BULLETIN

Volume 68, Number 1 | January 2025

Four Subway Stations Go ADA In One Month

A record four stations received elevators in December, and with that, all four became fully accessible.

Queensboro Plaza Station on the IRT Flushing 7 and BMT Astoria N W Lines was the first, on December 12, with the completion of two new elevators there. In addition to the new elevators, crews performed state of good repair work and made passenger circulation improvements, including new Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) boarding areas. This was the sixth subway station to be made accessible in 2024.

The project consisted of two elevators, one connecting the street (Queens Plaza South) and mezzanine level and another connecting the mezzanine to both platforms. The project also included:

- Expansion of the mezzanine by about 2,100 sq. ft., improving passenger flow within the station
- New lighting for the expanded mezzanine
- Updates to the pedestrian bridge
- A new street stair (S1/M1)
- New boarding areas compliant with the ADA, with new platform edges
- Upgrades to existing street and station stairs to current ADA standards

The station's accessibility upgrade is complemented with security and communication enhancements, upgrades to the fire alarm system, installation of a new security camera system, a new public address system, and digital information screens, offering better communication with clearer announcements and greater access to information via screens.

A second accessible entrance, on the north side of the station, is being constructed under a Zoning for Accessibility project.

One week later, on December 19, the completion of four new elevators, providing access to the southbound IND Sixth Avenue F M Line platform and the southbound IRT Seventh Avenue 1 2 3 Line platform, marked the completion of the entire 14 Street Station complex accessibility project.

In addition to the accessibility work, crews created an

Continued on page 3

Electric Railroaders Association

Founded August 15, 1934 by E.J. Quinby
P.O. Box 3323
New York, N.Y. 10163
https://erausa.org

In This Issue

Front Cover Photo

Sunday, May 19, was our seventh day of scheduled activities on the ERA's 2024 European tour. It took place in Ghent and our day there luckily coincided with that city's celebration of their 150th anniversary of tramways. After the parade of trams in the late morning, whichincluded everything from horse car to the latest Bombardier Flexity 2 LRV, several of the museum trams operated in a special shuttle service between the main railway station (Sint Pietersstation) and the Korenmarkt, the old town square. In this late afternoon view one block south of the Veergrep stop on the Kortrijksepoortstraat, MIVG (Gent city) 3-axle motor 339 (Les Ateliers Métallurgiques, 1930) and SNCV (Vicinal interurban) diesel railcar AR.86 (SNCV, 1934) pass each other as they cross the Ijzerlaan/Charles de Kerchovelaan. MIVG 339 is owned by ETG-Erfgoed Tram en bus van Gent en Oost-Vlaanderen (Heritage Tram and Bus of Ghent and East Flanders) while the AR.86 is owned by ASVi-Musée du Tram Vicinal, a museum the ERA group would visit four days later. Jeff Erlitz photo

Donations

The ERA Board of Directors express their deepest appreciation for these member donations in December 2024.

$500 to $999

Edward McKernan

$200 to $499

Irwin Markowitz, Edward Spinella, Leslie Sugai, Walter Zullig

$100 to $199

James Baker, Bruce Bente, Graeme Birchall, Frederick Maloney

$50 to $99

Stephen Ginsberg, Charles Lewis, Guy Martin, Henry Posner

Up to $49

Harry Bell, William Davidson, Richard Dickie, Nicholas Finck, Brian Hager, Greg Katkowski, Andrew Sparberg, Peter Stein, Khalis Ward, Lee Winson

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Monthly Zoom Meeting

Friday, January 17, 2025 at 7:30 PM.

Presenting This Month: Jack May

Our January 2025 presentation will be by ERA's longtime conventions and international trip chairman and past editor of Headlights, Jack May. Jack visited the United Kingdom this past July and will report on the latest transit developments on that side of the Atlantic. New extensions have been completed in Blackpool, Birmingham and Edinburgh, as well as Britain's first tram-train is now in operation in Sheffield. And new cars have finally been delivered to Newcastle. But the program will not only be confined to modern light rail systems. Jack will also take us to the historic sites of Beamish, Crich, and Seaton, where heritage trams provide visitors with a taste of electric traction from the days when streetcars were kings of the road, prior to World War II. London will not be forgotten as Docklands Light Railway, Croydon Tramlink and especially the Underground, including the new Elizabeth line, will be covered. Jack also made brief appearances in Stourbridge and Manchester.

Please join us on Friday, January 17th for Jack's exciting and diverse program!

How to Join Our Zoom Meeting

The Zoom registration link for this meeting is: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/0dpUaKbWTwiMuuN1g5R6CA. You can sign in at 7:15 PM. The show begins at 7:30 PM. If you have any problems, email Andrew Ludasi at aludasi@gmail.com, or on the night of the meeting, text or call Andrew at 609-865-8770.

enlarged mezzanine and new concession stand, installed new lighting and tiles, repaired concrete, steel, and paint defects, and refinished platforms featuring ADA boarding areas. The entire complex has 25 new staircases and 39 renovated staircases, as well as five platform upgrades, which includes new tactile warning strips and ADA boarding areas.

One elevator at Queensboro Plaza serves the mezzanine and both platforms. This view is looking east on the lower platform level. Marc A. Hermann/MTA photo

Two days later, 68 Street-Hunter College 6 Station became accessible with the completion of three new elevators. In addition to the new elevators, crews upgraded platforms and extended the mezzanine, improved passenger circulation with new entrances, and reconstructed stairs and installed better wayfinding signage. This station, which serves 20,000 daily riders, was the ninth subway station to be made accessible in 2024.

The project included one new street-to-mezzanine elevator and two new mezzanine-to-platform elevators, six new stairways, and nine refurbished stairways. Crews created an enlarged mezzanine and new concession stand, installed new lighting and tiles, repaired concrete, steel and paint defects, and refinished platforms featuring ADA boarding areas.

A number of safety enhancements were made in the station, including a new fire alarm system, CCTV cameras and upgraded communications systems, lighting, signs, and rider information.

The $177 million project includes $140 million in federal funds. The project's contractor is Forte-Citnalta Joint Venture, and the elevator manufacturer and installer is Mid-American Elevator Co.

This station also features new artwork in mosaic by artist Lisa Corinne Davis, who is a graduate and professor of art at Hunter College. Commissioned by MTA Arts & Design, the artwork abstractly charts the congregation of the racial, cultural, and economic diversity in this flourishing Upper East Side neighborhood. Comprising approximately 364 square feet, the artwork is prominently located on an expansive wall in the new mezzanine accessible by new stairs and elevators, as well as two walls flanking the seating areas in the paid side of the station.

The new elevator from the mezzanine to the southbound platform of the 14 Street 1 2 3 Station. Marc A. Hermann/MTA photo

The new elevator at 68 Street-Hunter College, located on the corner of Lexington Avenue and 68th Street. Marc A. Hermann/MTA photo

MTA Press Release, December 12
MTA Press Release, December 19
MTA Press Release, December 20

Worldwide Suburban Electric Railway, Metro and Tramway Openings in December 2024

Date	Country	City	Segment	Distance (miles)	Railway/ Metro/ Tram
12/1	China	Suzhou	Line 7: Hongzhuang to Changlou	15.1	M
"	Saudi Arabia	Riyadh	Yellow & Purple Lines: KAFD to Airport T1-2 / An Naseem Blue Line: SAB to Ad Dar Al Baida	30.4 22.8	M
"	Estonia	Tallinn	Line 2: Suur Rannavärav (ex Linnahall) to Vanasadam to Paberi	1.2	T
12/2	China	Macau	Hengqin Line: Lôtus to Hengqin	1.4	M
12/3	"	Xuzhou	Line 3: Xiadian to Zhenxingdadao Gaoxinqunan to Yinshan	4.1 1.0	M
12/8	India	Ahmedabad	Blue Line: Thaltej to Thaltej Gam	0.8	M
12/9	Australia	Perth	Bayswater to Ellenbrook	13.0	R
12/10	Singapore	Singapore	NEL Punggol to Punggol Coast	1.1	M
12/15	China	Beijing	Line 3: Dongsi Shitiao to Dongbabei Line 12: Sijiqingqiao to Dongbabei Changping Line: Xitucheng to Jimenqiao	9.1 16.7 n/a	M
"	Saudi Arabia	Riyadh	Red Line: King Saud University to King Fahad Stadium Green Line: Ministry of Education to National Museum	15.0 7.8	M
12/18	China	Qingdao	Line 2: Taishan Road to Sichuan Road	n/a	M
12/19	"	Chengdu	Line 8: Guilong Road to Shilidian & Lianhua to Longgang Line 27: Shifo to Shuxin Road	4.7 15.5	M
12/20	Australia	Sydney	L4 Parramatta Light Rail: Westmead to Carlingford	7.5	T
"	Canada	Vancouver	Canada Line: Capstan Station (infill)	n/a	M
12/21	South Korea	Daegu	Line 1: Ansim to Hayang	5.4	M
12/22	Vietnam	Ho Chi Minh City	Ben Thanh to Suoi Tien	12.2	M
12/26	China	Hefei	Line 8: Yilijing to Beicheng Gaotiezhan	14.0	M
"	"	Xi'an	Line 8: Circle Line	31.1	M
12/27	"	Shanghai	Airport Link Line: Hongqiao Airport T2 to Pudong Airport T1&2	36.7	R
"	"	Wuhan	Line 11: Wuhandong Railway Station to Jiang'an Road	10.1	M
"	Russia	St. Petersburg	Line 4: Spasskaya to Gornyi Institut	2.2	M
12/28	South Korea	Seoul	GTX-A: Seoul Station to Unjeongjungang	?	R
"	China	Tianjin	Line 11: Dongjiangdao to Shuishanggongyuanxilu	?	M
"	"	Nanjing	Line 7: Yingtiandajie to Mufuxilu	?	M
"	"	Shenzhen	Line 3: Shuanglong to Pingdi Liulian Line 7: Xili Lake to SZU Lihu Campus Line 11: Gangxia North to Huaqiang South Line 12: Waterlands Resort East to Songgang Line 13: Shenzhen Bay Checkpoint to Hi-Tech Central	5.8 1.6 2.7 4.1 ?	M
"	"	Guangzhou	Line 11: Circle Line	27.5	M
"	"	Guiyang	S1: Wangchengpo to Zaojiaoba	18.8	R
"	Russia	Moscow	Line 16: Tyutchevskaya to Novomoskovskaya	?	M
12/29	China	Zhengzhou	Line 7: Dongzhao to Nangangliu Line 8: Tianjianhu to Lumiao	16.7 32.2	M
12/30	"	Shenyang	Line 3: Lida to Nan Liguan	14.3	M
"	Belarus	Minsk	Line 3: Kavalskaya Slabada to Slutski Gastsinets	2.5	M

URBAN RAIL NEWS, DECEMBER 31

Rail News in Review

New York Metropolitan Area

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (MTA)

Grand Central Madison Wins Award

Grand Central Madison was awarded UNESCO's 2024 Prix Versailles Interior Award for the World's Most Beautiful Passenger Station category. This global architecture and design award for recently opened or renovated metro stations is selected by the Prix Versailles jury, composed of architects, designers, and cultural figures around the world. The announcement was made on December 2 at the Prix Versailles World Ceremony at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France.

In September, the Prix Versailles Selection Committee chose Grand Central Madison for the World's Most Beautiful Passenger Stations 2024 List, along with Schafbergbahn Station in St. Wolfgang, Austria; Bell Station in Melbourne, Australia; Beijing Station in Beijing, China; Matabiau Station in Toulouse, France; and Chiaia Metro Station in Naples, Italy. From the list, the World Judges Panel awarded three World Titles: Prix Versailles, Interior, and Exterior.

The Prix Versailles, a series of architectural competitions that shine a light on the finest contemporary projects worldwide, recognizes contemporary projects that leave extraordinary imprints on their living environments. The award criteria include the innovativeness, creativity, reflection of local heritage, and ecological efficiency of each project.
MTA Press Release, December 3

NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT (NYCT)

Platform Barrier Installation Update

Over the weekend of December 14-15, platform edge barriers were starting to be installed at Main Street-Flushing Station on the IRT Flushing 7 Line. The platform edge next to Track 1 was done on Saturday and the edge next to Track 2 was done on Sunday.

Church Avenue B Q ADA Work Update

At one minute past midnight on Saturday, November 23, the southbound platform at Church Avenue on the BMT Brighton Line was returned to service. It had been removed from service, with southbound B and Q trains bypassing the station, since August 5. This was to allow construction crews unfettered access to perform elevator construction work between the platform and the mezzanine.

For a little over one week, From November 23 to December 2, the express tracks of the Brighton Line were also returned to service. However, during that time, the platform edges along the express tracks in Church Avenue Station were closed off so any trains on the express tracks needed to bypass the station.

Then, on December 2, the northbound platform at Church Avenue was removed from service for that platform's elevator installation. With this, the express tracks, from Parkside Avenue to near Kings Highway, were also removed from service. This work is scheduled to finish up on March 7.

Gates Avenue J Z and Middletown Road 6 Stations To Become Accessible

Gates Avenue J Z Station in Bushwick, Brooklyn, will receive accessibility upgrades. A new addition to the 2020-2024 Capital Plan, Gates Avenue will be included in an upcoming procurement for a package of ADA upgrades at three stations — MTA's ADA Package 9, which will also include accessibility upgrades at the Parsons Boulevard F and Briarwood E F Stations in Queens. The Gates Avenue project will install two elevators, rebuild four staircases, and replace the yellow tactile strip along each platform.

ADA Package 9 is among the first of the projects made possible by the implementation of Congestion Pricing to move forward into procurement. A Request for Qualifications will be issued by the end of the year to select a contractor. Construction is expected to begin late 2026.

In other ADA news, the MTA mwill shortly award a contract for the construction of ADA accessibility upgrades at five subway stations. This package, called ADA Package 6, will now include the Middletown Road 6 subway station in the Bronx, a new addition to the 2020-2024 Capital Plan.

The stations included in ADA Package 6 are:

- Norwood Avenue J Z
- Myrtle Avenue J M Z
- Avenue I F
- Burnside Avenue 4
- Middletown Road 6

The Package is funded in part by $254 million in support from the Federal Transit Administration's All Stations Accessibility Program.

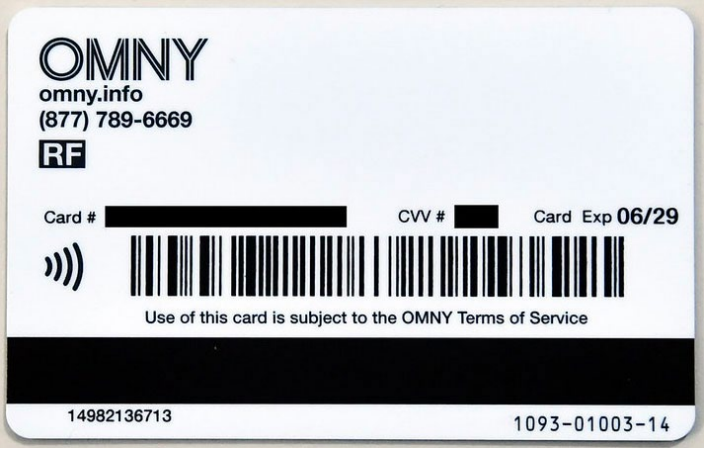
Middletown Road is a new addition to the MTA Capital Plan and will be funded by local funding sources. The upgrades to the Middletown Road station include the installation of one elevator on both platforms that will provide access to the mezzanine as well as the street. It will also include upgrades to fare payment areas on both platforms and station staircases.

The proposed contract will be submitted to the MTA Board for consideration and approval at its December committee and full board meetings. Work on the bundle of projects is set to begin in February 2025 and will be completed by early 2029.
MTA Press Release, December 12
MTA Press Release, December 13

OMNY Rollout Continues

Tap-and-go fare technology is now available to nearly all riders with the conversion of Reduced-Fare riders from MetroCard to OMNY. Reduced-Fare riders are the largest group to be made eligible for tap-and-go fare payments.

The MTA has begun mailing OMNY cards directly to the more than 1.5 million Reduced-Fare riders enrolled in the program, providing a seamless transition to the tap-and-go system. The new OMNY cards will enable current and future enrolled Reduced-Fare program riders to benefit from OMNY's convenience and financial flexibility to pay for subway and bus fares.



Unlike the MetroCards that have been in use for many years, the reduced fare OMNY cards have neither a photo of the card holder nor the card holder's name. MTA photo

OMNY has been supporting the Reduced-Fare riders since October 2022 with 75,000 of them having registered their own bank card or digital wallet to tap-to-pay for their travel. MTA Press Release, December 13

Additional Subway Cars Ordered

The New York City Transit Committee approved an order for 435 additional R-211 subway cars, authorizing the full MTA Board to consider the order at their monthly meeting. This order includes 355 closed-end cars and 80 open-gangway cars. The option would bring the total number of R-211 cars ordered to 1,610. There are currently 345 R-211 cars in service, on the A and C lines and the Staten Island Railway.

Beginning early next year, NYCT will run at least two open-gangway trains on the G line, making it the second subway line to have open-gangway trains. Open-gangway trains first operated on the C line earlier this year.

In January 2018, the Board awarded the contract to Kawasaki Rail Car Inc. to design, build and deliver 535 subway cars, comprised of 440 closed-end cars (R-211A), 20 open-gangway (R-211T) and 75 cars for Staten Island Railway. The Contract included two options: Option 1 for 640 cars and Option 2, which proposed either ordering 333 or 437 cars. In October 2022, the Board authorized Option 1 to exercise an additional 640 R-211A cars in the estimated amount of $1.78 billion. This

The 12:12 A from Far Rockaway to 207 Street, led by R-211A No. 4100, is rolling through the interlocking south of 80 Street Station on Liberty Avenue on October 23, 2024. Jeff Erlitz photo

announcement is to exercise Option 2 for 435 cars, a modification to the base contract proposed amounts, consisting of 355 R-211A and 80 R-211T, at an estimated price of $1.27 billion. MTA Press Release, December 16

LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD (LIRR)/ METRO-NORTH RAILROAD (MNR)

Winter Weekend Discounts for Monthly Ticketholders

The LIRR and MNR "Winter Weekend" discount program will have begun by the time you read this. This program expands on the popular "Summer Saturday" discount program that enables monthly ticketholders to travel anywhere the railroads go and bring friends of family for just one dollar each.

Beginning on Saturday, January 4, both railroads will honor all monthly tickets for travel to and from all stations within their territories regardless of which stations are printed on the ticket. Monthly ticket holders traveling Saturdays and Sundays will be able to bring up to two additional travelers for only one dollar per person each way. Promotional one dollar tickets can be purchased via the TrainTime app under Family Fares or on board without incurring an extra charge.

There will be no cross-honoring of these discounted tickets between the railroads, meaning LIRR customers cannot use their monthly tickets to travel on MNR, and vice versa. The program is expected to run through the end of March. MTA Press Release, December 27

NEW JERSEY TRANSIT (NJT)

New Leadership

Kris Kolluri will serve as the next President and CEO of NJT, following the resignation of Kevin Corbett, who will continue to serve in the position until January 15, 2025. The NJT Board

of Directors unanimously voted to confirm the Governor's nomination during its December 11 Board meeting.

Kris recently completed his tenure as the Chief Executive Officer of the Gateway Development Commission, a bi-state entity overseeing the Hudson Tunnel Project.

Previous work positions included:

- President & Chief Executive Officer of Camden Community Partnership, Inc.
- Chief Executive Officer of the Rowan University/Rutgers-Camden Board of Governors
- Chief Executive Officer of the New Jersey Schools Development Authority
- Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Transportation
- Chairman of NJT, the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, and the South Jersey Transportation Authority

NJ TRANSIT PRESS RELEASE, December 11

Raritan River Bridge Construction Advances

The NJT Board of Directors advanced the construction of the new Raritan River Bridge on the North Jersey Coast Line by awarding the second construction contract, which encompasses the lift portion of the bridge. The new bridge, which spans the Raritan River between Perth Amboy and South Amboy, will have a center span that lifts vertically to allow for marine traffic to pass underneath and will replace the current 116-year-old swing bridge.

The construction contract was awarded to Skanska Koch Inc. of Carteret, N.J. in the amount not to exceed $444,380,524, plus five percent for contingencies for the construction of the lift bridge and flanking spans, communication, signals, overhead catenary and other associated site work.

Rendering of the new lift bridge over the Raritan River. NJ Transit

The replacement bridge will be a vertical lift bridge providing a new two-track movable span across the Raritan River, slightly offset from the original alignment, and linking back to the existing mainline tracks at its northern and southern ends.

The current bridge has been in service since 1908 and was not designed to withstand the lateral forces due to ocean surges. Consequently, while currently still safe for train travel, the bridge suffered significant damage during Superstorm Sandy, including movement of the bridge deck out of its normal alignment due to ocean surges against the bridge superstructure and the impact of large, wave-borne debris bearing against the bridge girders.

After the storm passed, inspections revealed the damage, and train services and marine vessel operations were suspended until repairs could be made, resulting in no train service for a period of three weeks. Through these events, Superstorm Sandy demonstrated the vulnerability of the bridge to extreme weather events.

Under a separate authorization, NJT repaired the supporting piers of the current bridge to allow its continued use while a new bridge was designed and built.

The approaches to the new bridge are currently under construction in a separate contract awarded in June 2020. The overall replacement project is being funded in part through a more than $446-million grant from the Federal Transit Administration.

NJ TRANSIT PRESS RELEASE, December 11

County Yard/Delco Lead Project

NJT held a groundbreaking ceremony for the County Yard and Delco Lead Storage and Inspection Facility Project. The project is part of NJT's Resilience Program and will create an additional resilient storage location for rail cars and locomotives that will provide greater protection against future flooding. The centrally located Delco Lead, along the Northeast Corridor in New Brunswick, will allow rail cars and locomotives to be safely stored and protected during extreme weather events. The project also includes the construction of a new Service and Inspection facility on the adjacent grounds to quickly inspect and return the equipment to service once a weather event has passed.

Rendering of the inspection shop at County Yard. NJ Transit

In September 2024, the George Harms Construction Company, Inc., of Howell, N.J. was awarded the contract, in the amount of $497,977,585.35, plus 10 percent for contingencies, for the reconstruction of four miles of the existing Delco Lead track, and the construction of an adjacent track, approximately one mile long, from County Yard to North Brunswick. County Yard and Delco Lead, due to their location

above the floodplain, provide an ideal storage location for rail cars during extreme weather events.

Additionally, the project calls for the construction of a 1,250-foot-long Service and Inspection Facility. The new facility will be used for inspection and light maintenance of trains, spare parts storage, two 12-car inspection tracks, and five 12-car storage tracks.

Located along the Northeast Corridor, the Delco Lead Project will provide resilient storage for NJ TRANSIT's rail equipment in the event the Meadows Maintenance Complex in Kearny, N.J. and Morrisville, Pa. yard are evacuated.

A crew quarters and employee parking lot at County Yard will also be constructed as part of the project.

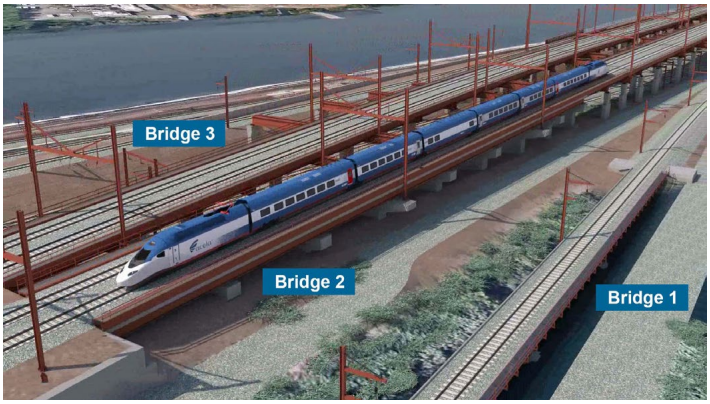
NJ TRANSIT PRESS RELEASE, December 12

AMTRAK

Sawtooth Bridges Replacement Project

Amtrak achieved a major milestone for the Sawtooth Bridges Replacement Project, selecting a Skanska, Walsh & Herzog Joint Venture to conduct pre-construction activities along with future contract opportunities for the project's full construction scope. This project will construct multiple bridge structures with four tracks, replacing the existing aging bridge and enhancing capacity, reliability, and speed along this segment of the Northeast Corridor (NEC).

Amtrak has also awarded a project and construction management contract to a Joint Venture of AECOM and STV for pre-construction support services during the project final design phase, and to perform construction management for the construction phase. This team will work closely with the Skanska, Walsh & Herzog Joint Venture and Amtrak's in-house Capital Delivery department.



Rendering of the new Sawtooth Bridges in Kearny, N.J. Amtrak

The Sawtooth Bridges were originally constructed in 1907 and serve as a critical link in the NEC, supporting more than 400 daily trains operated by Amtrak and NJT over tracks used by NJT, PATH, and Conrail Shared Assets freight trains. Their age and structural deficiencies limit train speeds to 60 mph.

The project will construct three new bridges along a 1.9-mile corridor in Kearny, N.J., between Newark Penn Station and Secaucus Junction:

- Bridge #1: Realigns NJT's Morris & Essex Track 5, creating space for additional NEC tracks built with Bridge #2
- Bridge #2: Features two new NEC tracks, adjacent to the existing Sawtooth Bridges
- Bridge #3: Completely replaces the existing Sawtooth Bridges structures, which carry the two current NEC tracks

Construction of the new bridges is being delivered through the innovative Construction Manager At-Risk delivery method, which improves project delivery time and allows design, pre-construction, and other work to proceed simultaneously.

The nearly two-mile project corridor presents unique challenges as a congested area with limited access points and space that require extensive coordination with NJT, PATH, Conrail, and third-party utilities. The new design will modernize rail infrastructure while preserving operations during construction.

AMTRAK PRESS RELEASE, December 19

Other U.S. Systems

ATLANTA, GA.

Signal System Modernization

The Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) Board of Directors awarded Stadler a $500 million contract to equip the agency's rail network with a new communication-based train control system.

The Stadler system will work seamlessly with MARTA's new Stadler CQ400 rail cars being introduced in 2025. The vehicles will be equipped with the necessary hardware at the Stadler plant in Salt Lake City, where the 56 new cars ordered in 2019 are being built. The trackside equipment will be installed, tested, and commissioned directly on the MARTA network. As the on-board and trackside components come from the same supplier, the project is expected to be completed seamlessly.

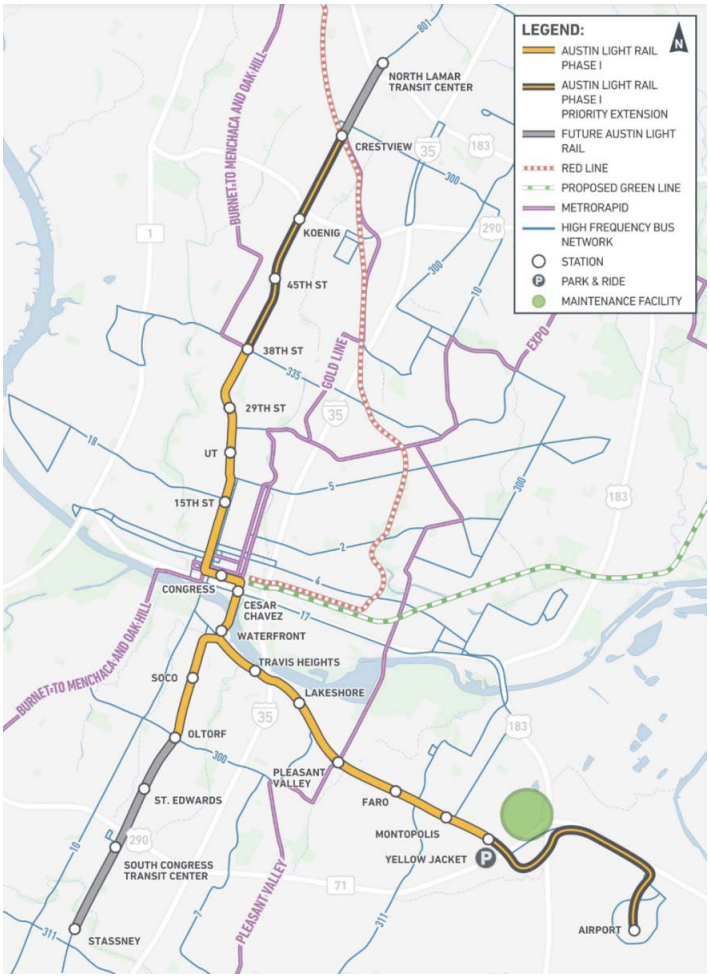
CQ312 No. 701 (Breda, 2003) is on the tail end of an Airport-bound Red Line train at the Dunwoody Station in this undated but recent photo. Railway Age photo

During a transition phase, trains will be able to run with both the old and the new system. As soon as the trackside components have been installed across the network, the transition process to the new signal system will be expected to be smooth and without any interruption to operations.
MARTA PRESS RELEASE, December 5

AUSTIN, TEXAS

Light Rail Project

Austin Transit Partnership (ATP), the local government corporation charged with implementing Austin's first light rail system, has selected AECOM as its Delivery Partner for Austin Light Rail Phase 1.



Map of Austin's proposed light rail network. Austin Transit Partners

ATP's Board of Directors unanimously approved a resolution December 18 authorizing the agency to move forward with a multi-year contract for a Delivery Partner for the implementation of Austin Light Rail. The value of the initial four-year contract as approved by the Board is for an amount not to exceed $98.5 million. The Delivery Partner serves as a Project Management/Construction Management team to deliver Austin Light Rail, through full integration with ATP and collaborative engagement with ATP's other contractors, as well as share a solutions-oriented approach to the work.

Serving as an extension of the ATP team, AECOM will provide a wide range of professional services to support Austin Light Rail during final design, construction, and the launch of service. Those services include staff augmentation and technical assistance for program management and administration services, project controls, Federal Transit Administration support and advisory services, design and construction management, and post-construction management services.

ATP initiated the Delivery Partner solicitation last January, engaging with industry for months before issuing a Request for Qualifications in June. The early engagement helped ATP strengthen its solicitations to encourage more top industry performers to submit proposals and allow bidders time to assign their best and most experienced team members.

AECOM is expected to begin work in January, the same month ATP will initiate procurement of final design and construction contracts valued at more than $4 billion. The contracts are expected to be awarded in 2026 with construction scheduled to begin in 2027.
ATP PRESS RELEASE, December 19

BALTIMORE, MD.

Red Line Advances

STV has signed a contract with the Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to provide comprehensive design services for MTA's Red Line, a new 14-mile light-rail transit corridor that will enhance east-west connectivity in Baltimore.

Rendering of a typical station on Baltimore's future Red Line. STV

In tri-venture with Jacobs and WRA as Transit Delivery Partners, STV will serve as the general engineering consultant. The firm is providing roadway, track, water resources, systems, traffic, landscaping, architecture, structural, and utility design and oversight. STV is also offering planning support in collaboration with the program management consultant (PMC) and will provide cost estimating services later in the project.

The Red Line project was revived again in June 2023 and in June 2024, light rail was selected as the preferred mode of transit to meet Baltimore's need for east-west transit service. STV had previously supported the original project as part of a PMC team prior to 2015.

The Red Line will connect communities from Woodlawn in Baltimore County to Johns Hopkins Bayview Hospital in East Baltimore. The majority of the route will be surface running within the existing Baltimore City roadway network. The project scope also includes the design of several maintenance buildings for vehicle storage and maintenance, as well as park-and-ride facilities along the alignment.
MASS TRANSIT, December 5

BOSTON, MASS.

All Track Work Completed

The MBTA, along with elected officials, held a press conference at North Station to celebrate the completion of the T's Track Improvement Program and the removal of slow zones for the first time in 20 years. Since 2023, the MBTA removed more than 220 speed restrictions and replaced 250,000 feet of rail across the system, saving riders 2.4 million passenger minutes of travel every weekday and generating nearly $1 million in economic benefit every day.
MBTA PRESS RELEASE, December 23

Type 8 No. 3865 (Breda, 2004)+Type 7 No. 3662 (Kinki-Sharyo, 1987) are slowing for their stop at Magoun Square on a Green Line E Route trip to Heath Street on July 22, 2023. Though only recently opened, the Green Line from Park Street north to Union Square and Medford/Tufts were where the last sections of track renewal work took place. That work was performed from December 6 to 20, which eliminated the last of the slow-speed restrictions on the entire MBTA rail system.
Jeff Erlitz photo

CHICAGO, ILL.

Station Renovation Program Completed for the Year

The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) announced the completion of work planned in 2024 as part of its ongoing, cyclical station improvement program Refresh & Renew. In 2024, crews completed an estimated $6.5 million in repairs and maintenance at 29 stations and 14 bus turnarounds across Chicagoland.

Created in 2019, the Refresh & Renew program aims at keeping CTA's stations in a state of good repair with focused maintenance that enhances the safety, security, and overall look and feel of facilities.

Prior to starting work at a location, crews perform a thorough inspection of the facility and identify items in need of immediate or eventual repair, cleaning, and/or replacement.

Some of the more comprehensive improvements made as part of this program include concrete repairs, removal of outdated fixtures and equipment, fixing utility and plumbing lines and more. Work also includes smaller cosmetic upgrades such as painting and replacing sheet metal or damaged signage, lighting upgrades, cleaning, and resurfacing (e.g., columns, walls, railings, fencing/gates, platform fixtures, etc.).
CTA PRESS RELEASE, December 12

DENVER, COLO.

Downtown Rail Reconstruction Project- Next Phase

RTD is seeking proposals from qualified design-build teams to complete the remaining phases of its Downtown Rail Reconstruction Project. RTD initiated the procurement process, which seeks multidisciplinary expertise in design, engineering, and construction. Information about the Request for Proposals (RFP) solicitation is currently available through the agency's online procurement portal. Proposals are due in February 2025, and the agency anticipates selecting a contractor in April.

SD160s 227+267+298 (Siemens, 2006-2010) are operating a Route D trip on Stout Street south of 15th Street in downtown on June 25, 2022.
Alex Krakowsky phot via Urban Electric Transit

The first phase of the Downtown Rail Reconstruction Project began in May 2024 and focused on 30-year-old infrastructure at five key intersections in the Downtown Loop.

The full-depth reconstruction process involved removing existing rail, concrete, ties, and ballast before rebuilding the embedded track along RTD's inaugural light rail line. The first phase was completed ahead of schedule in September, and RTD is now seeking proposals for the remaining three phases of the approximately $152 million project.

To complete the remaining reconstruction work, which will resume in 2025, RTD will use a progressive design-build project delivery approach. This approach is a method that combines the benefits of early contractor involvement with the design-build model. It's a two-phase process that involves the owner and the design-build team working together to develop a final design, schedule, and budget and will accelerate the project schedule and minimize the overall impacts to customers and the community. The RFP process will result in a single contract being awarded for both a project designer and construction contractor. After successfully completing a validation of the existing information, the contractor will then have an opportunity to negotiate the cost for the project's final design and construction.

The subsequent three phases of the project will begin in 2025, and work on each phase may simultaneously occur.

- Phase Two: Midblock Reconstruction in Downtown Loop
- Phase Three: Colfax Avenue Alignment Reconstruction
- Phase Four: Welton Street Corridor

Similar to Phase One in 2024, all D and H Line trains will be rerouted to Denver Union Station during the reconstruction work, and L Line service, which connects 30th/Downing Station to the Downtown Loop, will be temporarily suspended. No light rail service will operate in RTD's central corridor until the reconstruction project has been fully completed.

In other Denver news, the E (Union Station to RidgeGate Parkway Station) and H (18th & California to Florida) Lines are having their 15-minute headway reinstated with the next systemwide schedule change on January 19. These two lines are currently operating on a 30-minute off-peak headway.
DENVER RTD PRESS RELEASE, December 2
DENVER RTD PRESS RELEASE, December 19

HOUSTON, TEXAS

New Rail Maintenance Facility Under Construction

METRO broke ground on the new 30,000 square-foot Maintenance of Way (MOW) Facility, a project aimed at enhancing efficiency, safety, and reliability across the METRORail system.

Located near the Burnett Transit Center, the MOW Facility will serve as a centralized hub for maintaining and making repairs along the Red, Green, and Purple lines.

The facility will feature:

- A 3,500-square-foot maintenance shop
- A storage warehouse and laydown yard
- Surface parking and storm water detention infrastructure

In addition to the new building, the project will add sidewalks, street enhancements, and better drainage on Brooks and Keene Streets. The MOW Facility is the last project associated with the extension of the Red Line and is expected to be completed in July 2026.
HOUSTON METRO PRESS RELEASE, December 9

Urbos 70 No. 339 (CAF, 2015), operating on the Purple Line, is seen heading southeast on Capitol Street at Austin Street on September 2, 2023. Vladimir Shevchenko photo via Urban Electric Transit

KANSAS CITY, MO.

New Streetcar Order Completed

Kansas City's newest streetcar, No. 814, from vehicle manufacturer CAF USA, Inc. arrived in Kansas City on December 12.

This is the eighth streetcar to arrive to support operation of the Main Street and Riverfront Extensions, ultimately connecting the University of Missouri-Kansas City to Berkley Riverfront. The KC Streetcar vehicles are picking up the numbering where it left off with the 801-806 streetcar series and are numbered 807-814.

CAF, along with Silk Road Transport, delivered KC Streetcar vehicle No. 814 more than 1,000 miles from Elmira, N.Y. to Kansas City, Mo. Once on-site, the streetcar was offloaded onto the tracks located along Second Street just east of Oak Street and transported to the Kite Singleton Vehicle Maintenance Facility located at 600 East Third Street. KC Streetcar No. 814 will undergo shop testing for several weeks before it starts testing on the tracks.

The addition of eight new streetcars is a step in supporting the expansion of the KC Streetcar system, particularly as it grows beyond its original downtown route to include the Main Street and Riverfront Extensions. These new vehicles will accommodate the increased demand expected with the expanded service area. The acceptance of this newest streetcar marks the culmination of this fleet expansion. such as vehicle leveling, sensors, door mechanisms, onboard digital signage and announcements, and more. As each new streetcar completes the required testing and becomes certified for service, they will be deployed on the downtown line.

KC Streetcars Nos. 809-813 are also performing various tests in the Singleton Yard Vehicle Maintenance Facility and on the streetcar route during service hours and overnight. These tests include checks of the braking systems, interior systems Urbos 3 No. 814 (CAF, 2024) is about to leave the CAF USA factory in Elmira, N.Y. on its delivery to Kansas City. CAF photo

KC STREETCAR PRESS RELEASE, December 12

PITTSBURGH, PA.

Upcoming Rail Projects

Starting January 2, portions of the light-rail system in downtown Pittsburgh will be closed for about two months while crews repair and replace the plinth, the concrete beam that supports the tracks. This work is a continuation of a project Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT) began in 2022.

The project will be completed in two sections. From January 2 to early February, rail service from the South Hills will temporarily end at First Avenue Station. Shuttle buses will operate every 10 minutes between First Avenue and Steel Plaza while a "Subway Local" rail car will operate every 15 minutes between Steel Plaza and Allegheny stations. PRT's contractor will halt work to accommodate any yet-to-be scheduled Steelers games at Acrisure Stadium. Should the contractor complete the work early or need to extend the schedule, updates will be posted at www.rideprt.org/plinth.

From early February to early March, the light-rail system will be closed between Steel Plaza and Gateway stations. Wood Street Station will not be in service.

Service from the South Hills will end at Penn Station, the normally inactive light-rail station. Shuttle buses will operate every 10 minutes between Penn Station and Gateway Station while a "Subway Local" rail car operates every 10 minutes between Gateway and Allegheny stations.

Also starting in early January, crews will be grinding the rail in the South Hills. This maintenance work restores the profile of the rail by removing defects using a special machine to bring the rail to a uniform standard. A fundamental part of rail maintenance programs, rail grinding not only extends rail life but also reduces wear on the rail car wheels and improves ride quality.

This three-year (*Editor's Note: Three years?!*) $1.5 million project will run from January to March each year until 2027. The work is being performed by RailWorks. Rail grinding will start the first or second week of the year. The work will be conducted on weekdays during the day, although some overnight and weekend work will be required. Rail grinding will occur in sections: From South Hills Village to Washington Junction; from Washington Junction to Willow; from Willow to South Hills Junction; and, if time permits, from Washington Junction to Library Station.

Rail cars will be single-tracking through those areas so no station will be taken out of service completely.

PRT PRESS RELEASE, December 20

PAT SD400 No. 4214 (CAF, 2005) lays over briefly at the normally-unused Penn Station stop during a charter on June 9, 2024. These LRVs were built by Siemens in 1985 and were rebuilt by CAF in 2005. Kristen Fredriksen photo

SAN FRANSISCO BAY AREA, CALIF.

New Fare Gate Installations Continue on BART

Installation work began on December 13 to install the new next-generation fare gates at Dublin/Pleasanton and Hayward Stations. The installation process is expected to take approximately two weeks to complete.

During construction, there will be a barrier around the existing station gate array. Riders will use two temporary accessible gates to enter and exit. This latest work follows the successful installation of new fare gates at 11 BART stations across the system. All BART stations will have new gates by the end of 2025.

BART PRESS RELEASE, December 6
BART PRESS RELEASE, December 6
(Editor's Note: Two separate press releases on the same day).

Silicon Valley Phase II Project Amendment

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) Board of Directors authorized an amendment to the Kiewit Shea Traylor Joint Venture's (KST) tunnel and trackwork contract (CP2) for the BART Silicon Valley Phase II Project. The

amendment facilitates preparatory efforts and construction of the large shaft structure from which the tunnel boring machine (TBM) will be launched.

The value of the newly authorized KST amendment, not to exceed $366.4 million, reflects a $15 million negotiated reduction from the contractor's last estimate. Construction of the launch shaft will be executed concurrently with the custom manufacturing of the TBM, which is already underway, ensuring site readiness to tunnel boring in 2027.

CP2 is being executed in two stages and the current work is part of the first stage authorized by the board in May 2022. Other work in the first phase includes investigation of cost saving and delivery innovations, programming and design services, procurement of the TBM, demolition, utility relocations and other early site and general preparatory and construction activities.

Stage 2 of CP2 would be for all remaining tunnel-related work, including construction of the tunnel, concrete structures in the tunnel, portals, station shafts and tunnel connections, underground boarding platforms and track-work. A decision and suggested path forward on Stage 2 will be shared in the first quarter of 2025.

On June 12, 2024, Santa Clara VTA broke ground at the site of the future Santa Clara Station, which will include the station, rail and maintenance yard and tunnel's west portal where the TBM will be launched from and where passenger trains will descend to or ascend from the five-mile tunnel. To date, work at the site has included site grading, drainage, utility relocations, constructing on-site access points, crew parking, and offices and construction fencing while upcoming work includes installing a noise curtain to protect nearby residents and businesses, building the launch shaft, constructing a tunnel liner factory and storage area, excavated material bin, and a grout plant to make the sealant for tunnel liners.
MASS TRANSIT, December 16

TAMPA, FLA.

Will Streetcar Remain Free?

The fate of the TECO Line Streetcar fare-free service once again hangs in the balance, transit authority staff say. Facing a critical budget shortfall and the end of yearslong grant funding, transit officials are exploring possible cuts to service and the reinstatement of fares.

Transit officials are preparing for the worst-case scenario if the mayor falters on her assurance of continued fare-free service. That includes possible cuts to service and the reinstatement of fares, which could range from $1 to $2.50 per ride. One councilmember said the City Council is just waiting on a funding proposal from the mayor that would keep the streetcar free.

Owned by the city of Tampa and operated by the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HARTA), the iconic yellow cars have grown from a tourist novelty into a reliable public transit option for those on its 2.7-mile route connecting downtown Tampa to Ybor City.

Double-truck motor No. 428 (Gomaco, 2001) is on the private right-of-way outside the carbarn in the Ybor City section, just north of East 6th Avenue, on November 21, 2022.
Rudolf photo via Urban Electric Transit

Service has been free to riders since 2018, thanks to consistent grant funding from the Florida Department of Transportation — about $700,000 each year. Since then, ridership has exploded from just over 300,000 riders to more than 1.3 million. The state grant didn't continue into the 2025 fiscal year. But after a review earlier this year found additional expenses, the shortfall is even larger, totaling more than $2.5 million.

The advisory board that oversees the streetcar is planning as if the streetcar will have to bring back fares. They would prefer to see the lowest fair possible, one dollar, to preserve ridership.

In a presentation of possible solutions to the budget shortfall, HARTA estimated 1.4 million people would use the streetcar in 2025 without fares. Imposing a fee of even $1 would cut ridership by 300,000. A fare of $2.50 per ride, plus reduced service, would diminish ridership to a third of what it was.

Even with fares, the city will still need to give more money to the streetcar. The option that imposes a $2.50 fare and cuts service would still require $354,000 from the city.

Hillsborough transit officials will decide on a final solution in January at the earliest.
MASS TRANSIT, December 30

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Metro Service Increase

Starting Sunday December 15, Metro increased service on the Green and Yellow Lines. On weekdays, trains now operate on a six-minute headway until 9:30 PM. Previously, they operated on eight-minute headways during off-peak periods.

This previously-budgeted increase is possible because WMATA now has the needed number of operators available to provide it.
WMATA PRESS RELEASE, December 11

Proposed Metrorail Changes

Metro released its proposed budget for the next fiscal year which optimizes service to meet growing ridership demand without any major funding increases.

Metro is calling for longer weekend hours and targeting service increases on the Red, Silver, and Yellow lines. The proposed changes include:

- Extend half of the Yellow Line trains to Greenbelt: Operate in two patterns at all times, with half the trains operating between Huntington and Greenbelt and half operating between Huntington and Mt Vernon Square
- Split Silver Line service between Downtown Largo and New Carrollton: Operate the Silver Line in two service patterns at all times, with half of trains operating between Ashburn and Downtown Largo, and half operating between Ashburn and New Carrollton
- Silver Line additional peak service: Operate two additional Silver Line trains to provide capacity in the weekday peak hour only. Trains would operate from Wiehle-Reston East to Stadium-Armory in the morning, and from Stadium-Armory to Wiehle-Reston East in the afternoon
- Red Line additional peak service: Operate Red Line trains up to every four minutes, from every five minutes, during the busiest portions of weekday rush periods to provide additional capacity in both directions of travel. Red Line trains would continue to operate every five minutes during the remainder of peak service.
- Increase weekend hours of operation: Open the rail system one hour earlier on weekend mornings, at 6 AM on Saturdays and Sundays. Close the rail system one hour later during weekend late nights, closing at 2 AM on Fridays and Saturdays.

WMATA Press Release, December 12

Automatic Train Operation (ATO) Returns

For the first time in 15 years, Metro trains are operating in automatic mode, a move that allows the system to operate as it was originally designed. ATO controls the trains' acceleration, deceleration, and speed while being regulated by safety critical equipment. Trains will get signal and speed commands from equipment located between the tracks for a smoother ride, enhanced safety, and improved on-time performance. Metro will operate in a semi-automated mode with a train operator always inside of the operator's cab.

ATO allows for better coordinated arrivals at transfer stations and improved efficiency for riders transferring lines. Operators will remain responsible for the safety of those aboard their trains.

ATO is semi-automated and assists train operators with their duties. This allows them to observe safety concerns and the environment around the train, including monitoring track conditions, train status, and door operations. ATO will not be used during inclement weather, during single tracking, when workers are on the roadway, and other conditions.

Over the past decade, Metro has successfully included additional layers of protection to improve safety for passengers and train operators when trains run in ATO mode. Those upgrades include:

- Implementation of preventative maintenance cycles that align with manufacturer recommendations
- Adjustment of track marker coils to track train location more precisely
- Implementation of train detection tools, which pair with our control center software solution, to allow traffic controllers to act on potential safety risks
- Replacement of older generation track circuits with a new, more reliable model

Metro has been preparing those whose roles include operating, controlling, and maintaining ATO for several months. The training was designed by Metro in coordination with Metro's Safety & Readiness department and reviewed by the WMSC. Training includes classroom and simulator exercises, including the use of procedures that match real-life operations.

The first phase of ATO rollout began on the Red Line December 15 and will extend to other lines in 2025.

WMATA Press Release, December 12

International

BERN, SWITZERLAND

New EMUs Ordered

Bern suburban operator Regionalverkehr Bern-Solothurn has awarded Stadler a SFr190 million contract to supply 20 custom electric multiple-units to replace its oldest vehicles and increase capacity on Solothurn-Bern RegioExpress route RE5.

This is the third order RBS has placed with Stadler. The new EMUs will be delivered from the manufacturer's Bussnang plant for entry into service between mid-2027 and 2030. This will enable a cascade of stock, with current NExT EMUs on RE5 going to Bätterkinden-Bern service S8 to replace the Seconda units which are now more than 30 years old and increasingly unreliable.

Rendering of RBS's new Stadler EMUs. Stadler

The new metre-gauge 1.25 kV DC three-car EMUs will be 60 meters long, with up to three sets able to work in multiple. They will have 21 seats in first class and 103 seats plus 15

folding seats in second class. There will be multi-purpose areas for wheelchair users, baby carriages, bicycles, and luggage, barrier-free entrances with sliding steps, environmentally friendly air-conditioning and at-seat power sockets.
RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL, November 28

CARDIFF, WALES

Tramway Design/Build Contract Awarded

Graham has been awarded a contract for the detailed design and construction of a tram-train line between Cardiff Central station and Cardiff Bay. This forms Phase 1 of the planned Cardiff Crossrail plan to develop a line running from the northwest of the city to the planned Parkway station to the east.

Phase 1a is to start at a new two-platform tram-train stop in the southern car park of Cardiff Central station, and run through Callaghan Square and on raised track to join the existing railway from Queen Street to Cardiff Bay station. A third platform would be provided at Cardiff Bay, in addition to the second being built as part of the South Wales Metro railway upgrading program.

Phase 1a is now fully funded, with the Welsh and U.K. governments each committing £50 million. The planned Phase 1b extension from Cardiff Bay Station to Pierhead Street is not currently funded.

The early contractor involvement deal announced by Graham on December 1 will see the company collaborate with Cardiff Council and Transport for Wales to manage design costs and streamline the construction process. Detailed design is scheduled to be completed by autumn 2025, allowing construction to start for opening in 2028.

Earlier this year the council appointed consultants WSP and Rider Levett Bucknall to provide program and cost management services.
METRO REPORT INTERNATIONAL, December 3

ISTANBUL, TURKEY

Tramway Approval

Istanbul municipality has been given the go-ahead by the city's governor to develop the planned 21-kilometer Üsküdar-Kadıköy-Maltepe tram line, following a ruling that no environmental impact assessment would be required for the project. Construction is expected to start before the end of 2024 for completion by the end of 2027 at an expected cost of around TL8.5 billion.

The line will run mainly along a coastal highway, replacing existing bus services. It will have 33 stops, offering interchanges with the Marmaray suburban rail line at Üsküdar, Söğütlüçeşme, Göztepe, Bostancı and Maltepe, with the M5 metro line at Üsküdar, with the M4 metro line and T3 tramway at Kadıköy, with the M8 metro line at Bostancı and with the planned M12 metro line at Göztepe and Sahrayıcedit.

The first phase of operations will require 55 trams which are expected to be procured while construction is under way.

Ancillary work will include the rebuilding of Kadıköy harbor square, which is a major transport hub, and the removal of the existing bus station.

The approval of the tram line by the Governor, who is appointed by the national government in Ankara, appears to herald a new era of transport co-operation between the national government of President Erdogan and the opposition-controlled Istanbul municipality.

In recent years the two have been at odds over transport plans for the city, with the national transport ministry seizing control of a number of urban rail projects and rebranding them with the capital letter U, to differentiate them from the municipally controlled metro system, branded with a capital M.
METRO REPORT INTERNATIONAL, December 12

JAÉN, SPAIN

Tram Line to Reopen

The first test runs have been undertaken for the planned reopening of the 4.7-kilometer tramway in Jaén, which closed in 2011 after just 17 days of operation.

Andalucía's public works department began test running at the end of November to verify that the five Alstom trams had been adequately overhauled after 13 years in storage, and that the infrastructure had been restored to a usable condition. Work to revive the line began in October 2023 following the allocation of EU funding.

Citadis 302 No. 01 (Alstom, 2007), in the new paint scheme, at the El Valle stop. Andalusian Government photo

The Jaén trams have been repainted in the livery used by Andalucía for the urban rail networks in Granada and Cádiz.

Tenders have been called for replacement of the medium voltage power supply network, which will require 21 kilometers of underground cabling. The tramway's control software is also considered obsolete and will need replacement.

The line initially opened for trial running on May 3, 2011 with passengers being carried free of charge. However, services were suspended shortly afterwards by court order,

after a bus operator complained about unfair competition.
METRO REPORT INTERNATIONAL, December 6

LONDON, ENGLAND

No Driverless Trains for the Underground

The previous government's proposal for the possible conversion of London Underground lines to driverless operation will not be taken any further, Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has confirmed.

Conversion to driverless operation is regularly suggested by politicians and commentators, often in the belief that this would prevent industrial action stopping services. However, parts of the network date back to the 1860s and are not built as modern routes would be, and many of the lines have complex junctions.

London Underground Piccadilly Line Siemens Mobility train on test at Wildenrath. Tony Miles photo

In 2021 the then government required a study for the conversion of the two-station Waterloo & City Line and the much more complex Piccadilly Line to be undertaken. This was a condition of the provision of funding to keep services running at a time when ridership had collapsed because of Covid-19; before the pandemic the London Underground received no government funding for day-to-day operations.

The study was led by the Department for Transport, with technical input from Transport for London, and looked at the implementation of Grade-of-Automation (GoA) 3 (technically driverless, but with an attendant, as used on the Docklands Light Railway).

It had been concluded that the introduction of driverless trains would cost billions of pounds on each line. Learning from other metros around the world, particularly Paris which provided input into the work, the most practical way of conversion would be for it to coincide with the introduction of new rolling stock, signaling, and platform edge doors at the same time as part of a line upgrade. This would be needed to justify the high costs. On that basis, it was agreed the work shouldn't be progressed any further.
METRO REPORT INTERNATIONAL, December 4

MEDELLIN, COLUMBIA

New Metro Trains Ordered

Metro de Medellin has awarded CAF a contract to supply 13 three-car trainsets, with final assembly and testing to be undertaken at the operator's own facilities.

Metro trainset No. 46 (CAF, 2011) at the Main workshops adjacent to the Bello stop on Line A, near the north end of the line. CAF photo

The additional stock is needed to handle growing ridership on the two-line network, which carries over 1 million passengers per day. The latest trainsets from CAF's Inneo family will be similar to and compatible with 38 trains supplied between 2009 and 2018.

In 2023 CAF completed a comprehensive refurbishment of 42 MAN trainsets dating from the 1990s to improve their reliability and energy efficiency and to provide a further 25 years of service. On December 11 the operator said this modernization project had provided it with the knowledge needed to assemble the 13 new trains locally.
METRO REPORT INTERNATIONAL, December 13

NEWCASTLE, ENGLAND

New Cars In Service

The first of the 46 custom-designed Class 555 trainsets that Stadler is supplying to replace the Tyne & Wear Metro fleet entered passenger service on December 18.

The new train will initially run from Monday to Friday as part of a phased roll-out. Two-thirds of the 46 trainsets ordered have now been built, and 13 have been delivered with 25 more to follow in 2025 and the rest in 2026.

More than 23,000 people participated in consultation on the design, using virtual reality and digital engagement from Newcastle University's OpenLab research team.

Features of the articulated five-car aluminium bodied units include mobile charging points, double grab poles, climate control, 44 digital CCTV cameras and improved accessibility

Tyne & Wear's newest trainsets, the Class 555, with No. 021 shown here, are now in service. Nexus (the Tyne & Wear operator) photo

including an automatic sliding step supplied by Bode at each set of doors. Onboard batteries allow up to 45 minutes of running in the event of disruption to the network's 1.5 kV DC power supply.

There are 116 seats including 12 tip-up seats, with priority seating clearly marked and positioned opposite real-time digital information screens. There are four wheelchair bays and two multi-use areas for baby strollers, cycles, and heavy luggage.

The trains were ordered to replace the original fleet dating from the early 1980s as part of a £362 million investment package to modernize the 77.5-kilometer network.

METRO REPORT INTERNATIONAL, December 19

PARIS, FRANCE

New Work Locomotives Begin Testing, More Are Ordered

The first of 12 new work locomotives ordered by Paris operator RATP back in 2017 has finally arrived at the VUZ test center at Velim in the Czech Republic.

Supplied by Spanish rolling stock manufacturer CAF, the new locomotives are built specifically for use on the sections of RER Lines A and B which RATP is responsible for. The RER is the Reseau Express Regional, a regional metro system comprised of five lines — Lines A and B are jointly operated by the RATP with France's national railway SNCF, while Lines C, D, and E are exclusively the responsibility of SNCF.

The 1,000 kW locomotives are uniquely equipped with a cab-mounted pantograph to take power from the 1.5 kV AC overhead electrification featured on RATP's sections of Lines A and B. They are also equipped with nickel-cadmium batteries to enable continuous operation in work areas where the overhead power has been de-energized, thus eliminating the emissions and noise typically produced by diesel work locomotives and making for a much healthier working environment for maintenance-of-way forces.

Delivery of these locomotives was originally scheduled to begin in 2019 and be completed by 2021. However, several factors, including manufacturing issues, the pandemic, and the associated supply chain challenges, all combined to severely impact the delivery schedule.

The CAF-built battery locomotive for use on Paris RATP's RER lines, at the Velim testing grounds in the Czech Republic. Quintus Vosman photo

Meanwhile, RATP has also just placed an order with Stadler for 12 unique battery-electric locomotives for the Paris Métro. The four-axle locomotives are capable of running throughout the entire 245-kilometer Métro network, on lines equipped for either steel-wheel or rubber-tired operation, including on lines that have been equipped for automated operation. They will be 15 meters in length and designed for the network's tight curves, with fully automatic couplings and capable of operating in pairs to increase traction capacity from 120 to 240 tons.

They will run off of the Métro's 750 V DC third rail power supply when available, simultaneously recharging the batteries, which will provide power at worksites where the third rail has been shut off.

The contract has an option for two additional locomotives. This is RATP's first ever order from Swiss-based Stadler, a notable move away from its customary practice of French suppliers. Delivery is anticipated to start in 2027.

A rendering of the battery locomotive RATP has ordered from Stadler for use on the Paris Métro. This view is looking southeast from the Sèvres-Lecourbe station on Line 6. Stadler

METRO REPORT INTERNATIONAL, February 6, 2017

INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY JOURNAL, February 7, 2017
INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY JOURNAL, October 24, 2024
METRO REPORT INTERNATIONAL, October 21, 2024
INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY JOURNAL, October 21, 2024

QUEBEC CITY, CANADA

Tramway Development Agreement Signed

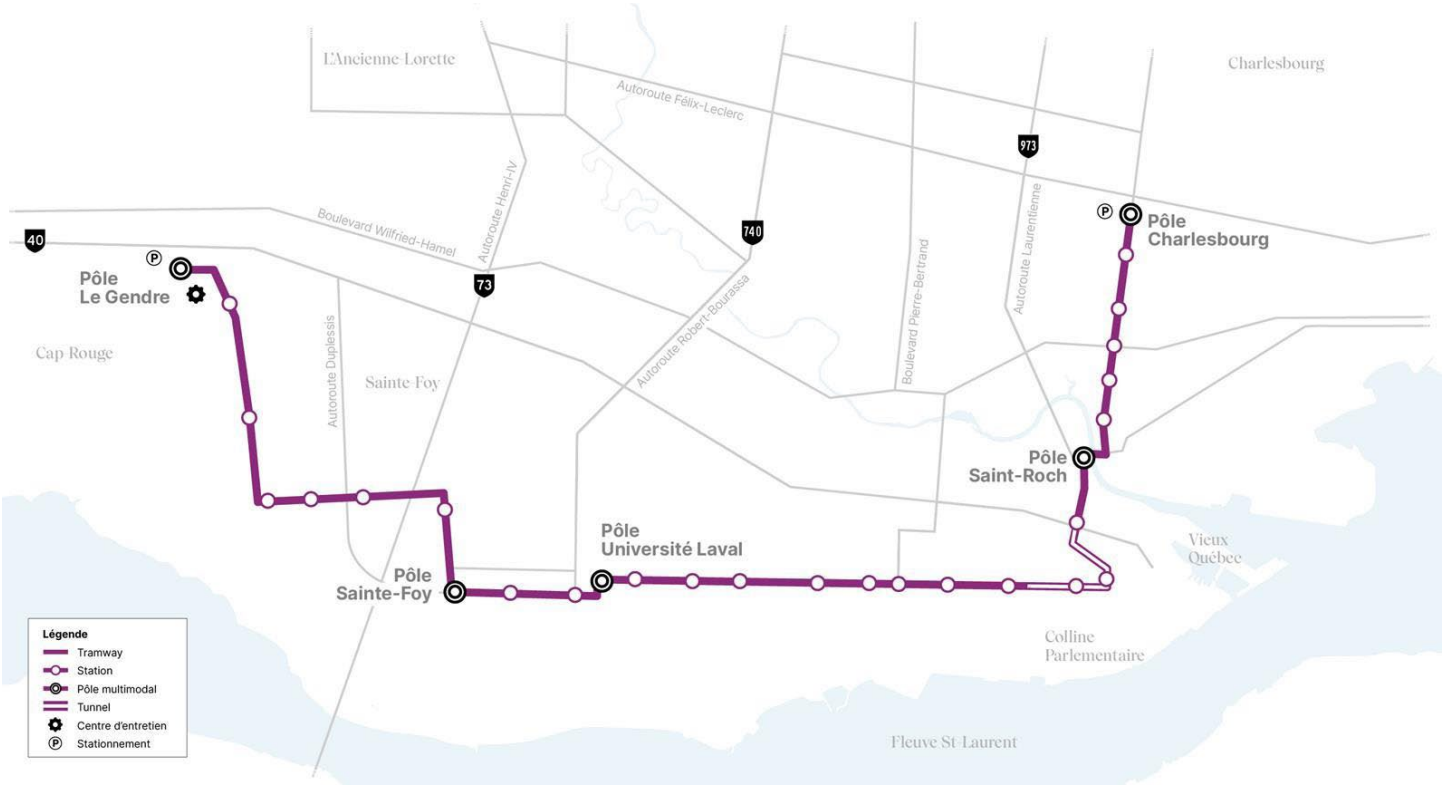
An agreement defining stakeholders' responsibilities for the development of the Quebec City tram project has been signed. The signatories were the city council, public infrastructure developer CDPQ Infra and the province's Ministry of Transport & Sustainable Mobility, which said each partner now has a clear mandate to move the project forward.

The first line of the tramway, which has been named TramCité, will run 19 kilometers from Le Gendre to Charlesbourg, via Sainte-Foy, Université Laval, Parliament Hill, and Saint-Roch, with 29 stops and an underground section.

CDPQ Infra had been asked to look at options for development after a previous plan collapsed in 2023. The new agreement signed on December 16 sets out the responsibilities of the stakeholders, along with project governance and scope.

The province will be the project owner and define the objectives, timelines and budget. CDPQ Infra will be responsible for project management. The city will be a partner and beneficiary, undertaking land acquisition and preparatory works, supporting CDPQ Infra and providing a one-stop shop for access to municipal services.

(Below) Map of the proposed tramway in Quebec City. CDPQ Infra



Opening is envisaged for 2033, with urban transport operator Réseau de transport de la Capitale to be the future owner and operator.

CDPQ Infra will now set up a project team and begin technical studies. Procurement will use a co-development approach, working with suppliers to establish a target price and schedule by the end of the planning phase in 2027. This approach would reduce the risks and costs, and at the end of planning, CDPQ Infra will be able to confirm to the government a competitive target price and a schedule representing the best possible deadlines.

METRO REPORT INTERNATIONAL, December 17

PARRAMATTA, AUSTRALIA

Light Rail Opens Outside Sydney

The new 12-kilometer light rail line serving Parramatta to the west of Sydney opened on December 20. Line L4 has 16 stops and runs from Westmead via central Parramatta to Carlingford and connects with Sydney Trains commuter services.

The line is operated by 13.45-meter-long CAF LRVs, each of which can accommodate up to 400 passengers. Services on weekdays will operate at nine-minute intervals between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM, reducing to a 12-minute frequency from 5:00 AM to 7:00 AM and between 7:00 PM and 11:00 PM, and to every 15 minutes from then until 1:00 AM.

This is the first light rail project in New South Wales to have what is described as green track in parklands and heritage-sensitive areas along 1.3 kilometers of the

Urbos 100 No. 2162 (CAF, 2021) has just left the Telopea stop on its way towards Dundas while on a test run on March 22, 2024. jiachen photo via Urban Electric Transit

alignment. Green track incorporates ground power supply and is designed to reduce noise and urban heat. The design used 81 percent less concrete in its construction than conventional track.

The project involved track doubling and converting the former single-track T6 Carlingford Line between Camellia and Carlingford, which ran at 30-minute intervals and stopped 70,000 road vehicles each day at the level crossing on Parramatta Road, Granville.

The New South Wales government expects around 22,000 passengers to use the new light rail line each day by 2026, with an estimated 130,000 people living within walking distance of the 16 stops.

The project was delivered by Ford Civil, Ventia, Diona Ward Joint Venture, the Parramatta Connect joint venture of CPB Contractors and Downer, and the Great River City Light Rail consortium of Transdev and CAF Rail Australia.
INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY JOURNAL, December 20

ROME, ITALY

First of New Trainsets Completed

The first of 14 six-car metro trainsets that Hitachi Rail is supplying for Rome's Metro Lines A and B has been completed. The trainset was inspected on a visit to Hitachi Rail's Reggio Calabria plant on November 24.

A framework agreement was signed in December 2022 for the supply of 30 trainsets, with a firm order for 12 for Line B and two for Line A. The 106-meter-long trainset has 24 doors on each side and has a maximum speed of 80 km/h. It has capacity to carry 1,204 passengers, 204 of whom can be seated. It features four spaces for wheelchairs and they are air-conditioned.

The new-generation trains will allow a reduction in energy consumption of about 10 percent compared to the fleet currently in use on the two lines. This result is made possible

The first of Rome Metro's new trainsets, at the Hitachi plant in Reggio Calabria. Hitachi photo

thanks to the weight of the new trains, reduced by five percent, and the greater efficiency of the traction system.
METRO REPORT INTERNATIONAL, December 10

SANTIAGO, CHILE

Driverless Metro Trains Ordered

CAF has been awarded a contract to supply and maintain six five-car trainsets as part of the project to extend Metro de Santiago's Line 6 at both ends.

Santiago's newest equipment as of today, the AS-2014 class, shown at the CAF plant sometime between 2015 and 2017. CAF photo

CAF has previously supplied nearly 80 trainsets for Lines 1, 3, and 6. The latest units from CAF's Inneo family will be equipped for GoA4 unattended driverless operation, as were the 41 supplied for Lines 3 and 6.
METRO REPORT INTERNATIONAL, December 12

SWITZERLAND

Narrow Gauge Railways Order Locomotives

Narrow gauge operators Rhätische Bahn (RhB) and Matterhorn Gotthard Bahn (MGB) have placed a SFr100 million joint order for 11 Stadler electro-diesel locomotives. The meter-gauge locomotives will be manufactured at Stadler's Bussnang works.

Eight will be delivered to RhB and the remaining three to MGB. There will be some significant technical differences, with the RhB locomotives being adhesion only, while the MGB locos will use the Abt rack and pinion system. The RhB locomotives will be dual-system to enable operation using the 1 kV DC electrification on the Bernina line.

Renderings of the new locomotives for the Rhätische Bahn (above) and Matterhorn Gotthard Bahn (below). Stadler

Both railways are planning to use the locomotives to support maintenance activity, and so the ability to operate when the overhead catenary is switched off or in the event of a power outage is key feature.

RhB said it welcomed the prospect of shorter intervention times in the event of disruption. The locomotives are more powerful and have better acceleration than the vehicles they will replace, which is seen as an advantage in the event of a train needing rescuing because much of the RhB network cannot be accessed by road. The locos will also help RhB to address increasing demands on its fleet as it launches more infrastructure enhancement works, while windows for engineering possessions are getting shorter.

MGB says its locos will play a role in helping snow clearance on the Oberalp Pass in winter. They will replace its HGm 4/4 61-62 diesel loco fleet, delivered in 1968.

The order is the latest to be placed under the RailPlus shared procurement model adopted by many of the Swiss narrow-gauge railways to keep costs down. Montreux-Berner Oberland-Bahn ordered six locomotives in mid-October, while Transports de la Région Morges-Bière-Cossonay ordered a single locomotive on December 10. RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL, December 16

TALLINN, ESTONIA

New Tram Line Opens

Commercial operation of Tallinn's 2.5-kilometer Vanasadam tram route began on the morning of December 1. The line through the city's old harbor district had been officially inaugurated on November 2, following 18 months of construction. The new loop line is projected to increase ridership by between 4,500 and 7,000 passengers per day, depending on how rapidly the old harbor district develops.

Tram Route 2, running from Kopli in the northwest to Suur-Paala on Peterburi tee in the east, has been rerouted to serve the new section in the city center. The tramway's airport branch is currently suspended because of construction work for the new Rail Baltica terminus at Ülemiste, but once this reopens the tram route will provide a direct connection between the terminals for all modes of inter-city transport: air, rail, sea, and bus and coach.

Brand-new Twist 147N No. 529 (PESA, 10/2024) on Route 3 and Urbos AXL No. 510 (CAF, 7/2015) on Route 4 are seen laying over at the Tondi terminal on December 15, 2024.
Tram Wasp photo via Urban Electric Transport

Branching west from the existing route at Gionsiori, the new double-track line turns north to a serve stop at Ants Laikmaa before crossing the original tram lines along Narva mnt at right angles. The new route then heads northeast along Hobujaama, crossing Ahtri on an S-curve to a stop at Laeva. It then skirts around the western and northern sides

of the old harbor to reach a stop at Vanasadam, close to the ferry and cruise ship terminals. From here the line loops eastward before heading west to a stop serving Linnahall, a multi-purpose cultural venue, before turning south to rejoin the Kopli route at Suur Rannavarav where the former Linnahall stop has been renamed.

Construction of the Vanasadama (Old Harbor) tram line is essentailly complete in this August 17, 2024 view looking north on Hobujaama tänav (street), just north of the intersection where this new tram line crosses existing tram line Routes 1, 3, and 4 on Narva maantee (road).
estoniaan photo via Urban Electric Transit

As well as tram infrastructure and relocation of utilities, the city has invested in improving the urban environment and creating a modern streetscape, including a complete reconstruction of the Kaubamaja intersection of Gonsiori and Laikmaa Streets, and large-scale cityscaping works in the harbour area. The total value of the project was €55 million with partial backing by the EU.

Two further network extensions should be completed by October 2029 with EU funding support. The first would be along Liivalaia Street, where a tram route linking the airport and southern lines would form part of a larger redevelopment with pedestrian and cycle paths. The second would serve the Pelguranna district in the northwest, connecting the Kopli axis with Stroomi Beach via Puhangu Street.
METRO REPORT INTERNATIONAL, December 5

TAMPERE, FINLAND

New Trams Ordered

Finnish light rail operator Tampere Tramway has signed a €70 million contract with Škoda Group for seven new ForCity LRVs. The deal also includes the supply of eight modules to extend existing LRVs from 37 to 47 meters and a 10-year full-service package.

The latest order is part of a €100 million contract signed in 2017 for the supply of 20 LRVs, which were delivered in 2020-21 and included three options for the supply of up to 46 additional LRVs. One of these, for five LRVs, was exercised in 2022. Following an initial extension order placed in September, the total number of extended LRVs will reach 19 by mid-2028. The seven new LRVs will be delivered by mid-2027, while the extension modules are scheduled to be installed by July 2028.
INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY JOURNAL, December 13

Brand-new ForCity Smart Artic X34 No. TRO24 (Škoda, 12/2024) is seen heading north on Insinöörinkatu just south of the Hervannan kampus stop while operating on Route 3 on December 12, 2024.
Nikita photo via Urban Electric Transit

TORONTO, CANADA

New Trains for Line 2 (Bloor-Danforth)

The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for 55 new subway cars for Line 2. The RFP follows the November 29 confirmation of $1.2 billion in Federal funding allocated to the TTC from the Canada Public Transit Fund (CPTF) Baseline Funding Stream over 10 years, of which $758 million will be dedicated to the 55 new subway cars.

The Province of Ontario has also committed $758 million in funding through the Ontario-Toronto New Deal Agreement, with the City of Toronto contributing a matching amount.

The procurement is for 70 cars in total, with 55 cars allocated to replace aging cars on Line 2 and 15 cars for the province's Yonge North Subway Extension and Scarborough Subway Extension projects.

As part of the overall strategy to modernize Line 2, the TTC has also launched a procurement for a new Automatic Train Control (ATC) system. ATC, which is currently running on Line 1, automatically controls train speed and separation between trains. Train location can be monitored more accurately, allowing more trains to operate closer together.

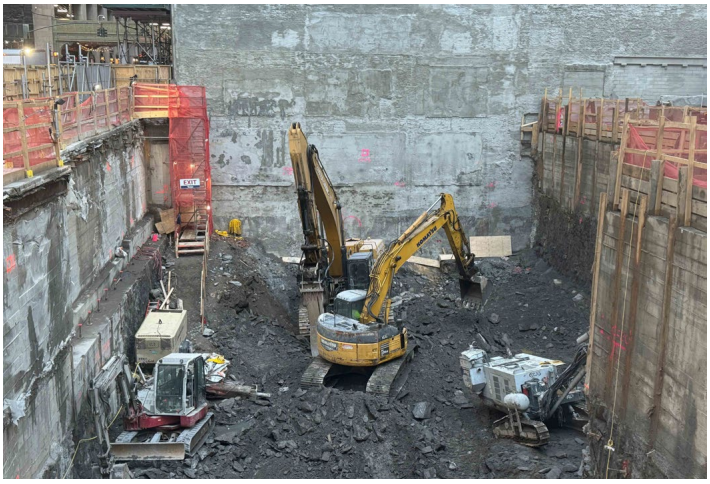
The TTC is currently developing a State-of-Good-Repair program to maintain the existing trains on Line 2 until the new trains are delivered starting in 2030. The design of the new subway trains will have additional features to improve accessibility and rider and employee experience. The RFP also includes options for up to an additional 150 trains to meet the future needs for network growth and eventual replacement of trains on Line 1.
TTC PRESS RELEASE, December 10

Grand Central Madison-45th Street Entrance Work Underway

By Subutay Musluoglu (ERA # 6474)

Grand Central Madison, the LIRR's second Manhattan terminal, opened just under two years ago on January 25, 2023. Expansion is now underway, as ground was broken on October 1, 2024 and construction started on a new street entrance from the southeast corner of Madison Avenue at 45th Street. The entrance is being built on the site of what was once the MTA's previous headquarters building at 347 Madison Avenue, which the MTA occupied from 1979 until 2014, when the agency moved to its current headquarters at 2 Broadway in Lower Manhattan.

In 2020, BXP was selected to redevelop the site with a new Class A commercial office building. Demolition began in February 2021 and was essentially completed by mid-2023. The MTA retains underlying ownership of the land and BXP has agreed to build the entrance in advance of its anticipated office building in order to prioritize public access and benefit. The redevelopment plan is enabled by the Midtown East Rezoning program, which yields transit improvements in exchange for zoning bonuses granted to commercial redevelopment. The redevelopment is eventually expected to generate over one billion dollars in ground rent revenues, which will be dedicated directly to the MTA Capital Program.



The excavation taking place for the new entrance on the southeast corner of Madison Avenue and 45th Street as seen on December 17, 2024. Subutay Musluoglu photo

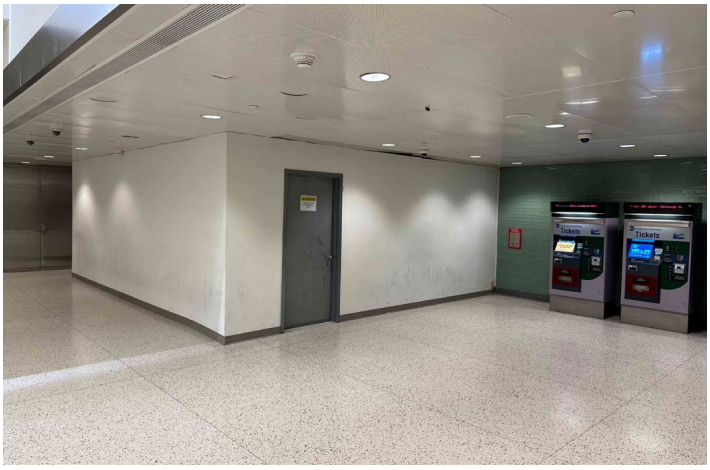
There are currently five direct access points between street level and the LIRR concourse at GCM — at 42nd and 43rd Streets through One Vanderbilt Avenue; at 47th Street within 383 Madison Avenue; and two elevator-only entrances in freestanding headhouse structures located on 44th and 48th Streets, both just east of Madison Avenue. Two additional street entrances are planned along Madison Avenue north of 47th Street. Provisions for these future entrances at GCM's concourse level, as well as for the one currently underway, were built as part of the overall LIRR East Side Access project.

Additionally, Grand Central Madison connects directly to Grand Central Terminal's lower level Dining Concourse; to Metro-North Railroad's east-west passageways under 45th and 47th Streets, which features entrances within the Helmsley Walk between 45th and 46th Streets; on 47th Street between Park and Lexington Avenues; and at 48th Street and Park Avenue.

Besides providing the approximately 72,000 daily LIRR riders who use GCM another entry point to the 700,000 square foot terminal, the new entrance will also provide MNR riders the ability to access Grand Central Terminal via the GCM concourse.

Rendering of the new entrance. MTA

The 45th Street entrance is expected to be completed in 18 months, anticipated to open sometime in mid-2026. While construction is underway, BXP is marketing the proposed approximately 950,000 square foot Class A office building which will eventually rise above the new entrance.



View southwest on January 9 of the construction barricade around the area where the 45th Street entrance will land on the concourse. Paul Grether photo

North American Transit Project Openings Scheduled for 2025

By Randy Glucksman (ERA #3213)

Date	Agency	City	Type	Line	Details	Notes
January	Los Angeles County MTA	Los Angeles, Calif.	LR	Foothill Gold	Glendora to Pomona 9.1 miles 4 stations	
"	PATCO	Philadelphia, Pa.	HR	PATCO	Franklin Square re-opens (Fifth time)	From 2024
1st Quarter	Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation	Honolulu, Hawaii	APM	Honolulu Rail Transit Phase II	Aloha Stadium to Middle Street-Kalihi Transit Center 5.2 miles 4 stations	
May	NICTD	Lake County, Ind.	CR	West Lake Corridor	Dyer to Hammond 4 stations 9 miles	
June 1	Toronto Transportation Commission	Toronto, Ont.	LR	Line 5: Eglinton Crosstown Phase I	Kennedy - Mt. Dennis 11.8 miles, 25 stations	From 2022
June	CalTrain	"	"	Line 6: Finch West	Humber College to Finch West 6.83 miles 18 stations	From 2023
Mid-2025	Kansas City Streetcar Authority	Kansas City, Mo.	LR	Main St. Extension (Purple)	Union Station to UKMC 3.5 miles 8 stations	
Mid-2025	Valley Metro Rail	Phoenix, Ariz.	LR	South Central Extension	Central Avenue to Baseline Road 5.5 miles 7 stations	From 2024
August	Orange County TA	Santa Ana, Calif.	SC	Santa Ana to Garden Grove Streetcar	Santa Ana RTC to Garden Grove 4.15 miles 10 stations	
Fall	Réseau express métropolitain	Montreal. Que.	LR	REM - Light Rail (2nd Phase)	Central Station to Deux Montagnes & Anse-a-L'Orme 31.7 miles 18 stations	From 2024
Late	Los Angeles County MTA	Los Angeles, Calif.	HR	Line D - (Purple) Extension Phase I	Wilshire/Western to Wilshire/La Cienega (Westwood VA Hospital) 3.92 miles 3 stations	
?	Sound Transit	Seattle, Wash.	LR	Line 2: East Link LRT Phase II	South Bellevue to International District/Chinatown Station 4 miles 2 stations	From 2024

Legend					
APM	Automated People Mover	HR	Heavy Rail	SC	Streetcar
CR	Commuter Rail	LR	Light Rail	LD	Long Distance

Book Review

By Paul Grether (ERA #6933)

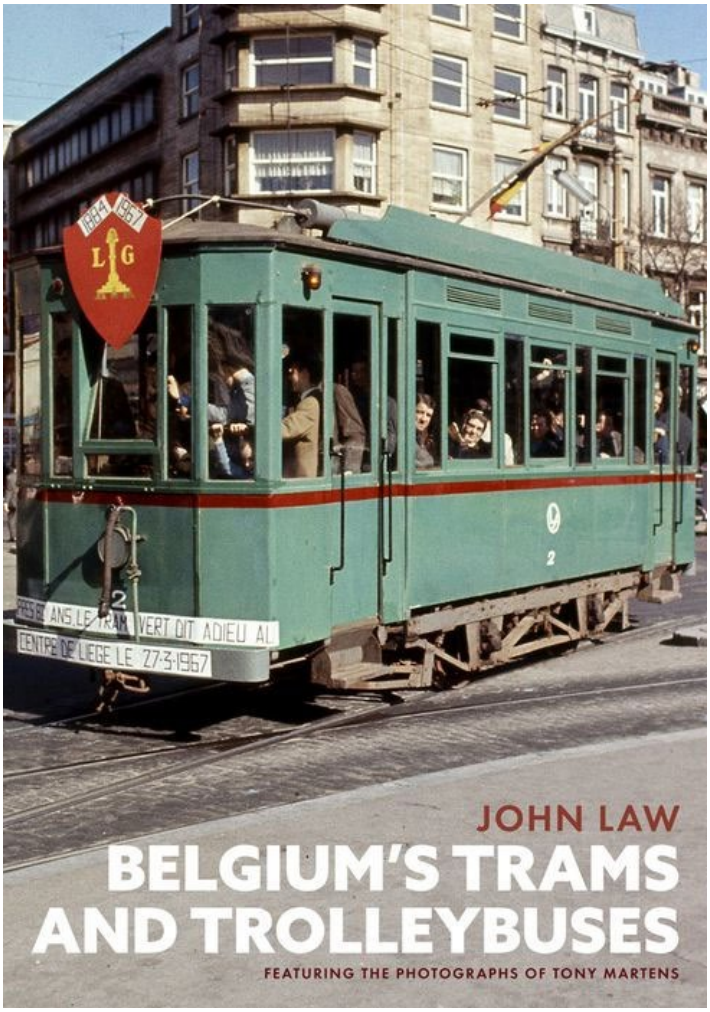
Belgium's Trams and Trolleybuses by John Law, published by Amberley Publishing, Gloucestershire, U.K. in 2023, softcover, 96 pages, with extensive color and some black-and-white pictures. Small-format paperback. ISBN 978-1398107243.

Belgium is like no other country in the world in terms of the proliferation of tramway networks. In addition to intensive urban systems in the cities in both Flanders and Wallonia, an unusual national meter-gauge interurban system evolved. State-owned, the interurban network actually exceeded the national railway system in size and track length. Known as Nationale Maatschappij van Buurtspoorwegen (NMVB) in Dutch and Société Nationale des Chemins de fer Vicinaux (SNCV) in French, this translates to National Company of Light Railways and is commonly referred to as the Vicinal. Operations were split between steam/diesel and electric.

Being relatively accessible to British tramway enthusiasts, many made visits and documented the systems over the years. Tony Martens was born in Belgium but lived in the U.K. most of his life. He started visiting the Vicinal in the early 1960s. While he unfortunately passed away in 2019, author John Law gained access to his photo collection. John started visiting in 1971 and combined the best of his pictures with Tony's (and a handful of other photographers) and developed this new photo album covering the 1960s through the present.

Brussels T3000 No. 3119 (Bombardier Transportation, 11/2012) is seen operating outbound on the soon to be abandonded Route 55 to Da Vinci on May 22, 2024. The location is east of the Tilleul stop on Rue Edouard Stuckens on what may be the only section of tramway in Brussels operating on separate one-way streets. Jeff Erlitz photo

The format of the book is a smaller size, and the quality is like an Arcadia Publishing book. There is a short two-page introduction, and the rest of the book contains captioned photographs, two per page. Most of the pictures are in color and range from the 1960s to present-day light rail and



museum subjects. One or two-sentence detailed captions follow each picture.

This book will appeal to those who have a general interest in Belgian/European traction subjects. The book does not cover the history of Belgian traction. The UK-based Light Rail Transit Association (LRTA) has published several comprehensive English language tomes covering the Vicinal in detail. Rather, this book showcases selections from a couple of English visiting photographers and the appeal is similar to what one might encounter in a slideshow presentation.

Link to book information:
www.libib.com/u/grether?solo=131070438

Travels with Jack May

Modern Streetcars in Three Midwestern Cities — Part 2

By Jack May (ERA #2275)

(Author's note: John Bromley and others pointed out an error in my paragraph about Cincinnati's former PCC cars. With that in mind I've rewritten it as follows: The new cars were built by CAF and are numbered 1175-1179, starting right after 1174, the number of Cincinnati's last PCC car. No. 1000, the Cincinnati Street Railway's only Pullman-built (in 1939) unit had been renumbered 1127 and the company's Brilliner, No. 1200, built at the same time, was renumbered 1128. The balance of the PCC fleet (air-electrics 1100-1126 and all-electrics 1150-1174) were manufactured by St. Louis Car.)

For Part 2, here are some additional photos, featuring the southern end of the Cincinnati Bell Connector. See https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/sites/streetcar/assets/Maps/streetcar_map_2023.pdf for a map.

Southbound cars use Central Parkway between Race and Walnut Streets. The broad boulevard was once the Miami and Erie Canal, and portions of the still-born Cincinnati subway, including stations, lie below its surface.

We took a break from our activities for a lunchtime snack at Fountain Square.

Fountain Square, with its centerpiece statue, is an oasis of tranquility in the midst of Cincinnati's largest concentration of skyscrapers. The 1871-built *Genius of Water* fountain showers the pool from hundreds of jets pierced through her

(Left) A southbound car stops at the Aronoff Center station on Walnut Street just above Seventh. The website of the performing arts complex (Proctor & Gamble Hall) provides driving directions and the location of nearby parking lots but contains nary a word about the Cincinnati Bell Connector and other transit access. In the background, the 18-story American Building stands on the north side of Central Parkway, putting it officially in Over-The-Rhine. It is said that the 1928-built Art Deco edifice was inspired by the Empire State Building. Its website indicates it now hosts 42 luxury condominiums.

outstretched fingers. Located at Fifth and Walnut Streets and surrounded by food vendor trucks and tents, it offers office workers and tourists a respite from the hustle and bustle of the adjacent area. Some may recall the nine-foot-high statue and the words, "To the People of Cincinnati," as a recurring sight in the introduction of the former weekly TV series, "WKRP in Cincinnati."

Interestingly, here is an over 100-year old photo from Shorpy that Wayne Koch sent out. The statue was moved in 2006.

1904. "Tyler Davidson Fountain ('The Genius of Water'), Cincinnati, O." 8x10 inch dry plate glass negative. Detroit Photographic Company

A view from the pedestrian overpass of Walnut Street between Fifth and Sixth Streets that leads to the Fifth Third Bank headquarters at 38 Fountain Square.

(Above and below) Two views on the downward grade toward the river with the upper photo showing a southbound streetcar on Walnut Street at Third. A parking deck on Vine Street allowed the photographer to gain some altitude when recording a northbound unit proceeding from Third Street to Fourth.

During the early fall, long shadows come early, and we decided to leave the Queen City a little after 3 PM. The two-hour drive to Indianapolis was easy and even gave us a glance at the northern portals of the subway. We drove directly to our Holiday Inn Express near the city center and the Amtrak station, where we planned to spend the night. Upon our arrival at the property, we were informed that our reserved Studio Suite accommodation for three was unavailable, but the hotel would be glad to put us up in two adjacent rooms for only a slight additional payment. Since we couldn't do anything about it we accepted the change. Further, it would be nice to have three full beds in two separate rooms instead of having just one room with a couch that converted into a bed, at least until I saw that my credit card was debited with an amount twice the price of the original room. The Holiday Inn refused to lower the bill (as they stated I had "agreed" to substitute the two rooms for the one). But since I had originally made the reservation through Booking.com, I notified them and they stepped in and had the charges corrected, but it took a week with several phone calls and email exchanges.

We dropped the car off downtown just before the Enterprise

agency closed at 6 PM, walked back to the Holiday Inn, and had a nice dinner nearby. On the following morning, we were up too early for the hotel's breakfast, as we had to get to the Amtrak station in time to ride the *Hoosier State* to Chicago, which was scheduled to depart at 6:00 AM. We taxied over and found a waiting room filled with very sleepy people.

I had been looking forward to riding this train, as it was being operated by the Iowa Pacific Railroad, a company set up by Ed Ellis to offer an alternative to Amtrak's run-of-the-mill intercity rail service. He contracted with the State of Indiana and Amtrak to take over the operation of the train, which runs four days each week to supplement the *Cardinal*, Amtrak's tri-weekly long-distance service between Chicago and Washington D.C./New York City. Rather than simple coach seats with a snack bar dispensing food, we would have breakfast in a dome diner, as the amenity was included in the price of the business class tickets we purchased. The heritage coaches from the golden era of lightweight streamliners, the dome car and the locomotive were painted in the snappy Illinois Central Railroad color scheme of yore and we looked forward to our ride.

And we were not disappointed; everything was as promised. The meals were cooked fresh in the kitchen of the dome car and served by a very personable and attentive staff, and we enjoyed riding upstairs so much that we stayed in our dome seats for the entire journey. We left on the advertised at 6:00 AM and remained virtually on time for the entire (leisurely) journey, arriving on Track 16 at Chicago's Union Station, 196 miles away, at 9:42, 23 minutes early (no doubt the result of padding in the schedule to avoid lateness from unforeseen problems). Since we moved from Eastern to Central time, the trip actually took four hours and 42 minutes, computing to an average speed of around 40 mph. For the record, the train's rolling stock specifically consisted of dome Summit View and coaches Durant, Du Quoin and Dyersberg.

I feel very fortunate to have ridden this intercity train, as the State of Indiana's experiment with Iowa Pacific came to an end on February 28, 2017, when the private company could no longer afford to operate it under the terms of its contract. I think Ed Ellis tried very hard but probably bit off more than he was able to chew. At least for a time he restored the type of excellent service that rail passengers in the 1950s expected, and got.

Unlike the previous day, Wednesday, September 28 was gloomy with periods of rain. While Dick went home (he lives in Chicago), John and I spent the time before our departure for Kansas City riding Metra. We took a bus over to Millenium Station and rode the next double-deck EMU to Blue Island over the former Illinois Central Electric. The underground terminal looked good, not at all the like the gloomy basement it was in the old days. I've taken this excursion, which includes returning to the Loop over the old Rock Island, on many an occasion in the past, and it was just as enjoyable as ever. For the record, we left on the 11:15 local, which switched onto the mostly single-track electrified branch after Kensington

(Above and back cover) Two views at Walnut at Second, where a streetcar is waiting for the traffic signal to allow it to turn sharply left to reach its southern terminal, The Banks. Taken only a moment or two apart, the photo on the next page utilized a wide-angle lens to include a portion of Cincinnati's skyline. At the far left is the PNC (Pittsburgh National Bank) Tower (1913, 31 stories); and behind it to the right is the Art Deco Carew Tower (1930, 49 stories).

at 11:48 and arrived on time at our destination in Blue Island at 12:02. Unfortunately, we didn't pass a South Shore Line train, as one was arriving just as we boarded the Metra double-decker. My nose was glued to the front window after Kensington, as I've always enjoyed riding this backyard-style line, which appeared to be in very good shape. After crossing the busy pavement to the Vermont Street station of the former Rock Island (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRmdS76oXw4), we rode the 1:03 train that arrived from Joliet on time and used the "suburban" route to downtown Chicago (rather than the mainline). Unlike the outbound electric train, this inbound run was highly patronized, and we arrived at the platforms of the former La Salle Street station at 1:48. Both trains operated on time; I did not take any photos because of the poor weather.

Dick soon joined us at Union Station, and we boarded Amtrak's *Southwest Chief*, which also was parked on Track 16, the same one used when we arrived on the *Hoosier State*. It too operated on time, leaving at 3:00 and arriving in Kansas City, 437 miles away, at 10:03 (10:11) for an average of about 63 mph. The seats in the Superliner coach were very comfortable and our dinner in the full-service diner was excellent. By the time we arrived the skies had turned clear, a good omen for our plans to ride and photograph Kansas City's streetcar line on the following day.

We taxied to our Hampton Inn in the Country Club section of town, where we occupied a room for three (I used the sofabed) and were offered a good complimentary breakfast in the morning.

Part 3 records our experiences in Kansas City on the next day.


usbank
DO NOT ENTER
ONE WAY
NO TURN ON RED
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AMCE GROUP