



MTA Press Releases

Press Release

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[Bridges & Tunnels](#)

IMMEDIATE

'Necklace' of Environmentally Friendly Lights Coming Soon to Bronx-Whitestone Bridge

LED Lighting Project Will Reduce Energy Use, Power Costs, Number of Maintenance Closures

As we recognize Earth Day, MTA Bridges and Tunnels is wrapping up installation of new environmentally friendly LED lights at the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge, the last of the agency's four suspended spans to upgrade its "necklace" light fixtures that are part of the bridges' architectural features. Final programming for the controls of the recently installed LED lights is underway, but the view will be worth it when the lights go on permanently (see photo of recent test run).

Bridges and Tunnels began its lighting project in 2004, when it initiated a year-long pilot to test energy-efficient lighting at facilities in an MTA-wide effort to reduce energy use and costs. In 2009, the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge became the first Bridges & Tunnels span to convert to the light-emitting diode (LED) lights from the original mercury-vapor bulbs.

At the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge, workers replaced 182 main cable necklace lights with the same number of LED necklace lights. The new fixtures will use approximately 30 watts of power compared to the original 100-watt metal halide fixtures, and are expected to yield about 38,812 kilowatt hour savings annually.

The LED lights help reduce energy use and electric costs by 73 percent while shining at the same brightness and color temperature as the mercury-vapor bulbs. They also last longer, about seven years compared to two years for mercury-vapor lights. This will mean fewer maintenance-related traffic disruptions for motorists, and shorter periods of time when crews will need to climb the bridge cables for bulb changes.

"The necklace lights of the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge can be seen for miles around, and they are a scenic feature for the people who live nearby. It is important to them, and to us, that we maintain this decades-old tradition but do it efficiently," said Chris Saladino, the span's facility engineer. "This LED technology will help us save money, conserve power, decrease the amount of time our crews need to be out on the cables replacing bulbs, and still light up the East River."

Meco Electric Company Inc., of Staten Island, N.Y., is the contractor for this project, which was incorporated into a larger and complex engineering and technology effort to install an acoustic cable monitoring system at the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge. The entire project, which cost \$9.5 million, began in July 2014.

The white necklace lights are decorative features used on the Verrazano-Narrows, Robert F. Kennedy, Bronx-Whitestone and Throgs Neck Bridges. Red lights between the white necklace lights provide navigation, as do the four beacon lights (two atop each tower), which shine red as required by the Federal Aviation Administration.

MTA Bridges and Tunnels' lighting projects at its four suspension spans were done in partnership with the New York Power Authority (NYPA) through its high-efficiency lighting program (HELP). With NYPA's aid, LED fixtures were designed, tested and procured for the Verrazano-Narrows, the Robert F. Kennedy (2011) and the Throgs Neck (2012) Bridges.

Other Bridges and Tunnels efforts to reduce its carbon footprint include increasing the number of hybrid and flex-fuel vehicles in the agency's fleet and continuing efforts to reduce paper consumption and recycle items ranging from tires and anti-freeze to tons of paper, plastic and metal. Administration and facility buildings at the Hugh L. Carey Tunnel, Queens Midtown Tunnel and Verrazano-Narrows Bridge also received lighting upgrades to increase efficiency and lower energy use.

MTA Bridges and Tunnels' facilities, which connect the five boroughs of New York City, are the Robert F. Kennedy, Throgs Neck, Bronx-Whitestone, Henry Hudson, Verrazano-Narrows, Cross Bay Veterans Memorial and Marine Parkway-Gil Hodges Bridges, and the Queens Midtown and Hugh L. Carey Tunnels.

The Bronx-Whitestone Bridge opened to traffic on April 29, 1939, in time for motorists to cross it when the World's Fair in Flushing Meadows Park opened the next day in Queens.

