



September 13, 2015

Photos: NYC's Newest (And 469th) Subway Station, 34th Street-Hudson Yards, Is Open

By Jen Chung



It was a momentous day in the history of NYC subways: the first new subway station in over 25 years opened today at 34th Street and 11th Avenue. The 7 train line was extended by 1.5 miles and its Manhattan terminus is now at the 34th Street-Hudson Yards station, in a gleaming new facility that features the subway system's longest escalator and its first inclined elevator. And it only took eight years and \$2.42 billion!

Actually, it took 10 years, if you count the fact that the City Council officially approved the 7 line extension and rezoning to create Hudson Yards. There's no West Side Stadium, but there will be millions of square feet for office, retail and residential buildings. Since construction started (the contract was awarded in 2007 and a "ground freezing" process was used to break ground in 2008), we've had tantalizing looks at the progress. Mayor Bloomberg, who strongly supported the project, took the first "maiden voyage" at the twilight of his term in December 2013; back then we wrote, "The new rails, which open to the public this summer, will provide the transit options desperately needed to fulfill Bloomberg's vision for the massive Yards' development."

Clearly, the station didn't open in the summer of 2014, but it was a complicated project: the subway platforms are 10 stories underground and the station is—wait for it—climate-controlled. It's also the first "column-less" station in the NYC subway system.

But amid all the exciting milestones the project brings, the opening ceremony was dominated by strong rhetoric from the MTA's president and elected officials about how to fund the station and other future important MTA projects in the city.

MTA Chairman Thomas Prendergast, who already complained that NYC must pony up \$3.2 billion to the MTA to fill a funding gap in a statement on Friday, emphasized how this station—which was fully funded by NYC (the first in 60 years)—was the result of "working together." He also noted, "Just as the 7 train created neighborhoods like Long Island City, Sunnyside, and Jackson Heights in the 20th Century, this extension instantly creates an accessible new neighborhood right here in Manhattan. It will improve service reliability for all 7 line customers, and thanks to the foresight of Mayor Bloomberg, it is anchoring the transit-oriented, mixed-use development transforming the far West Side."

Bloomberg also got a shout-out from Mayor Bill de Blasio, "He saw an opportunity for this city, and he went at it with all he had—and it's going to be a proud part of his legacy. And, you know, you can tell that something is personal to a leader—this vision was very personal to him. In fact, when the work started, there were two huge tunnel boring machines that were necessary to make this happen. Mayor Bloomberg asked they be named after his daughters, Emma and Georgina—so it's personal... He believed, he cared, and he got it done. It was done through an extraordinary private/public partnership, and it's going to have, again, a lasting impact on this city."

However, de Blasio did get a shot towards the MTA, which is basically a shot at Governor Andrew Cuomo (who isn't very into mass transit), "I think it's very important we remember the facts. The City of New York and the people of New York are the backbone of the funding of so much of the MTA. We pay 73 percent of the MTA budget through the city government's contribution, through the fares our people pay, the tolls our people pay, the taxes our people pay. We are doing our share."

This resulted in a Twitter battle ahead of the ceremony, between mayoral spokeswoman Karen Hinton and MTA communication head Adam Lisberg:



Senator Chuck Schumer tried to play peacemaker, by pointing out that the federal government should really step up and give NYC more funding, since a third of all public transportation is in NYC and we deserve a "proportionate share." He put the onus on himself and other NYC members of Congress to get it done, and also credited former City Council Speaker Christine Quinn for getting the Far West Side rezoned. Schumer closed by saying, "The days of the Wild West Side are over. It's the West Side Renaissance [now]... And at the other end of the 7 Avenue line are the New York Mets."

State Senator Brad Hoylman and State Assemblyman Dick Gottfried also said they would fight to make sure NYC was fairly represented by Albany. Gottfried praised our "amazing, one of a kind transit system... Without it, we'd be Cleveland," while Hoylman thanked the "blood, sweat and tears" of all the construction workers who made the project a reality.

Transit Workers Union President John Samuelson was blunt, telling the audience that the workers were "proud" to maintain the station, but, "Everyone has to stop the talk and [instead] figure out where the money" is coming from. His issue: While this gleaming new station is great for Hudson Yards, there are so many stations in disrepair in working class neighborhoods that desperately need attention.

We could go on, but let's get back to the station: after the ceremonial ribbon-cuttings both at the station entrance and in front of the turnstiles, the VIPs headed to board the 7 train. Poor



Senator Schumer:



The station is huge and gleaming. Right before the turnstiles, there's a gorgeous 2788-square foot mosaic by Harlem artist Xenobia Bailey. Multiple escalators and the funicular elevators lead to the mezzanine, then wide subway stairs and more elevators lead to the spacious platform, which will be great for crowds coming to the neighborhood for the Hudson Yards—which has 4 acres of park space—or Javits Center. The first ride from the station took everyone to 42nd Street-Times Square, where the doors remained closed before the train headed back to Hudson Yards.

The public crowded outside the entrance to the Hudson Yards, awaiting the 1 p.m. opening of the station. Christian Aristizabel, 12, of Queens, had been planning this trip to the opening for the past two weeks. He was most excited about the inclined elevator: "It's my most preferred way of transportation."

But he didn't realize it would take about two minutes—it's much faster if you take the escalator and walk down.

The station is huge and gleaming. Right before the turnstiles, there's a gorgeous 2788-square foot mosaic by Harlem artist Xenobia Bailey. Multiple escalators and the funicular elevators lead to the mezzanine, then wide subway stairs and more elevators lead to the spacious platform, which will be great for crowds coming to the neighborhood for the Hudson Yards—which has 4 acres of park space—or Javits Center. The first ride from the station took everyone to 42nd Street-Times Square, where the doors remained closed before the train headed back to Hudson Yards.

The public crowded outside the entrance to the Hudson Yards, awaiting the 1 p.m. opening of the station. Christian Aristizabel, 12, of Queens, had been planning this trip

to the opening for the past two weeks. He was most excited about the inclined elevator: "It's my most preferred way of transportation."

But he didn't realize it would take about two minutes—it's much faster if you take the escalator and walk down. Here's my leisurely ride in the elevator:



[MTA's new funicular elevator](#) by [Gothamist](#)

At 1:06 p.m., the first train to Main Street departed the station. Sixteen-year-old Roberto Morales, of Corona, Queens, who was decked out in a 7 line t-shirt and had snagged a ceremonial banner, got off the train at Times Square to wait for another train to take him back to Hudson Yards so he could explore the station more. He's been interested in the subway system since age 2 and estimated he's been to 90% of the stations. "Today is a great day," he said.

Former Deputy Mayor Dan Doctoroff was also at the opening. He too received credit for making the station and 7 line extension happen—and got a big hug from Mayor de Blasio when the train returned to 34th Street. Doctoroff and Michael Meola have an op-ed in today's Daily News, calling for the second additional 7 train station, at 42nd Street and 11th Avenue, to be built.