BULLETIN

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Electric Railroaders Association

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Back Issues
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In This Issue

Trip Notices/Save the Dates

April 16–18, 2026: Motor Bus Society spring San Francisco Bay Area convention.
April 29–May 13, 2026: ERA International trip to Northern England, Scotland and Isle of Man. Visit https://erausa.org/international-tours/2026/ for all the details.
August 28–September 2, 2026: ERA National Convention in Chicagoland. Potential activities include visits to region's famous museums, e.g., Illinois Railway Museum, Fox River Trolley Museum, East Troy Railroad Museum, the heritage operation in Kenosha, Wis., the downtown Milwaukee streetcar, and last but not least, a trip on Chicago Transit Authority's historic "L" fleet. This is ERA's first visit since 2011. More details will be forthcoming, so watch this space!

Donations

The ERA Board of Directors express their deepest appreciation for these member donations in December 2025.

$1,000 and Above

Dennis Furbush, Walter Zullig

$500 to $999

Constantine Mandros

$200 to $499

Lewis Hitch, Juergen Nanders, Henry Posner

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$50 to $99

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Up to $49

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Monthly Zoom Meeting

Friday, January 16, at 7:30 p.m.

Presenting This Month: Jack May

Our January 2026 presentation will be by ERA's longtime conventions and international trip chairman and past editor of *Headlights*, Jack May. Jack's presentation covers Paris and portions of the low countries. He caught up on new openings and new cars in Paris, a new extension in Luxembourg, the brand-new tramway in Liege, the relatively new Utrecht extensions, plus revisits to old stomping grounds in Rotterdam, Den Haag and Amsterdam. Of special interest in Den Haag was the heritage tram operation in city streets for "Open Monuments" weekend. The presentation includes scanned slides from Jack's 1960 trip. Do not miss this presentation from one of our most accomplished photographers and speakers!

How to Join Our Zoom Meeting

The Zoom registration link for this meeting is: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/_rkc67L_T7eZyNk1L2jM7A. You can sign in at 7:15 p.m. The show

begins at 7:30 p.m. If you have any problems, email Bob Newhouser at bnnyc1955@gmail.com, or on the night of the meeting, text or call Bob at 917-482-4235.

Front Cover Photo

On December 22, two weeks after the F and M trains swapped their weekday routes under the East River (see news item on page 4), we see the 1305+ M from Forest Hills arriving at Roosevelt Island Station on the IND 63rd Street Line. R-179 Nos. 3094-3095-3096-3097 (Bombardier Transportation, 1/2018) + 3050-3051-3052-3053 (Bombardier Transportation, 12/2016) made up this train. Of the 25 trains operating on the M this day, six of them were R-179s while the others were all R-160s. Jeff Erlitz photo

Rear Cover Photo

Last month's timely front cover showed one of Metro-North's Holiday Lights trains. This month we give equal time to the Long Island Rail Road's version. It's December 24, Christmas Eve, and Train 276 from Grand Central to Babylon is seen leaving Massapequa, holiday lights aglow. This is an eight-car set of M9 cars, the consist of which is E-9060-9059+9166-9165+9006-9005+9188-9187-W. Joe Stroppel photo

Worldwide Suburban Electric Railway, Metro and Tramway Openings in December 2025

Date	Country	City	Segment	Distance (miles)	Railway/ Metro/ Tram
12/1	Brazil	Santos	Conselheiro Nebias to Valongo	2.7	T
12/6	U.S.A.	Seattle	Line 1: Angle Lake to Federal Way Downtown	7.8	T
12/7	Canada	Toronto	Line 6: Finch West to Humber Collage (New line)	6.4	T
12/8	U.S.A.	Buffalo	Canalside to DL&W	0.4	T
12/10	China	Fuzhou	Line 4: Fenghuangchi to Banzhou	2.5	M
12/14	Sweden	Gothenburg	Lines 10/12: Frihamnen to Lindholmen	1.4	T
12/15	Mexico	Guadalajara	Line 4: Las Juntas to Tlajomulco Centro (New line)	13.5	T
12/16	China	Chengdu	Line 13: Wayaotan to Long'an (New line) Line 30: East of Terminal 2 of Shuangliu Int'l Airport to Longquanyi Railway Station South (New line)	18.1 17.4	M
"	Italy	Rome	Line C: San Giovanni to Colosseo	1.5	M
12/19	China	Nanjing	Line 3:L Mozhoudonglu to Moling Line 10: Andemen to Dongqilu	2.1 8.3	M
12/20	France	Montpellier	T5: Clapiers to Saint-Eloi/Docteur Pezet & Gambetta-Saint-Denis to Gres de Montpellier	2.7/3.9	T
12/21	India	Bhopal	Orange Line: Subash Nagar to AIIMS (New metro)	4.7	M
12/22	Poland	Warsaw	Line 19: Goworka to Pole Mokotowskie	0.6	T
12/24	Russia	St. Petersburg	Line 2: Metro Kupchino (Balkanskiy) to Valdayskaya ulitsa	2.9	T
12/26	China	Hefei	Line 6: (Qinglonggang –) Beiyanhu to Longtang (New line)	21.4	M
"	Russia	St. Petersburg	Line 6: Putilovskaya to Yugo-Zapadnaya (New line)	?	M
12/27	China	Shanghai	Line 18: South Changjiang Road to Kangwen Road	5.0	M
"	"	Jinan	Line 4: Shandong First Medical University to Pengjiazhuang (New line) Line 6: Shandong University to Liangwang (New line) Line 8: Xingcun Lijiaoqiao East to Qingyuan Dajie (New line)	25.0 12.1 15.7	M
"	"	Beijing	Line 6: Lucheng to Luyang Line 17: Workers' Stadium to Shilihe Line 18: Malianwa to Tiantongyuandong (New line)	1.3 5.1 12.3	M
12/28	"	Shenzhen	Line 5: Huangbeiling to Grand Theater Line 8: Xiaomeisha to Xichong Line 11: Huaqiang South to Hongling South Line 13: Hi-Tech Central to Shangwu	? ? ? ?	M
12/29	"	Guangzhou	Line 22: Chentougang to Fangcun	7.1	R
"	"	Xi'an	Line 15: Xiliu to Dongzhaoyu (New line)	12.1	M
12/30	"	Jinan	Jiyang Line: Jinan North Railway Station to Jiyang North (New line)	22.4	T

URBAN RAIL NEWS, DECEMBER 31

ERA Meetings in 2026

Here are the dates for all of our upcoming meetings this year:

January 16
February 20
March 27 (Fourth Friday)
April 24 (Fourth Friday)
May 15
June 19
July 17
August: No meeting
September 18
October 16
November 20
December 18

Rail News in Review

New York Metropolitan Area

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (MTA)

New Capital Program Dashboard Launched

MTA Construction & Development (C&D) launched a beta version of the redesigned Capital Program Dashboard, offering the public an easier and clearer way to track construction projects across the entire transit system: New York City Transit, Long Island Rail Road, Metro-North Railroad, and Bridges and Tunnels. The dashboard allows users to monitor progress and see what is being built or replaced, where it is happening, what the budget is, how much has been spent and when it will be completed.

First introduced in 2010, the Dashboard has been redeveloped with modern web technology to better reflect how the MTA is rebuilding and modernizing the transit system, and how the Authority is using smart, innovative construction methods. With improved navigation, search fields and filtering tools, the new dashboard empowers the public to better understand and engage with information surrounding the hundreds of transit construction projects throughout the New York region, including whether they are funded by the Congestion Relief Zone tolling program.

The dashboard currently includes all accessibility projects active in construction, projects in the procurement pipeline, and candidate locations for projects in the 2025-2029 Capital Plan. Additional projects and information will be added as C&D continues to refine features and functionality.

Key upgrades to the dashboard include:

- A new "Transit Service" view. This simplifies finding a project by grouping infrastructure projects by the transit routes they affect and a redesigned map that clearly shows where work is happening across the system. Users can click on a specific line to see the multiple projects that have been completed, underway, and planned across the entire route.
- A new "Initiatives" view. This allows users to see projects categorized by major priorities such as "Accessibility" or "Resilience." This also includes an initiative around Congestion Relief to allow users to see which projects have been enabled by the Central Business District Tolling Program.
- Real-world projects focused. The updated dashboard shifts the focus from using internal budget codes as the primary reporting structure to a way that makes more sense to the public, by project bundles that better reflect how we actually coordinate construction tasks, and contract and execute projects.

For detailed information about the Capital Program Dashboard including how it was developed, how to navigate all its features and more about the history of capital data reporting, see this three-part blog series, Behind the Capital Program. The MTA is also inviting users to provide feedback while the dashboard continues to be refined and uploaded with more projects.

MTA Press Release, December 1

NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT (NYCT)

Tracks Out of Service Long-Term

Track 1 at 148th Street-Lenox Terminal has been out of service since February 1, 2025 for ADA work. Scheduled to end on December 31 (really just as a "placeholder"), this is supposed to return to service on Sunday, March 1.

Even though the new Railcar Acceptance and Testing Facility (located in the 3rd Avenue Yard) was opened for use on November 21, all tracks between 2nd and 4th Avenues (all part of the South Brooklyn Railway) are still out of service until further notice.

Tracks 11 to 13 in Coney Island Yard are out of service for track renewal work on Track 12. The work started on December 1 and will continue to January 30. To assist in this track work, Tracks 80 and 81 are also out of service for the duration. *(Editor's note: Though these two tracks are 17 tracks away from Track 12!)*

F and M Swap River Crossings

On Monday, December 8, the F and M Lines traded their East River crossings during the hours that the M normally operates to Forest Hills, which are weekdays from about 5:30 a.m. to about 9:30 p.m.

The F has now resumed operating along 53rd Street

(during the above stated hours), from whence it started, on December 15, 1940, with the opening of the Sixth Avenue Line. The F was rerouted away from 53rd Street when the 63rd Street Connection opened in 2001. During the hours the M train does not operate to Forest Hills, the F returns to 63rd Street to cover the line.

The swap of these two routes occurred after the Fall B Division Pick had been approved by all concerned. That schedule change went into effect on November 2 (see December 2025 *ERA Bulletin*, page 4). Because of this, the weekday F and M Lines are operating under supplemental timetables and will continue to do so until the Spring Pick begins, on May 17.

The running time is the same whether via 53rd Street or 63rd Street. The F did not need any extra crews for its supplement but the M did (one midnight, two AM and two PM crews). M service was increased to a six-minute headway in the peak of the AM peak and many schedule "holds" needed to be inserted to properly mesh with the J Z at Myrtle Avenue. When the Spring Pick is "crew-optimized" for the M, those five extra crews will not be needed any more.

34th Street Interlocking Completed

The fifth and final phase of signal and switch cut-ins at 34th Street on the IND Eighth Avenue A C E Line took place over the weekend of December 13-14 when the equipment on northbound local Track A2 was placed into service. As mentioned previously, the interlocking is now remotely controlled from the 59th Street Master Tower. L.K. Comstock and Company, Inc., performed the work, under contract S-48006 (Eighth Avenue Line CBTC).

Former Alburtis Avenue Tower Demolition

The demolition of the former interlocking tower south of 103rd Street on the IRT Flushing 7 Line continues.

As of December 22, most of the upper floor, where the interlocking machine and tower operator had been located before 1926, had been removed.

The remains of the tower, as seen on December 22, 2025. The view is southwest from the south end of the southbound platform of 103rd Street Station. Jeff Erlitz photo

New Customer Service Centers Open

Five new Customer Service Centers (CSCs) are now open at subway stations in The Bronx, Manhattan and Brooklyn. Agents at CSCs are on hand 24/7 to assist riders in the transition to tap-and-ride, help customers sign up for the Fair Fares and Reduced-Fare programs, and provide service information, among other features. To celebrate the opening, the first 400 customers at each of the five new CSCs who transfer their balances from MetroCards to OMNY will receive fee-waived OMNY cards.

The new locations are:

- East 180th Street 2 5
- Church Avenue B Q
- Jay Street-MetroTech A C F R
- 96th Street 1 2 3
- Rockaway Parkway L

The fee-free OMNY cards will be loaded with balances remaining on the customers' MetroCards on the spot by a CSC agent. The OMNY cards will not have preloaded trip value. OMNY cards were originally priced at $5, but to facilitate the transition to Tap and Ride, in October of 2023, the cost of an OMNY card was reduced to just $1. The fee for a new OMNY card will increase to $2 next year.

MTA Press Release, December 8

Station Revive Program Summary

NYCT announced the completion of refurbishment work across the subway system that has brightened, cleaned and enhanced stations. Fluorescent light fixtures in all 472 subway stations were converted to modern LED lights, with crews replacing the final fixtures at the Times Square-42nd Street station this week; crews repainted and replaced tiles across subway stations; more than 1,460 tons of bagged garbage were removed from all stations and nearly 700 tons of debris in between stations were cleared, among other improvement work.

The conversion to all-LED lighting across the subway system began in January 2024. Since then, more than 181,000 fixtures throughout the system have been replaced or converted to LED lights. This initiative was completed well ahead of original target of mid-2026 and is expected to save the Authority approximately $5.9 million each year.

LED lighting is not only more cost effective, but also brighter than fluorescent lighting and allows for clearer visibility for the nearly four million daily subway riders. The upgrades will also enhance the images of the more than 15,000 security cameras across the subway system, creating more detailed videos for law enforcement to use when necessary.

This comes as NYCT works to upgrade fluorescent lights in other parts of the subway system, including aboard trains and AC-powered tunnel lighting, which will result in further savings once completed. *(Editor's note: We do not know which subway tunnels have DC-powered lighting.)* Currently, 73% of subway trains are equipped with LED lighting.

The LED conversion project was completed in tandem with New York City Transit's ongoing Revive initiative, which piggybacks on planned weekend outages to give stations a

complete makeover from top to bottom so customers return to an overhauled station. Crews completed 40 Revive projects at the following stations in 2025:

81st Street B C
110th Street B C
Beach 67th Street A
190th Street A
Bergen Street F G
50th Street C E
Union Street R
Central Avenue M
53rd Street R
Fresh Pond Road M
207th Street A
176th Street 4
Broad Channel A S
Saratoga Avenue 3
Cypress Avenue 6
Wall Street 4 5
Mets-Willets Point 7
Rockaway Avenue 3
23rd Street C E
Beach 98th Street A S
23rd Street F M
110th Street 2 3
25th Avenue D
Dyckman Street A
Montrose Avenue L
Bay 50th Street D
71st Avenue E F M R
Grand Central 4 5 6
Simpson Street 2 5
Grand Central S
Grand Central 7
Clark Street 2 3
59th Street N R
Court Square E M
145th Street 3
Bergen Street 2 3
New Lots Avenue L
28th Street 6
Church Avenue B Q
Graham Avenue L

MTA PRESS RELEASE, December 31

LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD (LIRR)

Valley Stream Renovation Completed

The LIRR has completed the renovation of its Valley Stream Station. The renovation improved accessibility, modernized the station and brought it into a state of good repair.

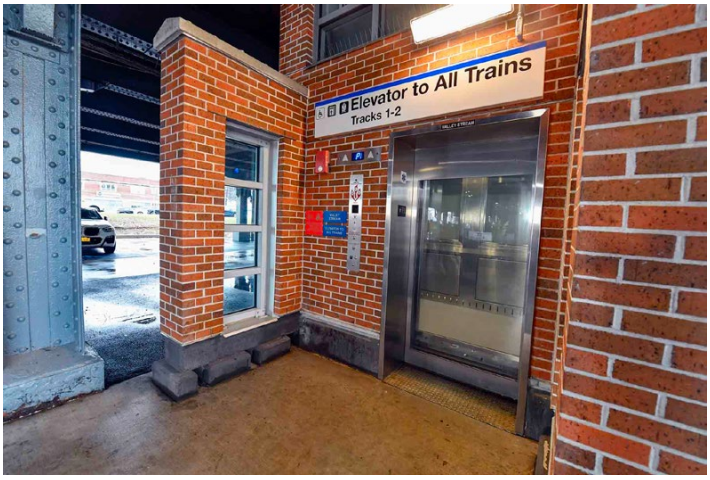
The project was completed using a design-build contracting technique that speeds work by allowing a single private-sector consortium to undertake both design and construction of a project from start to finish. Valley Stream was one station in a bundle to make seven stations accessible and to replace elevators and escalators at two stations that are currently accessible.

In addition to replacing the escalator, crews installed a new staircase, replaced an elevator, installed a new elevator machine room, new electrical room and made service upgrades and installed elevator vestibules as required for weather protection. The project also included new parking spaces, improved lighting, sidewalks and crosswalks and new CCTV cameras.

Crews also installed new station signage, painted steel columns and girders, make structural crack and spall repairs, replaced tactile strips, platform markers and rubbing edge boards and upgraded the station's public address system.

The project included more than $12 million in federal funding. Citnalta/Scalamandre, J.V. with Parsons Transportation Group was the Designer of Record with Major Sub-Contractors Bana Electric, Mid-American, Premier, Superior, and Welkin.

(Editor's note: Valley Stream is one of the stations where new elevators were placed inside original baggage elevator shafts. The current Valley Stream station opened in 1933, when many trains, both steam and electric, carried baggage.)



Street-level view of the new elevator. Marc A. Hermann/MTA photo

MTA PRESS RELEASE, December 19

METRO-NORTH RAILROAD (MNR)

Grand Central Terminal Train Shed Work

MTA, along with JPMorganChase (JPMC) and Vornado, announced that they are advancing two major public-private partnerships to rebuild the Grand Central Train Shed.

The Grand Central Train Shed is the roof structure over MNR's tracks and platforms below Park Avenue from East 44th to East 57th Streets. 98% of MNR trains transit the Train Shed on a daily basis. Decades of water, chemical and salt infiltration from streets above have significantly deteriorated the concrete and steel beams that hold up Park Avenue and some of the most valuable real estate in the world above MTA's infrastructure.

This announcement builds on the public-private partnership undertaken by MTA and JPMC that saw Sector 1 of the Train Shed reconstructed in conjunction with JPMC's reconstructed headquarters at 270 Park Avenue. Sector 1 included the area immediately adjacent to 270 Park, including the west side of Park Avenue between East 47th and East 48th Streets and the side streets themselves. Thanks to integration between the building construction and the Train Shed work, the project came in $20 million under budget and is on track for substantial completion by the end of 2026.

Continuing the partnership, JPMC will now manage reconstruction of Sector 2 of the Train Shed work, running along the east side of Park Avenue from East 46th to East 50th Street. In addition to managing the day-to-day construction, JPMC will contribute $50 million to support the work, a recognition of the immense value that MNR service below and a vibrant public realm at street level create for Midtown East.

In a new public-private partnership, Vornado will play a similar role for Sector 3 of the Train Shed work, running running along the west side of Park Avenue from East 50th

to East 53rd Street. This work will be undertaken in coordination with Vornado Realty Trust, Ken Griffin and Rudin's reconstruction of 350 Park Avenue, which received rezoning approval earlier this year and is expected to enter construction starting in 2026. For its part, the 350 Park project will be contributing $25 million in addition to Vornado managing day-to-day construction activities as JPMC has.
MTA PRESS RELEASE, December 16

NJ TRANSIT (NJT)

Collision in Montclair

Seventeen people were injured on the evening of December 19 when two NJT trains collided near the Bay Street station in Montclair, derailing one car. An NJT spokesman said the injuries were not life-threatening. Six of the injured were taken to hospitals, news site Montclair Local reported. All six had been released by the day after, the site said in an update.

Close-up view of the damaged nose of PL42AC No. 4008 (Alstom, 2004). Matt Kadosh/Montclair Local photo

The collision on the Montclair-Boonton Line occurred about 6:47 p.m., according to an NJT social media post. NJT police were leading the investigation pending the arrival of a team of investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board. Service on the Montclair-Boonton line was suspended following the collision and resumed Saturday morning, once the NTSB completed its initial gathering of information. That allowed NJT to begin clearing the damaged equipment from the scene.
TRAINS.COM, December 20

NJT's Patriotic Locomotive

NJT has joined the growing number of railroads and transit agencies with locomotives decorated to mark the 250th anniversary of U.S. independence. ALP45DP No. 4526 was introduced on December 23 and will be in service "soon," according to a social media post.

The dual-mode Bombardier locomotive joins NJT's Stadler

An NJT Bombardier ALP45DP now wears a red, white and blue wrap to commemorate the 250th anniversary of U.S. independence in 2026. NJT photo

light rail trainset wrapped to mark the 250th anniversary, introduced on October 28.
TRAINS.COM, December 23

PORT AUTHORITY TRANS-HUDSON (PATH)

Reloadable TAPP Card Introduced

With MetroCard sales and refills set to end after December 31, 2025, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey announced the launch of the reloadable TAPP card, a new physical fare option for PATH riders, including those who prefer or need to pay with cash. The agency is also introducing new, more user-friendly vending machines to make purchasing and reloading simpler across the system.

The new TAPP card and vending machines represent a major milestone in the modernization of fare payments for the 117-year-old PATH system. TAPP cards are available in all stations and for online purchase starting today. The new vending machines will initially be available at the Journal Square and 33rd Street Stations, with plans for wider expansion in the coming weeks as more vending machines complete the agency's testing process. The TAPP fare gates have allowed riders to pay with credit or debit cards by tapping the fare gate readers since their inception. That capability will continue to be available to PATH riders.

In the interim, existing SmartLink Card dispensing machines have been retrofitted to dispense TAPP cards at all PATH stations starting today as the new machines come online gradually. PATH passenger information agents will assist riders as the new system is launched.
PORT AUTHORITY PRESS RELEASE, December 17

Other U.S. Systems

ATLANTA, GA.

Station Renamed

Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) has renamed GWCC/CNN Center Station to the Sports, Entertainment, and Convention District Station, or SEC District Station.

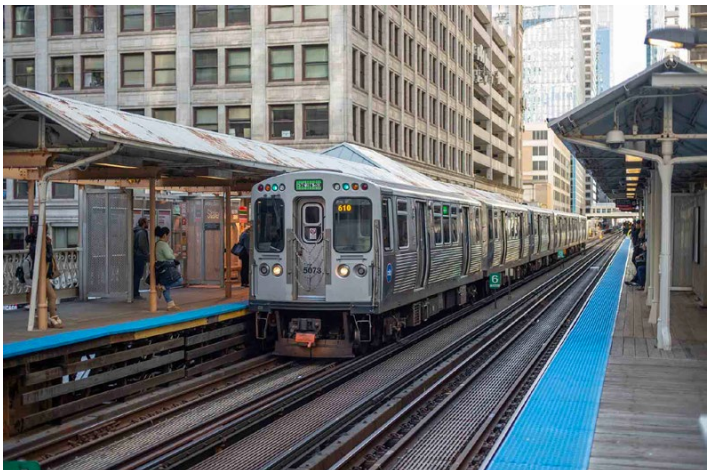
When the station opened, it served as a primary gateway to the Omni Coliseum and later to CNN Center, becoming widely recognized as the stop for major sporting events, concerts, and news headquarters. Generations of Atlantans have referred to the station by different names such as Omni, Dome, Phillips, and CNN Center. The new name captures the full range of destinations that exist in this modern era and provides clarity for riders who may be unfamiliar with historic facility names.

MARTA NEWS AND PRESS, December 1

CHICAGO, ILL.

Loop Station to Temporarily Close

The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), in coordination with the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), will be starting construction on the new State/Lake Loop Elevated station in downtown Chicago. The existing 130-year-old station will close beginning Monday, January 5, 2026, to allow for demolition and the start of major construction activities for the new, fully accessible rail hub.



A trio of 5000s, 5078-5077+5141-5142+5166-5165 (Bombardier Transportation, 2012), arrive at State/Lake with a Green Line train to Ashland/63rd on October 18, 2018. Jeff Erlitz photo

The new State/Lake elevated station will replace one of the oldest stations on the CTA rail system with a modern facility designed to improve safety, accessibility, and comfort for all riders. It is the fifth highest ridership station in the system and located at one of the busiest transfer points in the Loop. The new station will feature wider platforms, new elevators for full ADA accessibility, a striking glass canopy, and improved lighting and visibility. The new station is scheduled to open in 2029.

CTA NEWS, December 4

DENVER, COLO.

Regular Downtown Service Resumes

Beginning Sunday, January 4, regular downtown light rail service patterns were restored, following the most recent phase of the Downtown Rail Reconstruction Project, which concluded November 25.

The following service changes occurred:

- L Line service was reinstated
- H Line resumed its regular travel pattern to/from Florida Station and 18th/California and 18th/Stout Stations
- D Line service resumed its regular travel pattern to/from the 18th/California and 18th/Stout Stations instead of operating to/from Denver Union Station
- E, R, H, D, and W Lines underwent minor schedule changes

RTD NEWS STOP, December 30

SD100 cars Nos. 120+125+101 (Siemens, 1999, 1999, 1993) are seen operating on Route H on Stout Street back on June 25, 2022. Alex Krakowsky photo via Urban Electric Transit

KANSAS CITY, MO.

Riverfront Extension Progress

KC Streetcar began the testing phase of the Riverfront Extension on December 17.

Ahead of that day's live wire test, crews conducted "dead wire" testing with a specially built clearance cart, designed by the Riverfront Extension construction team. This clearance cart was used to verify that the streetcar can safely travel on the tracks and pass surrounding and adjacent structures and track elements.

Testing will continue for the next couple of months. The current phase, called Systems Integrated Testing, is expected to continue into early 2026, weather permitting. The following phase, Pre-Revenue Operations, will focus on operator training, safety drills, and real-world service simulations.

The KC Streetcar Riverfront Extension remains on schedule to be completed in early 2026. Once open, the 0.7-mile extension will connect riders from UMKC to the heart of Berkley

Riverfront, a five-minute walk to CPKC Stadium.
KC Streetcar Media Alert, December 17

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

MARC Railcars Leased

SEPTA received 10 leased rail coach cars from Maryland Area Regional Commuter Rail (MARC) on Friday, December. 5.

SEPTA signed the one-year agreement with MARC last month to provide some relief to riders in the coming weeks. The lease is being funded as part of the nearly $220 million in additional capital dollars allocated by the governor on November 24 to support urgent safety upgrades and infrastructure improvements.

SEPTA continues to make repairs to its Silverliner IV trains following the completion of federally mandated inspections of the entire fleet. While Regional Rail reliability should gradually improve as more railcars are repaired and returned to service, riders continue to face service disruptions.

SEPTA is also talking to transit agencies across North America about the possibility of similar arrangements.
SEPTA News, December 4

A train cannot get much shorter than this! During the peak of the Silverliner IV car shortage, Silverliner V No. 713 is seen rolling into Yardley Station with Train No. 3831 (West Trenton-Chestnut Hill West) on Saturday, October 4, 2025. Lee Winson photo

Strike Shutdown Averted

The SEPTA Board approved new contracts with TWU Local 234 and SMART Local 1594. TWU Local 234 represents nearly 5,000 operators, mechanics, trade specialists, and maintenance employees in the City, Suburban, and Frontier Divisions. SMART Local 1594 covers approximately 350 operators in the Victory Division.

Members from both unions voted to ratify the two-year agreements, which include wage increases and a temporary pension enhancement for employees who retire during the term of the contract, while maintaining healthcare and other benefits. It also adds a program designed to improve absence management and increases the pay differential for night shifts, two measures that are expected to help SEPTA ensure it has adequate staffing available as it works to improve service reliability.

The SEPTA Board also approved a new contract with the BLET, which represents Regional Rail engineers.
SEPTA News, December 19

PORTLAND, ORE.

Station Reopens

A major TriMet construction project entered its final phase, and as it did, the platform of one of Portland's oldest MAX stations reopened following a six-month closure.

Riders will resumed using the NE 82nd Avenue Station on Friday, December 19. Riders will continue to use the temporary stairs at the station until construction is fully completed in early 2026. The platform had been closed to riders since June, when TriMet began extensive renovations at the nearly 40-year-old station. Since then, riders have been using a temporary platform located to the west of the permanent one.

Construction will last through the start of 2026 and part of the station will remain inaccessible. Notably, the concrete stairs leading to and from the platform will be closed until construction is finished. Riders will be able to move between the platform and street level by either using the temporary stairs, located on the west side of Northeast 82nd Avenue, or the station's elevator, near the concrete stairs.

SD660 No. 228 (Siemens, 1997) leads a two-car train operating on the Red Line to Center City at the NE 82nd Avenue Station on June 22, 2017, long before the current renovation project. Jeff Erlitz photo

Upgraded features include improved lighting, seating, signage and security cameras. A new shelter maintains the original design from the 1980s. Also added was a second shelter and additional windscreen, providing greater weather protection. As part of the project, crews demolished an old mobility device lift building that was part of the original design. The building once housed a machine that transferred people from the platform onto high-floored trains. TriMet stopped using the lifts in 1997 when the first low-floor trains were introduced.
TriMet News, December 17

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA, CALIF.

New Fare Payment System

On December 10, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) joined the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and its regional transit partners to celebrate the launch of Next Generation Clipper, the Bay Area's electronic fare payment system administered by MTC. Next Generation Clipper will make fare payment faster, simpler, and more integrated.

MTC has begun the eight- to 12-week process of transitioning passengers who use the old Clipper card to the next generation. Like many other systems, the new system is both "tap and go" and an "open system," enabling the use of any wireless-enabled credit or debit card, in addition to mobile devices and the new Clipper card.

BART News, December 10

SEATTLE, WASH.

Federal Way Begins Service

Starting December 6, new Link light rail service to Federal Way began. The 1 Line extension, nearly eight miles long, allows travel between Seattle, Sea-Tac Airport and Federal Way and includes three new stations, Kent Des Moines, Star Lake and Federal Way Downtown, as well as two new parking structures and a parking addition in Federal Way.

This was the fifth light rail extension in the past three years for Sound Transit. Those include the T Line service to Hilltop, the 2 Line between South Bellevue and Redmond Technology Stations, the Lynnwood extension into Snohomish County and the 2 Line extension to Downtown Redmond. The Crosslake Connection, spanning the 2 Line across Lake Washington into Seattle, is expected in 2026.

Voters approved the Federal Way extension in 2008 as part of the Sound Transit 2 ballot measure. The project broke ground in summer 2020.

View of the Federal Way Downtown station platform from the parking garage on opening day, December 6.
SounderBruce photo via Wikimedia Commons

Kiewit was the design-builder for the project. Funding for the $2.5 billion project includes a $790 million federal grant agreement from the Federal Transit Administration and a $629.5 million low-interest loan from the U.S. Department of Transportation. In addition to the 2 Line's Crosslake Connection, a new Pinehurst Station at NE 130th Street in Seattle is expected to open in 2026. It was part of the ST3 ballot measure.

Sound Transit News Release, December 6

International

AARHUS, DENMARK

Tram-Trains Ordered

Stadler Valencia has been awarded a contract to supply the Aarhus Letbane with eight Citylink tram-trains designed for challenging winter conditions, with traction batteries able to provide power for up to 10 kilometers if the overhead wires are iced-over or there is a supply problem. The contract signed on December 2 has an option for a further 12 vehicles as well as spare parts management.

Stadler previously supplied trams and tram-trains for the Aarhus light rail network, which opened in stages in 2017-19. The latest order will enable the operator to boost peak capacity from the summer of 2029.

Rendering of tram-train for Aarhus. Stadler

The four-car 100 km/h Citylink tram-trains will be 49 meters long with a capacity of 324 passengers, 80 more than the current Tango tram-trains, which were also built by Stadler. They will have 152 seats including 16 folding seats. Each end car will have sliding steps for level boarding and a dedicated wheelchair space as well as spaces for pushchairs and bicycles, while the low floor with minimal steps at the ends will provide easy movement.

The use of tram-trains will enable operation on the urban tram lines as well as regional railway tracks.

Railway Gazette International, December 3

BELGIUM

New EMUs Ordered

National passenger train operator SNCB has finally awarded CAF a 12-year framework contract to design, manufacture and supply the AM30 train fleet, following unsuccessful legal challenges to the selection of the Spanish company.

The agreement confirmed by SNCB board on December 19 covers an initial €1.7 billion firm order for 180 electric and battery-electric multiple-units with a total capacity of 54,000 passengers. The contract requires the first units to enter service in 2030. The order could be expanded to by up to 380 additional units with a capacity of 170,000 passengers.

The AM30 fleet will gradually replace older rolling stock, improving reliability and offering independent access for people with reduced mobility, quiet zones, information screens, wi-fi and space for bicycles. The battery-electric trains will eventually replace existing diesel multiple-units.
RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL, December 22

BHOPAL, INDIA

New Metro Opens

Limited revenue services started on the first 6.2-kilometer section of Bhopal metro's Orange Line on December 21. Trains are initially running every 1 hour-15 minutes between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. The eight-station priority corridor in the southeast of the city links Subhash Nagar and the AIIMS medical campus and cost Rs22.5 billion.

Stations feature half-height platform screen doors, escalators and high speed elevators, AI-based CCTV cameras, audio and visual passenger information systems and emergency buttons. Alstom is supplying 52 three-car, standard-gauge Movia trainsets, CBTC and telecoms for both the Indore and Bhopal metro projects under a €387 million combined order signed in June 2022. The deal includes the provision of Alstom's FlexCare Perform maintenance services for 15 years.

A test train on December 19, before the line opened to the public. ANI photo

Of this build, 27 trainsets are being built for Bhopal, of which Alstom had by the opening delivered nine. The first arrived at Bhopal in August 2023; the trainsets are being produced at Alstom's Savli factory in Gujarat. The lightweight trains can operate at a maximum speed of 80 km/h and have a capacity of 144 seated and 981 standing passengers. They feature dedicated spaces for wheelchairs, air-conditioning and mobile charging points.

The remaining sections of the Orange Line are under construction, and the line will total 16.7 kilometers upon completion, while the Blue Line is also in build and will add a further 14.2 kilometers.
RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL, December 23

CHEMNITZ, GERMANY

New Tram-Train Arrives

The first of 19 second-generation Stadler Citylink tram-trains ordered by Mittelsachsen transport authority VMS for use around Chemnitz has been delivered for testing.

Citylink No. 451 (Stadler, 12/2025). VMS photo

The latest vehicles are similar to the first generation electro-diesel Citylink tram-trains supplied from 2015 by Vossloh's light rail business, which was subsequently acquired by Stadler. However, the second-generation vehicles ordered in March 2022 will be electric-only, using 600/750 V DC in the city area and 15 kV AC 16.7 Hz elsewhere. The three-section 100 km/h LRVs are 37.1 meters long with four wide double doors per side and level boarding at both 380 mm and 550 mm high platforms. Features include tactile flooring to assist visually impaired passengers.
RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL, December 19

DUBLIN, IRELAND

More EMUs Ordered

The Department of Transport has confirmed funding for national railway Iarnrod Eireann to place a firm order for a further 100 Alstom electric multiple-unit cars for the greater Dublin area's DART suburban network.

The first of the recent EMUs, seen on November 13, 2024. DART photo

They are to be used on the coastal line from Greystones to Malahide and Howth, enabling the full replacement of the original fleet in used since DART services were launched in 1984. The €173.9 million order announced on December 22 is the third to be placed under a December 2021 framework agreement with Alstom. It takes the total order to 57 five-car electric and battery-electric trainsets worth €670 million.

The 95 cars from the first firm order are now expected to enter service mainly on the line from Dublin to Drogheda from the first half of 2027. The second batch of 90 cars is to enter service from 2028. The EMUs will increase the capacity and sustainability of rail services, with benefits to passengers including greater accessibility, increased bicycle storage, device charging and CCTV for security.

RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL, December 22

ENGLAND

Class 810 Fleet Enters Service

The first of 33 Class 810 bi-mode trains finally entered service with East Midlands Railway (EMR) on December 3. The 200 km/h electro-diesel fleet had been formally unveiled at an event at Derby Etches Park depot on November 20, with EMR finally able to confirm that the program to replace its Class 222 fleet was about to get underway.

In a contract signed in July 2019 and valued at around £400 million, the five-car trainsets will provide a 24% increase in seat capacity and 19% more legroom. The fleet overall will deliver a 46% increase in the total number of seats available for passengers as well as an increase of up to 136% in luggage capacity, the operator says.

While electrification of the Midland Main Line beyond Wigston to Sheffield has been paused indefinitely, the Class 810s will now operate in electric mode for around 60% of their journeys, resulting in a reduction in carbon emissions of 66% on journeys between Sheffield and Nottingham and London. As well as AWS and TPWS equipment, the trains are described as "ETCS-ready" by the operator.

Delivery and commissioning of the trains by Hitachi has been significantly delayed, with the original target date for entry into service by December 2022 having been missed by more than three years. While Hitachi has placed much of the blame for this on the macroeconomic effects of the pandemic, EMR has been rather more open in citing various perceived failings by the supplier in public presentations.

RAIL BUSINESS UK, December 3

Class 810 train unit No. 810008 on test at Kilby Bridge, Leicestershire, on April 17, 2025. MajorScafellPike photo via Wikimedia Commons

FRANKFURT AM MAIN, GERMANY

Tram-Trains Ordered

The Fahma rolling stock subsidiary of Rhein-Main transport authority RMV has awarded Stadler a contract to supply 27 Citylink tram-trains for use on the Regionaltangente West orbital line which is being developed to run north-south around the western side of Frankfurt am Main.

The vehicles, able to operate on both main line and light rail routes, will be 50 meters long with a capacity of 360 passengers. They will be customized for the line's requirements, offering easy access from Deutsche Bahn's 760 and 960 mm high platforms as well as the 800-mm-high Regionaltangente West platforms.

Rendering of new tram-train for the Frankfurt am Main area. Stadler

Delivery of the first three vehicles for testing and approval is scheduled for autumn 2028, and the entire fleet is expected to be ready by autumn 2030, ready for full operation from the December 2030 timetable change.

The order announced on December 5 includes maintenance,

servicing and spare parts supply for 30 years. It will make use of existing lines, as well as 22 kilometers of new infrastructure, and will total 52 kilometers with 28 stops, 12 of which are already existing S-Bahn stations.

It will be operated as separate northern and southern services, overlapping in the middle. Ridership is predicted at more than 30,000 passengers per day.

RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL, December 15

GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN

Modernized Tram In Service

Gothenburg transport operator Goteborgs Sparvagar has returned to service the first of 79 Type M31 trams dating from the 1980s. The fleet is being modernized by Skoda Group to provide a further 15 years of service life.

The first modernized M31 tram. Skoda photo

The modernization program is being undertaken under a contract awarded in 2022 and includes a complete exterior and interior refurbishment, with a refreshed design aligned with the look of more recent trams. There is enhanced lighting, upgraded heating and air-conditioning and a re-engineered boarding ramp to improve accessibility.

There is a new electro-hydraulic braking system and new door drives replacing older pneumatic units. The driver's cab has been redesigned with a more ergonomic layout, improved visibility and modern controls, bringing working conditions up to contemporary standards.

Additional EMUs Ordered

In other area news, in November the Vastra Gotaland region authorized Vasttrafik to exercise an option for Alstom to supply a further 35 Avelia Stream Nordic X80 EMUs for SKr4 billion, as an option on a previous order for 45. This will support a projected increase in ridership on the region's train services from 65,000 to 100,000 journeys per day in the 2030s, and also enable the replacement of older rolling stock.

RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL, December 8

One of Vasttrafik's earlier X80 EMUs. Vasttrafik photo

GREECE

New EMUs Ordered

National passenger operator Hellenic Train, which is owned by Italy's FS Group, has signed a €393 million contract with Alstom for the supply of 23 six-car Coradia Stream electric multiple-units. The contract announced on December 22 includes the provision of maintenance services over a period of 10 years. A batch of 11 of the EMUs is planned to operate on Athens and Thessaloniki suburban services; these will have a higher density interior with 362 seats. A further 12 trainsets are expected to work Athens - Thessaloniki long-distance services and will have 335 seats.

The EMUs are to be equipped with a digital passenger counting system with high-precision sensors, audio and visual passenger information systems, as well as designated spaces for bicycles and baby carriages. They are to be equipped with large luggage racks, power sockets, adjustable LED lighting, as well as enhanced sound insulation.

The accessible EMUs are to be capable of a maximum speed of 160 km/h, and they will have two doors on each side of the middle cars and one door on each side of the end cars. They are to be fitted with ETCS onboard equipment.

Rendering of a Coradia Stream EMU. Alstom

Design and production of the trains will be undertaken at Alstom's Savigliano plant in Italy. Deliveries are scheduled to start in the second quarter of 2027.

Alstom is to provide preventive maintenance, scheduled overhauls and repairs, which the manufacturer says will be supported by the trains collecting data as they operate. The fleet is to be maintained at a Hellenic Train depot in Athens which will be customized for the Coradia Stream design, including the deployment of Alstom's HealthHub condition-based and predictive maintenance tool.
RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL, December 23

GUADALAJARA, MEXICO

Light Metro Line Opens

SITEUR-Sistema de Tren Electrico Urbano inaugurated a 21.7-kilometer nine-station light metro Line 4 in Guadalajara on December 15, linking Las Juntas to Tlajomulco Centro south of the city. Services operate between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. and travel was free until the end of the year.

A double-track, electrified alignment has been built for Line 4 adjacent to the existing single-track freight line that connects Guadalajara with Manzanillo on the coast.

Line 4 does not connect with the rest of the city's metro network, but it does have an interchange with the city's bus rapid transit routes at Jalisco 200 Anos and Las Juntas. The line is expected to carry 106,000 passengers a day.

The southern terminal of Line 4, Tlajomulco Centro. SITEUR photo

CRRC Zhuzhou has supplied 12 twin-section light rail vehicles. The accessible trains are capable of 300 passengers and equipped with air conditioning and CCTV.
RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL, December 24

LONDON, ENGLAND

New Overground Operator

Transport for London has selected the First Rail London Ltd (FRLL) subsidiary of FirstGroup for the next concession to operate London Overground inner-suburban passenger services. The preferred bidder was announced on December 10 and the standstill period before the formal award of ended on December 18.

FRLL is scheduled to take over from current London Overground operator Arriva Rail London on May 3, 2026. The contract is to run for an initial eight-year term, with an option to extend for up to two additional years at TfL's discretion. TfL will specify the service levels, with FRLL responsible for train services and station management. TfL retains all passenger revenue risk, and some cost risk for electricity pricing, regulatory charges and inflation protection up to an agreed amount.

FirstGroup said the contract is estimated to have a value of around £3 billion over eight years plus the optional extension. The contract includes a profit margin on concession payments, with the opportunity to earn additional fees if the operator achieves greater levels of operational performance, customer service delivery, customer satisfaction and reduced ticketless travel. FirstGroup is obliged to retain a £30 million Performance Bond and a parent company guarantee of £80 million.

Eastbound Overground train approaches West Hampstead on August 24, 2021. Simon/London Less Travelled photo via Wikimedia Commons

FirstGroup's plans include the provision of additional peak-time trains on the Mildmay Line from May 2026, with shuttle services between Clapham Junction and Shepherd's Bush during peak hours to provide more capacity. There will be more frequent trains on the Windrush Line from December 2026, with services through the core section of increasing to 18 trains per hour.

Help points and CCTV will be upgraded, and there will be an expansion of digital screens to display live travel updates for stations and nearby interchange services such as buses across all operator-managed stations. FRLL will collaborate with infrastructure manager Network Rail and rolling stock supplier Alstom to maintain performance and customer satisfaction. There will be targeted upgrades of the Mildmay Line infrastructure to boost performance. Work to improve accessibility will continue in partnership with advocacy groups.
RAIL BUSINESS UK, December 10

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Metro Tunnel Opens

Limited revenue services started through Melbourne's nine-kilometer Metro Tunnel with a ceremony on November 30. The 1,600-mm-gauge cross-city tunnel features five new underground stations: Arden, Parkville, State Library, Town Hall and Anzac. It is served by the Sunbury and Cranbourne/Pakenham suburban rail lines with an initial service of a train every 20 minutes from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekdays and from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekends. These are running between Westall on the Cranbourne/Pakenham Lines and West Footscray on the Sunbury Line, with some weekend services extending to East Pakenham and Sunbury.

The full opening is expected for February 1, when all Sunbury and Cranbourne/Pakenham Line services will be diverted into the tunnel, providing a combined three- to four-minute peak frequency, and allowing for the Big Switch network-wide timetable change.

Services are operated by High Capacity Metro Trains, 65 of which were ordered from the Evolution Rail consortium of Downer, CRRC Changchun Railway Vehicles and Plenary under an A$2 billion public-private partnership finalized in 2016. An additional five were ordered in 2021 and delivered by 2024. The line between West Footscray and Clayton was equipped with what is known locally as High Capacity Signaling; the Urbalis Flo CBTC was installed under a contract awarded to Bombardier Transportation (now Alstom) in 2017. The A$310 million program also included the construction of two control centers, one at Sunshine on the Sunbury Line and the other at Dandenong for the Cranbourne and Pakenham Lines.

Town Hall Station of the Melbourne Metro Tunnel on opening day.
Government of Victoria photo

Alstom also delivered platform screen doors and core component technologies for the Sunshine Signal Control Center. Trains started using the new signaling equipment in mid-2023.

The outer sections of both the Sunbury and Cranbourne/Pakenham Lines have been extensively upgraded to support the more frequent service, including sections being rebuilt on an elevated alignment. Many level-crossings have been removed as part of the regional grade separation program, with all due to be removed by 2030.

RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL, December 1

MONTPELLIER, FRANCE

Tram Route T5 Opens

Revenue services started on Montpellier tram Route 5 on December 20. The 14.2-kilometer line serves 27 stops. Part of the route is shared with Routes 1 and 4, but there are two newly-built sections. There is 4.5 kilometers of new alignment running north from Saint-Eloi on Route 1 to Clapiers, and 6.6 kilometers from Gambetta-Saint-Denis on Routes 3 and 4 to Gres de Montpellier in the southwest.

Built at a cost of €440 million, Route 5 is expected to carry around 80,000 passengers a day. Services are initially running at every 12 minutes, although the headways are scheduled to decrease to every 10 minutes from February 2026 and to every 7½ minutes from September as new rolling stock is delivered.

Urbos 100 No. 2106 (CAF, 7/2025) is seen operating on new Line T5.
Montpellier Mediterranee Metropole photo

CAF is supplying 60 seven-section Urbos trams to operator TAM (Transports de l'Agglomeration de Montpellier), 22 of which are destined for use on Route 5.

In Montpellier, each tram route has its own visual identity with colors and other visual cues. The Route 5 design by Barthelemy Toguo features plant and animal figures on a white base, symbolizing the tramway linking nature and people. The line serves several parks and green spaces, as well as the Zoo de Montpellier.

RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL, December 31

NAPLES, ITALY

New Tram Delivered

Turkish manufacturer Bozankaya delivered the first of the 20 five-section trams it is supplying for Naples operator ANM on November 26. The 100% low-floor, 30.5-meter-long bidirectional vehicle has capacity for up to 270 passengers, of which 64 can be seated. It has four double-leaf and two single-leaf doors on each side, and is capable of operating at up to 70 km/h.

Being supplied under a contract signed in May 2024, the first vehicle is scheduled to enter service next year.

The first of the new trams being delivered. Bozankaya photo

Meanwhile, for its home market, Bozankaya is also building 25 four-car metro trainsets for Istanbul's Line M4, and 20 light rail vehicle sets for the two-line Bursaray light metro network in Bursa.

RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL, December 5

PALERMO, ITALY

Tram Extensions

The city of Palermo has awarded a €145 million contract to a consortium led by D'Agostino Costruzioni Generali for the design and construction of tram extensions E1, E2 South, and F. The 4.5-kilometer Section F is to link Palermo Centrale main line station on tram Line 1 to Giachery main line station, which is to be part of a future circular railway.

Adjacent sections E1 and E2 South, totaling 5.8 kilometers, are to create a south-to-north corridor, linking the intersections of Croce Rossa and De Gasperi streets to Lanza di Scalera/Settentrionale Sicula.

The contract announced by the lead contractor on December 2 includes carrying out detailed design, construction of civil works and railway systems. It also provides for the implementation of environmental monitoring and mitigation measures, and the realization of large park-and-ride facilities at Mongibello and Galatea.

Flexity Outlook No. 17 (Bombardier Transportation, 2011) is operating on Route 2 at the Via Modica stop on March 8, 2023.
Yury Maller photo via Urban Electric Transit

The consortium includes ELUS, and Neocos for the construction, while Net Engineering Srl, Via Ingegneria srl, Arch&Tech, Ingerop T3 SLU, Ingerop Conseil & Ingengnierie, and archaeologist Cecilia Guastella for the design works. The works are being co-financed by the European Union's Recovery & Resilience Facility.

The extensions form part of Palermo tram Phase 2, which was approved by the city council in September. This will cover several extensions, including connections between the different parts of the network. Sections B and C were awarded in July 2023, while A, D, E2 Mondello and G are yet to be contracted.

RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL, December 16

PORTUGAL

New EMUs Arrive

The first Flirt for Portugal's CP, presumably at the Stadler plant. Stadler

The first of 22 Stadler Flirt regional multiple-units ordered by national train operator CP has arrived in Portugal for testing ahead of entry into service. The €158 million order signed in October 2020 includes 10 electric and 12 electro-diesel 1,668 mm gauge Class 2700 trainsets, along with staff training and four years of maintenance. All will have three car units, with the diesel-equipped sets also having a power car which can be removed later if it is viable to convert them to electric-only operation.

The 160 km/h units have a capacity of 369 passengers, including 204 seated, with areas for people with reduced mobility and bicycles. Features include wi-fi and power sockets. RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL, December 23

ROME, ITALY

Metro Line C Extended

A three-kilometer extension of Rome metro Line C was formally inaugurated on December 16, along with two new stations at Porta Metroni and Colosseo/Fori Imperiali.

Work on Section T3 of Line C, extending the route from San Giovanni toward the historic city center, began in March 2013. The line has been built by the Metro C Scpa consortium which includes Webuild, Vianini Lavori, Astaldi and Ansaldo STS (now Hitachi Rail). Work has taken 12 years due to the significant archaeological discoveries along the route, and the complex civil engineering required in the central area.

In order to manage the complexities of the capital's archaeology and geology, the Line C project adopted an archaeological top-down approach. This technique was developed specifically for the stations in the city center and initially applied to those at Colosseo/Fori Imperiali and Porta Metronia. Intermediate slabs are installed progressively as the excavation advances from top to bottom, ensuring structural stability and continuity for the archaeological digs while construction work proceeds.

Both of the new stations are among the six "archeo-stations" planned for Line C, together with San Giovanni (already operational), Venezia (under construction), and Chiesa Nuova and San Pietro (at the design phase). Developed under the guidance of the Ministry of Culture, these stations will showcase the numerous artifacts uncovered during the metro construction.

Porta Metronia station is located in Piazzale Ipponio, next to the Aurelian Walls. It has a rectangular structure with five underground levels reaching a maximum depth of 30 meters below street level. Excavations revealed a vast military compound, dating from the first half of the second century AD, including a Commander's House featuring frescoes and mosaic floors. The design of the station had to be revised in order to preserve the remains, although some elements including the bath house had to be relocated, according to Francesca Gherardi, restoration officer at the Colosseum Archaeological Park. Opening of the museum itself has been delayed, but it is expected to be ready in the next few months.

Colosseo/Fori Imperiali station is located beneath Via dei Fori Imperiali, between the Colosseum and the Basilica of

One of the many examples of artifacts on display at the new Colosseo/ Fori Imperiali Station. Municipality of Rome photo

Maxentius. This station box is 32 meters deep, with four underground levels. It provides a direct interchange to the existing Colosseo station on Line B. Historical exhibits inside the station have been curated by the Colosseum Archaeological Park, along with the Department of Architecture & Design at Sapienza University of Roma. RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL, December 17

SAO PAULO, BRAZIL

Suburban Line Changes Hands

TIC Trens took over the operation and maintenance of Sao Paulo's 57-kilometer suburban rail Line 7-Ruby on November 26 from state-owned operator CPTM. TIC Trens is a joint venture of local transport group Comporte Participacoes (60%) and CRRC Hong Kong (40%).

Sao Paulo TIC Trens livery. TIC Trens photo

TIC Trens was formed in May 2024 when it signed a contract for the development of an inter-city service along the 101-kilometer Sao Paulo – Campinas freight line with the provision of separate tracks for passenger services. That

contract includes taking on the operation of Line 7 for 30 years.

TIC Trens is to reconstruct all 17 stations on Line 7, which links Palmeiras-Barra Funda to Jundiai; these works are scheduled to start in May 2026. TIC Trens is also to replace 10 kilometers of track between December and November 2026.

The operator has also taken on the fleet of 30 eight-car 9500 Series EMUs to operate the route, which were built by Hyundai Rotem.

Following an amalgamation of Lines 7 and 10 in May 2021, Line 7 had been operated until August 2025 as the cross-city Line 710 between Rio Grande da Serra and Jundiai. However, the concessioning of the network meant the route has again been split, at this time at Barra Funda, to allow operational separation.
RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL, December 5

SWITZERLAND

Rack Rail Cars Ordered

Mountain railway and cable car operator Rigi Bahnen has ordered four more tailor-made rack-and-pinion trains from Stadler. Six Stadler Riggenbach rack system 1.5 kV DC Bhe 4/6 EMUs have been operating on its route between Vitznau and Rigi Kulm since 2022. The additional trainsets of the same type are intended to be used on the operator's other line from Goldau to Rigi Kulm.

One of Rigi Bahn's articulated cars from the previous order, No. 43 (Stadler, 2022). Rigi Bahn photo

The trains are to be manufactured at Stadler's Bussnang site. The two-car aluminum bodied standard-gauge EMUs will be 34.8 meters long and three meters wide with 150 seats arranged 2+3 and space for 53 standing passengers. The seats will be slightly reclined to compensate for the gradient during the journey, with large drop-down windows and upward-facing front windows which will allow passengers to enjoy the spectacular views.

The EMUs will be designed to be accessible for people with reduced mobility as well as for those with wheelchairs and winter sport equipment, with the trains having ski and sledge racks with water drainage systems.

There will be four powered cogwheel axles for traction on the steep gradients in all weather conditions. The trains will also support regenerative braking, with services traveling uphill reusing energy from downhill journeys.
RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL, December 22

More Rack Rail Cars Ordered

Appenzeller Bahnen has awarded Stadler a SFr17.5 million contract to supply two rack railcars to replace the life-expired fleet on the seven-kilometer Rorschach-Heiden line from the end of 2028.

The two standard-gauge adhesion and rack-and-pinion railcars will replace the existing vehicles built in 1998 and two older reserve vehicles dating from 1953 and 1967. Announcing the order on December 19, the operator said these cannot viably be brought into line with modern requirements. Summer services with open observation cars will continue to be offered.

Rendering of the new cars at the Rorschach-Hafen station. Stadler

The new railcars will be 21 meters long and able to operate in multiple when passenger numbers are high. Their light weight and use of the latest technologies will reduce energy and maintenance costs, and they will meet the requirements of the Swiss Disability Discrimination Act with low-floor access and two spaces for wheelchair users. There will also be space for bicycles and baby carriages, air-conditioning, plus infotainment provision and charging sockets.

First class will be reintroduced, with seats next to the driver at the front and rear of the train offering good views of the route and the Bodensee. *(Editor's note: Calling all railfans!)*

The vehicles will be prepared for future GoA4 (Grade of Automation) unattended automated operation, which Appenzeller Bahnen plans to introduce from around 2035.

Meanwhile, Appenzeller Bahnen and Swiss Federal Railways are looking at remodeling Rorschach Station to eliminate conflicting movements and enable services on the rack line to be increased from hourly to every 30 minutes in the peaks.
RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL, December 31

TORONTO, CANADA

Finch West Opens

Toronto's light rail Line 6-Finch West opened on December

7, running east-west from Finch West to Humber College in the northern suburbs of the city, with two underground and 16 surface stops. Passengers on the first day could ride free of charge and collect souvenirs, which included commemorative coins and badges.

The 10.3-kilometer fully segregated Line 6 runs west along Finch Avenue West from Keele Street to Highway 27, before turning south towards Humber Polytechnic's North Campus. It is intended to provide faster and more reliable transport along one of Toronto's busiest corridors, serving destinations including Humber Polytechnic and Etobicoke General Hospital.

There are more than 230,000 people within walking distance of the stops, and connections to around 30 bus routes as well as metro Line 1 Yonge-University at Finch West station. Ridership is predicted to reach 12 million people per year by 2031.

On August 12, 2025, Citadis Spirit No. 6501 (Alstom, 2023) is at the Jane and Finch stop while on a test run. Andrew Grahl photo

Following the recommendations of the public inquiry into problems with the Ottawa LRT project, Line 6 is initially operating under what Toronto Transit Commission calls "soft opening" conditions, with services running from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday to Saturday and 7:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sundays. The early end of services will provide an extended overnight maintenance window.

(Below) Map of Line 6 -Finch West. Metrolinx

The line was developed and is owned by Greater Toronto & Hamilton Area transport agency Metrolinx, with Toronto Transit Commission responsible for operations.

The federal and Ontario governments announced funding for the project in Toronto in June 2017.

In 2018, the Mosaic Transit Group private sector joint venture of ACS-FlatironDragados Canada, Aecon Concessions and CRH Canada was selected to build the line (Mosaic Transit Constructors), and maintain it over a 30-year period (Mosaic Transit Partners Maintenance).

Arup was primary subcontractor for the project's lead design. London Trackwork Inc. supplied turnouts, crossovers and switch machines, and TUV Rheinland provided safety assessment services. Zedas software is being used to track all assets down to component level.

Alstom, as successor to Bombardier Transportation, supplied the rolling stock and is responsible for the maintenance of the vehicles, track and the overhead electrification for the next 30 years. The 18 Canadian-built Citadis Spirit light rail vehicles were manufactured at its Brampton site and tested in Kingston. The 48-meter-long, 100% low-floor LRVs have a capacity of up to 292 passengers, including 120 seated, and are fully accessible for people with mobility needs.

They are designed for the Canadian market, with reinforced insulation, powerful HVAC and snow and ice management systems for operating in winter temperatures down to -36°F.

Line 6 is the first deployment of the latest generation of Hitachi Rail's SelTrac communications-based train control system, which was developed at its Global CBTC Competence Center in Toronto. The latest version requires less trackside infrastructure and cables, and features modular equipment that can be swapped out in minutes to simplify maintenance and upgrades.

RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL, December 9

North American Transit Project Openings Scheduled for 2026

By Randy Glucksman (ERA #3213)

Date	Agency	City	Type	Line	Details	Notes
Early	Sound Transit	Seattle, Wash.	LR	2 Line	Crosslake Connection	
"	Toronto Transportation Commission	Toronto, Ont.	LR	5 Eglinton Crosstown Phase I	Kennedy - Mt. Dennis opens from Kennedy - Mt. Dennis 11.8 miles 25 stations	From 2022
March	Los Angeles County MTA	Los Angeles, Calif.	HR	D (Purple) Extension Phase I	Wilshire/Western to Wilshire/La Cienega (Westwood VA Hospital) 3.92 miles 3 stations	From 2025
"	Northern Indiana Commuter Transportaton District	Lake County, Ind.	CR	West Lake Corridor	Dyer to Hammond 9 miles 4 stations	From 2025
Spring	Reseau Express Metropolitain (REM)	Montreal, Que.	LR	REM - Light Rail (Line A3) Deux Montagnes Branch	Central Station to Anse-a-L'OrmeBranch 7.4 miles 4 stations	From 2024
"	State of Illinois	St. Clair County, Ill.	LR	Metrolink	Extension to Mid-America Airport 5.2 miles 1 station	From 2024
Summer	Orange County Transportation Authority	Santa Ana, Calif.	SC	Santa Ana to Garden Grove	Santa Ana RTC to Garden Grove 4.15 miles 10 stations	From 2025

Legend	
CR	Commuter Rail
HR	Heavy Rail
LR	Light Rail
SC	Streetcar

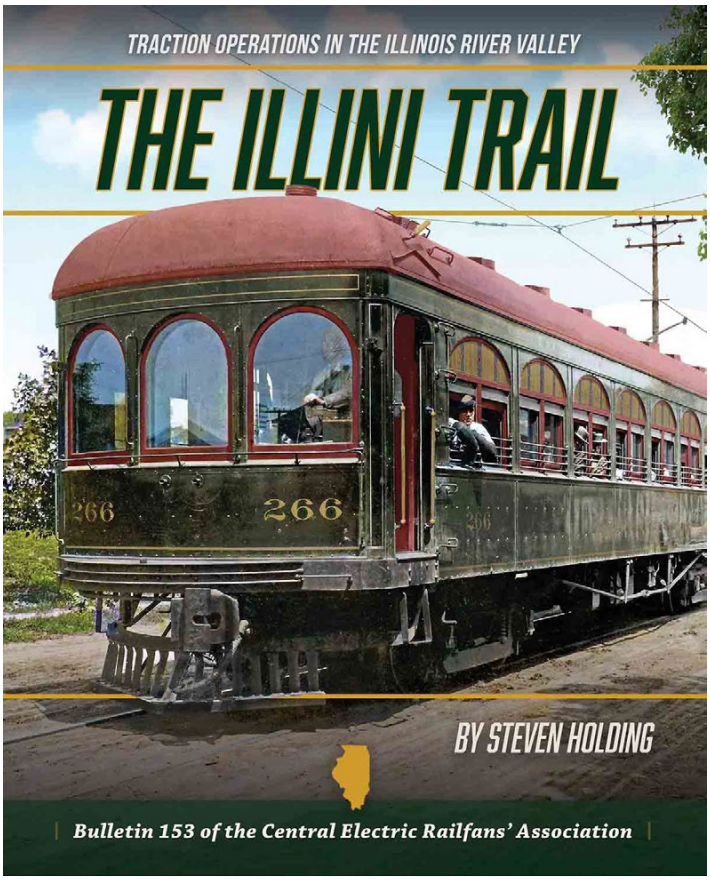
Paul's ERA Bookshelf

By Paul Grether (ERA #6933)

The Illini Trail: Traction Operations in the Illinois River Valley by Steven Holding, published by the Central Electric Railfans' Association, Chicago, Ill. in 2025, hardcover, 140 pages. Bulletin 153 of the C.E.R.A. Included are detailed track maps overlaid on the streets of major towns and cities served by the line, a listing with photos of powerhouses and substations, a select equipment roster and a bibliography. Extensive, captioned, black-and-white photos of the locations served, equipment and facilities with several color advertisements. ISBN 978-0915348541.

This work covers a specific line called the "Illini Trail" of what ultimately became part of the Illinois Traction System (ITS). This interurban line in northern Illinois largely followed the Illinois and Michigan Canal and grew out of several local systems that were incrementally connected through various corporate predecessors. "The Rock," or Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific steam railroad, paralleled much of the Illini Trail line and the lines were both competitors and co-dependent for traffic interchange. What is known as the Illini Trail interurban line to locals was at various times built and operated by Illinois Valley Railway, in 1908 becomes the Chicago, Ottawa & Peoria Railway, and became the Illinois Valley Division of the Illinois Traction System in 1922. Service on what was left of the lines ended in 1934 under the Chicago & Illinois Valley Railroad, which took over from ITS in 1929.

The complex story of the Illini Trail line is detailed in twelve chapters. These cover the early development and growth of the interurban service out of connections between the various small city systems, the connection with Chicago, operations under the various owners and the inevitable failure of the system due to debt and competition from roads. Also detailed is the healthy freight service, the structures and facilities of the line and the equipment.



Illinois Terminal No. 415 at IRM. H. Michael Miley/Wikimedia Commons photo

The Illini Trail briefly had branded long distance through service to downtown Chicago in a pooled arrangement with the Chicago & Joliet Electric Railway, which also required use of Chicago Surface Lines trackage. During the time the Illini Trail was a division of the ITS, it was planned to connect the McKinley Syndicate lines into a larger, presumably more viable system, and this unsuccessful dream persisted to the end. This is detailed in the book and describes the relationship of this isolated division with the rest of the system. The parent was known for interurban sleeping car service and if the divisions had been connected it is presumed that this service could have extended into Chicago.

The parallel canal was one of the Illini Trail's biggest assets and liability. While it meant that the line served the urban centers and industries along the water directly, and tapped into the hydroelectric power from the river, it also meant frequent washouts and bridge damage from the water.

There is very little published on the Illini Trail. In the January/February 1948 *Bulletin* #77, the CERA published some facts and figures, a handful of photos and a very brief historical summary. Now there is a much greater source of information. This book will appeal to those with an interest in Chicago and the Northern Illinois area electric rail history, information about an interurban line for which there is scant information. Finally, this book provides the history of the line which is the origin of the first car to operate at the Illinois Railway Museum (IRM), in 1966, Illinois Traction System No. 64, now restored as Illinois Terminal No. 415 at IRM.

Link to book information: www.libib.com/u/grether?solo=149435930

Building the New York Subway System, A Photographic Journey

Construction Route No. 18 — Part 5

By Jeff Erlitz (ERA #3997)

This month, we continue with Subway Construction Route No. 18, the IRT White Plains Road Line, and take a look at the first of the two yards and shops on this route, East 180th Street. These photographs are in the Subway Construction Photographs Collection of the New York Transit Museum via the New-York Historical Society.

Both photographs on this page were taken November 18, 1918 and show the temporary inspection barn at East 180th Street. This barn is in the location where yard Tracks A, B, C and D were later located and is north of the station. The view is north-northwest.

This is looking north-northeast from, presumably, the East 180th Street Tower. Note the New York, Westchester & Boston equipment on the far side of their right-of-way at their inspection and repair shop. That property is where today's Unionport Yard is located.

It is now March 25, 1920. We are looking northeast towards the temporary inspection shed and East 180th Street Tower. The station is just off to the right. The photographer is standing in the area where the permanent inspection shop and yard will be built. The new pipes are probably part of the utility work necessary for the new yard and shop building.

Five months after the photo above was taken, it is now August 12, 1920. We are looking southwest on the yard lead of the new East 180th Street Yard. Off to the left are the East 180th Street stations (NYW&B RR and subway).

Two years later, it is now October 18, 1922. The steelwork for the inspection shop appears to now be complete, or nearly so. The view is looking southwest. At this point, we do not know the reason for the apparent delay in construction.

The date is December 11, 1923 and the inspection shop certainly appears to be in service, as there are cars inside the building. If you look carefully, the car visible through the second from the left door appears to have suffered from some sort of collision damage.

Travels with Jack May

Scotland-Ireland 2018 — Part 3

By Jack May (ERA #2275, Photographs by the author)

Thursday, May 17 dawned sunny, and remained mostly bright. After breakfast we checked out of the Mercure and rolled our bags to nearby Waverley station, which is located in a wide cut. The departure boards directed us to gate 15, where we found two 2-car DMUs, ours being the furthest from the bumper block. Waverley is a complicated station, with both through tracks and stub ended ones coming from both directions (London and Glasgow/North). Most of the station's facilities are located in a rectangular central island between the through tracks and the ends of the stub tracks. The tracks (or platforms in British terminology) are numbered 1-4 and 7-20. We were about 20 minutes early and found a pair of seats on the right side in the center of the first car. While we awaited our departure (which was on time at 9:36 a.m.) we saw only a few people boarding, but when we arrived at Haymarket about three minutes later, lots of travelers got on, and now about every window seat was taken. We stopped at Edinburgh Gateway, probably for passengers coming by tram from the airport, and soon we were on the famous railway bridge that crosses the Firth of Forth.

If I were ever to spend more time in this area I'd like to get to various locations where I could photograph the bridge (preferably with a train on it), but when you're riding you are limited to seeing the surroundings rather than structure itself.

I lifted this photo of the Forth Bridge from the internet. Less than 10 miles from Waverley station, it is considered Scotland's greatest man-made wonder, and has become a UNESCO World Heritage site. Opened in 1890, the 8,094-foot-long bridge is a cantilever structure made up of three spans, some 150 feet above the water. About 200 trains use the massive crossing each day.
MrMasterKeyboard photo via Wikimedia Commons

The run to Perth was enjoyable, with our train bisecting farmland, passing small villages and skirting the coast, with North Sea views in the area around Inverkeithing and Kirkcaldy as well. Of course we sailed by golf courses galore, probably as many just on this part of our itinerary than Amtrak trains pass for the whole of their American network. The Scots certainly love golf. There are but seven way stations between Edinburgh and Perth (51 miles taking 78 minutes for an average of 40 mph) and we stopped at four, arriving at the train's terminal on time at 10:55 a.m.

Our train of Class 158 DMUs after our arrival in Perth on one of the two stub-end tracks. There are also four through tracks surrounding two platforms. Perth has a population of just under 50,000.

We bought a snack from a kiosk at track level and waited for the arrival of our 11:14 a.m. train from Glasgow to Inverness, which dutifully appeared on time. The DMU paused for two minutes while we and some others boarded and easily found seats. Our first train of the day consisted of a pair of Class 158 cars, built between 1989 and 1992 by BREL-British Rail Engineering Limited, in Derby. The train we just boarded, which looked a little dilapidated, had three Class 170 cars, built between 1999 and 2005 by BREL's successor Adtranz, also at Derby, but felt a great deal roomier. *(Author's note: The Class 170 series were introduced to the public as "Turbostars." The privatization of British Rail resulted in BREL's Derby Works being acquired by ABB, whose rail division was merged into Adtranz on January 1, 1996. In May 2001 Bombardier acquired Adtranz. In January 2021 Alstom acquired Bombardier. This information is from Wikipedia.)* Both had large picture windows and rode well. We would ride 158s twice again on our circle trip, which would last for four days. They had been refurbished in 2010, but their seating was still a bit tight.

We proceeded to Inverness (also just under 50,000 in population) aboard the 170s, which left on time at 11:16 a.m., and made stops at four of the eight way stations listed in the timetable. Until Pitochry (11:50 a.m.) we were on time, but then fell three minutes late waiting for a "down" train

to pass. Then, at Kingussie, we were passed by the Royal Scotsman, a luxury train with a diner and an observation lounge. I couldn't tell if it was in regular service or being deadheaded. It's a beautiful train, which we came upon again later in the trip (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Royal_Scotsman). The fare for a multi-day excursion is rather steep though, ranging from about $5,000 to $15,000, depending on the length of the "voyage" and the type of accommodations. Additionally, after we arrived in Inverness we were able to see the Caledonian Sleeper, an overnight rail service between a number of points in Scotland and London (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caledonian_Sleeper). It was attached to a diesel locomotive lettered for the Deutsche Bahn — why the DB, I don't know.

We arrived at Inverness, a relatively small stub-end station, on time at 1:27 p.m. (two hours for 120 miles, 60 mph average). Rather than grabbing a quick lunch before our 2:00 p.m. departure, we just bought some snacks and drinks for consuming aboard the final train of our day's worth of riding. Now we would be entering some scenic territory as we headed toward Thurso along ScotRail's "Far North" line aboard another pair of Class 158 DMUs.

Before continuing the narrative I should mention that many of the rail routes we would be covering are considered to be among the most scenic on the British Isles. That, and the fact that many Brits and Scots have an affinity for trains (remember the Titfield Thunderbolt?), there are many tracts on the subject; on the Internet I found quite a few describing the lines we were going to ride and the points of interest that we would be able to see from the trains' windows and/or as a result of pausing at various stations, if we chose to do so. Some are quite detailed and even indicate which side of the train should be ridden to see the most desirable scenery. *(Author's note: Before Amtrak many American railroads published "Route Guides," booklets describing the towns, cities and topography that could be seen through the windows of their varnish. This was even adopted by Amtrak, but eventually discontinued in its war against long-distance trains and passenger amenities.)* As a result I copied some of these commentaries and we brought them along to get the most from our rides.

Of the three mainlines we would be riding this one was the least interesting topographically, as we mainly moved through flat territory, seeing farmland and sheep, lots of sheep. But the gorse and mustard fields were colorful and we also ran along the North Sea for quite a spell, some 15 miles or so, seeing many firths and lochs (rivers and lakes). It was a pleasant ride and we observed patches of snow at the tops of mountains in the distance. If we got hungry or thirsty, an attendant with a portable food cart (trolley in British vernacular) catered to our needs.

The timekeeping on the line, which has a combination of single- and double-track, was a bit spotty, as at Ardgay (3:29 p.m.) we waited for eight minutes for some reason and never recovered. After leaving Inverness at 2:00 p.m. we looked out for Beauly station (2:15 p.m.), as it's a treasure from 1862. The building became a private home in 1960 and the stop was relocated, and now has the distinction of having the shortest

Beauly Station, built in 1862.

platform in all of Britain. I was looking out the wrong side, but Clare got to see it, and photographed it with her digital camera.

We passed a down train at Muir of Ord (2:23 p.m.) during a period that we were operating right-handed. I wondered if the sections of double track, which consisted mostly of jointed rail, were signaled for both directions. There are 23 way-stations on the 155-mile line, and eight were listed as flag stops for our train, but we only skipped three of them. After Ardgay we tended to run some 10 to 13 minutes late, and despite very short dwell times, we arrived at Georgemas Junction, one station before Thurso, still 13 minutes late, at 5:49 p.m. The run from Inverness took four hours and three minutes (average of just under 40 mph). We passed a down train that was on time between Kimbrace and Forsinard.

Georgemas is one station before both Wick and Thurso, which are on separate branches. When ridership was greater (there is a lot of competition from bus services, as the highway is much more direct than the rail line, by as much as 40 miles), trains were made up of two sets of DMUs, which were separated at this station. But now the same pair of cars travel to both. *(Author's note: Very reminiscent of the off-peak operation of Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Line single-Budd car trains, which would first run into Wildwood from Wildwood Junction, and then return to continue their trip to Cape May.)* After changing ends, the two-car units first continue to Thurso, where they change ends again, come back to the junction, and then continue on to Wick, where they finally lay over (there are four round trips on Mondays to Saturdays

Dingwall is the junction of the Far North line to Thurso and Wick with the Kyle line to Kyle of Lochalsh, which we would cover on the next day. The schedule called for a one-minute stop and since we arrived about a minute early, I took the time for a quick photo of our DMU.

We waited at Ardgay for our opposite number, which was 7 minutes late, causing us to fall behind schedule by an equal amount.

(Above and below) Two views of our 158-class DMU train near the end of its journey. The upper photo was taken at Georgemas Junction, where Clare stepped off as well (she is behind the crew member). Note the electronic train annunciator even here in the middle of nowhere. It only took ten minutes more to get to Thurso, the northernmost point on Britain's rail system, which is the location of the lower view. Here the equipment changed ends again to return to the junction and on to Wick, where it laid up for the night.

with only one on Sundays). There was a coach tour on board our train, which was heading for Wick to spend the night, but quite a few of the group stayed on the platform, probably deciding to stretch their legs as they knew the train was coming back in about 20 minutes. I detrained too, but only for a photo.

Clare saw me get off and for some reason thought we were in Thurso, so she disembarked as well. After the crew changed ends and I hurried back to get aboard, it was lucky I saw her and she was able to board in time. The DMU arrived in Thurso 10 minutes later at 6:03 (13 late). We alighted and I took another photo as the crew changed ends again. After the train moved off to go back to the junction, Clare realized she had left her folding cane aboard. Our accommodation was only a short distance from the Thurso station so she walked carefully without the cane to the B&B.

Our concern about the lack of a cane was eased when we checked in to the B&B, and the proprietor indicated that a previous guest had left her "walking stick" (the British word for cane) and had never came back for it, and Clare was welcomed to take it. Problem solved, although there is a "rest of the story," which will be related in Part 4 of this series.

It was still light and we walked about a half-mile to this town's (of about 8,000) beach, which was the furthest north we would get on the entire trip. It was not warm enough for a swim, but there were plenty of dogs being taken off their leashes by their owners to run loose and some children enjoying themselves on playground equipment. Ferries are operated from Thurso to the Orkney Islands, which are even further north, from a terminal about a mile away. We had passed a hotel that had posted an interesting menu, so we attempted to stop there for dinner, but were turned away as all tables were taken. Fortunately our B&B also served meals, and we ended up enjoying their victuals.

It was a pleasant day of train riding, and we were looking forward to resuming our exploration of the Highlands of Scotland on the following morning.

To be continued in Part 4.


Exit
9187
MTA
Long Island
Rail Road
9-12
UNIT