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Press Release

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[Bridges & Tunnels](#)

IMMEDIATE

### MTA Targets Early Completion of Verrazano-Narrows Bridge Work

MTA Bridges and Tunnels announced today that it has negotiated a speed-up of necessary construction on the lower level deck of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge in response to concerns about impact of the work on customers.

The plan, which includes financial incentives, is expected to cut the time that lanes will be closed on the lower level in both directions, from 21 months down to an expected 15 months, barring extreme weather conditions. Under the revised terms, the contractor, El Sol, will add additional workers, working extra shifts. The revised plan will add \$6.2 million to the \$58.8 million project.

"We regret that the deck project causes customer inconvenience but closing the lanes is the only way to do this work safely" said Acting President David Moretti.

"Whenever a lane is closed, delays are unavoidable but this action will make that period as short as possible. Instead of a lane closed in each direction until March 2009, we hope to have them reopened in both directions by Labor Day 2008. When the work is completed the approaches will be like new with a life cycle of another 45 - 50 years of service to customers."

Congressman Vito Fossella, Staten Island Borough President Jim Molinaro, Councilman James Oddo and Councilman Vincent Gentile have all recognized the need for the work and encouraged some means to reduce its impact.

Congressman Vito Fossella said:

"I asked the MTA to add incentives to the contract because I was confident it could speed up the completion of this project. I am delighted the MTA followed up on my suggestion and reworked the contract to complete this project six months sooner. Now the MTA must continue to explore other innovative solutions to minimize the impact of this project, including creating contra flow lanes to maximize capacity on the bridge. I want to thank Lee Sander and David Moretti for their willingness to embrace the idea of adding incentives to the contract.

Staten Island Borough president James Molinaro made the following statement.

"I am glad to learn that after my recent meeting with all the involved agencies, the MTA has announced a significant reduction in the timeline for the construction on the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. Based on some of the suggestions made during this meeting, we can now expect the project to take approximately 30% less time than originally forecasted."

Full start of the eastbound lower level lane had been delayed while adjustments were made to ease the westbound closure and negotiations to speed up the work were undertaken. Work has been going on eastbound with lane closures only during off peak hours. Today, the shoulder on the eastbound Gowanus Expressway approach past the Belt Parkway entrance will be closed with concrete barriers for 740 feet for the project. The around the clock lane closure of the lower level eastbound left lane will begin on Thursday August 23. The Belt Parkway exit will be accessed from the middle lane.

The work is the same as the work underway on the westbound approaches.

It involves complete removal and reconstruction of the roadway including the asphalt and concrete deck itself, parapet wall and utilities and rehabilitation of the steel beneath.

Traffic enforcement agents will be at 92nd Street/Dahlgren Place in Brooklyn and Lily Pond Avenue in Staten Island when the eastbound closure begins. Bridge management will monitor traffic closely and take whatever actions are possible to ease the initial period of adjustment and throughout the period of the now-shortened project.

Last spring, anticipating that some traffic would move to the eastbound upper level during the construction, MTA Bridges and Tunnels working with MTA NYC Transit, took steps to improve access for commuter buses. The bus lane on the Staten Island Expressway was extended through the toll plaza and slower moving truck traffic was required to use the right lane.

The Verrazano Narrows Bridge was opened to traffic in 1964 and carries almost 200,000 vehicles on an average weekday.