

## **META 2: Escape from New York**

**ANSWER:** EMPIRE STATE BUILDING

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The title of the puzzle and the “Rules of the Rail” section hint you towards the fact that this puzzle has to do with New York City, and more specifically the subway system. Each of the puzzle answers references a location in NYC. Once you have found these places, you also need to look for the nearest subway station to each of them. The colored dots should help you confirm that you are on the right track (the color of the dots are the blended colors of all the lines that service each of the stations).

**HOOPER = Hooper Street, nearest station is Hewes St (J,M)**

**ARCH = Washington Square Arch, nearest station is W 4 St Wash Sq (A,B,C,D,E,F,M)**

**ATLAS = Atlas Statue, nearest station is 47-50 Sts Rockefeller Ctr (B,D,F,M)**

**SMORGASBORD = Smorgasburg, nearest station is Bedford Av (L)**

**SALVATION = Salvation Army Executive Headquarters, nearest station is 14 St 6 Av (F,L,M)**

**NEWSPAPER = New York Times Building, nearest station is 42 St/Port Authority Bus Terminal (A,C,E)**

Once you figure out these stations, you need to find the shortest route possible (uses fewest number of stops) that connects them, while making sure to simultaneously follow all the rules of the rail. One important note is that this puzzle hunt was created in the summer of 2020 and therefore uses this subway map: <https://new.mta.info/map/7551> Here’s an explanation of the route that you get:

From Hewes St to W 4 St Wash Sq, the shortest route is to take the M train all the way. Unfortunately, “The M train isn’t running below 42nd Street,” so you must take the J and transfer to the F instead. This gives you the route:

**Hewes St, Marcy Av, Delancey St Essex St, 2 Av, B’way-Lafayette St, W 4 St Wash Sq**

From W 4 St Wash Sq to 6 Av 14 St, the shortest route is to take the B/D/F/M trains. Since “Trains are being rerouted around the stop on 23rd St. and Sixth Ave,” however, you must switch to the L, then switch to the R/W, and finally switch back to the B/D/F/M. This gives you the route:

**W 4 St Wash Sq, 14 St 6 Av, 23 St, 28 St, 34 St Herald Sq, 42 St Bryant Pk, 47-50 Sts Rockefeller Ctr**

There seem to be many different possibilities to get from 47-50 Sts Rockefeller Ctr to Bedford Av. Since “The Rawson St. and 5 Ave. stops on the 7 train are closed for renovation” and there are “No u-turns,” the shortest route possible is to continue on the B/D/F/M, transfer to the G, and then finally switch to the L. This gives you the route:

**47-50 Sts Rockefeller Ctr, 5 Av/53 St, Lexington Av/53 St, Court Sq-23 St, Court Sq, 21 St, Greenpoint Av, Nassau Av, Metropolitan Av, Lorimer St, Bedford Av**

From Bedford Av to 6 Av 14 St, you can simply take the L all the way. This gives you the route:

## **Bedford Av, 1 Av, 3 Av, 14 St-Union Sq, 6 Av 14 St**

From Bedford Av to 42 St/Port Authority Bus Terminal the shortest route is to continue on the L, until you transfer to the A/C/E at 14 St 8 Av. Since “The stench of the L train cannot be tolerated for more than six stops in a row,” you instead must switch to the A/C/E immediately. This gives you the route:

**6 Av 14 St, W 4 St Wash Sq, 14 St, 23 St, 34 St Penn Station, 42 St/Port Authority Bus Terminal**

Putting all of this together, you get the route:

**Hewes St, Marcy Av, Delancey St Essex St, 2 Av, B’way-Lafayette St, W 4 St Wash Sq, 14 St 6 Av, 23 St, 28 St, 34 St Herald Sq, 42 St Bryant Pk, 47-50 Sts Rockefeller Ctr, 5 Av/53 St, Lexington Av/53 St, Court Sq-23 St, Court Sq, 21 St, Greenpoint Av, Nassau Av, Metropolitan Av, Lorimer St, Bedford Av, 1 Av, 3 Av, 14 St-Union Sq, 6 Av 14 St, W 4 St Wash Sq, 14 St, 23 St, 34 St Penn Station, 42 St/Port Authority Bus Terminal**

Since “Herald Sq., Wall St., and Nassau Ave. are not worth counting,” you need to remove them:

**Hewes St, Marcy Av, Delancey St Essex St, 2 Av, B’way-Lafayette St, W 4 St Wash Sq, 14 St 6 Av, 23 St, 28 St, 42 St Bryant Pk, 47-50 Sts Rockefeller Ctr, 5 Av/53 St, Lexington Av/53 St, Court Sq-23 St, Court Sq, 21 St, Greenpoint Av, Metropolitan Av, Lorimer St, Bedford Av, 1 Av, 3 Av, 14 St-Union Sq, 6 Av 14 St, W 4 St Wash Sq, 14 St, 23 St, 34 St Penn Station, 42 St/Port Authority Bus Terminal**

Now that you have all the stops in order, the flavor text “local shorts,” clues you to the fact that this route actually spells out a message in Morse code, with the local stops as dots and the express stops as dashes. By using the spacing key at the bottom of the puzzle, you get the message.

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Which translates into:

## **RACE TO THE SKY**

By looking up “race to the sky New York City,” you should find that this was the name of the competition between real estate developers to construct the world’s tallest building. The race was eventually won by the answer to this puzzle:

## **EMPIRE STATE BUILDING**