



Portal North Bridge Track Cutover Work

Briefing
September 17, 2026



Executive Summary

The project will consist of a second set of critical construction and operational activities to transfer, or “cut over,” rail operations from the last remaining track on the existing Portal Bridge to the second new track on the Portal North Bridge over the Hackensack River.

During this work, trains will only be able to operate on a single track between Newark & Secaucus over the new bridge.

This cutover represents a major milestone for the region and is essential to advancing long-term reliability and capacity improvements along the Northeast Corridor.

While this work will ultimately deliver substantial benefits, the cutover process is complex and operationally intensive, requiring temporary changes to rail service.



NJ TRANSIT & AMTRAK Service Plan Guiding Principles

NJ TRANSIT and Amtrak leveraged **three core principles** in developing its service plan, balancing customer needs with operational realities during the cutover period to minimize impacts as much as possible.

1. **Maximizing Capacity and Seat Availability**
2. **Maintaining Service on All Rail Lines**
3. **Upholding the Highest Standards of Safety**



MAJOR SERVICE UPDATE

Portal North Bridge Cutover

 **AMTRAK**


TRANSIT

Scope of Project Cutover Work

The cutover work involves transferring active rail traffic from the sole remaining track that crosses the more than 116-year-old Portal Bridge to the newly constructed Portal North Bridge, including making the connection between the existing infrastructure to the new infrastructure.

Due to the interdependent nature of these systems, the work must occur within defined time windows and requires temporary reductions in train service to support the work.



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Expected Timeline

Friday, October 9	Cutover Begins in the Evening
Sunday, October 11	New NJ TRANSIT Schedule Goes into Effect
Sunday, November 15	Regular NJ TRANSIT schedule resumes*
Monday, November 16	Full Return to Normal Service <i>with construction activities continuing at other areas of the project until mid-December.</i>

** Subject to completion of safety testing and commissioning.*



Amtrak

Cutover Work Details



Amtrak Goals

Complete work
on time and on
budget

Incorporate
learning lessons
from the first
cutover

Prioritize safety
and efficiency

Keep travelers
top of mind

Strong
collaboration
with NJ
TRANSIT

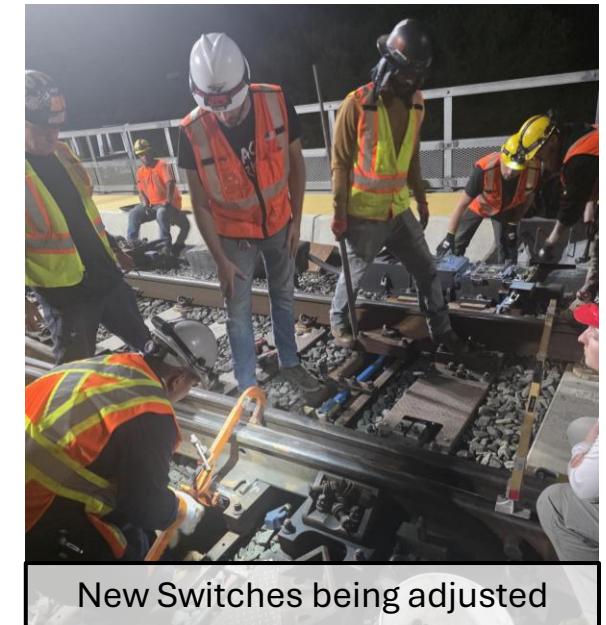
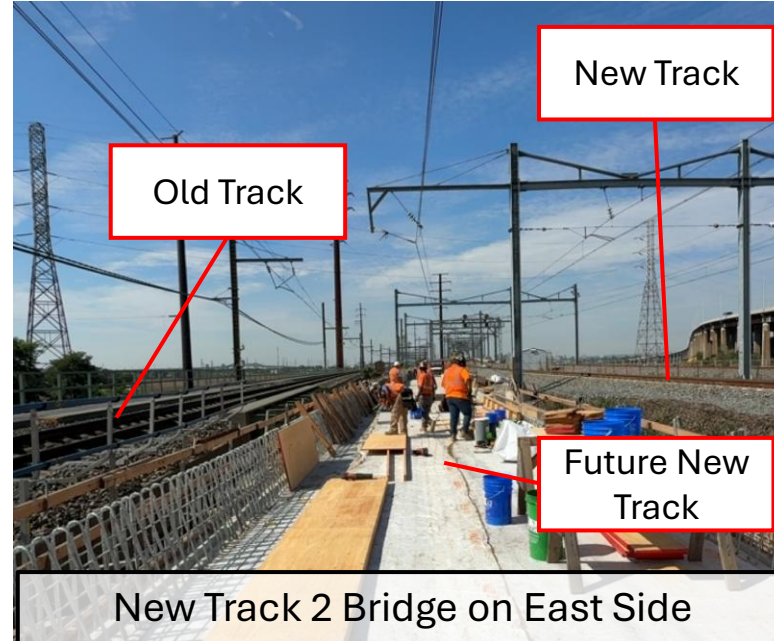


MAJOR SERVICE UPDATE

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Pictures of Preparatory Work





Infrastructure Work – By The Numbers

Work will happen on both sides of the bridge on the East and West ends simultaneously.

Estimated Combined Labor Force:

- Approx. 40,000 manhours
- 2 Shifts per day, 7 days per week
- Average of approx. 50-75 workers per shift

Work to be Completed during Second Cutover:

- 2.5 Mile Section of new Track 2 will be tied into existing infrastructure
- Removal of structures and foundations that interfere with the final alignment
- Approximately 4,500 Linear Feet of New Track Installed
- 1 New Turnout Installed, including 2 new Switch Machines
- Approximately 4,500 Linear Feet of New Catenary Wire installed
- Wiring of all Signal and Communications Systems, including 5 new Signals
- Testing and Commissioning of all new Infrastructure Assets



Amtrak Service Impacts

Amtrak and NJ TRANSIT coordinated on our respective schedule changes and agreed to our service plans before announcing them publicly.

Less service for Amtrak too – adjusted over 280 trains in total.

- **Acela**
 - Reduction from 20 weekday trains to 18
- **Northeast Regional**
 - Reduction from 44 weekday trains to 40
- **Keystone**
 - Reduction from 24 weekday trains to 10 (Between Philadelphia & NYC)
 - Full service operates between Harrisburg and Philadelphia
- **Long Distance**
 - No change in service levels.

The service impacts will run from Sat., Oct. 10th – Sun., Nov. 15th.



NJ TRANSIT Service Impacts

During the cutover period, NJ TRANSIT customers should expect service impacts during the cutover work.

While disruptive in the short term, these impacts are necessary to ensure a safe and successful transition to the new bridge infrastructure.

These impacts will primarily affect rail lines that operate through the Portal Bridge corridor, including services into and out of New York Penn Station.



Customer Communications & Support

NJ TRANSIT is implementing a comprehensive customer support strategy, including:

- Cross-honoring with NJ TRANSIT Route 126 bus service, New York Waterway Ferry and PATH at Hoboken and 33rd St. Stations
 - Enhanced AM/PM peak ferry service to/from Midtown
- Advance notice of service impacts across every available customer communication channel
- Real-time service alerts through digital channels
- Station signage and messaging
- FLEXPASS ticket option on sale (20 trips w/ 15% discount)
- Additional NJ TRANSIT Staff in Hoboken & Secaucus

Customers will be encouraged to check schedules before traveling, allow extra time, and consider alternate travel options or working from home where available.

www.njtransit.com/portalcutover will serve as a hub for the latest and most up-to-date service and schedule information.



Support for Midtown Direct Customers

All Midtown Direct service will be diverted to Hoboken.

Midtown Direct customers on Morristown Line, Gladstone Branch and Montclair-Boonton line trains should purchase **NJ TRANSIT tickets & passes to/from Hoboken.**

Tickets/passes with an origin station on these 3 rail lines with a Hoboken destination will be accepted for travel on:

- PATH (at Hoboken & 33rd St. Stations only)
- NY Waterway ferry service (between Hoboken and Midtown only)
- NJ TRANSIT's 126 bus service between Hoboken and the PABT
- Weekend Midtown Direct trains operating to/from New York
 - This applies to monthly/weekly passes and FLEXPASS only
 - One-way tickets will need a NY destination on weekends

By purchasing NJ TRANSIT tickets to/from Hoboken and using PATH or NY Waterway ferry service, customers can realize a savings of up to 25% per trip based on their origin station.



NJ TRANSIT

Service Plan Details



Weekday Service Plan Impacts by Line

- **Northeast Corridor (NEC)**
 - Reduction from 133 weekday trains to 113
- **North Jersey Coast Line (NJCL)**
 - Reduction from 99 weekday trains to 87
- **Raritan Valley Line (RVL)**
 - Reduction from 51 weekday trains to 50
- **Morristown Line & Gladstone Branch**
 - Reduction from 148 weekday trains to 139
- **Montclair-Boonton Line**
 - Reduction from 64 weekday trains to 60
- **Main Line, Bergen County Line, Pascack Valley Line and Port Jervis Line**
 - Other than connecting times, service remains unchanged
 - Added 44 shuttle trips between Secaucus & PSNY to maintain connections (22 trips in each direction)

See schedules & detailed information on

njtransit.com/portalcutover



Service Plan Impacts - Weekends

- **New York**

- Existing weekend service to/from PSNY will continue from lines that have it
- Timing of hourly service may shift up to 30 minutes
- RVL does not change

- **Morristown Line, Gladstone Branch / Montclair-Boonton Line**

- Hoboken connections to/from Morristown Line will occur at Secaucus instead of Newark Broad St.
- Montclair-Boonton Line schedule continues to operate bi-hourly, but at different times to maintain NY connection at Newark
- Last trips connecting to Montclair and Gladstone will operate 30 minutes earlier

- **Main Line, Bergen County Line, Pascack Valley Line and Port Jervis Line**

- Added 34 shuttle trips between Secaucus & PSNY to maintain connections (17 trips in each direction)



Concurrent Infrastructure Work

- **North Jersey Coast Line Brielle Bridge** *October 11 – October 25*
 - To perform maintenance of bridge supports, trains will not operate between Manasquan and Bay Head
 - Buses replace trains at Bay Head and Point Pleasant, with rail connection at Manasquan
 - Bus replaces last train from Long Branch to Bay Head on Saturday and Sunday
 - Bridge will remain operable for marine traffic
- **Raritan Valley Line (RVL)** *Saturday November 7*
 - Conrail track replacement at junction with NEC
 - Buses replace trains Cranford to Newark
- **Port Jervis Line** *October 11 – November 14*
 - Continuation of ongoing track maintenance between Suffern and Port Jervis stations
 - 8 weekday, midday off-peak trains replaced by bus, with rail connection at Ramsey Rt. 17



Conclusion

The Portal Bridge cutover is a **necessary and highly complex undertaking** that will temporarily impact NJ TRANSIT customers.

Through close coordination between NJ TRANSIT and Amtrak, a service plan grounded in **capacity, continuity, and safety** has been developed to minimize disruption while positioning the system for long-term improvement.

While we recognize the short-term inconvenience customers will experience, the successful completion of this work will deliver lasting benefits for decades to come.



Q&A



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APPENDIX



Service Plan Guiding Principle #1: ***Maximizing Capacity and Seat Availability***

The service plan is designed to **provide the greatest number of seats possible across the system**, even under constrained operating conditions. This is accomplished by:

- Prioritizing high-demand travel periods
- Adjusting train lengths
- Managing equipment assignments to maximize throughput

The plan emphasizes **moving as many customers as possible safely and efficiently.**



Service Plan Guiding Principle #2: *Maintaining Service on All Rail Lines*

The plan preserves **continued service on every rail line**, ensuring that no communities lose access to rail service during the cutover.

- Maintains regional connectivity
- Avoids full line suspensions
- Provides customers with predictable, if modified, travel options



Service Plan Guiding Principle #3: ***Upholding the Highest Standards of Safety***

Safety is the overriding priority during the cutover process.

The service plan:

- Ensures customer safety and minimize overcrowding to the greatest extent possible
- Ensures crews, dispatchers, and maintenance teams can operate within established safety margins
- Allows sufficient time for testing and validation of new infrastructure
- Reduces operational complexity during the transition

All service decisions were evaluated through a safety-first lens, recognizing that a successful cutover depends on disciplined, controlled operations.



What Customers Should Expect

- Modified train schedules, largely including earlier departures
- Adjustments to service frequencies on certain segments
- Longer travel times on some trips due to operational constraints
- Some train consolidations or cancellations



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