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# Newsday

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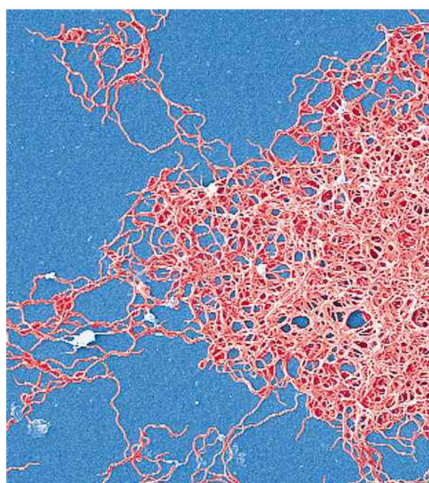
THE LONG ISLAND NEWSPAPER

  
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MOSTLY SUNNY

## MELT DOWN

PSEG flub  
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**A8**



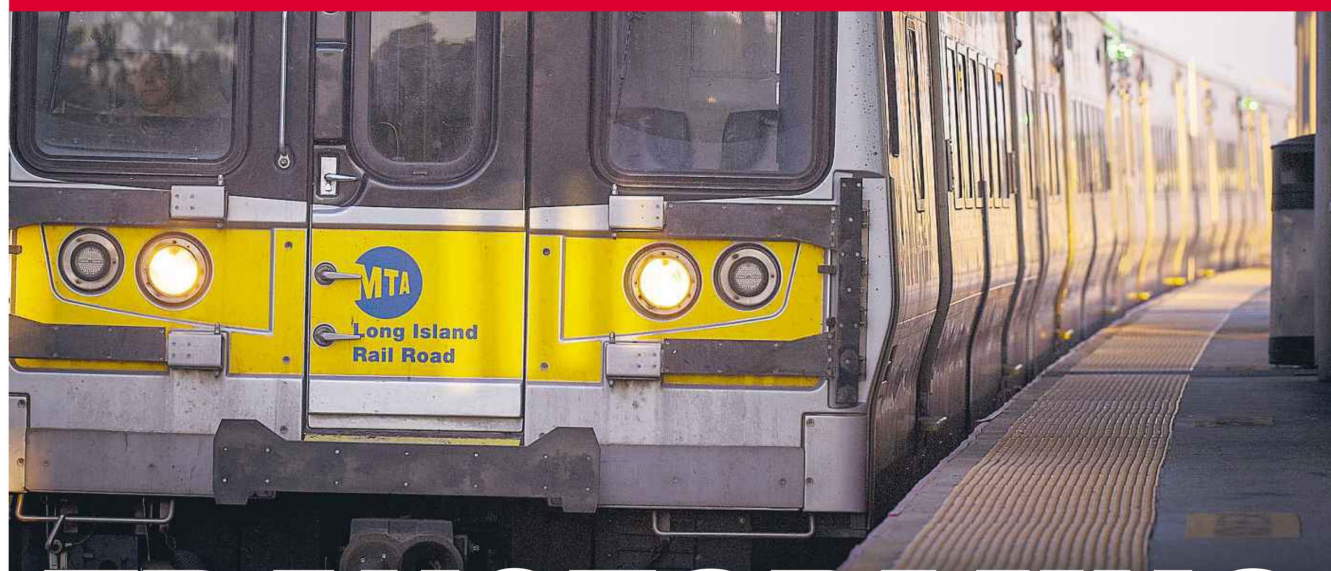
ALAMY / SCIENCE HISTORY IMAGES

## LYME DISEASE VACCINE

Maker gets OK  
for FDA's fast track

**A4-5**

## LIRR MEGAPROJECTS



# TRANSFORMING TRANSIT

From East Side Access to third track, billions  
are being spent to improve your commute

**A2-3 | UPDATES AT NEWSDAY.COM**

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**THURSDAY, AUGUST 10**  
**10 A.M. — 6 P.M.**

Not open to Nursing and Allied Health programs.

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J. CONRAD WILLIAMS JR.



# THE LIRR'S MASS

## 7 megaprojects aimed at making your commute easier are already underway

BY ALFONSO A. CASTILLO  
alfonso.castillo@newsday.com

**B**illions of dollars in infrastructure investments being made now on the LIRR could transform how Long Islanders live and commute within the next five years, experts said.

From new trains to new stations to new tracks, several big-ticket improvements long debated for the Long Island Rail Road are now approved, funded and on the way.

Taken together, the convergence of major railroad enhancements provide a stark contrast to the misery commuters have endured leading up to, and during, the ongoing “summer of hell” that resulted from the LIRR struggling to reconcile record ridership with antiquated assets.

“We may be too close to these various projects to fully appreciate the historic nature of what is going on here,” said Kyle Strober, executive director of the Association for a Better Long Island, a planning group. “The fact is our region hasn’t seen such a massive investment in our transportation system since Robert Moses built Long Island’s parkway system.”

Some of the projects were conceived decades ago, such as a link to Manhattan’s East Side and a third track along the LIRR’s congested Main Line in Nassau County. Others seek to take advantage of emerging technology, including computer systems that can automatically prevent train crashes and high-tech train cars with digital billboards and charging ports on every row.

What this potentially will mean for the LIRR’s 308,000 daily riders is shorter commutes to work and back home, fewer rush-hour delays and can-

cellations, safer and more comfortable trains, and for some, a way to avoid the maddening conditions at Penn Station.

“I would certainly not say that this is all a panacea — you do these things and you don’t have to do anything else ever,” said Chris Jones, chief planner for the Regional Plan Association, a nonprofit planning group. “But I would say you can’t underestimate the improvements that will be there once all these projects are done.”

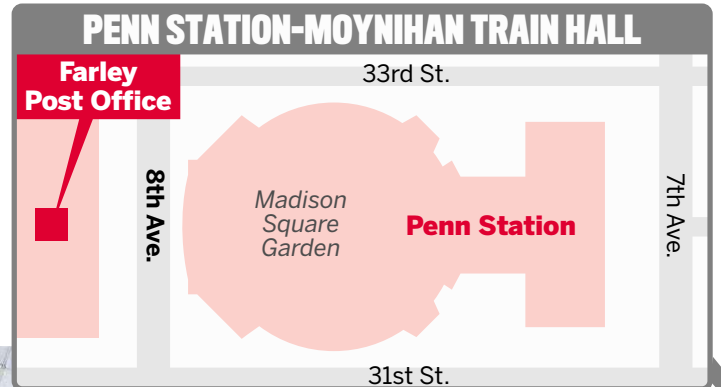
More than just improve the commuting experience, the changes coming to the LIRR will provide better access to high-paying jobs, bring more income back to Nassau and Suffolk businesses, increase home values, and help attract and retain the next generation of Long Islanders, experts said.

“We’ve been talking about these piecemeal, and I don’t think people have appreciated the totality of the transformation that is now a reality,” Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo said in a telephone interview Friday. “This is actually underway and happening and it’s going to be the greatest transformation of the LIRR since it began. It’s long overdue.”

Here’s a look at some of the key improvements that are in the pipeline:



RENDERING



### JAMAICA CAPACITY IMPROVEMENTS

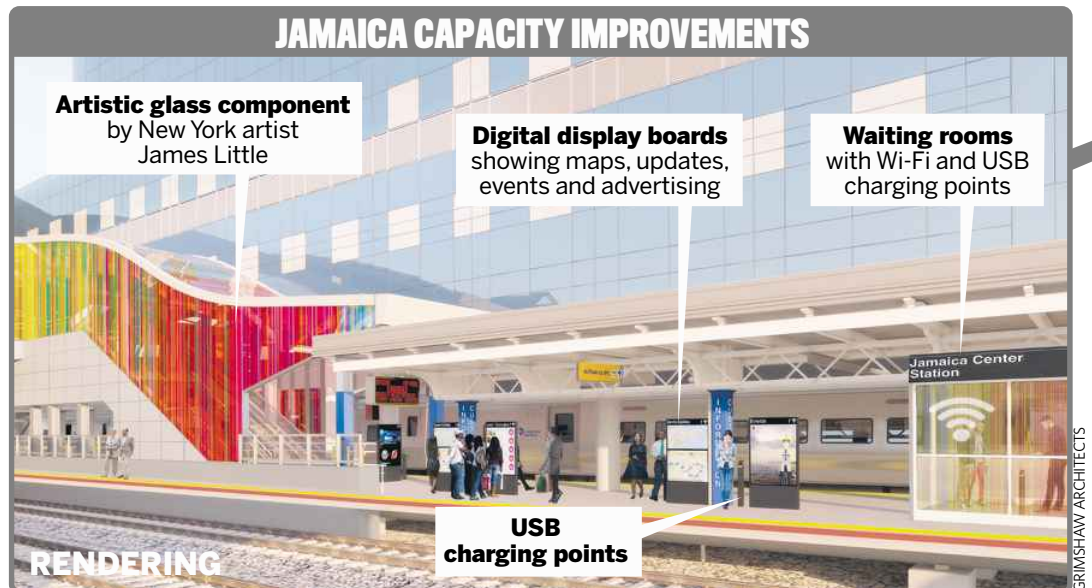
**Artistic glass component**  
by New York artist  
James Little

**Digital display boards**  
showing maps, updates,  
events and advertising

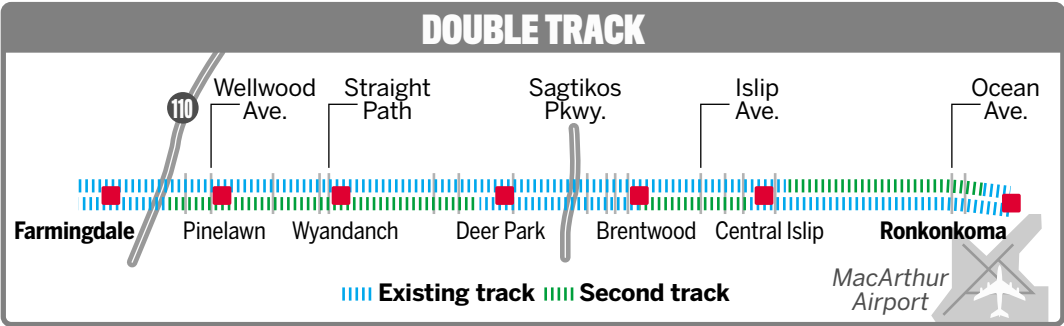
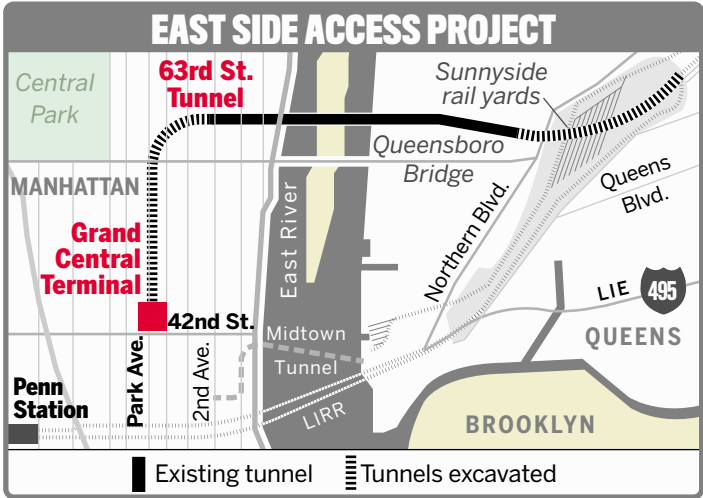
**Waiting rooms**  
with Wi-Fi and USB  
charging points

**USB  
charging points**

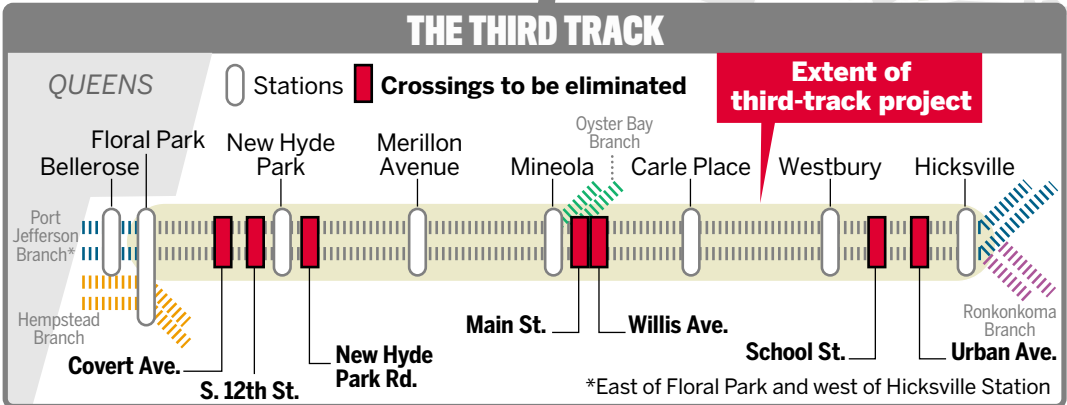
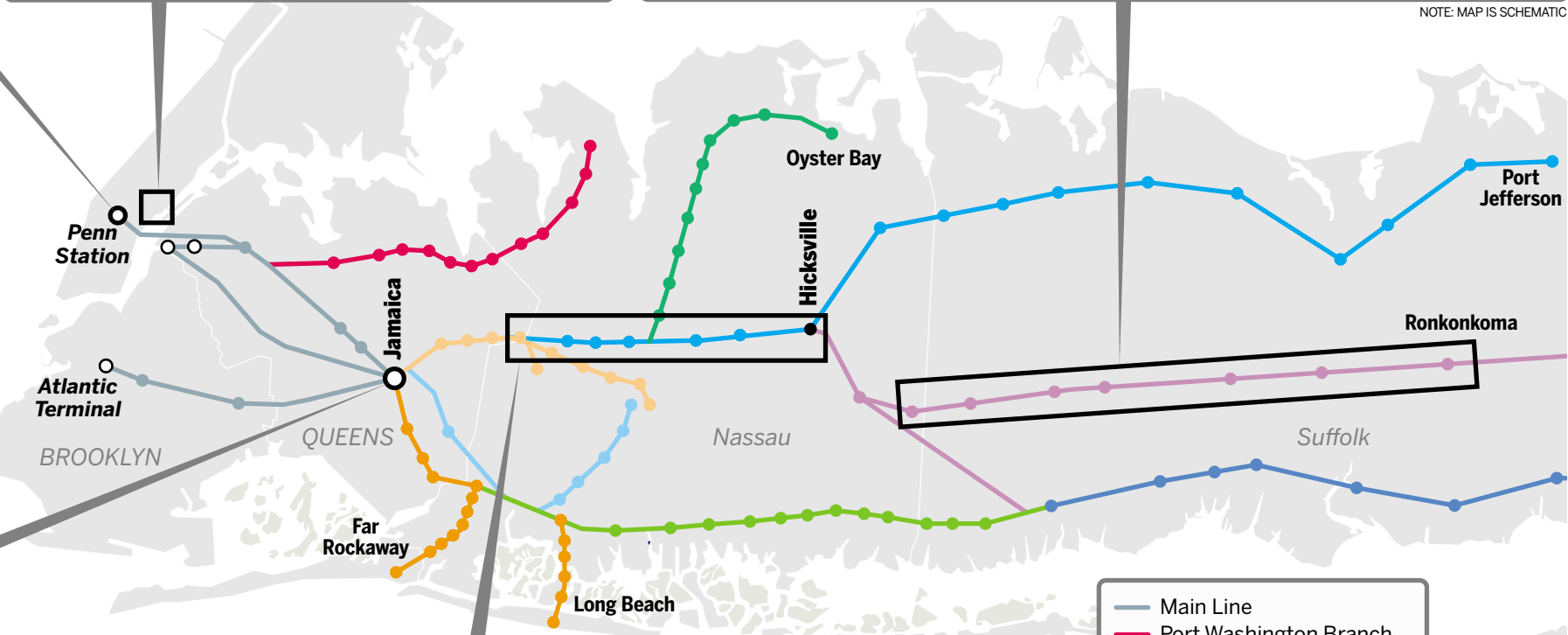
RENDERING



# TRANSFORMATION



NOTE: MAP IS SCHEMATIC



- Main Line
- Port Washington Branch
- Hempstead Branch
- Port Jefferson Branch
- Oyster Bay Branch
- Ronkonkoma Branch
- Far Rockaway/Long Beach
- Babylon Branch
- Montauk Branch

SOURCES: MTA; OFFICE OF GOV. ANDREW M. CUOMO

NEWSDAY/ROD EYER

**READ MORE ON A10**



# LIRR'S BIG LEAP

CONTINUED FROM A3

## POSITIVE TRAIN CONTROL

**Budget:** \$968 million for the LIRR and Metro-North combined.

**Estimated completion:** December 2018

**What it will do:** So-called PTC is intended to curtail deadly crashes by reducing the possibility of human error. Radio transponders installed on tracks and on trains communicate with each other to automatically slow down or stop a train if it's going too fast, is about to hit another train or violates a signal.

Experts, including the National Transportation Safety Board, have said PTC could have prevented several train accidents in the Northeast in recent years.

**Status:** The U.S. Safety Improvement Act of 2008, drafted after a Los Angeles collision between a commuter train and a freight train killed 25 people, requires all railroads to have PTC in place by the end of 2018. The MTA has begun installing the technology on tracks and trains and says it is still on schedule to meet the deadline. But the agency has also said recent design and software issues "have made it more challenging to maintain the schedule" and that it is "in the process of determining if additional funds are needed."



Workers install a radio transponder for positive train control on an LIRR track. The transponders communicate to stop speeding trains.

## 'THE THIRD TRACK'/LIRR EXPANSION

**Budget:** \$1.95 billion

**Estimated completion:** Officials have said construction will begin next year and take three to four years.

**What it will do:** A decade after the LIRR's last expansion plan went nowhere, Cuomo and the railroad last year resurrected the plan for improvements along a particularly busy 9.8-mile stretch of the LIRR's Main Line between Floral Park and Hicksville. Key among them is the construction of a third track on the LIRR's existing

property that officials say will reduce congestion and provide needed redundancy for the LIRR to more quickly bounce back from unplanned service disruptions, by providing additional track space around disabled trains and other problems. It will also facilitate reverse commuting to and from jobs on Long Island.

The planned work also eliminates seven railroad grade crossings, which will reduce accidents, traffic congestion and noise from train horns and

whistles. Also in the plan are more than 3,600 new parking spaces, including at least three new garages, modernized train signals and improvements to several stations along the project corridor.

**Status:** Just last month, the State Legislature accepted the MTA's amendment of its five-year capital program to include the third track, clearing the way for the agency to put out to bid a contract to design and build the project, guided by the final environmental impact statement that was issued in April.

## DOUBLE TRACK

**Budget:** \$388 million

**Estimated completion:** Summer 2018

**What it will do:** Formally proposed in 2009, the Double Track will add a second set of rails to an 18-mile, largely single-track stretch between Farmingdale and Ronkonkoma. The MTA has said the addition of a second track, which is being constructed entirely on the LIRR's property, will "dramatically increase capacity of the Ronkonkoma Branch" — allowing the railroad to offer half-hourly service in both directions during off-peak hours, providing more flexibility, reducing the impact of disruptions on the branch, and better serving Long Island MacArthur Airport. The project also calls for signal upgrades where the new rail is



Cuomo tours the laying of the Double Track in Central Islip last year.

being added.

**Status:** The first segment of new track was laid in 2015 just west of Ronkonkoma, and by August of last year the second track had reached as far as Central Islip.

Construction work was under way in Brentwood as recently as last month. Cuomo recently said the project, originally slated to be complete by late 2018, was on pace to finish months early.

## JAMAICA CAPACITY IMPROVEMENTS

**Budget:** \$442 million

**Estimated completion:** 2019

**What it will do:** The project is to bring some of the most significant changes in the 104-year history of the busy Queens junction, where all but one of the LIRR's branches converge. Included is a major reconfiguration of Jamaica's complex network of tracks and switches, including the construction of a new, dedicated track and platform for all Brooklyn trains. The new area,

located south of the existing tracks near the AirTrain connection to Kennedy Airport, will include glass-enclosed, heated waiting areas, Wi-Fi access and USB charging stations. LIRR officials have said the enhancements will allow the LIRR to increase the number of morning trains it runs from Jamaica to Manhattan by 40 percent — a necessary upgrade as the railroad begins running to Grand Central Terminal in 2022 via East

Side Access.

**Status:** Begun in 2010, the Jamaica project is being funded through both the MTA's existing 2015-19 capital program and its previous five-year plan. In September 2016, the MTA announced it had awarded a \$64.9 million contract to create the new platform and track for Brooklyn trains. Some tracks have already been reconfigured, including at the Johnson rail yard near the station.





MTA / PATRICK CASHIN

The East Side Access Project, underway at the former Madison Yards site, will bring the LIRR to a new 8-track station under the Grand Central Terminal, via six miles of tunnels.

## EAST SIDE ACCESS

**Budget:** \$10.2 billion

**Estimated completion:** December 2022

**What it will do:** The project, described as the largest public works effort under construction in the nation, aims to bring the LIRR to a new eight-track, bi-level station underneath Grand Central Terminal via six miles of newly bored tunnels from Queens to Manhattan. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority predicts some 162,000 customers will travel to and from the LIRR's new Manhattan terminal, which will include a 350,000-square-foot customer concourse and 25,000 square feet of new retail space. Project proponents say the new, direct connection to Manhattan's East Side will save some commuters up to 40 minutes a day in travel time. It will also provide the LIRR and its riders an alternative to the aging and disruption-prone Penn Station.

**Status:** Ten years after major construction began, significant progress has been made on the project, jointly funded by federal grants and the capital program of the MTA, the LIRR's parent agency. Major tunnel boring was completed about five years ago and the MTA last year awarded its last major construction contract, which will include putting the finishing touches on the new station. But delays and cost overruns have plagued the project, which was once forecast to be finished by 2009 at a cost of \$4.3 billion. Project officials have said recently they are falling further behind, in part because of the lack of cooperation from Amtrak at a critical work site in Queens.

## PENN STATION REDEVELOPMENT/MOYNIHAN TRAIN HALL



CRAIG RUTTLE

Concourse at Farley Post Office building connects to LIRR.

**Budget:** \$1.6 billion

**Estimated completion:** December 2020

**What it will do:** In September 2016, Cuomo announced plans to carve out space for the LIRR in the new 255,000-square-foot Moynihan Train Hall being built at the James A. Farley Post Office on Eighth Avenue, across the street from Penn Station. Cuomo said the new train hall, which was initially proposed to be used exclusively by Amtrak, could "effectively replace Penn Station" for some commuters. The 300,000-square-foot new train hall will include a new concourse for LIRR customers, retail and a 92-foot-high skylight roof. The project includes improvements to the existing LIRR concourse at Penn, with wider walkways and taller ceilings. The project promises to ease the confusion, crowding and chaos at Penn, but does nothing to improve or add capacity to the tracks below.

**Status:** In June, the Empire State Development Corp., a quasi public agency overseeing the Moynihan initiative, closed on the second and final phase of the project, which is being funded by the state, Amtrak, the MTA, the Port Authority, private developers and through federal grants. June also marked the completion of the first phase, which included new entrances/exits and a new 400-by-400-foot customer concourse with access to 17 of Penn's 21 tracks.

CONTINUED ON A12



# LIRR SET FOR BIG CHANGES

CONTINUED FROM A11

## NEXT GENERATION OF LIRR TRAINS

**Budget:** \$500 million

**Estimated completion:** First cars roll out in November 2018

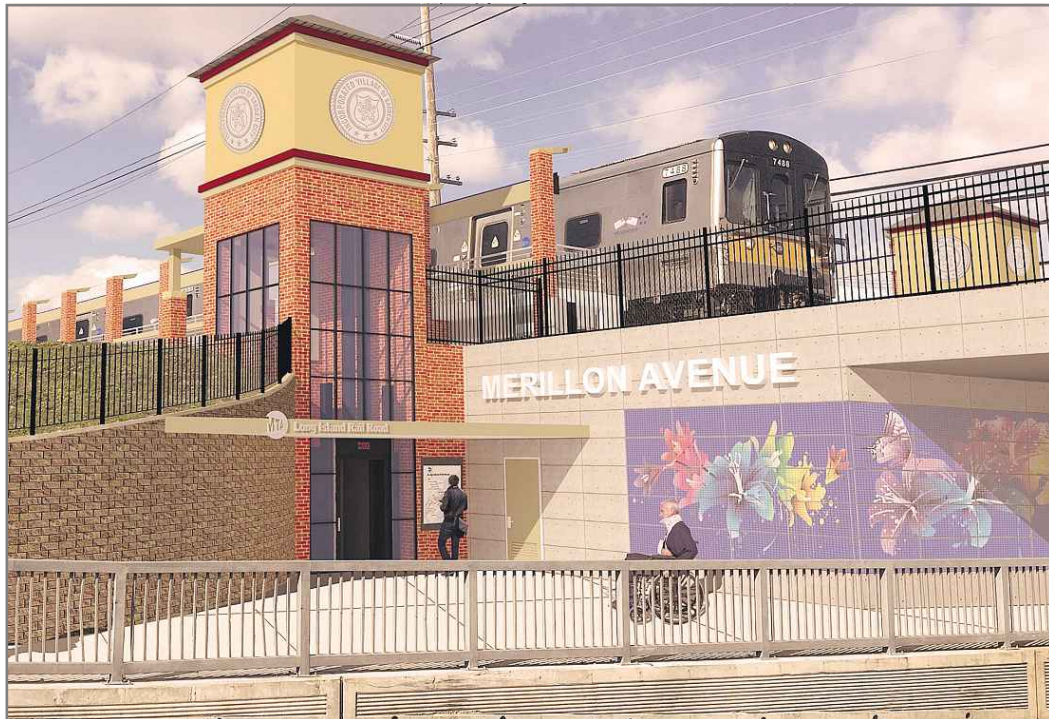
**What it will do:** The LIRR expects to purchase more than 400 new "M-9" model train cars, both to bolster its existing fleet of about 1,200 trains as it begins running additional service as part of East Side Access, and to replace its 1980s-era M-3 electric cars. The trains will include several new features, like on-board cameras, closed-loop armrests that will prevent ripped pockets, electrical outlets on every row, 32-inch multimedia screens in each car, increased window tint to reduce glare, touchless hand dryers in

the bathrooms, and four to six additional seats per every pair of cars. Another 160 "M-9A" cars, which may come online in 2021, will have even more amenities, including USB ports at every outlet, power bathroom doors, and damage-resistant windows.

**Status:** The new cars, funded in the MTA's current capital program, are being designed by Kawasaki Rail Car Inc. in Kobe, Japan, but will be mass-produced at Kawasaki's facility in Yonkers. The design phase has encountered some delays and cost overruns, in part because the initial design did not include the necessary space for the installation of positive train control equipment.

## OTHER UPGRADES

Commuters stand to benefit from other projects in the works: \$120 million in renovations at 16 LIRR stations, a \$128 million new storage yard in Ronkonkoma and new stations near Republic Airport in East Farmingdale and the Brookhaven National Laboratory in Yaphank. In addition, the construction of new "pocket tracks" and rail sidings will offer smaller capacity improvements.



A rendering shows the Merillon Avenue station in Garden City as part of the LIRR expansion project.

## THE NEXT FRONTIER

In addition to the improvements already in the pipeline, experts said there will be plenty of proposals on the horizon to complete the LIRR's transformation into a 21st-century railroad. They include:

- Amtrak's proposed \$24 billion Gateway project, which would eventually double the capacity at Penn Station by adding new tracks and platforms and a new rail tunnel under the Hudson River.
- LIRR president Patrick Nowakowski has said a top priority in the MTA's next capital program should be bringing centralized, computerized train control to the railroad to replace its antiquated

signal tower-based train control system.

- Several towns and villages have lobbied the LIRR to electrify its tracks throughout its "diesel territory" in Suffolk.

- The Regional Plan Association has proposed "through-running service" among the region's commuter railroads that would include extending the LIRR into New Jersey.

- Cuomo has also pushed for the consideration of other far-out projects, like an AirTrain linking the LIRR to LaGuardia Airport and a rail tunnel across the Long Island Sound.

# Passion

BY JESSE COBURN

jesse.coburn@newsday.com

Hondo Davis made the trip from Coney Island to Lindenhurst to dance at the Pau-manauke Pow Wow yesterday for many reasons. The fun of the competition is one, said the community health worker, and the chance to show off his concho belt, cow-bone breastplate and other American Indian vestments is another. But above all, he dances to honor his heritage, he said.

"The dignity and passion that makes up who we are as native people, I get to exhibit that, and it's a privilege," said Davis, 30, who counts the Catawba, Santee and Creek peoples among his ancestors.

Davis was among about 5,000 expected to visit the annual celebration of indigenous culture now in its 37th year. The two-day event offers Long Islanders the chance to experience American Indian music and dance, and to browse goods sold by dozens of indigenous vendors.

Raising money for scholarships for American Indian students is one goal of the event, according to Tony Moonhawk Langhorn of Ringwood, New Jersey, one of the pow wow's organizers. Another is to educate attendees about the endur-



RAYCHEL BRIGHTMAN

**Pride in crafts, culture were seen yesterday in Lindenhurst**

ing presence of indigenous peoples in the region.

"A lot of people think there's no more natives left on the East Coast," he said. "We try to show them that there are."

Lance Gumbs, the former tribal chairman of the Shinnecock Indian Nation in Southampton, agreed.

"We have to make sure that we are visible," said Gumbs, in front of a stand at which he was selling moccasins, ornamental feathers, and wampum-strung jewelry. "We have a long and storied history on Long Island," he said, citing Massapequa, Montauk and other communities whose names have American Indian origins.

# Ruling says town

KAIMAN from A6

bilities.

Bosworth, who was elected after Jon Kaiman left office in 2014, said she gave Kim Kaiman two titles to cover a new, broader set of responsibilities for the tourism executive director position, such as boosting film production in town. The town intended to increase the nonprofit agency's role beyond that of previous years, Bosworth said.

She did not address whether Kaiman performed the deputy finance commissioner responsibilities listed for the commission other than to say the duties "coincide with planning, business and tourism."

"It was a title we thought fit,"

Bosworth said.

Because the town gave the commission only information on Kaiman's finance title, the agency was unaware of the tourism duties, officials said. If the commission had known Kaiman's job was solely to perform the tourism duties, it would not have approved her accruing pension credits under the finance title, commission executive director Karl Kampe said.

Kaiman was the first person in the town tourism job to be given an added Civil Service title to receive pension credits.

**Civil Service title added**

The county Civil Service Commission started investigating Kaiman's job responsibilities and pension accrual in May 2016