

Clearing the air about ARC

Access to the Region's Core (ARC) – the proposed passenger rail tunnel between New Jersey and New York – will reshape and redefine our region, just as the first trans-Hudson rail tunnel did 100 years ago.

Each morning during rush hour, a train enters Midtown from New Jersey every two minutes. This frequency cannot increase without a new tunnel under the Hudson River. ARC will allow an additional 25 trains an hour to enter the economic hub of the region from the biggest source of labor in the region. ARC will enable major economic growth, alleviate traffic gridlock at the lower Hudson River crossings,¹ reduce greenhouse gas emissions,² and [increase real estate values](#)³ throughout northern and central New Jersey.

Though funding for the project was committed in 2009 and initial construction has started, some disagreement remains about details and merits of the tunnel. As three leading advocates for transportation and planning in the New York/New Jersey region, we believe it is important to set the record straight about the benefits of ARC. For a complete description of the project and why we support the project, please refer to: www.tstc.org www.rpa.org www.njfuture.org.

Which lines will benefit?

After ARC is complete, the following lines will finally receive direct (transfer-free) service to Manhattan:

- Main & Bergen County Line
- Port Jervis Line
- Pascack Valley Line
- Raritan Valley Line
- North Jersey Coast Line (points south of Long Branch)
- Morristown Line (points west of Dover)
- Montclair / Boonton Line (points west of Montclair State University)

The following rail lines will receive more frequent and express service:

- Northeast Corridor
- North Jersey Coast Line (Long Branch and points north)
- Morristown Line (Dover and points east) & the Gladstone Branch
- Montclair / Boonton Line (Montclair State University and points east)

Access to the West and East Sides of Midtown

As currently planned, ARC will provide a one-seat ride to Manhattan's 34th Street from New Jersey for eight NJ TRANSIT rail lines serving 13 counties in New Jersey. Extending ARC to the east side of Midtown will be feasible and explored once New York City completes Water Tunnel No. 3 around 2020. This new water tunnel will support and expand New York City's existing 100-year-old water-tunnel system, including Water Tunnel No. 1, which runs down Sixth Avenue, east of Penn Station. Until Tunnel No. 3 can back up Tunnel No. 1, New York City's Department of Environmental Protection has understandably prohibited construction in the vicinity of Tunnel No. 1. (This water-tunnel issue would persist even with a different ARC alignment.)

¹ <http://www.arctunnel.com/library/>

² [67,000 tons of GHG; 1,558 tons of CO₂; 14 tons of NO_x; 38 tons of VOC; 3.3 tons of PM₁₀](#)

³ Regional Plan Association, "The ARC Effect" July 2010

Tunnel Depth

Manhattan's infrastructure has changed significantly in the past century, as has tunnel boring technology. The technique used to build Penn Station's existing tunnel involved digging a trench straight through the urban fabric. This technique is no longer possible. Dozens of buildings would have to be razed, the recently completed Hudson River Park would have to be bisected, and a great deal of underground infrastructure such as sewage, water, gas and electrical pipes would have to be relocated. New tunnel boring techniques in dense cities, such as Manhattan, require a deeper tunnel and station. Three subway stations in Manhattan and several in Washington DC already exist at depths deeper than the future ARC terminal. At these stations, speedy escalators escort commuters to street level, as they will at the new ARC station.

Terminal Location

Because of capacity, infrastructure and cost constraints, the new ARC terminal will be located on 34th Street, closer to Midtown's commercial center and just one short block north of Penn Station. It is inconceivable that the existing Penn Station could handle the additional people coming in via ARC. According to a 2008 analysis conducted by the 34th Street Partnership, nearly 70,000 people an hour enter and exit Penn Station (32nd and 7th Avenue entrance) during peak periods. A sub-basement below Penn Station would be costly and difficult to build given the existing station is at capacity. And, in a post-9/11 world, the presence of two transit hubs can provide redundancy in case of an attack or accident.

ARC Funding

Transportation infrastructure is expensive, and the price tag for ARC is \$8.7 billion. Fortunately, the Federal Transportation Administration has committed \$3 billion to this project, one of the largest federal transit investments in generations. The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey will contribute another \$3 billion, reflecting a bi-state investment in ARC. Finally, the State of New Jersey will contribute \$2.7 billion. This funding structure reflects the shared commitment of two states, the federal government, and the public to improve transit service, air quality and increase economic productivity of this region. While the final project cost could change, the longer we hold off on project completion, the more expensive it will become.

ARC and AMTRAK

Ridership on NJ TRANSIT's rail system has grown exponentially in the last two decades, from just over 9 million passengers in 1980 to almost 45 million passengers in 2009. This phenomenal growth in transit ridership will continue if the system has the capacity to handle it. As a result, NJ TRANSIT needs the additional capacity provided by ARC now – not in 10 or 20 years. Meanwhile, Amtrak's growth rate, while robust, is much slower. Amtrak will eventually also need more capacity under the Hudson River but for the time being, NJ TRANSIT and Amtrak have agreed to provide Amtrak with a larger number of slots through the existing tunnel – enough to cover Amtrak's need for a generation. A third trans-Hudson tunnel can be planned and built as the first two tunnels reach capacity.

ARC is essential to the future of New Jersey

ARC will benefit New Jersey residents every day with shorter and more reliable commutes and less road congestion into Manhattan. Other benefits include a healthy and expanding economy, less climate-change pollution, and higher property values. The ARC project has cleared all technical and environmental hurdles, and the necessary funding has been committed. We cannot afford to postpone this essential project.

For more information, contact: Neysa Pranger, Regional Plan Association at (212) 253-5796 or (917) 532-0567 or npranger@rpa.org; Zoe Baldwin, Tri-State Transportation Campaign at (212) 268-7474 or (609) 271-0778 or zoe@tstc.org or Jay Corbalis, New Jersey Future at (609) 393-0008 ext. 110 or jcorbalis@njfuture.org.