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Press Release

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[NYC Transit](#)

IMMEDIATE

### MTA Moves Forward with Signal Modernization of Eighth Avenue ACE Line

#### ***\$246M Contract Awarded to Install Communications-Based Train Control System and Other Significant Upgrades on Major Corridor Between Manhattan & Brooklyn***

#### ***NYCT to Deploy Modern Axle-Counter Technology for First Time to Replace Track Circuits & Further Improve Signal System Reliability***

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced that a \$245.8 million contract has been awarded to install a modern computer-based signaling system and a multitude of other significant upgrades on the Eighth Avenue **ACE** line, which serves hundreds of thousands of customers and connects Manhattan's West side with Brooklyn and various subway lines that interface with nearly every subway line throughout the system. The corridor includes some of the busiest station complexes and transfer points in New York City, including Columbus Circle, Times Square and the Port Authority Bus Terminal, Penn Station and West 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The project corridor serves more than 700,000 riders each weekday, however because problems in one area can affect an entire line, all users of the **ACE** lines across New York City will benefit from this work.

"A modern signaling system will help transform commutes for our millions of customers and bring our transit system into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by providing modern, reliable, safe service that can carry more riders than ever," said MTA NYC Transit President Andy Byford. "This progress in our Eighth Avenue line resignaling project is a major milestone and a sign of what's coming as we push forward to modernize the system as quickly as possible."

The MTA's new approach to "bundling" work in order to minimize disruptions to customers will be heavily employed in this project. In addition to performing a wide variety of upgrades in the contract simultaneously, the MTA's new Construction and Development Company (C&D) will accelerate and coordinate millions of dollars of additional improvement work planned for the corridor so that it happens at the same time, thereby minimizing the amount of service disruption experienced by customers.

"The new MTA is customer-centric and delivering projects better, faster and cheaper," said Chief Development Officer Janno Lieber, head of MTA C&D. "We are bundling projects in order to minimize impacts on customers and this project will be our biggest effort yet."

Modern signaling allows more trains per hour to operate, increasing passenger capacity; provide improved and more reliable service; and make more efficient use of its track and car fleet. Communications-Based Train Control (CBTC) is more flexible than the current block signaling system because CBTC continuously updates train positions, distances and travel speeds, allowing for faster and more efficient operations. Continuous updates allow the subway system to recover quickly from delays and restore consistent wait times at subway stations.

NYC Transit has successfully installed and implemented CBTC on the Canarsie **1** and Flushing **7** lines, where the new signaling system has boosted performance improvements to more than 90 percent and helped to

attract new ridership as those lines grow in reliability, capacity and performance. In November 2019, the on-time performance of the Flushing **7** line was more than 92 percent, and the on-time performance of the Canarsie **L** line was more than 95 percent. In comparison, the combined average on-time performance of the **ACE** lines was 73.5 percent.

The project also enhances safety for customers and employees alike, since NYC Transit using CBTC can program a “work zone” so trains cannot exceed a set speed, adding an extra layer of safety for workers on the tracks. The modern signaling system also provides precise real-time train arrival information that can be shared with customers on public address systems and electronic screens such as countdown clocks or data-driven mobile apps.

CBTC will be installed on local and express tracks serving the **ACE** lines from 59 St-Columbus Circle to High Street **AC** in Brooklyn. This project will connect with the CBTC project underway on the portion of the **CE** lines as part of the Queens Boulevard signal modernization project, which spans the entire Queens Boulevard Line to midtown Manhattan north of the 47-50 Sts/Rockefeller Ctr station on the **FM** Lines and south of the 50 St **CE** station. After the successful implementation of both CBTC systems on the Eighth Avenue **ACE** and Queens Boulevard **EFMR** lines, the entire length of the **E** line will use the modern signaling system, enabling NYC Transit to increase capacity on one of the most popular subway lines in the city and one of two subway lines that provides access to John F. Kennedy Airport via the JFK AirTrain at Jamaica.

The scope of this comprehensive Eighth Avenue line modernization project includes the complete installation of the new signaling system from south of the 59<sup>th</sup> Street Interlocking in Manhattan to the High St **AC** station in Brooklyn, as well as two interlockings at 30<sup>th</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> Streets in Manhattan, power supply, zone controllers, cables, fire suppression, HVAC, lighting, and construction of facilities to house infrastructure such as relays and power.

This project also represents the first time NYC Transit will use axle counters in the place of traditional track circuits, which will help reduce delays and reduce installation and maintenance costs. Axle counters, compared to track circuits, use less equipment and more resilient components than traditional track circuits, which are more susceptible to water and debris-related problems. Track repairs and replacements can also happen more quickly on tracks using axle counters rather than continuous track circuits.

The MTA awarded the contract to L.K. Comstock & Company. It includes penalties for delays and was the outcome of a procurement method called “A+B bidding,” which uses both price and impact on customers as criteria in order to be as customer-friendly as possible. As part of the contract, Siemens Mobility Inc. will provide the CBTC system and equipment. Once the contract is awarded, design work will start immediately with construction beginning as early as the end of this year.

This project represents the first corridor in the NYC subway system receiving modern signaling designed to coincide with the delivery of new CBTC-enabled train cars built from the ground up – the R211 model.

NYC Transit previously announced plans to bring CBTC to the Culver **F** line in Brooklyn, and the historic MTA 2020-2024 Capital Plan also includes \$7.1 billion to resignal six additional subway line segments, including the system’s busiest, the Lexington Avenue **456** line. By the end of the 2020-2024 program, more than 50 percent of the system’s total ridership will benefit from modernized signals and new power substations to support advanced signaling on a total of 11 lines.

In September 2019, the MTA and the Transit Innovation Partnership announced [a new collaborative effort](#) designed to leverage private sector expertise and innovation in an effort to achieve signal modernization more quickly and effectively.