1-9 were still out of service as this edition of *The Bulletin* was being written. Weekday peak period service on the Port Jervis/Main/Bergen County and Pascack Valley Lines was also restored. Full service was restored to Hoboken on Monday, October 17, two and one-half weeks after the wreck. (NJ Transit website, October 6-14; NBCTV News 4, September 29-30)

AMTRAK

Amtrak suspended passenger services on its Florida routes Thursday, October 6 through Monday, October 10. On October 10, the *Silver Star* was restored only between Miami and Winter Park, Florida as CSX reopened its rail lines over that stretch of track following track and structure inspections after Hurricane Matthew struck the state on Friday, October 7. The *Silver Meteor* and the *Auto Train* remained suspended over their entire routes until the following weekend. *Carolinian* and *Piedmont* services to North Carolina were suspended Sunday due to high water conditions threatening the integrity of the tracks and structures along the line. The *Piedmont* remained cancelled between Raleigh and Charlotte on October 10 while the *Carolinian* was partially restored in two sections, New York City to Richmond and Charlotte to Raleigh. Service to Norfolk, Virginia was restored with *Northeast Regional* train #125 to Norfolk on October 10 and full service restored the morning of October 11. The *Silver Meteor* resumed service over its entire New York City-Miami route on October 14, the *Silver Star* on October 15, and the *Auto Train* Sanford, Florida-Lorton, Virginia on October 16. (Amtrak website, October 13)

Amtrak unveiled its new state-of-the-art Passenger Information Display System (PIDS) at New York City's Penn Station, replacing the old information board in the main concourse. Two large LCD displays located at each end of the main train hall/concourse provide departure information, clock time and date, visual messaging, and synchronized station announcements. The new locations of the PIDS are intended to move the waiting passengers and spread them out to cluster at either end, eliminating a longstanding (pun intended) bottle-

neck in the middle of the concourse. Eventually, 38 additional monitor displays will be placed at strategic locations around the station, such as boarding gates, *Acela* Lounge, Amtrak seated waiting areas, and the Rotunda. (*Metro Magazine*, October 12)

Amtrak *Acela* and regional service between Penn Station and New Rochelle, New York were suspended for a few hours after a CSX freight train derailed and jackknifed several cars, fouling both tracks of the Northeast Corridor, on Wednesday, October 5. Service was restored three hours later at around 12:30 PM after the cars were cleared and tracks, signals, and catenary inspected. During the outage, Northeast Corridor passengers were advised to transfer to and from Metro-North trains at New Rochelle for service to New York City's Grand Central Terminal. (NBC4 News, October 5)

INDUSTRY

On October 21 Bombardier, Incorporated announced plans to cut approximately 7,500 jobs worldwide as part of a workforce optimization and site specialization program running through to 2018. Around two-thirds of the job losses would be at the Bombardier Transportation rail business, with the rest in the aerospace business.

Further details are to be released once the company has held talks with employee representatives over the coming weeks. There will be a "streamlining" of administrative and non-production functions, with centers of excellence to be created for design, engineering, and manufacturing. Bombardier said the impact on overall employment would be partially offset by recruitment to support "key growth programs," including the C Series and Global 7000 aircraft and major rail contracts.

The company expects to achieve recurring savings of approximately \$300 million by the end of 2018. It anticipates \$225-\$275 million in restructuring charges, which would be reported as special items starting in the fourth quarter of 2016 and continuing through 2017. The restructuring forms part of a five-year turnaround plan launched in 2015. (*Editor's Note from Sasha Ivanoff: With problems traveling over third rail gaps, NYCT is suspending testing of the R-179 cars. Bombardier, known years ago for delivering dependable equipment, now seems to be missing more than hitting.*) (*Railway Gazette*, October 21)

MISCELLANEOUS

ERA TRIP REPORT — CLEVELAND-BUFFALO-ROCHESTER

The Electric Railroaders' Association held its annual fall season rail themed trip around destinations in the northeastern United States. This year's trip covered the New York Museum of Transportation near Rochester, New York, Cleveland's RTA rapid transit Red Line and light rail Blue and Green Lines, and, finally, Buffalo's light rail line operated by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA). ERA based itself out of the Hampton Inn Buffalo Airport/Galleria located in Cheektowaga, convenient to the interstate highway system for easy access for the long bus trips to and from our destinations. We departed out of New York City on Saturday, October 15 at 8:20 AM and had a lunch stop in the Des-

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tiny USA Mall, formerly known as the Carousel Center Mall, in Syracuse. While there, some members took advantage of the proximity of the mall's food court to milepost 292 of the CSX (ex-New York Central Water Level Route) mainline just west of the Syracuse Regional Transportation Center, which includes the Amtrak station. Fortunately, Amtrak Train #63, the *Maple Leaf* from Penn Station New York bound for Toronto, was due to depart Syracuse and pass by during our meal break. Milepost 292 on the CSX mainline is also the location of the Carousel Center station of the short-lived commuter rail service operated by the New York, Susquehanna & Western Railroad using ex-Metro-North Railroad RDCs linking Syracuse with a college campus south of the city. The station is still completely intact, single track, platform, canopy, lighting, stairs, and ADA ramps leading to it from the adjacent access road of the mall. There is a six-foot-high chain link fence that totally sep-



Amtrak P-42 182, Syracuse, New York, October 15, 2016.
Ronald Yee photograph

arates the station area and track from the CSX mainline. A couple of ERA members were able to photograph Amtrak Train #63 as well as two CSX freight trains passing through in perfect midday sunshine. Afterward, the group paid a two-hour visit to the New York Museum of Transportation (NYMT), where former Philadelphia & Western (P&W) Brill car 161 provided a ride on the half-mile electrified track and ran photo/video run-by for the group. Afterward, there was time to visit the other exhibits in the museum's collection, which included New York State Railways, Rochester & Eastern Rapid Railway 157, NJT PCC 7, Northern Texas Traction Company 409, and Philadelphia Transportation Company snow sweeper C130 among other cars undergoing various stages of restoration. In the trolley barn was the other P&W Brill in the collection, 168, with an original interior, which is used as a backup in the event 161 is not available. Because NYMT is a museum of transportation, it also had a vintage automobile, truck, fire engine, etc. in the barn. As the group departed NYMT, Brill 168 was

seen operating slowly out of the barn for a short trial run before being put away back in the barn. The ERA group had a dinner stop at the famous Anchor Bar & Grill, home of the original Buffalo Wings, near downtown Buffalo before overnighting at the hotel.

On Sunday, October 16, the ERA Coach Tours bus



Brill 161 at New York Museum of Transportation, October 15, 2016.
Ronald Yee photograph

took the group to Cleveland, where the 11:30 AM arrival provided the group with over five hours with which to ride and photograph the Cleveland RTA transit system. While enough time to cover the entire system, with Sunday service headways, attendees had to be fairly selective with where they set up their photo/video shoots. Knowing that the weather forecast was going to be iffy in the mid-late afternoon, my wife and I opted to immediately cover both the Green and Blue light rail lines in the bright midday sunshine. The 1982-vintage Breda LRVs cover all service on the Blue and Green Lines and I selected Tower City/Public Square, Shaker Square (where both lines split for their respective destinations), and the terminals of each line at Warrensville/Van Aken and at Green Road for my photos. A visit to Cleveland is not complete without a visit to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, conveniently located two blocks north of the E. 9th Street station of the Waterfront Line, affording me chance to ride and photograph this relatively new line at the E. 9th Street station as well as its terminus at the South Harbor station. Finally, on the way to meet the group at Guarino's Italian Restaurant in the Little Italy section of Cleveland, a ride on the eastern half of the Red line to Windermere, recording images of the 1984-5 Tokyu-built rapid transit trains at Tower City/Public Square, Windermere, and at the new Mayfield Road/Little Italy station. On the way to Windermere, work in progress was definitely seen at some of the stations with older wood plank high level platforms; they were being renovated with concrete platforms, stairs, and probably ADA accessibility. During the tour, plans for RTA's 30+-year-old rail fleet were part of the discussion amongst members. One subject was the possibility that all of the current equipment would be replaced by one

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large car order for light rail vehicles, the intent being to convert the Red Line into light rail. As the Red Line has always been a rapid transit line already equipped with high-level platforms, the logical conclusion would be that the Blue and Green Lines would be fully equipped with high-level platforms, simplifying ADA accessibility issues by relocating all of the accessibility issues to the station platforms, a much cheaper alternative to providing ADA lifts on all of the railcars to service low-level platforms. If this does come about, the light rail look on the Blue and Green Line stations will vanish. The only part of the RTA rail system I did not have time to cover was the western half of the line to Cleveland Hopkins Airport. That will have to wait for another visit.



RTA Blue Line LRV 842 at Van Aken, October 16, 2016.
Ronald Yee photograph



RTA Red Line car 337 at Tower City, October 16, 2016.
Ronald Yee photograph

On Monday, October 17, ERA visited Buffalo's Niagara Frontier Transit Authority (NFTA) light rail line. A comprehensive tour of the maintenance shops was first on the agenda. The shops are located on the grounds and part of the structural complex that was once Buffalo's Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad Terminal,

built in 1917. The lower level is used as part of the servicing facility for NFTA's light rail fleet with the main shop located adjacent to the historic building. The 1983-vintage, Tokyu-built LRV fleet is currently undergoing a mid-life overhaul performed by AnsaldoBreda in Dansville, New York in which the cars will be equipped with LED destination and informational signage and totally new interiors, lighting, seating, flooring, windows, door operator mechanisms and door chimes, automated station announcements, and upgraded propulsion and braking systems. 14 of the fleet of 27 cars have been rebuilt, the speed of the program being limited by the number of cars (6) that NFTA can set aside at any given time for rebuilding. During the shop tour, the NFTA guide quoted the enormous cost savings by rebuilding solidly built cars (\$1.7 million each) compared with \$3-4 million per car for a new LRV. Current car fleet size with 6 of 27 cars off-line for rebuilding prevents NFTA from meeting the peak period requirement of 7 three-car trains, fielding only 4-5 three car trains with the other 2-3 trains operating with 2 cars each.



NFTA LRV 119, fresh from rebuilding, October 17, 2016.
Ronald Yee photograph

Following the shop tour, the group was taken on a tour up to the second level of the DL&W terminal, walking along the old trackbed of the upper level trainshed. Afterward, the group was bused to the Erie Canal Harbor station (normally the last stop of the 6.4-mile, 13-station line unless there is a special event that warrants the use of the 14th station, appropriately named Special Events. We then rode LRV 104 to the recently rebuilt Fountain Plaza station, which is the last surface station before the line dips underground for the remainder of the route. Our NFTA guide had informed us that NFTA and the City of Buffalo are slowly converting the transit mall the line runs on (Main Street) into a regular street that the LRVs will have to share with automotive traffic, all in the name of promoting business growth downtown, however illogical that sounds in terms of operating a surface-running light rail line efficiently. The one good thing that will come out of this process will be that all of the surface stations on Main Street will be totally rebuilt, Foun-

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tain Plaza being the prototype of what is to come. After photographing one headway in each direction, the group re-boarded and rode LRV 120 to the last stop, University, and boarded the Coach Tours chartered bus for a return to New York City via Corning, New York.

OTHER TRANSIT SYSTEMS**BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS**

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority officials are seeking proposals from firms that are interested in providing services to extend Boston's Green Line train service. MBTA is hosting a forum on November 16 that will include design-build firms so that the firms can gain a good understanding of the scope of the work. The Green Line extension will include a plan for two new branches that will serve as an extension of the existing line. A mainline branch is planned to operate in the already existing section of the Lowell Line from approximately the Lechmere station in Cambridge up north to Medford. Additionally, a second branch line would run within the existing area of the Fitchburg Line to Union Square in Somerville. MBTA is requesting for contractors to relocate the Lechmere station along with constructing seven brand new stations. The extension plan has been approved by MBTA's fiscal board and will be funded by local and state tax dollars in addition to contingent money from the Federal Transit Administration.

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

A referendum on the November ballot for Virginia Beach could, if approved, begin the process that would culminate in the extension of the Norfolk TIDE light rail line beyond its current single-track terminus at Newtown Road. The line would continue east for 3.5 miles to Virginia Beach Town Center, stopping at three new stations: Witchduck Road, Kellam Road, and Constitution Drive. This extension is expected to cost just over \$243 million, including \$21 million for three additional light rail vehicles that would need to be acquired, \$24.8 million in right-of-way costs, and over \$157 million in design-build costs that would include three new bridges over the heavily trafficked Witchduck Road, Independence Boulevard, and Market Drive, nine grade crossings, and six signalized street intersections. (AI Holtz, October 6)

CINCINNATI, OHIO

Cincinnati's new streetcar line, known as the Cincinnati Bell Connector, is increasing service on the weekends due to extremely high ridership according to Transdev, the line's operator. The line, which opened to the public on September 9, has been reaching full rider capacity to the point where passengers have been unable to board the streetcars on several occasions due to overcrowding. Transdev spokesperson Ruth Otte has stated that it "will add extra service to meet weekend demand." It is believed that between 300 to 500 percent more riders than originally projected are riding on the new tram service. Cincinnati's contract with the streetcar operator requires that passengers must not have to wait more than fifteen minutes for a streetcar, further

justifying the additional service. (trains.com, October 11)

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Metra issued new schedules effective October 9 on the BNSF line to Aurora with timetables adjusted to better reflect actual travel times between intermediate stations. Changes for around two-thirds of Metra trains on the line range from 1-2 additional minutes of total travel time, but some trains had 4-7 minutes added following an analysis of several months of BNSF operating data identifying points of delay for each train. Arrival and departure times at Chicago Union Station will remain unchanged. (*Chicago Tribune*, October 3)

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Plans to expand light rail in Minneapolis are moving forward after the project received environmental review clearance from Minnesota and the Federal Transit Administration. The MetroTransit Blue Line extension will be the agency's fourth light rail project and will provide new service to the northwest suburbs through Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park. The project has become known as the Bottineau LRT and will serve rapidly growing communities. The next phase of the project is to secure the necessary \$1.53 billion for its completion. The Federal Transit Administration is set to pay for half of the expenses and transit leaders are going to call on the State of Minnesota to contribute additional funding. It is hoped that construction on the new extension will begin by 2018 and be completed and in service by 2021. (trains.com, October 4)

PHOENIX, ARIZONA

Valley Metro is beginning construction on the Gilbert Road Extension, which will add 1.9 miles of track on Main Street from Mesa Drive to Gilbert Road. A groundbreaking ceremony took place on October 15 and construction was set to begin in the coming weeks. The project is scheduled for completion in late 2018 or early 2019 and will provide better transit service for locals in the Gilbert Road area. (valleymetro.org, October 15)

CALIFORNIA

In Sacramento, work is being done to connect the power grid to a new high-speed rail line that is currently under construction. A \$36 million contract has been awarded to Pacific Gas & Electric that calls for the company to design, engineer, and permit ten substations along a 345-mile route from San Jose in the Bay Area to Bakersfield in the south end of Central Valley. The contract will run through 2018 and future contracts for other major work relating to the project are anticipated in the near future. Currently, construction is on schedule for the new rail line to open between San Francisco and Los Angeles by 2029. The new high-speed rail line will carry passengers between the major cities at speeds of up to 220 miles per hour, meaning a ride will take less than three hours, a major reduction in travel time compared to other transit options. (trains.com, October 12)

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Metrolink filed a lawsuit against Rotem, the manufacturer of its most recently acquired push-pull coaches that were involved in a grade crossing collision with a

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

utility truck. The Rotem cars (57 cab cars and 54 coaches) were purchased specifically for their ability to manage and deflect impact forces in the event of a collision, significantly improving protection levels for passengers and crew. However, it appears that the “pilot,” formerly known as a “cow catcher,” of the cab cars was not attached strongly enough to the underside of the car body, in this case, allowing it to tear loose upon impact with that large vehicle at the grade crossing, become lodged under the lead truck assembly, and derail the train, causing the lead cars to roll over onto their sides, resulting in the death of the Engineer and injuring 30 passengers. A subsequent investigation revealed that all of the cab cars had a similar defect. As a result, Metrolink was forced to lease a number of BNSF freight locomotives that were placed in front of the cab cars until the pilots could be reinforced to the proper strength. (*Metro Magazine*, October 5)

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) has implemented One Person Train Operation (OPTO) on its Sheppard Line as a measure to reduce operating costs by eliminating the “Guard” position on the train. TTC is anticipating a C\$172 million deficit for this year. The Operator is now tasked with opening and closing the doors at each station stop as well as operating the train. This line is a short five-station line connecting with the Yonge Street mainline. Ridership is low enough to permit the operation of shorter trains, making it an ideal candidate on which to try out OPTO. While the Sheppard Line is an ideal route to implement this practice (which is common practice worldwide at other transit systems) the labor union representing the Operators and Guards was quick to point out the inherent risks associated with a reduced crew on security issues, perceived passenger safety, and customer service to the riding public. (CBC News, October 9)

CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA

On September 20, a C-Train light rail vehicle was involved in a derailment that seriously injured the Operator. Calgary Transit director Doug Morgan stated that the accident, which occurred at the Tuscany LRT station, was caused by Operator error. The train derailed at the end of the Northwest Line early on the morning of September 20, causing serious damage to the vehicle and injuring the experienced female Operator, who was in her early 60s and was reported to have not remembered the accident after it occurred. There is no evidence that the accident was caused by mechanical failure. Calgary Transit is beginning a process to purchase new cars to replace its aging fleet and each new car costs about \$3.2 million. (CBC News, October 6)

EAST ANGLIA, ENGLAND

Major rail company Bombardier has agreed to produce and deliver 665 new AVENTRA train cars to Angel Trains for use on the East Anglia rail franchise operated by Abellio in the United Kingdom. Bombardier finalized

the contract after having already been selected as a preferred bidder for the deal back in August. Bombardier will also take on the role of maintaining the new trains. The contract for the new trains is valued at about \$1.1 billion and the contract for maintenance services is valued at close to \$108 million. Per Allmer, President of the Europe, Middle East & Africa Division of Bombardier Transportation, has stated that, “Our modern AVENTRA platform will greatly improve the journey experience for Abellio Greater Anglia's customers by delivering an enhanced interior environment and passenger comfort together with greater connectivity, shorter journey times and more reliable trains. These important contracts demonstrate Bombardier's ability to deliver high quality, integrated transportation products and services, providing value-adding long-term solutions for our customers. As a modular train, our AVENTRA product family offers maximum flexibility and hence has the capability to serve many different market requirements from metro to intercity, both in the UK and worldwide”. (Bombardier press release, September 30)

FRANCE

On October 2, a Eurostar train traveling from London's St. Pancras station to Paris Gare du Nord was delayed for close to an hour after coming into contact with a wild boar that had wandered onto the railroad tracks in the Haute Picardie area of Northern France. A spokesperson from Eurostar said that the accident led to minor delays because of speed restrictions that were put into place afterwards. No one on board the train was injured from the accident, and the train arrived safely at its destination after being delayed. Eurostar conducted an investigation regarding the accident but has not provided any further information. (bbc.com, October 2)

Normandy is set award Bombardier a contract to replace Corail coaches on inter-city services that the region is taking over from French National Railways (SNCF), according to regional Councillor Jean-Baptiste Gastienne. Gastienne told Agence France-Presse (AFP) on October 20 that the region will place an order for 40 Bombardier Omneo Premium double-deck EMUs, with deliveries starting in late 2019. SNCF President Guillaume Pepy also told reporters during a visit to Rouen on October 20 that Normandy will receive €720 million from the French state to fund the order and the contract will be signed on November 23.

Normandy signed an agreement with the French government on April 25 to take over the operation of five loss-making inter-city services from SNCF in a deal that included a commitment by the French government to fund the renewal of rolling stock. Under the agreement, which represents the first transfer of so-called Balance of Territory (TET) trains currently operated by French National Railways (SNCF) to regional control, Normandy will assume responsibility for Paris-Caen-Cherbourg, Trouville-Deauville, Paris-Rouen-Le Havre, Paris-Granville, Paris-Evreux-Serquigny, and Caen-Le Mans-Tours services by the beginning of 2020.

On October 17 Bombardier France President Laurent

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SWITZERLAND IN THE LATE SUMMER

by Jack May

(Photographs by the author)

(Continued from October, 2016 issue)

After taking a few photos of the Matterhorn from the clean picture windows of our car, we alighted at the second stop, Riffelalp, at 11:03. We chose this station because of the short battery-operated tramway that connects it with the 5-star Riffelalp resort hotel. But we discovered that the first tram of the day would not leave until 11:34 (meeting the next train), so we walked up the gradual gradient of a path alongside the track to the hotel, and immediately saw two bright red cars posing in beautiful sunlight in front of the Matterhorn, no doubt just for us.

Actually that was not a surprise, because I had corresponded with the hotel just to make sure the tram would be running. Its website states that it operates daily in the summer, but I was not sure what would be the last day of its season. The immediate reply I received indicated that it would run through the 22nd, which is the day before the onslaught of autumn. The Swiss are very literal and I should not have doubted that when they said summer, it would be all summer. The hotel is also open during the skiing season, starting in the middle of December, but snowmobiles are used for transport to and from the Gornergratbahn instead of the tramway.

The line's gauge is 800 millimeters and it is a less than half-mile long (2,215 feet). Trams run every 24 minutes, the same frequency as the Gornergratbahn. The hotel, at an altitude of 2,222 meters (7,332 feet), was built in 1884, and an electric tramway to connect it with the railway to Zermatt was added in 1899. A fire in 1961 destroyed the entire complex. The hotel was reopened in 1988, and by 1998 had been rebuilt and up-

graded to all its past glory. The tramway was restored in 2001, but not with its original cars. While they had not been destroyed in the fire, they had deteriorated to such an extent that it was decided to construct replica motor cars instead of restoring them. A goods trailer, used for baggage, rounds out the roster, but we did not see it, having made no attempt to visit the car house, which also contains a battery charging station. The cars are capable of reaching a speed of about 6 mph. The hotel's website, <http://www.riffelalp.com/de/das-resort/riffelalp-tram/>, provides further information.

After photographing the trams and the Matterhorn from every possible angle, we paused for refreshment at the hotel's outdoor cafe. We had a tea, a caffe latte and some elaborate pastries — at a cost of about \$35. Main dishes were even more expensive. After our pleasant repast in sight of the Matterhorn we proceeded into the hotel's spacious lobby. I asked the desk clerk if the hotel sold postcards of the tramway and was treated to some gratis, but better yet, we were rewarded with a cardboard model of a tramcar — filled with delicious Swiss chocolates. We wrapped it carefully and brought it back to New Jersey, where we consumed its contents gradually; the model is now on our mantel as a reminder of our enjoyable visit to this unique tramway. After a complimentary ride around the loop (the trams are double-ended, and tend to use the loop only when pulling the baggage trailer) we paid two 2.5-franc one-way fares and took the 12:30 trip back to the Gornergratbahn.



The Riffelalp's two-car battery-powered train alongside the hotel's outdoor cafe. A happy passenger peeks out the window of the front compartment.



A close-up view of battery car 1 on the 800-millimeter gauge Riffelalp Hotel tramway.

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Switzerland in the Late Summer

(Continued from page 14)



Two views of the Riffelalp Hotel's tramway at its hotel terminal with the Matterhorn looming in the distance. Step boxes aid passengers in boarding and alighting. The track at left leads onto a loop, which is traversed when the train pulls a goods trailer. In normal service the operator just changes ends at the terminal.

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Commuter and Transit Notes

(Continued from page 13)

Bouyer told AFP that the company's Crespin plant in Hauts-de-France, which is currently building Omneo trains for the French regions, has no booked orders beyond the first quarter of 2019. (*International Railway Journal*, October 21)

LIÈGE, BELGIUM

Three consortia have submitted bids to prequalify for a revised design-build-finance-maintain concession to build the planned 12.5-kilometer tram route in Liège.

The proposals opened on October 12 were submitted by Alstom/BAM PPP PGM; CAF/Colas/DIF; and Škoda Transportation/Vinci/CFE/Meridam.

Société Régionale Wallonne du Transport announced earlier this year that it would re-tender the project, after its previous contract awarded to an Alstom-led consortium was halted because the PPP arrangements failed to meet Eurostat requirements. The agency had ruled that too many state-related banks were involved and that the risk had been unevenly distributed between the public and private partners. Although SRWT could still have proceeded with the €398 million project, the cost would have to be carried on the Wallonie regional budget.

A new DFBM specification has therefore been developed, for which SRWT expects to receive Eurostat approval by the end of 2016. This would allow the new tender documents to be sent to the shortlisted bidders in early 2017. As a result of the delays, the line is not now expected to open before 2022 at the earliest. (*Railway Gazette*, October 21)

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia and Djibouti have begun operating service on the first fully electrified cross-border rail line in Africa. The new line links Ethiopia's capital of Addis Ababa to the Red Sea port of Djibouti, traveling a length of over

750 kilometers (466 miles). Trains on the line will travel at speeds of up to 120 kilometers per hour, and the service will dramatically reduce travel time from three days to 12 hours. The project cost approximately \$3.4 billion to complete and received funding from a Chinese bank and will have Chinese employees. Tracks of the new line will parallel an abandoned Ethio-Djibouti railway that is over 100 years old. When the line opens it will initially only run freight service, but passenger service is expected to begin within the next three months. Ticket prices for the new route have not yet been announced, but the line is anticipated to be much cheaper and more reliable than traveling the same route by road. The rail line is expected to provide huge benefits to the local economies and is being met with positive support from public and government officials. (bbc.com, October 5)

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA/KOLKATA, INDIA

Melbourne and Kolkata are very rare examples of cities outside of Europe that have continuously used tram systems since the 19th Century. This long and continuous operation has led to something special being formed called the Tramjatra, a friendship society that was started back in 1996. At that time Kolkata's tram tracks were in a bad state of repair, accidents were commonplace, and the lines used antiquated cars. The system was on the verge of closing until Robert D'Andrea, a tram Conductor from Australia, visited the city, riding the tram network and getting to know some of the employees. He returned to Melbourne and discussed the unfortunate situation of the tram network to his colleagues, who in turn worked with him to create a relationship between their tram depot in Melbourne and the tram depot in Belgachia, India. The Tramjatra partnership involves commissioning art installations on the outside of trams and also emphasizing the importance of trams and why they benefit the environment. (abc.net.au, October 6)

Around New York's Transit System

W Service Will Resume November 7

W trains, which ceased operating in 2010, will make local stops between Whitehall Street and 57th Street-Seventh Avenue while N trains will be routed via the express tracks between Canal Street and 57th Street-Seventh Avenue.

If the Second Avenue Subway is opened in late December, 2016, C trains will be rerouted in the new subway and W service will be extended to Astoria. At the present time, tests are being conducted on Second Avenue's third rail.

Under the previous schedule, W trains operated on weekdays during rush hours, midday, and early evening and N trains made local stops at other times.

Second Avenue Subway Progress Report

Test trains made up of R-68 and R-160 equipment signed up G and B were observed operating through the Lexington Avenue station on the 63rd Street Line, which normally carries only F trains, by an unidentified transit enthusiast who just happened to be in the right place at the right time and recorded video of the trains. These trains were reported to have weights inside the cars, simulating a passenger load. He reported it to DNAinfo New York, which followed up on the report with MTA, which confirmed that test trains were indeed being operated over the entire line. Over 300 successful test runs are required before the line can be opened to the public. An engineering consultant indicated that the testing was behind schedule, as were the 72nd and 86th Street stations. Despite these issues, MTA continues to anticipate the opening of the line before the end of

2016.

Meanwhile, on October 21, the *New York Daily News* reported that adjustments had to be made to parts of a tunnel wall to accommodate 75-foot cars. While 75-foot cars are not expected to operate on the new line on a regular basis, they could be sent there if a train needs to be diverted for some reason. A Track Geometry Car discovered the problem, which was on a curve. The repair is not expected to affect the opening date of the Second Avenue Subway.

Flushing Line CBTC Testing

On Saturday October 8, member Ron Yee observed a set of R-188s numbered in the 7850-series operating southbound out of 61st Street-Woodside on the northbound local track on the Flushing Line. It is apparent that testing of the CBTC systems has commenced, the northbound local track between Rawson Junction and 69th Street being one of the first sections. He then rode a Manhattan-bound 7 and observed the same consist making a turnaround south of 33rd Street-Rawson Street. Evidently, they were testing the bidirectional signaling capabilities that CBTC will offer when it is "cut-in" in late 2017.

L Service Disruption

Member Ed McKernan reported on October 6 that due to a major service disruption on L, NYCT added two extra consists to increase service on G to accommodate the diverted riders. R-46 consist (north) 5664 and (south) 5488, and R-160 consist (north) 9117 and (south) 9103 were utilized.

Brooklyn PCC Cars' 80th Anniversary

(Continued from page 5)

B-48/Lorimer Street	March 23, 1949	July 27, 1960
B-57/Flushing Avenue	November 14, 1949	July 27, 1960
B-62/Graham Avenue	December 11, 1949	July 27, 1960

After the eight trolley lines were motorized in 1949, the PCCs, 6000s, and 8000s were able to provide service on the remaining lines. Your Editor-in-Chief's supervisor assumed that these lines, which were in a state of good repair, would continue running for several years. But when buses appeared on one of the twelve busiest, Putnam Avenue, on February 5, 1950, he believed that the Brooklyn trolley car was doomed. Conversion pro-

ceeded rapidly. In the first five months of 1951, buses replaced trolley cars on nine lines. After May 27, 1951, PCCs provided service on Church Avenue, Coney Island Avenue, and McDonald Avenue. Twenty 8400s were retained for rush hour short-line service to the crossover at Avenue I and McDonald Avenue.

October 31, 1956 was the last day of trolley operation in Brooklyn. Buses appeared on Church Avenue, but there was no longer any surface transportation on McDonald Avenue. Brooklyn's PCCs were in service for less than 20 years and were scrapped long before the end of their useful lives. Trolley coaches, which were less than 12 years old, probably could have run a little longer, but they were replaced by buses on July 27, 1960, the last day of electric surface transit in Brooklyn.

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