



MAJOR SERVICE UPDATE

New Portal North Bridge



Portal North Bridge Track Cutover Work

*Stakeholder Briefing
January 15, 2026*



Executive Summary

Amtrak will perform a critical series of construction and operational activities to transfer, or “cut over,” rail operations from one track on the existing Portal Bridge to one track on the new Portal North Bridge over the Hackensack River. **During this work, trains will only be able to operate on a single track between Newark and Secaucus.**

This cutover represents a major milestone in the Gateway Program 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 but significant changes to rail service.



Scope of Amtrak Cutover Work

The cutover work involves transferring active rail traffic from one track that crosses the more than 110-year-old Portal Bridge to one track on the newly constructed Portal North Bridge.

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



MAJOR SERVICE UPDATE

New Portal North Bridge



Amtrak Cutover Work Details



Cutover Details

This is a major infrastructure project that requires a significant amount of work and testing to complete and connect an existing asset (the NEC) with a new asset (Portal North Bridge).

It's very complex – and not just a flip of a switch.

But you might be wondering...

- Why a cutover?
- Why this plan?
- Main challenges
- Balancing service vs. construction
- First of two cutovers required



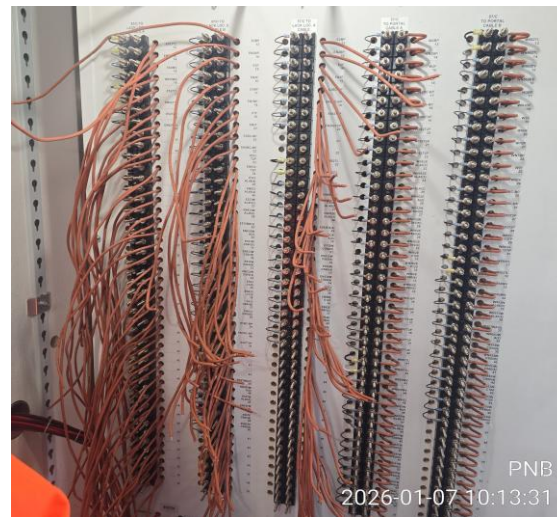
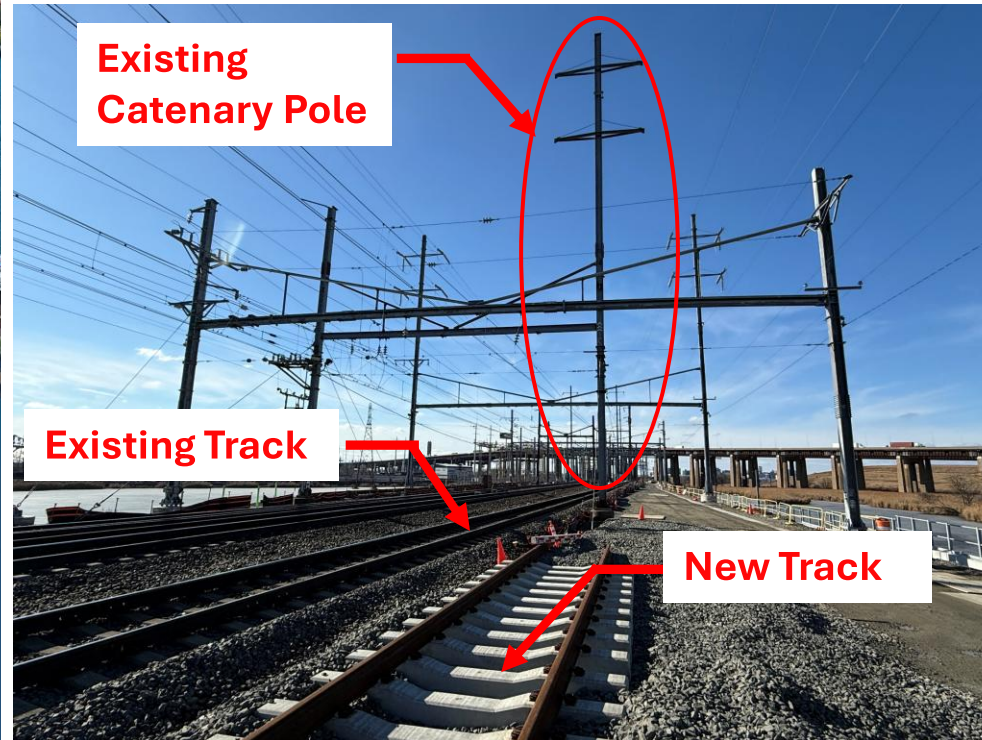
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AMTRAK **N TRANSIT**

Pictures





Infrastructure Alignment – By The Numbers

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

Estimated Labor Force:

- Approx. 40,000 manhours
- 2 Shifts per day, 7 days per week
- Average of approx. 70 – 90 workers per shift

Work to be completed during cutover

- Removal of 6 existing Catenary poles & foundations, which interfere with new alignment
- 2.5 Mile Section of New Railroad will be tied into existing infrastructure
- 2 New Interlockings Built
 - 5 New Turnouts
 - 20 New Switch Machines
 - 15 New Signal Huts
 - Wiring and Testing of Signal System
- 4,500 Linear Feet of New Track
 - 6,000 Feet of Existing Track Demolished or modified
 - 9,000 Feet of New Rail
 - 1,600 Tons of New Ballast
- 4,500 LF of Catenary Wire



Expected Timeline of Amtrak Cutover

Sunday, February 15	New NJ TRANSIT Schedule Goes into Effect
Saturday, March 14	Cutover Work Completed
Sunday, March 15	Regular NJ TRANSIT schedule resumes*

* Subject to completion of safety testing



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., Feb. 14th – Sun., March 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.



What Customers Should Expect

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



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



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.



Customer Communications & Support

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

- Cross-honoring with PATH and New York Waterway Ferry with 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 2/15 (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.

These tickets 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

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.



MAJOR SERVICE UPDATE

New Portal North Bridge



NJ TRANSIT Service Plan Details



Weekday Service Plan Impacts by Line

- **Northeast Corridor (NEC)**
 - Reduction from 133 weekday trains to 112
- **North Jersey Coast Line (NJCL)**
 - Reduction from 109 weekday trains to 92
- **Raritan Valley Line (RVL)**
 - Reduction from 52 weekday trains to 49
- **Morristown Line & Gladstone Branch**
 - Reduction from 149 weekday trains to 141
- **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)



Conclusion

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

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

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