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Press Release

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[NYC Transit](#)

IMMEDIATE

### MTA Unveils New Accessible Station Lab at Jay St-MetroTech Station

#### *Living Lab Tests Over a Dozen Features – Wayfinding Apps, Braille and Tactile Maps and Floor Treatments – to Improve Accessibility Across the Subway System*

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today unveiled the first-of-its-kind Jay Street-MetroTech A C F R Accessible Station Lab in downtown Brooklyn. The new MTA living lab will test dozens of new features – new smartphone apps for wayfinding, floor treatments, braille and tactile maps, digital signage and in-station navigation – that make subway stations more accessible for riders of all abilities. The project will allow customers to test these products and services in a live station environment and provide [direct feedback](#) to New York City Transit, while allowing NYCT to evaluate the durability and performance of such features. The pilot will run through Dec. 31, 2019.

"We all know that accessibility is about much more than elevators, and the Accessible Station Lab brings that idea to life. Whether you use tactile guideways or an audio app to navigate, benefit from our new Customer Information screens that provide service information in large, clear text, or care about clean elevators, this project shows that the subway is for you," **said NYCT President Andy Byford**.

"I am particularly proud of the innovative approach that we are taking with the Accessible Station Lab pilot," **said Alex Elegudin, NYCT Senior Advisor for Systemwide Accessibility**. "Rather than try a single feature at one station and another feature elsewhere, we are giving customers the opportunity to test about a dozen new features in one station, and really envision what the accessible station of the future could look like. Many of these products or features are being tested individually in other transit systems, but we are the first to bring everything together in one station in this 'living laboratory' approach."

The Jay St.-MetroTech Accessible Station Lab will demonstrate features that can further increase accessibility for customers with mobility-related disabilities, who are blind or low-vision, deaf or hard-of-hearing, or have cognitive disabilities.

#### The features in the proof of concept include the following:

- Physical Wayfinding

- o Tactile Guideways: Blue guidance tiles with raised bars or domes throughout the main mezzanine and supporting braille signage at decision points. NYCT is testing different guideway materials including hard plastic and rubber to determine which customers prefer.

- o Tape Guideways: Three different brightly colored tape guideways on the floor to indicate accessible and transfer paths, especially helpful for those with cognitive disabilities and forms of vision loss; plus six Boarding Area floor markers.

- o Stair Warnings: 50 yellow warning strips with truncated domes at top of stairs and colored tape at bottom of stairs.

- o Touch Graphic Maps: Interactive tablet map on the main mezzanine showing station environment; plus tactile/braille line map on the R platform.

- Five New Wayfinding Apps

- o Waymap: Uses beacons at entrances, exits and around key features to guide users through station; uses audio and "smart routing" for those who are blind or low vision; available in multiple languages

- o NaviLens & NaviLens GO: More than 100 QR-style unique codes (on signage throughout station) to turn signs into audio that provide wayfinding, train arrival, and trip planning. NaviLens GO uses same codes to create virtual arrows to help translate signs and guide users.

- o AIRA: Service that connects users to trained live agents who provide digital descriptions to guide users to their destinations using smart phone camera

- o Magnus Cards: Geared toward people with cognitive disabilities, each card deck provides step-by-step visual, audio and text instructions for navigating the station, using MetroCards, train rides and transfers and reading station maps and signs

- o Click & Go Wayfinding: Large tactile station environment maps on mezzanines, dozens of pre-scripted audio routes provided via app with beacons for additional information and digital low-vision maps of routes throughout the station.

- New Customer Information Centers (CICs): Testing includes new ways to display escalator and elevator outage information to screens; information on Station Lab project.

- **ADA Pathway Signage:** 15 alternate route diagrams that map alternate routes in the event of an elevator outage; and station layout diagrams that highlight the accessible path of travel from street to platform.

The Accessible Station Lab pilot is a milestone toward delivering on the Fast Forward goal to accelerate the roll-out of accessibility features across the subway system. Those features that are deemed successful during the pilot-based both on customer feedback and operational performance will be considered for inclusion in future ADA station projects, which are funded through the Capital Plan. We will also seek opportunities to integrate these features into our existing stock of accessible stations through innovative partnerships such as work with the Transit Tech Lab.

The full list of vendors participating in the project as well as a customer feedback section is available on the MTA website: [mta.info/accessibility/stationlab](https://mta.info/accessibility/stationlab)

As this proof of concept demonstrates, accelerating accessibility is a top priority for NYC Transit. The 2020-2024 Capital Plan, recently approved by the MTA Board, includes a historic commitment of more than \$5 billion to make an additional 70 subway stations ADA accessible, ensuring customers will be no farther than two stops from an accessible station anywhere in the system. The MTA has also made it a priority to improve communication with customers on the real-time status of elevators and escalators, improve audio and visual access to information throughout the system, and explore new approaches to priority and courtesy seating on buses.

The Accessible Station Lab will be on display until the end of 2019, and the MTA invites customers and advocates to visit the station during that time and provide feedback in-person or online. Engaging customers with disabilities, community members, and advocacy organizations is a key element of the project. The members of NYCT's new Advisory Committee on Transit Accessibility (ACTA) will provide key voices in evaluating the products and services included in the pilot project.

**MTA Board Member Veronica Vanterpool said:** "As a member of the MTA board, I have fought relentlessly to improve conditions for riders with disabilities. Today's announcement is very encouraging and shows that when advocates, board members and other stakeholders come together to improve accessibility in our system, real change can happen. By empowering riders of all abilities to test different products and services, the MTA is bringing a more nimble approach to the way it tackles a longstanding challenge and I look forward to seeing this program evolve."

**NYCT Advisory Committee on Transit Accessibility Member Gian Pedulla said:** "It is so exciting to see what the MTA is doing at the Accessible Station Lab because they are using a range of high-tech and low-tech options to provide everyone equal access to information in the station. This will help make the subway a more safe, efficient, and comfortable means of transportation for blind users, and all riders with disabilities."

**United Spinal Association CEO Jim Weisman said:** "An accessible subway system needs to be accessible to all, and the range of features that the MTA is testing as part of the Lab shows Transit's dedication to this goal. The MTA's renewed focus on accessibility is promising, and this innovative project shows they are now looking to the future of accessibility in a holistic, comprehensive way. Seeing these features being tested hopefully is a path to really open up the experience of riding the subway to thousands of New Yorkers who previously couldn't. While we continue to advocate for making every station ADA accessible, I am excited to invite members of the community to test these features at the station."

**Lisa Daglian, Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee (PCAC) said:** "We are very excited about the Accessible Station Lab and the possibilities it brings to making our city's stations more accessible in more ways. Improving wayfinding will allow vision and hearing impaired New Yorkers to better navigate and use the system, much as installing elevators brings options to mobility-impaired riders. The more we can do to increase accessibility for all transit riders the better. We hope to see these features and tools replicated across the system to allow access for all riders."

**Colin Wright, Senior Advocacy Associate, TransitCenter:** "Accessible design features like those being testing at the Lab will help lifelong New Yorkers and visitors alike navigate complex subway stations. We welcome the MTA's adaptable approach to addressing barriers to station accessibility."

**Jaqi Cohen, Straphangers Campaign Coordinator:** "The Accessible Station Lab will help provide visually and hearing impaired New Yorkers with the tools they need to navigate the system and get where they need to go. We applaud the MTA for their focus on helping make the system more accessible for everyone and we look forward to seeing the results of this impactful pilot."