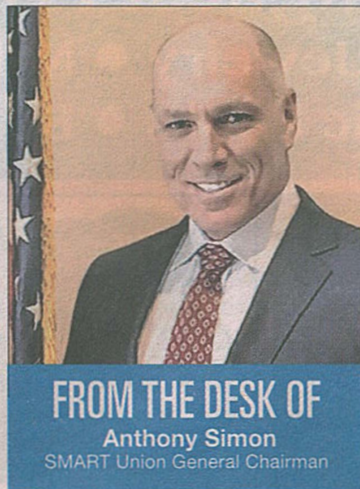


# Long Island Rail Road Modernization Made Possible By Labor

The coming months mark the start of a new chapter for the Long Island Rail Road, one made possible by the men and women of labor. Projects once dismissed as pipe dreams, like Third Track and Grand Central Madison, are now becoming reality thanks to our members' tireless work. They showed up day after day through a deadly pandemic to deliver progress for their fellow Long Islanders, and now we all get to reap the benefits.

The new 9.8-mile Third Track is fully operational between Floral Park and Hicksville. Every grade crossing along that stretch has either been eliminated or had its railroad bridge raised so riders will no longer be inconvenienced by delays due to over height trucks crashing into them. And without crossing gates that stop traffic multiple times each day, cars and trucks will no longer sit idling for extended periods of time, leading to cleaner air and quieter neighborhoods.

These benefits, combined with the opening of Grand Central Madison later this year, will allow the LIRR to significantly increase service across all 11 branches —by 58 percent during the morning rush and by 62 percent in the evening peak. And reverse commuting is finally going to be a realistic



**FROM THE DESK OF**  
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alternative, with peak service from Manhattan increasing by a whopping 65 percent. This is huge for Long Island businesses, who will now have access to a much larger labor pool.

Meantime, commuters to East Midtown will be able to save up to 40 minutes a day on their trips by going straight to Grand Central, where they'll find a beautiful new eight-track terminal—the first new rail facility of its size to be opened in the United States since the early 1950s. It's a stunning space that proves the men and women of labor can deliver big things.

Look at what we've already done in Penn Station. The first phase of the new LIRR concourse opened last month to rave reviews. It's practically unrecognizable: the corridors



**The Seventh Avenue entrance to Penn Station**

(Photo by Danazar/CC BY-SA 4.0)

are now double the width, illuminated ceilings have been raised to 18-foot high, and there are now multiple high-res displays with track information and new wayfinding signs. And by early next year, the concourse will have added four brand new elevators that increase accessibility and a new ventilation system to bring in more fresh air.

Next up is the rest of existing Penn. Governor Hochul has

unveiled plans for a complete renovation that transforms the dungeon we all know and tolerate to a spacious and light-filled station that we can all be proud to use. Union workers will be there every step of the way, as we always have been, to keep Long Island and New York moving full speed ahead.

**Anthony Simon is the SMART Union General Chairman**