

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy and U.S. Transportation Secretary Buttigieg, Alongside NJ TRANSIT and Federal and State Officials, Officially Break Ground on New Portal North Bridge Construction

08/1/2022

Governor Murphy and U.S. Transportation Secretary Buttigieg, Alongside NJ TRANSIT and Federal and State Officials, Officially Break Ground on New Portal North Bridge Construction Construction of Portal North Bridge and Larger Gateway Program Will Drive Economic Growth, Create Good-Paying Jobs, Significantly Improve Customer Experience for Millions of Commuters Annually

KEARNY – Governor Governor Phil Murphy, alongside United States Department of Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, Senators Cory Booker and Bob Menendez, New Jersey Department of Transportation Commissioner and NJ TRANSIT Board Chair Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti, NJ TRANSIT President & CEO Kevin S. Corbett, and several federal, state, and local officials and project partners gathered today to celebrate the official physical groundbreaking of the new Portal North Bridge. Construction of the new Portal North Bridge will greatly reduce gridlock caused by critical operation and maintenance issues of the existing 110-year-old swing bridge and improve service, reliability, and capacity for rail travel along the Northeast Corridor. The bridge is a major part of the larger Gateway Program, the nation's most important infrastructure project, and a testament to the prioritization of critical infrastructure investments by the Murphy and Biden administrations.

"The esteemed elected officials, transportation executives, and union members gathered here today to celebrate a national milestone are evidence of what we can achieve when we band together as Americans in pursuit of a common purpose," **said Governor Murphy**. "Safe, reliable, and modern infrastructure is about more than just getting to work on time. It's also about the thousands of good-paying jobs this project will create and the families they support. By improving connectivity, we will also promote economic opportunity, not just for New Jersey residents and commuters, but for the Northeast Corridor and our nation. The new Portal North Bridge symbolizes our lasting legacy and our commitment to the welfare and prosperity of all New Jerseyans."

"This project turns the Portal North Bridge from a chokepoint to an access point. It modernizes the way that people and goods get to and from this region that is responsible for 20 percent of America's economic product every year," **said U.S. Secretary of Transportation Buttigieg**. "I hope that this bridge will not only bring people to work and loved ones to where they need to be, but brings renewed confidence in our ability to get things done together. We are entering into a true infrastructure decade."

The Portal North Bridge project is a critical component of the larger Gateway Program, which will eventually double rail capacity between Newark and New York.

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

The Portal North Bridge project will eliminate the 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 project is being funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation, New Jersey, New York, 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.

In October 2021, Governor Murphy and NJ TRANSIT announced the approval of a \$1,559,993,000 construction contract awarded to Skanska/Traylor Bros PNB Joint Venture (STJV) for the construction of the new Portal North Bridge. The contract represents the single largest construction award in NJ TRANSIT's history.

The Portal North Bridge 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. The Notice to Proceed (NTP) given to STJV in April signified the start of the construction contract, which is anticipated to take approximately five and a half years to complete.

"Today marks another advancement for the Gateway Program with the groundbreaking of the Portal North Bridge. Upon completion, the crossing will give rail passengers and commuters coming to and from New York City a reliable commute, replacing a century old bridge long past its useful life," **said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer**. "For over a decade, I've prioritized funding for this project and the entire Gateway Program to secure our region's economic future. Today's event is another milestone on the path of building modern transit infrastructure linking New York and New Jersey and the entire northeast corridor. I look forward to advancing more progress in the months ahead."

"Today, we turn the page. When the new Portal Bridge opens it will be fixed in place and high enough for marine traffic to pass below unimpeded. It will spare hundreds of thousands of passengers each day from malfunctions and delays," **said Sen. Menendez**. "For travelers, it will mean less time stuck on a train and more time with their families and loved ones, and at their destinations. For our region, it will help us double rail capacity between Newark and Manhattan as part of the broader Gateway program. And for our communities, this project is directly tied towards more jobs, higher wages, and greater productivity."

"The groundbreaking of Portal North Bridge is the culmination of an effort that has spanned years," **said Sen. Booker**. "This vital infrastructure project has been a priority of mine since I joined the Senate. It will improve reliability and safety for riders, eliminate cumbersome delays, and move us one step closer to completing the broader Gateway Program that is critical to our region and nation's long-term economic competitiveness. I am proud of the coordination between federal, state, and local officials that has moved this project forward."

"Today's groundbreaking on the Portal North Bridge is a significant step in our efforts to create a reliable, world-class rail experience for travelers across the Northeast," **said New York Governor Kathy Hochul**. "The Portal North Bridge is a key component of the Gateway Tunnel Project – the nation's most pressing infrastructure project – that will spur economic development and deliver fundamentally improved travel throughout the region for generations to come. I thank Governor Murphy, Senator Schumer and the Biden Administration for their partnership, and together we will build a bridge to a new future for New York, New Jersey and the entire Northeast."

"After years of hard work, this is a huge win for Jersey – to finally see shovels in the ground and people working on the Portal North Bridge. Projects like this are exactly why I fought to help shape and pass the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill and claw back critically-needed federal investments back from Washington to Jersey," **said Rep. Josh Gottheimer**. "This bridge is a top priority for the completion of the Gateway Train Tunnel and it will help residents spend more time with their families by commuting on faster, more reliable trains, create new jobs, and ensure Jersey's economy is stronger and safer – by removing our reliance on a more than 110-year-old-bridge plagued with bottlenecks and delays."

"Today we are replacing a bridge that has slowed down our trains for decades and keeping our promise to bring home the tax dollars we send to Washington," **said Rep. Tom Malinowski**. "I am proud of what we did in Congress to get this project approved and funded, and look forward to many more groundbreakings as we move the Gateway Program forward."

"Today is a great day for New Jersey residents. Thanks to President Biden, Governor Murphy, and Congressional Democrats, the Portal North Bridge is now well on its way to becoming a reality," **said Rep. Frank Pallone**. "New Jersey commuters deserve safe and efficient transportation when they travel between New Jersey and New York each day, and I'm proud to see this project get started. It will improve the lives of thousands of commuters and will bolster the long-term growth of our region's economy."

"History is happening today. For years New Jerseyans have waited patiently for relief at the Portal Bridge over the Hackensack. Because of congestion and delays at this chokepoint, countless dinners, outings, and hours of family time have been sapped by interminable commutes," said Rep. **Bill Pascrell, Jr., a longtime advocate for this project and whose district includes one side of the bridge.** "Our groundbreaking today marks a titanic step to keep the Northeast Corridor moving and relieving one less cause of stress for countless North Jerseyans. Our federal, state, and local leaders have worked assiduously to reach this moment. I cannot wait for the new Portal North Bridge."

"It is an honor to participate in the groundbreaking for the new Portal North Bridge," said Rep. **Donald M. Payne, Jr.** "When this bridge is completed, it will make life easier for millions of commuters in New Jersey and throughout the Northeast Corridor. It is a critical project to me because I have been an outspoken advocate for the entire Gateway Program and worked tirelessly to support the new bridge. I helped secure \$900 million in federal funding for the new bridge and I have written letters to President Biden, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, and House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Peter DeFazio urging them to prioritize it for federal approval. Now that we have broken ground on the bridge, I want to focus on approvals and funding for the Hudson River Tunnel project, which is part of the Gateway Program."

"This groundbreaking for the Portal Bridge is the culmination of years of advocacy and hard work, as well as a new beginning for NJ-11 commuters who have suffered through too many arduous daily commutes and 'summers of hell.' This project, made possible by federal transportation funding that I've championed over the past three years, is going to make a tangible difference to the quality of life and economic opportunities of New Jersey families, and will have a significant positive environmental impact in North Jersey," said Rep. **Sherrill.** "I look forward to the day we return for a ribbon cutting when the project is completed."

"I applaud Governor Murphy and NJ Transit on the groundbreaking of the Portal North Bridge, which is a huge step towards reducing gridlock and improving safety for rail commuters between New Jersey and New York City," said Rep. **Albio Sires.** "As a senior member of the House of Representatives Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I have long advocated for funding to replace the bridge and to complete the other parts of the Gateway Program. We have made tremendous progress, and I will continue working with my federal and state partners to get this project over the finish line."

"Beginning full construction on the Portal Bridge gives hope to millions of travelers up and down the Northeast Corridor who have suffered from a stuck century old swing bridge," said **Balpreet Grewal-Virk and Alicia Glen, New Jersey and New York Chairs for the Gateway Development Commission.** "Portal will be a visible symbol that this nation and region take 21st Century rail travel seriously, and we thank Governors Hochul and Murphy and the Biden Administration for making it and the Hudson Tunnel Project such high priorities."

"The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is proud to invest in a new Portal North Bridge, a project of national significance that will modernize the busiest rail bridge in the Western Hemisphere, increasing safety and reliability," said **FRA Administrator Amit Bose.** "FRA will continue to work with New York and New Jersey leaders, Amtrak, NJ TRANSIT, and other stakeholders, as well as our colleagues at the U.S. Department of Transportation to advance projects that improve rail service for the millions of Americans that depend on the Northeast Corridor."

"Thanks to the President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Federal Transit Administration will be able to support more projects like the new Portal North bridge, which will improve our economy along the Northeast Corridor, and throughout the country," said **Nuria Fernandez, FTA Administrator.** "I am proud to join Secretary Buttigieg as construction begins on this critical project. It will bring an important part of our national infrastructure into the 21st Century, creating jobs and getting Americans where they're going quickly and safely."

"Today's event marks the beginning of this major construction on a project that will greatly benefit Amtrak and NJ TRANSIT passengers by eliminating delays caused by an outdated, moveable bridge," said **Amtrak Board Chair Tony Coscia.** "Having shovels in the ground means that the planning and talking are over; it's time to build state-of-the-art infrastructure and make rail travel more reliable to the region's train travelers."

"We are grateful to our many partners – including Govs. Murphy and Hochul, Senators Schumer, Gillibrand, Menendez, and Booker, and Secretary Buttigieg, Administrator Bose and Administrator Fernandez – for their decades-long work in turning the vision for a new Portal North Bridge into reality," said **Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner.** "This project, and the entire Gateway Program, creates the reliability and capacity we need to enable more riders to make the cleaner, greener choice of traveling by train."

"It has been my goal as Board Chair of NJ TRANSIT that the agency prioritizes investments in infrastructure projects that will deliver long-term customer experience improvements," said **New Jersey Department of Transportation Commissioner and NJ TRANSIT Board Chair Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti.** "This groundbreaking symbolizes the next step in modernizing and maximizing rail service along the highly transited Northeast Corridor improving reliability and capacity for generations to come."

"As all too many travelers are painfully aware, the existing bridge has been a source of countless delays and frustration for the millions of NJ TRANSIT and Amtrak customers who ride along the bridge between New Jersey and New York annually, and its importance cannot be overstated," said **NJ TRANSIT President & CEO Kevin S. Corbett.** "Construction of a new bridge will not only create approximately 15,000 jobs and add billions of dollars to our local economy but, more importantly, it will provide safe, reliable rail service for all Northeast Corridor commuters between Washington, D.C and Boston for generations to come."

"The Hudson County Building & Construction Trades Affiliates are excited for this project," said **Patrick Kelleher, Presiden of The Hudson County Building & Construction Trades Council.** "Not only is this great for our State, but for our skilled Union Workers to secure steady work and income at this time of our state of economy."

"The 111-year-old Portal Bridge has been the cause of constant delays for travelers and commuters on the Northeast Corridor for decades," said **Regional Plan Association President and CEO Tom Wright.** "The Build Gateway Now Coalition could not be more excited about beginning construction on the new Portal North Bridge. Fixing one of the most obvious and persistent problems on the Corridor has been a top priority of this coalition since its inception. Moreover, recent research (https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/njvdsh/zw5zq7zb/z8yyqy_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbAlJdRlpwmiEePGH59WWqudPslMFwm8g_d7tu0_VB9KIPzaBl9dzZfQ6Dsa36vBLM) has shown the clear need for Portal, the Gateway Tunnel, and the other projects in the Gateway Program, which will be needed by the time they are completed. Congratulations to the Gateway Development Commission, Governor Murphy, NJ Transit, and the many other Gateway Program partners on reaching this critical milestone."

"The ripple effect of a job like this is profound. The workers involved in this project are grabbing their part of the American dream all because of what these public officials have brought here today," said **Greg Lalevee, Business Manager of the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 825.** "On behalf of operating engineers, my fellow craft workers, and all the workers associated with this – we're happy to get to work and we're ready to get to work. That's why we greet today with such enthusiasm."

Governor Phil Murphy

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