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Governor Phil Murphy

# Governor Murphy and NJ TRANSIT Announce Portal North Bridge Project Construction Award

10/12/2021

*Project Replaces 110-Year-Old Bridge to Improve Service and Reliability on the Northeast Corridor for NJ TRANSIT and Amtrak Customers as Part of the Gateway Program*

*Portal North Bridge Construction Award is Largest in History of NJ TRANSIT*

**TRENTON** – Governor Murphy today announced that the NJ TRANSIT Board of Directors has approved a contract with Skanska/Traylor Bros Joint Venture for the construction of the new Portal North Bridge. The project, a critical part of the Gateway Program, will eliminate the critical issues caused by operation and maintenance of the existing swing bridge that have long plagued the most heavily transited portion of the Northeast Corridor. The largest award in NJ TRANSIT's history, this monumental step exemplifies the Murphy Administration's commitment to funding critical infrastructure and providing investments that will benefit current and future generations of New Jerseyans.

"Few infrastructure projects are as critical to the nation as replacing the aging Portal Bridge," **said Governor Murphy**. "With today's step, NJ TRANSIT is rapidly moving towards beginning the first phase of the largest infrastructure project in the United States. This award will not only bring a bridge that will resolve the long-standing bottlenecks plaguing New Jersey commuters, but will also create well-paying skilled labor jobs in the process. We would not be at this step today without our partners in the Biden Administration, NJ TRANSIT, the New Jersey Department of Transportation, our federal delegation, Amtrak, and the State of New York."

"The award of this important construction contract is yet another example of NJ TRANSIT's commitment to advance critical infrastructure projects that will ultimately improve service to our customers," **said New Jersey Department of Transportation Commissioner and NJ TRANSIT Board Chair Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti**. "This project will power the region's economic vitality for generations to come."

"This construction award, which is the single largest in our agency's history, is the culmination of more than three years of hard work and determination by NJ TRANSIT and our project partners at Amtrak," **said NJ TRANSIT President & CEO Kevin S. Corbett**. "NJ TRANSIT will soon begin construction on the most important infrastructure project in the nation next to the Hudson Tunnel Project, creating jobs and spurring economic growth for our region, and restoring dependable rail service to the millions of customers who count on this critical rail link between New Jersey and New York every year."

"A new Portal North Bridge that won't have to open and close for river traffic is vital to improving safety, speed and reliability in the busiest section of the Northeast Corridor," **said Amtrak Board Chair Tony Coscia**. "Amtrak is pleased to partner with NJ TRANSIT on this important project that will improve the lives of riders and put Americans to work."



The \$1,559,993,000 construction contract for the project spans 2.44 miles of the Northeast Corridor line and includes construction of retaining walls, deep foundations, concrete piers, structural steel bridge spans, rail systems, demolition of the existing bridge, and related incidental works. Once construction begins, the construction contract is anticipated to take approximately five and a half years.

The project is being funded by the US Department of Transportation, NJ TRANSIT and Amtrak. In January 2021, Governor Murphy announced the signing of a Full Funding Grant Agreement which secured \$766.5 million in Federal Transit Administration funding to support the project's construction.

"Today's announcement is another major milestone after we secured federal funding for the project earlier this year. It represents a critical step towards replacing the century-old Portal Bridge that has been riddled with failures and malfunctions for too long," **said U.S. Senator Bob Menendez**. "I appreciate the leadership of Governor Murphy who has been committed to the completion of the Gateway Project throughout his time in office. Together, we will build a new bridge, replace the Hudson tunnels, and move our nation forward."

"Today marks another important milestone in our fight to provide much-needed relief to New Jersey commuters," **said U.S. Senator Cory Booker**. "Replacing the century-old Portal Bridge will help improve the safety and reliability of rail transit for commuters who have long been plagued by delays caused by this aging and unreliable infrastructure. As we continue our work to advance this vital project, we must remain focused on finding long-term solutions to help ensure commuter safety and increase our economic competitiveness through robust infrastructure investment, including completion of the Gateway Program."

"When the Portal Bridge was built, William Howard Taft was in the White House and Connie Mack's Philadelphia Athletics won the World Series," **said Congressman Bill Pascrell**. "Thanks to teamwork between Governor Murphy and our state's delegation in Washington, New Jersey has done its part to get funding to begin this needed construction work. New Jersey Transit's moving forward to begin this work is welcome. Our commuters have waited long enough to fix this transit chokepoint. Let's get started."

"With this announcement, we are one step closer to the completion of the Portal North Bridge," **said Congressman Donald M. Payne, Jr.** "I was proud to help secure the first \$900 million for this project to replace the current, 110-year-old bridge. Once completed, the new bridge will benefit commuters throughout the Northeast Corridor. I applaud New Jersey Transit for their efforts to improve infrastructure throughout New Jersey."

"This is a big step in the right direction to modernizing the infrastructure that thousands of commuters traveling between New Jersey and New York depend on each day," **said Congressman Frank Pallone**. "Ensuring the long-term reliability of the Gateway Tunnel and the Portal North Bridge is critical to our region's economy. I will continue to work with my colleagues in Congress and the Biden Administration to make sure this project receives the federal funding it needs to deliver safe and efficient transportation for New Jersey commuters."

"The Portal Bridge is an essential piece of the Gateway Project - an initiative important to the continued economic success of the entire region," **said Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman**. "I am thrilled to see the Portal North Bridge move one step closer to completion and look forward to what it signals for the rest of Gateway. I will continue to fight for the funds necessary to get this done as a member of the Appropriations Committee, and pledge to work alongside my friends and colleagues in Congress to complete Gateway."

"Today's announcement of the contract award for the Portal North Bridge marks another crucial step forward in this effort to finally complete this project," **said Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill**. "After three years of advocacy alongside the New Jersey delegation in Congress, I am so pleased to see the completion of our Full Funding Agreement and the provision of over \$760 million in federal funding to get Portal done. The inclusion of full funding for Gateway in the bipartisan infrastructure bill is also a critical piece of this puzzle, which is why I'll continue pushing to ensure that the bill gets passed as quickly as possible. Together, these steps will ensure that we finally get shovels in the ground on the entire Gateway Project. This is a full community endeavor that, once completed, will have a hugely beneficial impact on families and businesses across northern New Jersey and the nation's economy."

"Today's announcement is a win for New Jersey commuters, and brings us one step closer towards breaking ground on a key component of the Gateway Project," **said Congressman Tom Malinowski**. "I will continue the push to accelerate construction of the Portal North Bridge, and will be working to ensure additional projects that my constituents need – including the Hunter Flyover and the all-important Hudson River Tunnel – are able to get to this point."

"This project has been a long time coming and is vital to so many families in New Jersey," **said Congressman Andy Kim**. "It's time we see this and other critical projects in our great state finally moving forward that will create jobs and more opportunities."

"The Gateway Project is our nation's most critical infrastructure project, it's the lynchpin to 20 percent of our nation's GDP, and something we've all been fighting for for years. This is incredibly welcome news for a key part of the Gateway Project to move forward. We've all been over the Portal North Bridge. It's more than 100 years old and literally falling apart. It doesn't close properly and regularly catches on fire, causing massive delays and stalling commuters who are just trying to get home to see their families," **said Congressman Josh Gottheimer**. "That's why I've been fighting around the clock for months on the bipartisan infrastructure bill, to get the funding needed to get shovels in ground and Americans to work."

Also in January 2021, NJ TRANSIT advertised the Invitation for Bid (IFB) for the construction contract. The procurement was a two-step process, the initial step being the Special Pre-Qualification of Bidders. In May, NJ TRANSIT pre-qualified four bidders and conducted a pre-bid conference and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise outreach. Two of the pre-qualified bidders submitted proposals on September 2. Skanska/Traylor Bros Joint Venture of Queens, New York was deemed the lowest responsible and responsive bidder.

Portal North Bridge project is an important initial element of the broader Gateway Program which will eventually double rail capacity between Newark and New York. The project will eliminate the existing 110-year-old swing bridge which has been the enduring source of major service disruptions for NJ TRANSIT and Amtrak customers traveling on the Northeast Corridor.

The new bridge is a modern two track, high level, fixed-span bridge that will improve service and capacity along this section of the Northeast Corridor. The new bridge will rise 50-feet over the Hackensack River and will allow marine traffic to pass underneath without interrupting rail traffic.

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