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Press Release

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NYC Transit

IMMEDIATE


# MTA Announces Shuttle Bus Service as Elevator Replacement Project Begins at Unique 181 St Station


*Subway Service to Station Continues to Operate in Both Directions Through Work*

*Shuttle Bus Service Provides Connectivity to Non-Transit-Customer Pedestrians Who Rely Upon Station Elevators Due to Area's Steep Topography*

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced that a shuttle bus service will complement alternate service plans during an elevator replacement project at the 181 St  station beginning this weekend for local pedestrians who use the station elevators not necessarily for accessing the subway but for more easily traversing the neighborhood's unique, steep topography.




"The MTA is committed to being good neighbors, and we recognize this community's unique and particular mobility concerns because of the very steep inclines and large hills in this area," said MTA Managing Director Veronique Hakim. "We want to get these new elevators in place and working as quickly as possible, so we will be working double shifts and providing free shuttle bus service between Broadway and Fort Washington Avenue, on Day 1 of the project."

The elevator replacement project at 181 St was announced in 2018 as part of elevator improvements at five separate "deep" stations in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan. The 181 St  station is unique among the stations because of the steep and challenging topography of the neighborhood and the neighborhood's lack of a local municipal solution to the problem, wherein local pedestrians use the station's elevators to move between streets at different elevations. Many of the elevators' users are not entering to use the subway.

At the 181 St  station, NYC Transit will install three new elevators with wider cabs with larger doors, brighter lighting, an emergency exit system and security cameras, build a new elevator shaft, renovate the machine rooms, widen the entrances, upgrade the communications system and perform water mitigation work. The construction will be completed on an expedited one-year construction timeline with 14-hour workdays. All three elevators at the station must be worked on at the same time because they share a shaft and a machine room. This necessary approach also ensures the project is completed as quickly as possible.

During the work, subway service at the station will not be affected, and customers can also take the M4 bus route, which mirrors the A subway line in this area and serves all three of the station's entrances. One entrance will be closed during the work, and the other two – including an entrance with a set of escalators – will remain open. For non-MTA customers who use the station elevators due to a lack of accessible pedestrian paths through the area's inclines, a free shuttle bus will provide service between the 181 St and 190 St A stations along Broadway and Fort Washington Avenue. This shuttle bus will be available starting Saturday, August 3, from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. NYC Transit will monitor service closely and make adjustments, if necessary, to align with ridership. The service is estimated to cost NYC Transit approximately \$685,000.

The shuttle bus service will make stops at:


- Fort Washington Avenue and Cabrini Blvd/Corbin Circle (southbound)
- 181 St  station entrance at Fort Washington Avenue and West 185<sup>th</sup> Street (both directions)
- 181 St  station entrance at Overlook Terrace and 184<sup>th</sup> Street (both directions)
- 190 St  station at Fort Washington Avenue and West 190<sup>th</sup> Street (northbound)

The elevators at the station are past their useful lives, having been in heavy continuous service without replacement for many decades. The station has endured significant water intrusion and decay, which also reduced the elevators' reliability. Many of the elevator components are nearly a century old.

During the 181 St  elevator replacement project:

- Subway service continues to be available in both directions

- The station entrance at 181<sup>st</sup> Street and Fort Washington Avenue, which is approximately three blocks from the closed elevator entrance, will remain open
- The Overlook Terrace station entrance remains open
- The station entrance for the elevators at Fort Washington Avenue and 184<sup>th</sup> Street will be closed from August 2019 to August 2020

Once this project is complete, customers and pedestrians in the area will benefit from increased reliability and availability of these elevators. More than 22,000 customers use the 181 St  station daily, more than a quarter of which rely on these elevators for egress, in addition to hundreds of non-MTA customers traversing the neighborhood. For more information on the project, visit [new.mta.info/system\\_modernization/uptownelevators](https://new.mta.info/system_modernization/uptownelevators).

**Congressman Adriano Espaillat** (District 13) said: "Thank you MTA and Chairman Foye for hearing the concerns from our community and officials and agreeing to provide this critical shuttle bus service during elevator repairs at 181st Street Subway Station. The steep landscape and large senior community in this area necessitate this service and we appreciate your understanding and willingness to respond to our needs. I look forward to continuing my work with the MTA and community leaders to ensure this is a success."

**Assembly member Carmen De La Rosa** said: "The voice of the community was heard! We are proud of our united efforts to bring shuttle bus service to 181st and 184th Street (A) train station entrances starting tomorrow. I look forward to working closely with the MTA along with my colleagues to make sure the bus services run as smoothly as possible for the Washington Heights residents. Thank you for allowing the connection between the two neighborhoods to our elderly, young families and disabled so that they may achieve their daily activities without any additional inconvenience."

**Assembly member Al Taylor** said: "I am extremely pleased that the MTA heard the concerns of the community and the elected officials and will now provide shuttle buses to our neighborhood while work is being done on the elevators at the 181st and 190th A train stations. The buses will allow for our seniors, the disabled and families to easily navigate the neighborhood. The community and electeds working together leads to victory!"

**Senator Robert Jackson** said: "I am very proud that our elected officials came together with the community to demand what our neighborhood needs. I'm thankful the MTA has met those needs, and not a moment too soon. My staff and I have fought tirelessly alongside our constituents for transit equity during the necessary elevator closures in Washington Heights. Today's announcement confirms what I have always known about our community: when we fight together, everyone wins."

**Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer** said: "The elevators at the 181<sup>st</sup> street station are vital to the lives of seniors, disabled individuals and families with small children who rely on them to connect to vital services, schools, and work. I thank the MTA for mitigating these impacts by providing a shuttle bus from Overlook Terrace to Fort Washington Avenue during the construction period. Congratulations to the seniors for their advocacy, and thank you to MTA Chair Pat Foye and NYCT President Andy Byford for their support."

**Councilman Ydanis Rodriguez, Chairman of the Transportation Committee**, said: "Thanks to the continual efforts of the local elected officials and the advocates in our community working with the MTA, we will have shuttle buses during the closure of the 181st elevators. Many community residents will especially our seniors and disabled community will greatly benefit from these shuttle buses. Our community's steep hills and rough terrain, make it difficult to walk for many of our residents, especially during the City's heat waves. Thank you to the MTA especially Chairman Patrick Foye and MTA President Andy Byford for helping us resolve this issue, proving what can be accomplished when our government entities come together."

**Manhattan Community Board 12** said: "Community Board 12, M appreciates the decision announced today by the MTA/NYCT to provide free shuttle bus service to community residents affected by the proposed yearlong elevator rehabilitation and closure of at the entrances West 184th Street and Overlook Terrace and Fort Washington Avenue. Community Board 12, Manhattan appreciates the concerns voiced from a recent large community meeting we hosted with the MTA/NYCT and the help of all our local elected officials where everyone listened to seniors, women with children and others who are seriously and usually affected during this rehab in a deep cavernous region of our district. Finally, we also appreciate any recommendation by the MTA/NYCT and agreements by the contractors to speed elevator construction where possible."