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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Introduces 'Talking Kiosk' at Penn Station For Visually Impaired Customers

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and MTA Long Island Rail Road today unveiled a "talking kiosk" to help visually impaired and other customers navigate the concourses, passageways and platforms of Pennsylvania Station. The kiosk features a touch-activated, tactile map of the station, vivid visual displays for the partially sighted, and a voice designed for phonetic clarity. As a customer touches different parts of the map, the kiosk describes the corresponding location and gives directions of how to get there. It also offers general information about Penn Station and the Long Island Rail Road.

The kiosk is the second permanent talking kiosk located on the Long Island Rail Road concourse. The new version has expanded functionality and an improved user interface, a smaller size and a convenient wall-mounted position. It costs \$23,000, or less than half the cost of the previous model, which was removed earlier this year.

"The installation of this kiosk is just one of the many ways we are making transit more accessible to our disabled customers," said Elliot G. Sander, Executive Director and CEO of the MTA. "And while it is designed with visually impaired customers in mind, this kiosk is useful for anybody who is unfamiliar with Penn Station."

"At the Long Island Rail Road, we understand that access to public transportation is a key to independence, employment and full community participation for people with disabilities," said LIRR President Helena Williams. "The talking kiosk is just part of the effort the LIRR is making to increase accessibility for customers with disabilities, including those who are blind or have visual impairments. We are working hard to ensure that our facilities are accessible and that individuals with disabilities can safely board, ride and exit our trains. Our goal is to make people with disabilities comfortable riding the LIRR."

The kiosk is located in the Long Island Rail Road's main concourse, between the entrances to Tracks 14 and 15. To help visually impaired customers find the kiosk, the kiosk emits the song of the lark sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*), a bird species native to the American West that is found by audiologists to have a unique set of phonetic properties that make it most effective at assisting in directional wayfinding.