

Welcome to the Penn Station Access quarterly newsletter. MTA's Penn Station Access Project will bolster equity, regional connectivity, and reliability by upgrading Amtrak's existing Hell Gate Line and providing four new accessible stations in the East Bronx. Read on to learn more about recent progress, community engagement, and upcoming work. For past newsletter issues, click [here](#). For updates on specific areas along the project corridor where work will take place, sign up [here](#).



Amtrak train crossing Leggett Interlocking, July 2025

PSA Progress: Commissioning of Leggett Interlocking

The successful commissioning of Leggett Interlocking in July marks a major milestone for the Penn Station Access project, paving the way for safer, faster, and more efficient construction without impacting Amtrak's regular service. Commissioning Leggett Interlocking near Hunts Point creates a shorter diversion of trains during track outages, allowing crews more freedom to work within the Amtrak right-of-way while maintaining passenger service.

An interlocking is a 'track intersection' which allows trains to cross from one track to another parallel track. It consists of track, track switches, and overhead contact wiring. It ensures that no conflicting movements can occur, making it impossible for trains to be routed onto the same track at the same time. Interlockings are essential to train safety, operational flexibility, and network reliability. To bring Leggett Interlocking online, over 900 feet of new track was built, and a new signal system was installed, tested, and completed. At this location, 95% of overhead catenary system (OCS) structures have been completed, which moves the project significantly closer to integrating PSA into the broader regional network.

What's Next?

With the commissioning of Leggett Interlocking, PSA can expedite work and utilize Continuous Track Outages (CTO), a long-term track outage necessary to continue installing new tracks, OCS, bridge work, and additional signal upgrades and to make space to build the center platforms for the four passenger stations. The new interlocking allows Amtrak to provide the PSA team with these track outages without changing their existing train schedule and significantly reduces the burden of rerouting trains and streamlines coordination. During the CTO, Amtrak reserves an assigned track for PSA use. The current CTO will continue through the end of the year, is located near the Parkchester/ Van Nest station area. The CTOs enable uninterrupted day and night construction activities along one track to advance track installation and station development, while keeping passenger service running smoothly.

Leggett is the first of five interlockings (four new, one reconfigured) to be delivered as part of the PSA project, each one bringing enhanced flexibility and reliability for what will be a 4-track corridor through the Hell Gate section of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor. During the CTO, effort is focused in the Van Nest area, but work is also progressing steadily at all four station locations. More progress is on the horizon, and we are excited to share those updates with the community as work continues!



Backfilling approach slabs on Bronx River Bridge, June 2025



Overhead view of Parkchester/Van Nest Station progress, July 2025

Meet the Team: Jesse Jameson

Jesse Jameson, Project Executive for the Halmar International / RailWorks Joint Venture, brings more than four decades of industry experience to the Penn Station Access Project. In his words, the role of a project executive is to oversee the management of subcontractors, material procurement, and schedule while being responsible for the relationship between the project owner and the contractor. Essentially, when there's a problem, Jesse sits down with Project CEO Jolyon Handler to solve it.



Jesse Jameson, Project Executive

Even with his years of expertise, Jesse is aware of the distinct challenges posed by this complicated project—interagency coordination, difficult construction environments, and unusual design parameters have all required innovative solutions. He described the constraints of working within the highly active and narrow Amtrak right-of-way as “constantly trying to fit 10 pounds into a 5-pound bag”.

Jesse gives credit to his team for working through these issues. “Only a few design firms can handle this kind of work,” he remarked about Jacobs, the lead designer, “The overhead catenary system (OCS) is unique and not a lot of people know how to design it.” He commended RailWorks for their “extensive experience working with Amtrak,” they have managed the complex track and electrical aspects of the Project handily. Jesse is passionate about moving this megaproject forward in the face of so many hurdles. He looks forward to ushering this new rail line into operation one solution at a time. When he's not at work, you can find Jesse spending time with his friends and family at the race track. He is an avid racecar builder and driver, and is a 3-time winner of the IOE Award at the [24 Hours of Lemons](#) race.

Celebrating a Major Milestone at Leggett: Night Crew Appreciation

On July 22nd, the PSA team celebrated the dedication and hard work of our night-shift crew members and commemorated the commissioning of Leggett Interlocking with a hot breakfast on-site. The event recognized the many late nights and early mornings that made this achievement possible. It was a fun and meaningful way to mark this major milestone and build momentum as the project moves ahead into the next phase of construction.



Night crew celebrates the commissioning of Leggett interlocking, July 2025



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