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Press Release

June 12, 2017

[Bridges & Tunnels](#)

IMMEDIATE

Governor Cuomo Orders Acceleration of Construction on Bridges and Tunnels in Anticipation of Added Traffic Due to Amtrak Emergency Repair Work

Major Construction Projects Will be Complete by July 8th to Mitigate Impact - All Major Commuting Crossings Will Be Cashless and All Lanes Will Be Open During Daytime to Streamline Commutes

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo has ordered an acceleration of the construction on MTA bridges and tunnels to mitigate the effects of additional vehicles on the road caused by Amtrak's emergency repair work this summer. This aggressive schedule ensures major construction projects will be completed by July 8 to reduce vehicular congestion during Amtrak's extended period of widespread reduced service. Governor Cuomo's order will mean that all major commuting crossings will be cashless and all lanes will be open during the daytime.

"Our top priority is ensuring all New Yorkers can get where they need to go as quickly and easily as possible this summer and we're taking every conceivable step to prepare for Amtrak's summer of hell," Governor Cuomo said. "By aggressively expediting construction we are taking action to ease commutes and provide New Yorkers with peace of mind."

A special interagency team, composed of the Governor's Office, the Department of Transportation and the MTA, is overseeing the expedited construction. In May, Governor Cuomo directed the MTA to develop a comprehensive mitigation plan to combat the Pennsylvania Station summer crisis. Amtrak is proposing repairs that would reduce the number of trains at Pennsylvania Station by approximately 20 percent during peak travel times and as a result, commuters searching for alternative methods of transportation will crush an already overburdened subway system and clog roads and bridges.

Construction projects that will be accelerated for completion by July 8th:

Verrazano Narrows Bridge:

- **ORT Construction:** Cashless Tolling Go Live date accelerated by nearly five months, from November 30, 2017 to July 8, 2017. This will improve traffic flow by allowing customers to travel without stopping to pay a toll.
- **New Bus/HOV Lane on Upper Level:** Project completion accelerated five months, from November 2017 to week of June 19th, 2017, allowing for the opening of the Brooklyn bound BUS HOV lane. Will result in a continuous 14-mile Bus/HOV lane from Staten Island to Lower Manhattan - improving traffic flow on the Staten Island and Gowanus Expressways - providing up to 15 minutes reduction in travel time for over 30,000 daily commuters. Adding this 7th lane increases roadway capacity by 16 percent.
- **New BUS/HOV Ramp:** Completed one month early, the ramp will link the Verrazano bridge to the Gowanus Expressway with the new Bus/HOV ramp.

Queens-Midtown Tunnel:

- **Tunnel Sandy Reconstruction:** Accelerated construction of the north tube from August 31, 2017 to July 8, 2017. Motorists will experience full use of both tubes during daytime hours with suspension of daytime weekend closures starting July 8, 2017, which will significantly improve customer travel time.
- **Manhattan Downtown Exit Plaza Rehabilitation:** Completion by July 4, 2017. The entire ramp will be re-opened to operate at its full two-lane capacity for customers using the downtown Manhattan exit ramp of the QMT. One of the two ramp lanes has been closed since September 16, 2016.

Robert F. Kennedy Bridge:

- **ORT Construction:** Cashless Tolling Go Live date accelerated two and a half months, from August 31, 2017 to June 15, 2017. Improves traffic flow by allowing customers to travel without stopping to pay a toll.
- **New 125th Street Manhattan on-bound ramp to RFK Bridge:** Accelerated ramp reconstruction by six months from December 31, 2017 to June 30, 2017. Project restores full capacity of the ramp with both lanes opened, thereby improving traffic flow from Manhattan to Queens/Bronx. One of the two lanes has been closed since February 29, 2016.
- **Reconstruction of Queens to Manhattan Ramp:** Construction completion by July 8, 2017. One lane has been closed to accommodate ramp reconstruction since July 23, 2016. Restoring this ramp to its full capacity will improve traffic flow and ease congestion in this heavily traveled corridor.
- **Queens & Bronx Bound Plaza Reconstruction:** Construction completion accelerated three months, from September 2017 to June 30, 2017. Project will improve roadway alignment and traffic flow.
- **Bronx & Manhattan Toll Plaza Demolition:** Accelerated demolition of toll booths to July 8, 2017 from original September 30, 2017.

Hugh L Carey Tunnel:

- Brooklyn Plaza Reconstruction: Fast tracked completion to July 7, 2017 from original completion date of July 15, 2017. This project opens up the plaza to free-flow traffic. Restores evening contra-flow traffic by providing three outbound lanes from lower Manhattan which will ease the evening commute.