THE REGION DOESN'T END AT PENN.

By Liam Blank



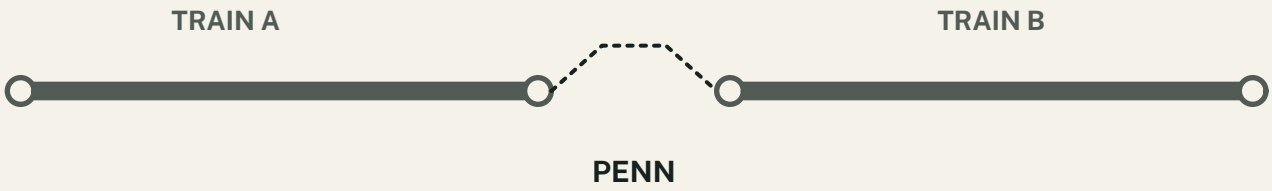
Build a rail network around the places people need to go.

Through-running at Penn Station. Frequent trains in both directions. Fares people can afford. More places to live within reach of work, school, care, and family.

A STOP IN THE JOURNEY. NOT THE END OF IT.

Through-running means a passenger train stops at Penn, lets people off and on, and continues in service to the other side.[5] Riders traveling across Penn stay aboard.[5]

CHANGING TRAINS AT PENN



Leave one train. Find the next. Allow time for the connection.

THROUGH-RUNNING ACROSS PENN



Stay on if you are traveling farther. Get off if Penn is your stop. Board if your journey starts here.

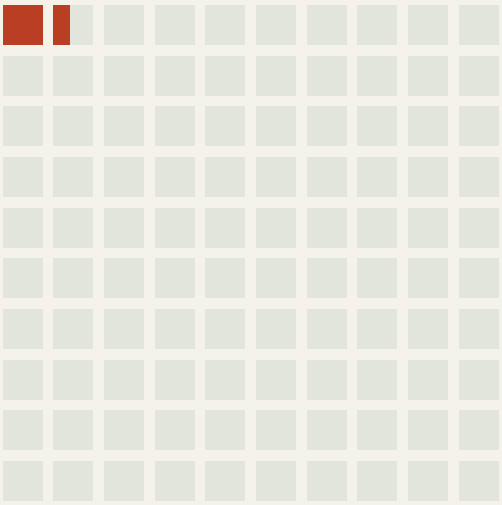
Keep the connection in passenger service. Through-running carries people onward across Penn.[5] Build that connection into the everyday rail network: New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut, with Penn at the center.

MAKE PENN THE CONNECTION.

5. FRA, Phase I Service Optimization Study, June 2026, pp. 3-32–3-35. https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/new-york-penn-station-service-optimization-study-phase-i-report-final-june-2026

HOUSING CHOICE NEEDS A WAY TO GET THERE.

A place to live needs a way to reach work, school, and care. Build housing and regional rail together so people have real choices about where to make a life.



1.41%

NYC rental vacancy in 2023, as cited in the City's 2026 draft Fair Housing Growth Strategy.[1]

Each square represents one percentage point. The colored area represents the vacancy rate.

350,000

New homes targeted over five years in the draft strategy, with contributions from all 59 NYC community districts.[1]

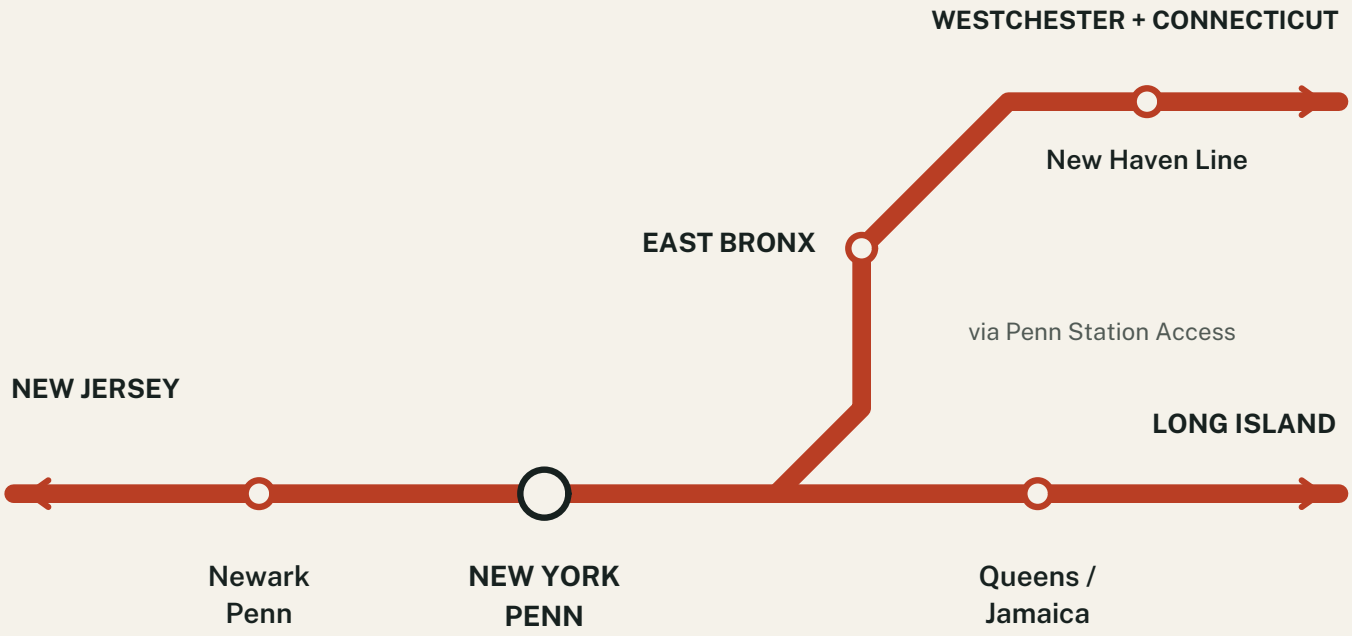
The draft calls for more housing choice **and** the ability to stay as neighborhoods change.[1] It also calls for housing to be paired with services and capital investment.[1]

Build the homes. Connect them to the region. Put affordable housing and dependable rail service on the same agenda.

1. NYC HPD / DCP, Fair Housing Growth Strategy, draft, Aug. 2026, pp. 7, 11, 14, 27–28, 55. https://wherewelive.cityofnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/Fair-Housing-Growth-Strategy_Draft-Report.pdf

THE MAP SHOULD FOLLOW LIVES, NOT LOGOS.

Connect NJ TRANSIT, LIRR, and Metro-North's New Haven Line through Penn. Plan the routes, schedules, and fares as one regional network, with trains running all day in both directions.



Regional network vision. Metro-North's Penn Station Access project will connect the New Haven Line and four new Bronx stations to Penn.[2]

PLAN FOR THE TRIPS PEOPLE MAKE

WORK

A shift that begins before the morning rush.

CARE

An appointment across the region.

EVERYDAY LIFE

A class, a family visit, a weekend trip.

2. MTA, Penn Station Access, updated June 1, 2026. https://www.mta.info/project/penn-station-access

THE BRONX SHOWS WHY THIS BELONGS TOGETHER.

Penn Station Access and the City's station-area plan already link a new rail connection with housing and neighborhood investment.[2, 3] The lesson is to plan the service and the places it serves together.

FOUR NEW ACCESSIBLE METRO-NORTH STATIONS

- Co-op City
- Morris Park
- Parkchester / Van Nest
- Hunts Point

New Haven Line service to Penn. MTA's current estimated project completion: **2030.**[2]

CITY STATION-AREA PLAN

NEARLY

7,000

homes enabled by the plan, including:[3]

1,700

permanently income-restricted affordable homes.[3]

Make the next connection. Put through-service from the Bronx and New Haven Line to New Jersey into the regional service plan. Carry the housing-and-rail agenda across Penn.

OPEN UP MORE OF THE REGION WITH EVERY NEW STATION.

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2. MTA, Penn Station Access, updated June 1, 2026. https://www.mta.info/project/penn-station-access

3. NYC DCP, Bronx Metro-North Station Area Plan. https://www.nyc.gov/content/planning/pages/our-work/plans/bronx/bronx-metro-north-area

KEEP TRAINS MOVING. PUT PLATFORMS TO WORK.

Through-running reduces the time and operating work of turning trains at the platform.[5] Organize the tracks, trains, and station around moving people through.

TURNBACK: ARRIVE, REVERSE, DEPART



THROUGH-RUNNING: ONE STOP, ONWARD SERVICE



PLATFORMS + TRACKS	Speed boarding and platform clearance. Organize train paths to reduce crossing conflicts.
TRAINS + POWER	Procure trains and power systems for cross-Penn service. Make interoperability a purchasing requirement.
RELIABLE OPERATIONS	Coordinate dispatching, recovery time, and disruption response across the network.
CREWS + GOVERNANCE	Agree on common operating rules and crew arrangements. Give one delivery program responsibility for the result.

The operating framework: FRA combines through-running, faster platform clearance, fewer track conflicts, and disciplined operations in its capacity strategy.[4]

4. FRA, Penn Station Service Optimization Study, updated Sept. 30, 2026. https://railroads.dot.gov/rail-network-development/planning/penn-station-service-optimization-study

5. FRA, Phase I Service Optimization Study, June 2026, pp. 3-32–3-35. https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/new-york-penn-station-service-optimization-study-phase-i-report-final-june-2026

DESIGN THE SERVICE. BUILD WHAT IT NEEDS.

Start with where people need to go and how often trains should run. Make every station project, train purchase, and track investment answer to that service plan.

SERVICE

Choose the connections.

Set cross-Penn routes, all-day frequencies, operating hours, and an integrated fare.

OPERATIONS

Make the timetable work.

Coordinate trains, crews, platforms, dispatching, and recovery across the railroads.

INVESTMENT

Build for that timetable.

Fund the station, fleet, track, and power improvements that deliver the service.

RESULTS

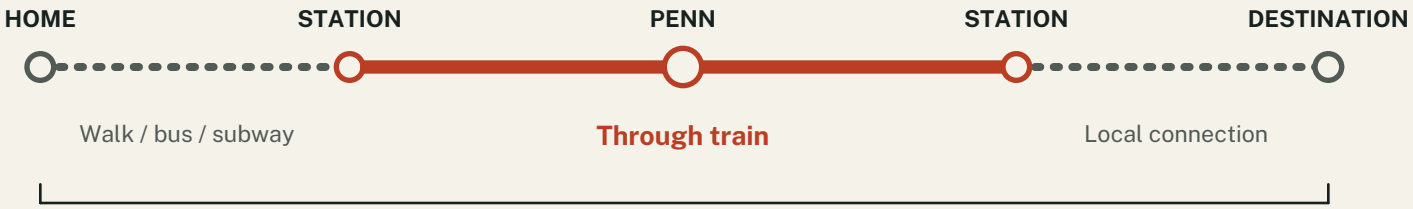
Count what riders gain.

Measure travel time, fare burden, reliability, and the jobs and homes within reach.

MAKE EVERY DOLLAR BUY A BETTER CONNECTED REGION.

REGIONAL RAIL FOR EVERYDAY LIFE.

Build through-running into a network people can use throughout the day. Make frequent service, affordable fares, accessible stations, and housing security part of the same commitment.



FREQUENT	**All day. Both directions.** Run trains for evenings, weekends, and the rush hour.
AFFORDABLE	**One trip across the systems.** Integrate fares and low-income discounts, including connecting transit.
ACCESSIBLE	**Make the whole journey work.** Provide step-free stations, usable boarding, and reliable local connections.
RELIABLE	**Service people can count on.** Coordinate schedules, dispatching, maintenance, and recovery.
FAIR	**A secure place to call home.** Build and preserve affordable homes near stations with tenant protections and climate-safe land use.

MORE CHOICE TO MOVE. MORE SECURITY TO STAY.

COMMIT TO THE NETWORK. SET THE DATES.

The governors of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, together with Amtrak, MTA, NJ TRANSIT, and federal partners, must deliver:

Through-running at Penn. Frequent trains in both directions. Affordable fares across the railroads. A funded regional service plan with opening dates, responsible agencies, and measurable gains for riders.



PLAN

Within 12 months

Adopt routes, frequencies, budgets, and agency responsibilities.

FUND

The first phase

Pay for the trains, station work, and operating changes.

OPEN + EXPAND

Set opening dates

Launch through-service, report results, and extend the network.

ONE PASSENGER NETWORK

Integrate fares and schedules. Make bus and subway connections accessible and affordable.

HOMES + SERVICE

Build and preserve affordable homes near stations. Fund service and tenant protections together.

THE SCORECARD MUST INCLUDE

Peak capacity and reliability • Jobs reachable in 45 / 60 minutes • All-day frequency • Door-to-door travel time • Total fare burden • Accessible trips • Affordable homes built and preserved

THIS IS WHAT WE'RE ASKING FOR.

A STATEMENT FOR PUBLIC MEETINGS AND LETTERS

Make Penn Station the center of a connected regional rail network. Build through-running around the places people need to go.

New York City's draft housing strategy calls for growth across all 59 community districts, more housing choice, and the ability to stay as neighborhoods change.[1] Put rail service behind those goals. Connect places people can afford to live with jobs, schools, care, and family across the region.

Through-running lets a passenger train stop at Penn and continue in service to the other side.[5] Make that connection part of daily life: frequent trains in both directions, affordable fares across the railroads, and accessible stations.

Adopt a joint service plan within 12 months. Fund the first through-service phase. Name the agencies responsible and set opening dates. Build and preserve affordable homes near stations, with strong tenant protections.

The goal is bigger than the station. Give people more choices about where to live and more of the region within reach. Build the network to make it happen.

MORE PLACES TO LIVE.
MORE OF THE REGION WITHIN REACH.

TAKE THIS DEMAND TO GOVERNORS, RAIL AGENCIES, AND PUBLIC MEETINGS.

1. NYC HPD / DCP, Fair Housing Growth Strategy, draft, Aug. 2026. https://wherewelive.cityofnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/Fair-Housing-Growth-Strategy_Draft-Report.pdf

5. FRA, Phase I Service Optimization Study, June 2026, pp. 3-32–3-35. https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/new-york-penn-station-service-optimization-study-phase-i-report-final-june-2026