Metro-North Capital Plan Case Study

A focus on Metro-North's capital program

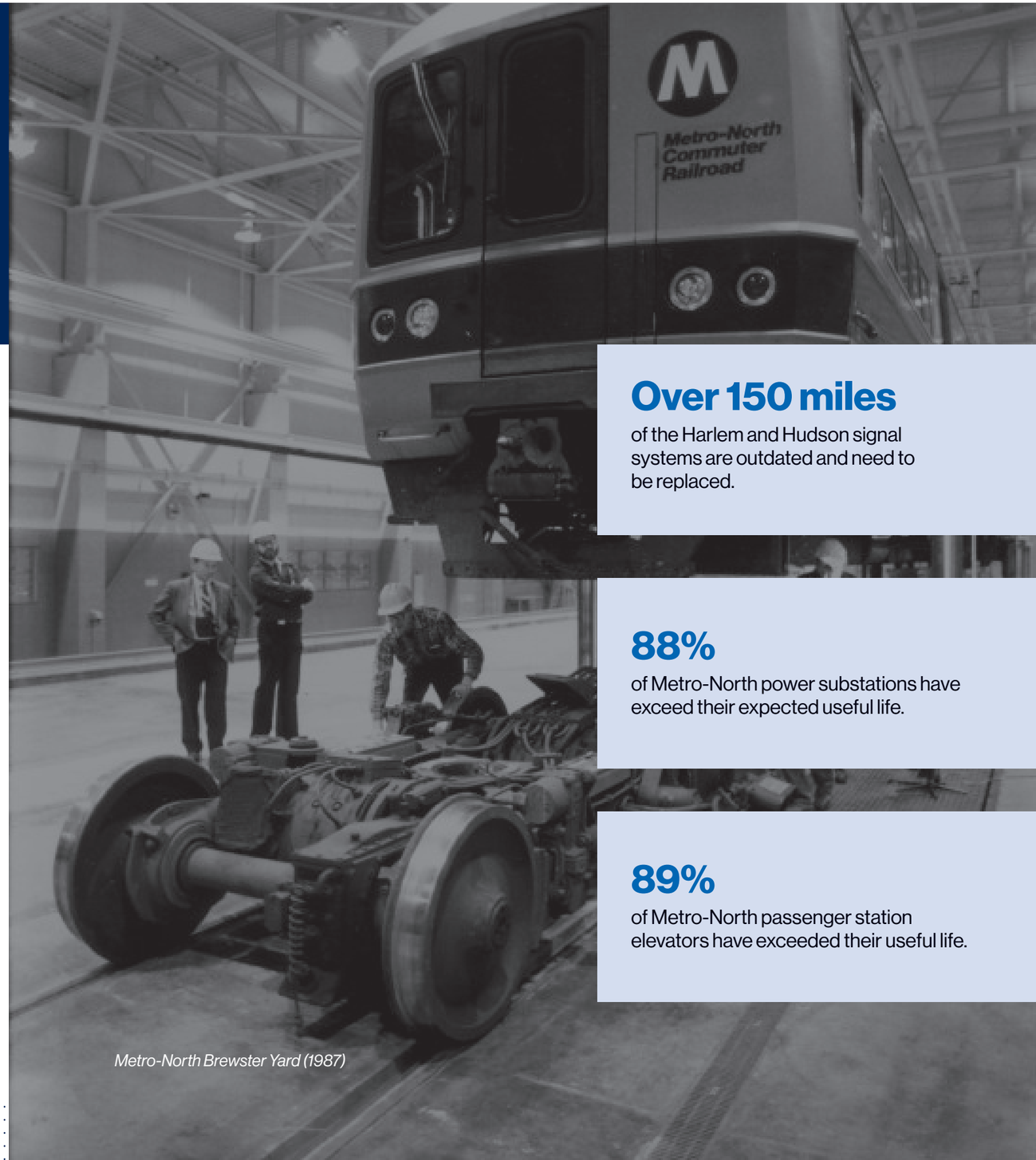
How the capital program saved Metro-North

In the early 1980s, commuter rail service north of New York City was at risk of falling apart entirely. After its original private operators' 1970 bankruptcy and continued neglect from struggling Conrail throughout the 1970s, the system was trapped in a vicious cycle of disinvestment. Infrastructure was failing and service was suffering as a result.

In 1983, New York state stepped up and created the Metro-North Railroad. It was more than a change in name; Metro-North enacted an ambitious plan to restore the railroad's basic infrastructure, requiring large-scale reinvestment in a system that was in severe disrepair. Early focus was on restoring basic infrastructure to reliable condition and working to achieve a state of good repair. This investment worked. Targeted investments in Metro-North's infrastructure have had a dramatic effect on our service reliability: on-time performance was at 80.5% in 1983 and is now at 97.1% in 2022.

Why it needs to again

Now, as Metro-North strives to maintain its accomplishments and provide reliable service to changing customer demands, much of its infrastructure remains largely as originally built and have met or exceeded the end of their useful life. Significant work remains on some vital aging assets that have deteriorated past the ability to continue with routine maintenance and must be substantially repaired, rehabilitated or replaced, such as the 130-year-old Park Avenue Viaduct and the 110-year-old Grand Central Train Shed. Much progress has been made over the years protecting past investments and providing targeted improvements; however, the state-of-good-repair needs of Metro-North's infrastructure are significant and require investment to preserve the accomplishments of the past 40 years and to address the needs of the aging systems to allow Metro-North to continue to serve its tens of millions of riders each year.



Metro-North Brewster Yard (1987)

Over 150 miles
of the Harlem and Hudson signal systems are outdated and need to be replaced.

88%
of Metro-North power substations have exceed their expected useful life.

89%
of Metro-North passenger station elevators have exceeded their useful life.