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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Launches Second Avenue Subway Tunnel Boring Machine

Machine Will Dig First Phase of Second Avenue Subway

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), elected officials, and contractor S3 Tunnel Constructors today launched the tunnel boring machine that will dig the first phase of the Second Avenue Subway. The 485-ton, 450-foot-long machine will dig through approximately 50 feet of Manhattan bedrock per day as it completes two runs from 92nd Street to 63rd Street by November 2011. The event marks a significant milestone in Phase 1 of the MTA's Second Avenue Subway construction project, which is on schedule to be completed by December 2016.

The Second Avenue Subway Phase 1 will serve more than 200,000 people per day, reducing overcrowding on the Lexington Avenue Line and restoring a transit link to a neighborhood that lost the Second Avenue Elevated in 1940.

"There have been skeptics who saw construction start and stop in the 1970s and said the Second Avenue Subway would never be built," said MTA Chairman and CEO Jay H. Walder. "But today, we are turning on the machine that will dig the Phase 1 Second Avenue Subway tunnels, and we won't turn it off until the tunnels are done. This powerful machine is a tangible reminder of the important role that today's MTA capital program will play for generations of New Yorkers to come."

"Anyone riding the Lexington Avenue Line today, whether for work commute or pleasure, understands the critical importance of constructing the Second Avenue Subway," said Thomas F. Prendergast, President of MTA New York City Transit. "When completed, it will provide the capacity needed to sustain the East Side's vitality and future growth."

"Building the Second Avenue Subway is a remarkable undertaking that has had its share of challenges, both past and present," said Dr. Michael Horodniceanu, President of MTA Capital Construction. "Thanks to the commitment of our funding partners and the Upper East Side community, we continue to make significant progress towards delivering a new state-of-the-art subway for New York City."

"This is an historic day for all New York straphangers," said U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer. "The Second Avenue Subway will meet commuter needs that have existed for far too long here in New York, improve transportation options for millions of New Yorkers and spur economic growth in the process. I am proud to have worked on this project for so many years and am thrilled to see that the process of improving our public transit is underway."

"I am delighted that this long-awaited and crucially important project is moving forward," said Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver. "The Second Avenue subway, for which I have been a leading advocate for decades, will improve the lives of so many New Yorkers, particularly East Side residents, who have endured overcrowded commutes and limited access to the subway for far too long. I commend the MTA for the progress it is making and I look forward to the day when the residents of my district, on the Lower East Side, can enjoy the city's newest subway."

Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney said: "Today marks a whole new phase for the Second Avenue Subway project. Every day, the tunnel boring machine will be moving the new subway dozens of yards closer to the finish line. That's real progress and it means that it's no longer a matter of 'if' the Second Avenue Subway will get done – it's now a matter of 'when.' With this new tunnel boring machine and the dedication of our community, the construction workers and the MTA to the project, the Second Avenue Subway will soon be moving down the tracks."

"The Second Avenue Subway is going to transform transportation on the East Side," said Council Member Jessica Lappin. "Today we are taking an exciting step closer to easing overcrowding on the Lexington line and making commutes a little easier for all East Siders."

"This is what progress looks like – it's 450 feet long, has a 200-ton cutter head, and it's moving us closer to transit relief on the East Side," said City Council Member Dan Garodnick. "It can be difficult to appreciate the enormity of this project and how construction is progressing, but there can be no doubt today that we are moving forward. Thousands of riders, residents and merchants are now hoping that this project continues to move forward swiftly and safely."

The Second Avenue Subway is one of four large-scale projects being built as the MTA undertakes the largest expansion of New York's public transportation system in two generations. The MTA is also connecting the Long Island Rail Road to Grand Central Terminal, extending the 7 subway line to the far west side, and building the Fulton Street Transit Center in Lower Manhattan.

Under Phase 1 of the Second Avenue Subway project, new stations being built at 96th Street, 86th Street, and 72nd Street will be served by the Q train, as will an expanded station at 63rd Street and Lexington Avenue. Further phases of the project will extend the line from 125th Street in Harlem to Hanover Square in the Financial District. The configuration of the tracks will allow for possible future extensions into Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx.

