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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Launches 'Bus Time' on Staten Island

First Borough-Wide Application of Real-Time Bus Info

For Staten Island bus riders who have ever wondered: "Where is my bus and when will it get here?" The answer has arrived: **MTA Bus Time!** Beginning today, every bus and bus route that operates in Staten Island, including express routes, can be tracked in real time on the Internet, smart phones and by text message to any cell phone. Staten Islanders are first to receive real-time bus information on a borough-wide basis.

"Bus Time is going to transform the way that our 2.5 million bus riders use the bus system every day, and we're thrilled to start here on Staten Island," said MTA Chairman Joseph J. Lhota, "The MTA continues to bring new technology to our customers in ways that make our transit system better every day. With Bus Time you can get real-time information right on your cell phone or computer."

"In a borough that lacks a subway system," said Staten Island Borough President James Molinaro, "this is a great improvement for the people of Staten Island to track the real time location of buses to enhance their commuting experience."

MTA Bus Time is easy to use in three ways: **Click it. Text it. Scan it.**

- **Click it:** From a desktop or a smartphone, customers can enter the bus route, intersection or bus stop code and get a map showing where the buses are along the route and how close the next bus is.
- **Text it:** Customers can text a bus stop code or intersection to 511123 on their cell phones and they'll receive a text back stating how many stops away the next bus is. Bus stop codes can be found online at www.mta.info/bustime or at bus stops printed on the posted Guide-A-Ride schedules in the coming weeks.
- **Scan it:** In addition, if customers have a smart phone with a QR reader, they just scan a Quick Response (QR) code also available on the Guide-A-Rides in the coming weeks and get the same information. (The Guide-A-Rides will be distributed to 2100 Staten Island bus stops including the Staten Island express bus stops in Manhattan over the next six weeks.)

Bus Time will use accurate location data provided by an enhanced Global Positioning Device mounted inside each bus. That information will be integrated with the bus operator login information (including the route, run and destination sign code) and will then be transmitted wirelessly to a Bus Time server using onboard cellular equipment. This server will integrate location and login information with schedules and map files to output real time "next bus information" to the customers who will be able to obtain this information through their cell phones, smart phones, PCs and digital displays.

Brochures and Guide-A-Rides will have clear instructions on how to use Bus Time. In addition there is an in-depth website at www.mta.info/bustime.

MTA Bus Time will communicate bus location information to the customer through a range of digital and mobile interfaces made possible by a number of contractors, including Cambridge Systematics, Verifone, Open Plans Transportation, and Mobile Commons.

Over the summer, seven electrical engineering graduate students from Columbia University and City College under the direction of Professors Nicholas Maxemchuk (Columbia) and Umit Uyar (CCNY) collaborated with the MTA on ways to improve the accuracy of our bus location tracking by the use of new algorithms. Their contribution helped overcome previous problems GPS systems had with signals being blocked by tall buildings.

"We've taken a new approach by using already existing off-the-shelf components and tailoring open standards and software," said MTA New York City President Thomas Prendergast. "The benefit of this in-house, open-design approach allows the MTA more freedom to purchase equipment from several different suppliers and adapt to new technology allowing us to roll out this important communications tool to our customers at a much lower cost."

MTA NYC Transit will shortly begin deployment of Bus Time technology to depots in the other boroughs. Over the next year, more than 6,000 buses and 14,000 bus stops will be upgraded in order to make Bus Time fully operational city-wide by the end of 2013.