



Empire State Passengers Association

**Working For A Balanced Public
Transportation Network**

For All New Yorkers

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ESPA EXPRESS

*News From The
Empire State Passengers Association*

HOT DESTINATIONS, ROUTE MAPS, EVENTS, AMTRAK SPECIAL OFFERS **THE ULTIMATE EMPIRE STATE GUIDE**

new york by rail

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TAKE IT OUTSIDE
New York State's best music festivals, hiking and biking trails, leaf peeping spots and epic winter fun!
BY SARAH CARPENTER PECK

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, NEW YORK!
As the country celebrates its 225th, there's all over the Empire State are ready to party!
BY REBECCA D'AMORIO

SPORTS CENTER
Amtrak is your ticket to the pro sports!
BY RICHARD HÉREZ FERRA

TRAVELOGUE: My New York State Of Mind
BY MORE HOSCHKE

BURLINGTON BECKONS AGAIN
BY SEAN HULANDIN

WHY THIS STUDENT LOVES AMTRAK
BY LANA BUCKLEY

OVERNIGHT IN ALBANY, ROCHESTER, SYRACUSE AND HUDSON
BY JIM BARRETT

WELLNESS WITHOUT CARS
BY MARCO HERRERO

AMTRAK

**2026/27
New York By Rail Now Available!
See Page 3**

Rhinecliff Station Saga Continues - Steve Strauss

In early April, the Empire State Passengers Association and the public learned that the United States Department of Transportation had asked New York State DOT to "pause" design work on a series of improvements at the Amtrak station while the Department reviewed the project's Federal grant. This was yet another delay in a project that has not gone well from the beginning.

In August of 2022, the Biden administration announced the award of a \$28.2 million FY21 Federal-State Partnership grant for the station. The grant would help fund design and construction of a new high-level platform, new elevators, restoration of the historic canopy, and other ADA improvements between the platform and the station building. The state agreed to put up nearly \$12 million in local match, making \$40 million available for the improvements..

Prior to the announcement of the grant New York State and Amtrak were working on a smaller scale package of improvements that had assumed a six-car high level platform. As the FRA began looking at the original improvement plans, they directed the State to lengthen the new platform to accommodate eight cars. (Continued On Page 5 - Rhinecliff)



NYS DOT



'Improving Passenger Rail In The Empire Corridor'

(A One-Day Educational Symposium)

Wednesday, October 7, 2026 - 8:00am to 4:30pm
At 'The Duke' @ The Mercantile On Main - Rochester, NY

Join us for this interactive symposium which will bring together business & community leaders, government representatives, tourism & hospitality industry members, rail industry suppliers and rail advocates to learn about New York State's passenger rail improvement initiatives and what accelerated implementation could do for Upstate New York.

*Hosted By The Empire State Passengers Foundation
A 501(c)3 Charitable Educational Organization*

Confirmed Speakers:

State Senator Jeremy Cooney
Chair NYS Senate Transportation Comm.

Monroe County Executive Adam Bello
Rochester Mayor Malik Evans

And Many More To Be Announced Soon!



**Scan To Register &
For More Information**

Executive Director's Report: Steve Strauss

In the passenger rail advocacy business, it seems like for every two steps we move forward, we take one step backward. That saying explains much about recent passenger rail activity in the state.

After a dormant period, NYSDOT commenced the Section 106 state historic preservation consultation process for the Rhinecliff station project with all interested parties. They released a preliminary design, and were all set to convene a public presentation in late April or early May, to discuss the plans, when the federal government told them to pause work! (ESPA is hearing that the pause may be lifted by the time you read this article.)

After a couple of years of delays, Amtrak has finally placed its new Acela trains into Northeast Corridor service. However, soon after this good news, Amtrak and Metro North get into a brawl over several issues related to non-revenue train moves in MNR territory! Which results in Amtrak filing a lawsuit against Metro North!

Further Upstate, Amtrak has begun the construction of a new high-level platform at Saratoga Springs, but they took a long time before letting anyone know about their plans! Further west, Amtrak is making much needed repairs to its low-level station platform at Buffalo-Depew.

Also in Western New York, the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) has established a formal Passenger Rail Working Group to advise the Council on intercity passenger rail matters. ESPA is hopeful this will lead to GBNRTC supporting more train service to Western New York and additional frequencies between the Niagara Frontier and Cleveland/Toledo. ESPA's Bruce Becker, Roy Davis & myself are participants in the group.

On May 18, Amtrak and the State of Vermont tightened the schedule on the Ethan Allen resulting in shorter travel times between Albany and Burlington. Amtrak has also returned an additional seasonal coaches to the Lake Shore Limited, providing more seats on that train.

I would like to thank the following ESPA members who attended the Rail Passengers Association's "Day on the Hill" in April to speak with members of the New York congressional delegation about funding Amtrak and improving passenger train service in New York and around the country: Andrew Cabal, DeWain Feller, Alexander Ivanoff, Kevin Jones, Tom Martinelli, Chris Nadelbach, Alexander Schaefer, and yours truly, made the journey to our Nation's Capital.

Our sister organization, the Empire State Passengers Foundation, is planning its second annual [Passenger Rail Conference \('Symposium' in Upstate parlance\) in Rochester on Wednesday, October 7th](#). State Senator Jeremy Cooney (Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee) is a confirmed speaker, along with other industry & business leaders. You are urged to attend! *Steve*



New York State Fair, NY

**Amtrak Will Again Make A Special Stop Directly
At The New York State Fair (NYF)
From Wednesday, August 26 through Monday, September 7
Advance Reservations Are Required! - www.amtrak.com**

Eastbound Trains: #284 (Arrives NYF 9:29am) & #64 (Arrives NYF 2:29pm)

Westbound Trains: #63 (Arrives NYF 1:11pm), #281 (Arrives NYF 4:21pm) & #283 (Arrives NYF 7:13pm)

Reserve Early For The Lowest Fares - 'See New York and Save 15%' Promotion Available!

THE LATEST EDITION OF NEW YORK BY RAIL HAS PULLED INTO THE STATION

The 2026/2027 edition of the award-winning [New York By Rail](#) is making fun, affordable, safe, stress-free travel within reach. Published by Content Studio New York, this annual Amtrak magazine, with its vintage-inspired cover and its companion [digital edition](#), is the ultimate playbook to traveling throughout New York and into Canada and Vermont by Amtrak.



The 22nd issue focuses on traversing the state by rail to enjoy the outdoors--from your favorite music festival or athletic event to the ideal hiking, biking, skiing or leaf-peeping spot. It's complete with hot destinations, maps, a calendar of events and overnight itineraries, including Toronto's art scene and 46 hours in Burlington, Vermont. There are special offers and even some tips on where to find the best made [Amtrak-inspired pizza](#). "Once again, we're proud to partner with Amtrak to publish this beautiful guide that has everything you need to plan an Amtrak getaway," said Tom Martinelli, publisher of New York By Rail. "At a time when flying and driving has become more stressful; we're encouraging more folks to hop aboard Amtrak for easy travel"

With special emphasis on our nation's 250th birthday, you can catch all the celebrations that New York has to offer with a calendar of exciting events that you can access by train. It includes a route map and station services guide to forty Amtrak stops and Amtrak Connection buses along the Adirondack, Berkshire Flyer, Empire Service, Ethan Allen Express and Maple Leaf routes.

The magazine is brought to life on [Instagram @newyorkbyrail](#) with first person car-free, train experiences and is available at most Amtrak stations, tourist Information centers, airports, hotels and via travel agents. For more information or to request a hard copy of the guide, visit [NewYorkByRail.com](#). Follow New York by Rail on Facebook and Instagram! To learn more about Amtrak visit [Amtrak.com](#).

Penn Station Transformation

On May 20, 2026, USDOT Secretary Sean Duffy and Amtrak Special Advisor Andy Byford announced the selection of [Penn Transformation](#) Partners (Halmer and Skanska) as the "Master Developer" team to transform New York's Penn Station. This will include a new entrance on 8th Avenue that will lead into a new train hall with seamless passenger experience connecting Amtrak, New Jersey Transit, LIRR, and the many subway lines which serve Penn Station.

Full coverage of the plan will be covered in the next issue of the ESPA Express.



Concept View From New 8th Avenue Street Entrance

New York State Ridership Stats

Route	FY YTD October - June											June '26 Customer OTP
	Jun '26	Jun '25	Jun '19	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	
Empire Service	124,900 119% of 2019 #	114,900	104,700	1,017,000 113% of 2019 #	1,022,600	1,001,500	906,900	731,600	369,100	570,000	899,800	75.7%
Maple Leaf	39,900 123% of 2019 #	38,000	32,500	343,200 124% of 2019 #	339,900	361,600	314,900	275,000	149,900	190,900	277,500	61.3%
Adirondack	8,300 82% of 2019 #	7,000	10,100	59,100 75% of 2019 #	59,000	57,200	15,900	0	0	44,200	79,300	72.9%
Ethan Allen Exp.	8,000 186% of 2019 #	7,200	4,300	64,900 186% of 2019 #	61,500	64,400	62,700	35,700	0	23,300	34,900	33.4%
Lake Shore Lim.	33,000 105% of 2019 #	33,000	31,500	261,800 103% of 2019 #	285,700	295,700	250,700	213,000	106,500	175,900	255,000	62.6%

Data Source - Amtrak Monthly Performance Reports

NYS Route Definitions

Empire Service - Passengers On New York To Albany-Rensselaer Trains & Passengers Solely On Other Trains Between New York & Albany-Rensselaer

Maple Leaf - Passengers On West of Albany To Syracuse- Buffalo - Niagara Falls - Toronto Trains

Adirondack - Passengers On Train North Of Albany To Montreal **Ethan Allen Express** - Passengers On Train North Of Albany to Burlington

Lake Shore Limited - Passengers On New York/Boston - Albany - Buffalo - Cleveland - Chicago Train

New High-Level Platform at Saratoga - Benjamin Turon

Construction is underway on a new high-level platform at the Saratoga Springs Rail Station — the \$12.5 million project funded by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and is part of Amtrak's ADA Stations Program.

Steve Strauss, ESPA Executive Director, stated in the press release that: "The new high-level platform at Saratoga Springs will speed boarding and alighting and slightly shorten travel time for customers using the Adirondack and Ethan Allen trains. The Empire State Passengers Association is excited to see Amtrak advancing this project in Saratoga."

The new six-hundred-foot high-level platform will facilitate level boarding for improved accessibility, eliminating climbs up and down the drop-steps of the coaches. There will be new LED light fixtures, wayfinding signage, new microphone and speaker system, and a yellow-painted safety detectable warning system at the platform edge.

This station improvement project began construction in January and is on track for completion in summer 2027. The station served 38,000 passengers in 2025.

The station dates to 1956, when it was built by the Delaware & Hudson Railway as part of a state funded realignment and grade separation of their mainline out of the center of Saratoga Springs. The mainline is now part of the Class One freight railroad CPKC (Canadian Pacific) system.

The Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) acquired the station building and rebuilt it in 2004 in a \$5.9 million project. It is also served by Greyhound and Adirondack Trailways buses, with the CDTA providing local bus and microtransit (Flex) service in the city.



Ben Turon

The original station had two "team tracks" for servicing private cars, and as of May it seems that one will remain for special trains, for example, railroad business trains that have stopped at Saratoga during the horse racing season.

The new high-level platform seems to be located on a new dedicated track just east of the running and main tracks, leaving the existing mainline tracks free for use by freight trains. Updates with photos are being posted regularly on the [ESPA Facebook page](#).

Berkshire Flyer Returns - Gary Prophet

Starting on Friday, June 12, the Berkshire Flyer retuned for the 2026 summer season with an expanded schedule. As a result of ESPA's and other's suggestions, the train operates in both directions on Fridays and Sundays. It departs New York Penn Station at 11:06am, making all regular stops to Albany and then continues to Pittsfield, MA with a 3:00pm arrival. Also on both Fridays and Sundays, it departs Pittsfield at 3:15pm and arrives back in New York City at 7:51pm. This is not an additional train between Albany and New York City, but is simply an extension of Train 233 northbound and Train 244 southbound (with a slightly different schedule than on the other 5 days of the week when the train starts and ends in Albany).

The train has business class, but not café car service. This schedule promotes weekend travel to Pittsfield and also promotes weekend travel from Pittsfield, which is new this year. Additionally, with the earlier northbound schedule, passengers arrive at Pittsfield mid-afternoon, so plenty of time for dinner and evening entertainment in Pittsfield, which was not an option with the later schedule of prior years.

ESPA is very pleased with the earlier departure of the northbound and the fact that the Berkshire Flyer will operate in both directions Fridays and Sundays. In prior years, it was only available northbound on Fridays and southbound on Sundays. Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey stated, "We want every region of Massachusetts to be connected and accessible, and rail service like the Berkshire Flyer helps make that possible".

The Berkshire Flyer will operate through Sunday, September 13 and will operate on Labor Day, Monday, September 7 instead of Sunday, September 6. The Empire Corridor is very busy on summer weekends so make your reservations well in advance.

Ethan Allen Express Running Time Reduced

Effective May 18, the schedule for the Ethan Allen Express was reduced by approximately 30 minutes, with the running time savings occurring between Burlington and Saratoga Springs. The northbound train departs New York Penn Station at 2:19pm and now arrives at Burlington, VT at 9:26pm. The southbound departs Burlington at 9:25am, about 30 minutes earlier, and arrives New York at 4:27pm, about an hour earlier.

Rhinecliff (Continued From Page 1)

Because of the geometry of the tracks in the Rhinecliff area this required extensive redesign of the track, interlocking, and platform work. The generous size of the grant also permitted Amtrak and New York State to expand the scope of the infrastructure improvements from rehabilitation to replacement, but further delayed progress on an updated design.

In ESPA's opinion, the redesign work was not undertaken in an expeditious manner, and the State did not relaunch the required historic preservation outreach until early in 2026. The mandatory consultation with interested parties, including ESPA, resulted in the release of architectural drawings of the improvements this spring and provided New York State with their first public feedback on the design.

This process was leading to a planned public presentation of the design in late April or early May. Those plans came to a halt in early April when Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy announced that the Department had asked New York State DOT to pause any further design and environmental review work. NYSDOT and [Amtrak held the first public presentation on the proposed plans July 30th](#).

Because New York State and the Federal Railroad Administration have not yet completed the environmental review process for the project, the grant has not yet been "obligated", meaning there is no written signed agreement between the two parties. As a result, U.S. DOT could cancel the grant. U.S. DOT's lifting of the design pause in early June means NYS may resume work on the project.

The Rhinecliff project differs from the Gateway Tunnel project which secured signed agreements with the Biden administration and had their funds obligated before the change in administrations.

NYS Applies for Large Fed-State Partnership Capital Grants - Steve Strauss

In late January New York State DOT applied for federal funding assistance for two large capital construction projects. The first grant application seeks to complete the final design and construct the long-awaited Niagara Falls trainset maintenance facility at an estimated cost of \$126,000,000.

Advancing this project has been a long-standing ESPA priority. Getting this facility into construction is a necessary precursor to the introduction of new Airo trainsets in the Empire Corridor. New or rehabilitated shops are under construction in Washington, Philadelphia, and Seattle in preparation for the new trains. Train maintenance facilities at Sunnyside Yard and Rensselaer will also receive upgrades.

The new Niagara Falls Maintenance Facility will replace aging, functionally obsolete and highly inadequate servicing infrastructure at the western terminus of the Empire Corridor. The new facility will provide a modern Service and Inspection (S&I) shop, covered train servicing canopy, upgraded yard tracks, and year-round utilities to support cleaning, inspections, light maintenance, and reliable layover operations. Niagara Falls currently supports two daily Empire Service train turnarounds and one daily through train but has only minimal servicing capability, which limits equipment availability and diminishes the quality of service.

Construction of the Niagara Falls Inspection and Maintenance Facility could also allow for additional Amtrak service between Western New York and destinations in the Midwest such as Cleveland, Toledo, and Detroit.

The second grant application consists of two packages of signal and interlocking projects in the Hudson and Mohawk valleys. The application covers final design and construction of over 70 miles of improvements at an estimated cost of \$196,000,000. The two packages of work will replace failing antiquated signal infrastructure and construct new universal crossovers to improve safety, reliability, and performance for existing passenger rail service. These projects include upgrades for 32 miles of signal infrastructure from Rensselaer to Hudson and Schenectady to Hoffmans; and the upgrade of 39 miles from Hudson to Poughkeepsie with cab signaling.



The scope of work also includes the upgrade of several grade crossings and the addition of four new interlockings. The existing interlockings, from south of Rensselaer Station to Hudson Station, are widely spaced and limit dispatching flexibility for train meets and passes.

In addition to bringing the signal system in these areas to a State of Good Repair, the work will provide the following benefits: 1.) fewer train delays, 2.) better protection against stronger storms, 3.) more efficient maintenance work windows and improved safety for roadway maintenance and inspection crews made possible through the additional interlockings, 4.) increased operational flexibility for train dispatching, 5.) improved safety at highway grade crossings, and 6.) a signal system ready to support increased train speeds and future service growth.

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Their Generous Support!**



Great News!

The 15% Discount For Amtrak Travel
All Across New York State
Now Requires **ONLY A One Day Advance Purchase!**

Valid on Empire Service Trains, Adirondack,
Maple Leaf & Ethan Allen Express

Other Terms, Conditions & Restrictions Apply!

Amtrak Share Fares make it easy to bring the whole crew by helping you save with each plus one. The more family, friends, loved ones you bring, the more you all save.

Share Fares provide a group discount of up to 60% off tickets for 8 passengers traveling together on the same reservation. Here's how the discount works: Passenger 1 – full price (or lowest available fare); Groups of 2 – full price (or lowest available fare); Groups of 3 – 15% off all tickets; Groups of 4 – 25% off all tickets; Groups of 5 – 37% off all tickets; Groups of 6 – 47% off all tickets; Groups of 7 – 54% off all tickets; Groups of 8 – 60% off all tickets. 2-day advance purchase required. Other terms & conditions apply.

Visit **Amtrak.com**; click on 'Deals' at the top, then click on 'Deals & Promotions' and then 'Share Fares'

Reminder...The popular 'I Love New York' 15% Discount continues to be offered for travel to/from all New York State destinations on Empire Corridor trains & the Ethan Allen Express. The current promotional offer is valid through 2026. **NEW...**Reservations must be made at least **1 day** in advance of travel; black-out dates and other restrictions apply. The 15% discount is not available for travel on the Lake Shore Limited.

Visit **Amtrak.com**; click on 'Deals' at the top, then click on 'Deals & Promotions' and scroll down to the 'See NY & Save 15%' option to take advantage of this great offer.



See New York and
Save 15%



Save on Group
Travel with
Share Fares
Up to 60% Off



Station Advisories:

- Parking at the **Buffalo-Depew, NY** station has been temporarily limited as the project to reconstruct the boarding platform and complete other exterior ADA improvements continues. Ticketed passengers are receiving alerts encouraging them to be dropped-off or use any of various private lots located across from the Buffalo Niagara International Airport, approximately 2.5 miles away. Parking and transportation to the station from these lots would be the customer's responsibility. From a practical standpoint parking is generally available at the station mid-week, but passengers should plan ahead if they are departing on weekends or over holidays.



ESPA Meetings

ESPA members and ALL other interested persons are welcome & encouraged to participate in ESPA Meetings!

Check 'Events' at www.esparail.org for the most current meeting information! Advance registration is required!

Upcoming ESPA Working Group Meetings

Monday, September 28, 2026 - 7:00pm to 9:00pm

Via Zoom - Advance Registration Required

Saturday, November 7, 2026 - 12:00n to 4:00pm

In Person - Downtown Schenectady

Location To Be Announced

Advance Registration Required

Dates, times & locations are subject to change!

ESPA Membership

- ☐ Introductory Membership (\$20.00 for first year)
- ☐ Regular Individual Membership (\$35.00 per year)
- ☐ Student, Senior, Fixed-Income Membership (\$25.00 per year)
- ☐ Family Membership (\$45.00 per year)
- ☐ Sustaining Membership (\$65.00 per year)
- ☐ Patron Membership (\$120.00 per year)
- ☐ Association/Non-Profit Org. (\$300.00 per year)
- ☐ Corporate Membership (\$500.00 per year)
- ☐ Lifetime Membership (\$500.00 One Time)

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ESPA, P.O. Box 3012, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

Update on Empire Corridor Airo Trainsets - Benjamin Turon

As Amtrak takes delivery of its new Siemens “Airo” trainsets for the Cascades corridor in the Pacific Northwest — sending them through their paces on the Northeast Corridor before entry into revenue service — perhaps now is a good time to get an update on the future Airo trainsets for the Empire Corridor.

Chris Jagodzinski, Amtrak’s VP of Commissioning & Corridor Optimization gave an [online YouTube](#) presentation to Mass Bay RRE last November, giving some details on the Empire Airos which are planned to enter service in 2030. The Empire Corridor (Empire Service, Maple Leaf, Adirondack, and Ethan Allen) will receive 17 trainsets of the Type C Airos which will have a battery pack, replacing the need to use the third rail in and around Penn Station. The trainsets will be bidirectional six car sets of semi-permanently connected coaches hauled by a Charger ALC-42E (4200 hp) diesel-electric locomotive. The sets will normally be maintained as one unit, like the Acela high-speed trainsets. Amtrak’s Rensselaer Maintenance Facility will be retrofitted as a “Level 1” location for the upkeep of the new fleet and a new “Level 2” satellite maintenance facility will be built at Niagara Falls.

The trainsets contain a business coach with up to 49 seats in a 1x2 configuration, and five regular coaches with a total of 286 seats in a 2x2 configuration. The business coach would also serve as the “Auxiliary Power Vehicle” (APV), housing the battery pack at the end of the car adjacent to the locomotive.

The regular coach adjacent to the business car will include the café space and an ‘office’ for the train crew. The last coach in the trainset will include a cab car for bidirectional operation.



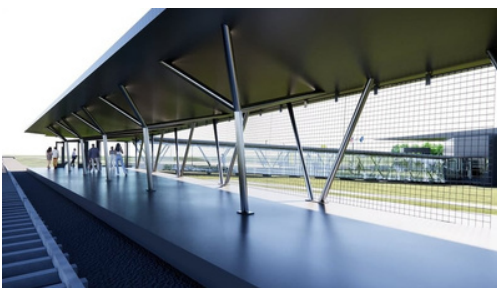
First Airo Trainsets Destined For The Pacific Northwest

Regarding the proposed battery propulsion, Mr. Jagodzinski stated it is expected that in 2028 Amtrak will receive the first dual-mode diesel/battery Airo trainset from Siemens Mobility. This prototype set will undergo comprehensive testing to validate the proposed diesel/battery technology. If after testing the battery dual-mode propulsion system is found not to be satisfactory, Amtrak & Siemens will explore other alternative power configurations for the New York State trainsets. On an equipment chart shown during the video presentation it was stated for the Airo C sets: “Battery Prototype and ability to pivot to 3rd Rail/Diesel.” This indicates that Siemens Dual-Mode Charger locomotives, similar to those currently entering service on Metro-North, are a potential fallback should the proposed battery systems proves unsuitable.

And that may prove true as given the amount of battery power necessary to move the 466 tons of a six-car Airo trainset with a Charger locomotive may not be practical within the planned space and could require a second locomotive. However, if Amtrak does decide to go with Siemens Dual-Mode locomotive Chargers with third rail capability, including the battery APV coach might still be a good idea. Documents from Siemens indicated that the battery pack in the Airo would provide a power boost for acceleration and for recovering energy (regenerative braking) from the locomotive’s dynamic braking, significantly decreasing fuel consumption and emissions.

Of course, moving more travelers from driving and flying would address the state’s environmental goals, which is why passenger capacity for the Empire Airos should be increased from 6 to at least 7 cars, given the frequency today of sold-out trains. A standard five car Amfleet consist has 306 seats compared to the 335 seats in an Empire Airo, which has more business class seating. An Airo regular coach car has 72 seats, so adding one additional coach to make a seven car consist would increase overall capacity to 407 seats; 101 more than on the existing 5-car Amfleet One trains. The battery APV may potentially reduce the capacity of business class by 9 to 15 seats.

Rail News in Brief by Steve Strauss



Smith-Miller + Hawkinson Architects

At Rouses Point, construction has begun on an entirely new U.S. Port of Entry. The \$47.6 million project is being constructed by Murnane Building Contractors of Plattsburgh with completion targeted for August 2027. The new facility will replace the current in-bound to the U.S. border inspections for passengers, which occurs on board the train at the Rouses Point station. An immediately adjacent rail platform and covered walkway into the new building will allow for more secure off-train processing of passengers and will also house the joint U.S.-Canada NEXUS processing center. The new facility will continue to be necessary even after the long-sought Montreal Central Station Pre-Clearance becomes a reality in the future. [info. from our friends at the North Country Chamber of Commerce.] [More Info On The Design](#)

Amtrak Long Distance Fleet Replacement Request for Proposal (RFP) Issued

Amtrak has released the complete Long Distance Fleet Replacement Request for Proposal (RFP) through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.

The entire RFP release is over 2,500 pages and contains hundreds of pages of highly detailed technical & mechanical specifications. The release also includes over 340 pages of newly available images, graphics, details and descriptions of the passenger accommodations, services & facilities Amtrak is seeking for the new Long Distance fleet.

Click Here To View - <https://www.esparail.com/resources/ld-fleet-replacement/>



Long Distance Coach



Club Bedroom



Dining Car



Lounge Space

East River Tunnel #2 Reopens

The completely rebuilt East River Tunnel #2 is scheduled to reopen on August 13th! This major rehabilitation project was necessary after the over one-hundred year old Tunnels #1 & #2 were severely damaged by Super Storm Sandy in 2012.

The project completely removed all of the old interior components of the tunnel, which were then replaced with all new construction and fixtures. The track structure is now directly anchored to the concrete 'ties' which are part of the new floor surface.

It is expected that Tunnel #1 will close for its rebuilding later this fall, with all work to be completed in 2027. Lessons learned from Tunnel #2 work will help keep the Tunnel #1 phase on schedule.



Amtrak

Effective March 16, 2026, two New York to Albany round trip trains were restored to the Empire Corridor schedule. The trains had been discontinued as part of the reductions that occurred on April 28, 2025, due to the closure of one of the East River Tunnels. Although the tunnel was still closed, Amtrak was able to adapt its operations and bring back the two round trips earlier than initially expected. In addition, the combining of the Maple Leaf and Adirondack trains also ended on March 16.

ESPA thanks Governor Hochul and the many other elected officials who strongly advocated to restore the two round trips and for the separation of the Maple Leaf & Adirondack. The trains returned include a daily 5:00am Albany departure to NYC and a daily New York City departure at 11:25pm back to Albany, as well as an afternoon train in each direction between Albany and New York City. Amtrak has stated to ESPA that the New York to Florida Silver Star service will return to serve New York Penn Station in late 2027 when the full East River Tunnel work is completed.