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Press Release

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[Bridges & Tunnels](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA and Elected Officials Kick-Off Work to Remove Defunct Brooklyn-bound Toll Booths at Verrazano-Narrows

Metropolitan Transportation Authority Chairman and Chief CEO Jay Walder, along with federal, city and state officials, donned hardhats Sunday as several pieces of toll booth #1 at the Brooklyn-bound Verrazano-Narrows toll plaza were removed.

The event marked the beginning of a year-long, \$2.5 million project to demolish the first 8 east-bound toll booths that have not been used since one-way tolling was first mandated by Congress in 1986. The contractor on the project is Paul J. Scariano Inc., of Brooklyn.

This is very good news for our customers who will have a much easier trip through this area by early next year," MTA Chairman Walder said.

One-way tolling at the Verrazano-Narrows began as a six-month experiment in March 1986, at the urging of Staten Island elected officials, and was continued by Congress on a year-to-year basis until it was made permanent as part of the National Highway System Designation Act in 1995.

In addition to Walder, others who attended the kick-off of the project included U.S. Rep. Michael McMahon, Staten Island Borough President James Molinaro, State Sen. Andrew Lanza, State Sen. Diane Savino, Assemblywoman Janele Hyer-Spencer, Assemblyman Michael Cusick, and New York City Councilmember Debi Rose.

MTA officials also on hand were MTA Staten Island Board member Alan Capelli, MTA Acting Bridges and Tunnels President James Ferrara, Bridges and Tunnels Vice President of Operations James Fortunato, Verrazano-Narrows General Manager Daniel DeCrescenzo, and Verrazano-Narrows Facility Engineer David Riggs.

The booths will be removed two at time, beginning with the two located to the far right of the Brooklyn-bound toll plaza. The project also includes removing concrete islands, utilities, canopy structures, electronic signs, as well as concrete and asphalt restoration work.

"The removal of these toll booths is the most significant change in the physical design of the bridge since the lower level was opened to traffic in 1969," said Bridges and Tunnels Acting President Ferrara. The upper level of the bridge opened in November 1964.

The project is part of a larger Verrazano-Narrows Bridge Toll Plaza Improvement Project, which has been designed and closely coordinated with the New York State Department of Transportation's Staten Island Expressway Access Improvement work.

The remaining 3 defunct booths, which are primarily used by traffic from the main Staten Island Expressway lanes, will be removed in a second phase of work, slated to begin in 2011. This work will include realignment of plaza roadway from the Staten Island Expressway to accommodate traffic traveling at higher rates of speed. This is important because the plaza roadways were designed to handle stop-and-go traffic.

Other improvements in the next phase of work includes newly redesigned Lily Pond and Narrows Road South ramps leading onto the Brooklyn-bound plaza, and rehabilitation of the Brooklyn-bound Father Capodanno on ramp and Staten Island-bound Lily Pond exit ramp. The project is expected to be completed sometime in 2014.

During removal of the first 8 toll booths, all nine lanes of traffic coming through the Brooklyn-bound plaza from the Staten Island Expressway, Father Capodanno, Lily Pond and Narrows Road South ramps will be maintained during peak driving times by shifting traffic around the construction zone. Some off-peak toll lane closures may be scheduled.

The Verrazano-Narrows Bridge is the most-heavily traveled of Bridges and Tunnels seven bridges and two tunnels, carrying 188, 000 vehicles daily in both directions. In 2009, a total of 68.6 million trips were taken across the bridge (in both directions).

MTA Bridges and Tunnels, which carries about 800,000 vehicles daily, operates seven bridges and two tunnels connecting the five boroughs of New York City. They are: the Robert. F. Kennedy, Throgs Neck, Bronx-Whitestone, Henry Hudson, Verrazano-Narrows, Cross Bay Veterans Memorial and Marine Parkway-Gil Hodges Bridges, and the Queens Midtown and Brooklyn-Battery Tunnels.



MTA Chairman Jay Walder (center in white hat) with elected officials watch as workers remove toll booth #1 sign from the first booths on the east-bound toll plaza that will be demolished in the coming weeks.



(r to l) State Sen. Andrew Lanza, U.S. Rep. Michael McMahon and State Assemblywoman Janele Hyer-Spencer (holding toll booth #1 sign), Assemblyman Michael Cusick, MTA Chairman Jay Walder, City Councilwoman Debi Rose, Staten Island Borough President James Molinaro, and MTA officials.

Photo Credit: Patrick Cashin, Metropolitan Transportation Authority. April 18, 2010.