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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Reports Improved Storm Performance



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Metropolitan Transportation Authority Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer Elliot G. Sander today reported the significant storm performance progress made by the MTA since an August 8, 2007 storm flooded key parts of the transit system. Sander unveiled new flood-mitigating subway furniture on Hillside Avenue in Queens, one highlight of the agency's work in the 365 days since the release of an inter-agency task force report on necessary improvements to handle future storms.

"In just one year's time we have made enormous progress in tackling flooding issues that have plagued the MTA's transit network for a generation," said Elliot G. Sander, MTA Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer. "While there's still work to be done, I'm proud of the MTA's performance during the heavy storms that hit the area earlier this month. The street furniture we're debuting today on Hillside Avenue proves that we can fight flood waters with good design that adds to the community."

The prototype street furniture was designed by Rogers Marvel with di Domenico and Partners. In the coming weeks, the MTA will also release different designs for similar structures, designed by Grimshaw Billings Jackson with Systra, on West Broadway in Lower Manhattan and on the Upper West Side, for public comment.

The September 20, 2007 report was produced by an inter-agency task force that included: the presidents of all of the MTA's operating agencies; MTA Inspector General Barry Kluger; NYC Dept. of Environmental Protection Commissioner Emily Lloyd; NYC Dept. of Transportation Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan; and NYS Dept. of Transportation Commissioner Astrid Glynn. The report provided recommendations in operations, engineering and communications. Sander reported significant progress in all three areas.

Operations

- *Early warning and response capability:* The MTA established a common weather forecasting system, installed Doppler radar screens in all agency operations centers and has begun to pre-deploy operating personnel in flood-prone areas.
- *Emergency Response Center:* The MTA completed an internal ERC in October 2007 with communications, weather monitoring, Doppler radar and video conferencing capabilities.
- *Agency Storm Protocols:* The MTA revised its agency-wide storm protocols and established a common structure for emergency response teams.

Engineering

- NYC Transit: Vent grating prototypes have been designed and are being constructed for placement at the top 6 flood locations, with the next four priority locations underway. Also substantially completed IG recommendations from prior report.
- LIRR: Bayside Station sewer line improvements by NYC DEP and LIRR; portable pumps have been staged at Mineola with installation of drainage rings planned for 2009.
- Metro-North: Short-term engineering solutions complete at Mott Haven; additional catch basin installed by NYC DEP on Webster Ave.
- Bridges & Tunnels: Construction due to complete in early '09 will remedy situation at Marine Parkway Bridge and Cross Bay Bridge.

Communications

- *Increase website capacity and clarity:* Firewalls were replaced in Sept. 2007, home page redesign is underway, universal PDA access to website was completed in September 2007, and rss alert feeds have been provided since February.
- *Develop capacity for real-time text and email alerts:* A contract for agency-wide email and text messaging alerts was issued and service is set to begin in October.
- *Improve communication between operation centers and field personnel:* All agencies improved communications, including: establishment of a Communications Coordinator at NYCT's Rail Control Center; virtually all LIRR train personnel are now equipped with cell phones; key Metro-North railroad managers have received Blackberry devices; and B & T has established redundant methods of communication including two-way radios and Blackberry.
- *Establish clear emergency communication protocols:* All agency public affairs staffs have reviewed and/or revised communications protocol to ensure accurate and timely customer communication.
- *Advance public address and video screen technologies:* Video screens installed at Penn and Jamaica in late 2007 for LIRR; system testing continues at White Plains station for Metro-North's Model Station Communication Network; and NYCT is testing video screens.