



Doubling the Capacity of the LIRR

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New Mezzanine at Grand Central for Long Island Railroad

I've looked at some of the big projects that are in the works on the Hudson side of Manhattan, like the [new Hudson River Tunnels](#), the possible extension of passenger rail service [back to Scranton and Binghamton](#), and New Jersey's innovative [Transit Village town planning initiative](#). Another project that deserves more attention than it is getting is the \$6 Billion East Side Access project that the MTA is undertaking currently and will be completed by 2013. This project will double the capacity and quality of rail transportation into New York from Long Island while reducing the overcrowding and the commute times of many people. It will also allow Long Island to redesign its LIRR towns around increased rail service to NYC.



Map of New Tunnel Route into Grand Central

Many people think that this whole project is about adding a new stop on the way from Long Island to Penn Station. That is wrong. It provides a whole new tunnel for LIRR trains to cross the East River into Manhattan, thus doubling the number of trains (and passengers) that can enter Manhattan, which is a big deal, considering they already carry over 200,000 passengers into and out of NYC every weekday. This will also entice more customers to the LIRR that currently commute by car to East Side destinations because it will significantly lower their commuting times.

But what should be starting right now and I can't find much evidence of this yet, is for Long Island to start increasing the population density around and mass transit (bus, light rail, etc) link-ups to

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the existing LIRR stations such that most Long Islanders are not more than half a mile from a mass transit link to the LIRR. This should be a major priority for any truly regional transportation planning and use this added capacity as best possible.



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