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Press Release   November 6, 2007

MTA Headquarters   IMMEDIATE

MTA Seeks Proposals to Provide Text Messaging and E-Mail Alerts

RFP Looks for Provider to Begin Service in Spring '08; Up to 1 Million Subscribers

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority today announced the release of a competitive procurement for an e-Alert system that will provide timely and consistent e-mail and text messaging service alerts to its customers. The MTA is seeking the services of an external firm to provide a common platform for an all-agency service alert system that can be used by operations staff and public information officers at MTA operating agencies to notify customers of any events that might disrupt their normal travel. The agency is hoping to begin providing the service to customers by the spring of 2008.

The proposed system would send text messages or e-mails to customers' designated e-mail accounts, cell phones, PDAs and other similar communications devices - in as close to real-time as possible. Such messages would include notification of planned service disruptions such as scheduled track work that might result in weekend delays or alternate train routing, as well as unplanned disruptions resulting from fires, storms, flooding or other emergency conditions.

The new email and text messaging service was recommended in the MTA's report responding to the August 8 storm that flooded parts of the transportation network. It is also consistent with work done by the MTA's Customer Service Initiative earlier this year as one of MTA Executive Director and CEO Lee Sander's primary priorities.

"Better customer communication has been high on my priority list since I came to the MTA earlier this year," said Elliot G. Sander, MTA Executive Director and CEO. "The flooding on August 8 made it clear that timely text and email alerts are necessary, and I am confident we can find a third-party provider with the processing power to carry this out. It will no doubt be the largest such customer service alert system in the nation."

Over time, the MTA anticipates up to one million subscribers to this service, a number which cannot be handled with in-house technology. Currently, such large amounts of e-mail would require many distributed servers and would take hours to send out. As the delivery of such information can be critical in times of emergency or major service disruptions, the proposed system must be capable of delivering vast numbers of messages in a very short time.

This system will also serve the purpose of integrating several separate MTA operating agency-specific systems to allow MTA customers to do one-stop registration for any number of MTA services.