



Moynihhan/Penn Station – Grand Central Connection

Connecting the new Hudson River rail tunnels with existing platforms and tracks in Penn Station and then linking them to existing platforms and tracks in the Lower Level of Grand Central would produce a truly world-class railway system for the NY-NJ-CT metropolitan area. This plan (shown above) evolved from a cooperative planning study for new Trans-Hudson rail capacity – “Access to the Region’s Core” – a collaboration of NJ Transit, MTA and the Port Authority of NY & NJ. With this connection West of Hudson rail passengers could more easily reach Manhattan’s East Side with its extraordinary concentration of office space. Likewise, Bronx, Westchester, Mid-Hudson and Connecticut passengers could gain better access to the growing developments in West Midtown. The Boston-Washington Northeast Corridor would be routed through Manhattan’s two major activity centers, greatly improving its attractiveness, especially when competing for air shuttle travelers. New York’s Empire Corridor trains could be routed through both stations continuing to points further south.

This plan is superior to the “deep cavern” plan currently being advanced by NJ Transit. Travelers would save time and avoid the risk associated with a *terminal* station, some 175 feet below 34th Street. Furthermore, extending the Deep Cavern station to East Midtown is costly and challenging, and is not a real option. Linking the new Hudson River tunnels directly to existing tracks and platforms at Penn Station reduces capital and operating cost and permits all trains to connect directly to the new Moynihan Station and then continue on to Grand Central. The key to this plan’s success is for MTA and NJ Transit to closely cooperate. This means that to fully use new Trans-Hudson tunnel capacity, interoperability is essential and all trains using the connection must be thru-routed. MTA rejected this plan in the past, but new leadership in Albany can call for regional cooperation to overcome narrow agency prerogatives.