

PORTAL NORTH BRIDGE PROJECT



A passenger train crosses the Portal Bridge

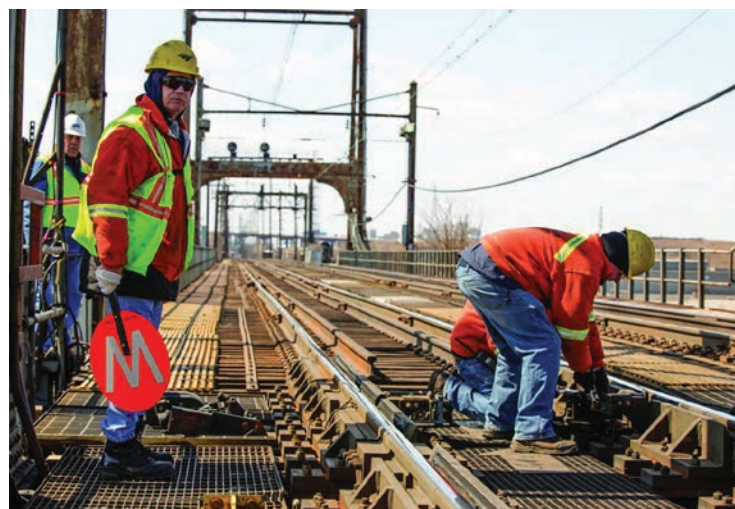
Built in 1910, the existing Portal Bridge is a two-track moveable swing-span bridge between the towns of Kearny and Secaucus in Hudson County, New Jersey. A critical Northeast Corridor link for New Jersey commuters and intercity rail customers to New York City, the century-old bridge is in need of replacement.

Project Need

The century-old Portal Bridge is a two-track swing bridge over the Hackensack River in New Jersey that rotates open for maritime traffic several times per month. 450 trains cross the bridge as they travel between Newark, N.J., and Penn Station New York every day. **The bridge is a major bottleneck and source of delay for Amtrak and NJ TRANSIT trains – the aging mechanical & electrical components sometimes malfunction while opening and closing, causing a cascade of delays.**

Infrastructure Background

Portal Bridge was constructed by the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1907 and began revenue operations in November 1910. The bridge earned the name “Portal,” because it leads the Northeast Corridor (NEC) rail line to the “portal” of the North River Tunnel, located just three miles away. It consists of seven spans and totals 960 feet in length. The middle span is 300 feet long and pivots to open for marine traffic. The swing span and special “miter rail” configuration pose maintenance and operational challenges. Due to age and fragility, trains are restricted to a maximum of 60 miles per hour over the bridge. Only 23 feet of clearance separate the Hackensack River and the bottom of the bridge.



The aging Portal Bridge requires regular repairs to address malfunctions caused by outdated mechanical and electrical systems, often resulting in a cascade of delays.

1910

Over a century old, the bridge is a major bottleneck for New Jersey and New York travelers

450

Passenger trains cross the bridge every day

60mph

Reduced speed limit required to cross the bridge

Project Benefits

- Higher clearance for maritime traffic eliminates opening and closing
- Expansion of horizontal clearance across the river channel to 300 feet
- More reliable fixed-span reduces maintenance cost
- Increased track speeds and NJ TRANSIT capacity

The Portal North Bridge Project will replace this outdated and increasingly unreliable structure with a modern, more reliable fixed-span bridge that is much higher over the water, allowing boats to pass underneath without the need to open and close. A new bridge will also permit higher track speeds and increased capacity and save millions of dollars in maintenance costs.

The Portal North Bridge Project is a key component of Phase I of the Gateway Program, a comprehensive set of strategic rail infrastructure improvements designed to improve current services and create new capacity that will allow the doubling of passenger trains running under the Hudson River.

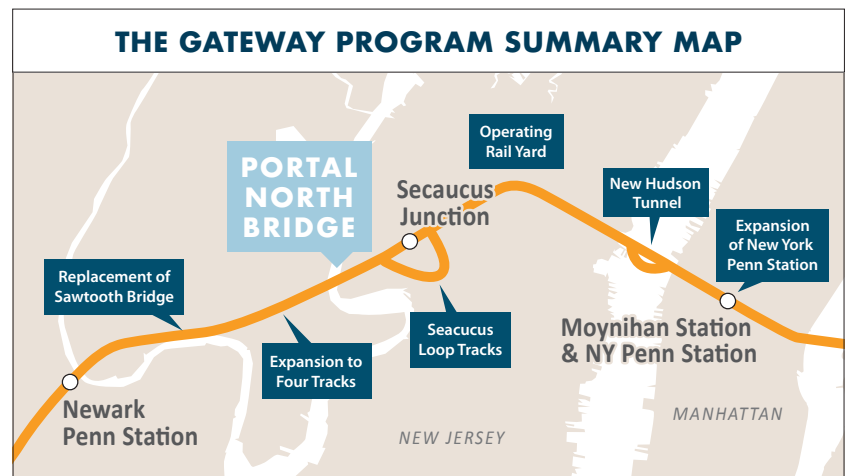


Rendering of future Portal North Bridge.

Project Status

The Portal North Bridge project is shovel ready. It has been fully designed and has all its necessary permits. The State of New Jersey has committed \$600 million toward construction of a new span and has a financial plan pending with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for additional funding. With a Full Funding Grant Agreement from FTA, the project can proceed to major construction.

It will take approximately five years to build the new, higher-span, fixed bridge that will eliminate the need for Portal Bridge to open and close. Early construction work began in Summer 2017 and was completed on time and on budget in February 2019. Funded by a \$16 million TIGER grant and local match the work included the realignment of a 138kV transmission pole, the installation of new fiber optic cable poles, the construction of a finger pier, construction of a steel bridge structure over the Jersey City Municipal Utility Authority water main, and a retaining wall just west of the Frank R. Lautenberg Station at Secaucus Junction.



The Portal North Bridge Project is a key component of The Gateway Program, a comprehensive set of strategic rail infrastructure improvements designed to improve current services and create new capacity that will allow the doubling of passenger trains running under the Hudson River. The program will increase track, tunnel, bridge and station capacity, eventually creating four mainline tracks between Newark, N.J., and New York Penn Station, including a new, two-track Hudson River Tunnel.

NEC FUTURE Investment Plan: 2040 and Beyond

NEC FUTURE is the FRA's investment plan to improve the reliability, capacity, connectivity, performance and resiliency of passenger rail service throughout the NEC. By replacing a century-old swing bridge with a modern fixed span, the Portal North Bridge Project is instrumental to realizing these goals and is identified in NEC FUTURE as fundamental to implementing the plan's full potential.

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