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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

### MTA Installs Second Prototype of Street Furniture to Prevent Subway Flooding

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced that it had installed the second of three prototypes of multi-purpose street furniture that will prevent flooding while ventilating the subway system. This one, in front of 151 West Broadway between Worth and Thomas streets, provides benches and bicycle racks, and represents a design that will be replicated at 15 locations along West Broadway between Chambers and Leonard Streets, and on Varick Street between Leonard and Franklin streets.

The creation of special furniture to curb the flow of stormwater into the MTA New York City Transit subway system is one of many initiatives the MTA has undertaken in response to its report on the storm of August 8, 2007, which disrupted its transit systems. The design of the units has been a joint effort in partnership with numerous outside stakeholders, including the New York City Department of Transportation, the Public Design Commission of the City of New York, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, and the Municipal Art Society.

The street furniture for Lower Manhattan, designed by Grimshaw Billings Jackson with Systra/HNTB, is on view to be tested by cyclists, pedestrians and the local community before the additional units are installed. The units, which will range in length from 16 to 26 feet, join the raised grates and benches in Jamaica, Queens, built for a similar purpose. The prototype of those units, designed by Rogers Marvel Architects with di Domenico Partners, was unveiled on Sept. 19.

"This was an unprecedented collaboration for the MTA," said Elliot G. Sander, MTA Executive Director and CEO. "By partnering with so many leaders of the design community, we achieved both the highest caliber of design excellence and a much needed functionality, to improve the MTA's ability to serve customers during intense rainstorms."

"Initiatives like this are critical to the continuous functioning of the City," said Janette Sadik-Khan, NYC Department of Transportation Commissioner. "The fact that this new street furniture does more than double-duty as protection from stormwater by providing seating and bike racks shows that good design can turn problems into assets."

"The creative design solutions that resulted from the collaborative efforts initiated by the MTA reinforce the Design Commission's philosophy that good design can positively impact the quality of life in our city," noted Signe Nielsen, a landscape architect and Vice President of the Public Design Commission of the City of New York. "What could have been unattractive interventions on our sidewalks, will now be successful public amenities that reference the larger environmental issues that necessitate them in the first place."

Some of the bike racks need to be installed in the TriBeCa South Historic District and TriBeCa West Historic District. In response, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission's Advisory Report noted, "The transparent nature of the design and neutral finish of the bike racks will allow the installation to have an unobtrusive presence in the streetscape."

Vanessa Gruen, Director of Special Projects at the Municipal Art Society, said, "It was a rewarding experience to work with such a professional team to achieve an attractive design that works as an amenity for the community."



Note: Photograph of the West Broadway prototype. Credit: Metropolitan Transportation Authority/Rob Wilson.