



MTA Press Releases

[Select Language](#) | ▼

Press Release

February 16, 2010

[NYC Transit](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA New York City Transit Pilots New Ways to Bring Countdown Clocks to Lettered Subway Lines

A and C Line customers headed downtown from six stations in Washington Heights and Harlem will benefit from a new pilot project testing the delivery of next train arrival information similar to that now in service along the L line and recently deployed in several Bronx stations on the 6.

While plans are in place to activate customer information signs at all of the stations on the numbered subway lines by next year, the same technology does not exist on the lettered lines, requiring innovative solutions to provide the same information to customers. The PA/CIS (Public Address/Customer Information Screen) pilot in operation along a northern segment of the Eighth Avenue Line utilizes previously installed electronic signs in four stations, tying them in with existing infrastructure. This method eliminates the need for major capital construction and related service disruptions while allowing it to be up and running as quickly as possible. The initial phase of the pilot will provide next train arrival information at 181st, 175th, 168th, 163rd, 155th, and 145th Street Stations. While audio announcements will be available at all six stations, Customer Information Screens will be up and running at the four southernmost stations only.

"This is another part of the initiative to offer real time train arrival information to our customers, but here we are going about it in a different manner using existing infrastructure rather than waiting for the installation of an entirely new communications system," said NYC Transit President Thomas F. Prendergast. "We looked at the equipment that was already in place and we have designed a pilot that responds to MTA Chairman Jay Walder's call to find affordable ways to make customer improvements as quickly as possible."

Unlike the more advanced system currently being turned on along the numbered lines which receives its information from the scheduled data provided by ATS (Automatic Train Supervision), this simpler system identifies train location using the signal system's track circuits and sending this information to existing equipment. Due to the limitations of the information transmitted by the signal track circuits, the demonstration pilot will provide information on train movement on a specific track only and cannot identify specific trains as the ATS system is able to do.

In stations equipped with screens, the information will transmit how many stations away the train is along with the estimated length of time to arrive. For example: "Train 2 stations away. Approximately 2 minutes." Information for the express track begins being transmitted to stations downtown as the train approaches 181st Street. Local track information transmission begins at 168th Street.

If this first pilot is successful and well received, we will look to implement it at other stations on the lettered lines. Additionally, other pilots that will test different technology options are currently being investigated. These efforts follow the release of "Making Every Dollar Count," a report of Chairman Walder's first 100 days at the MTA that is available online at www.mta.info.