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Immediate

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MTA BusTime Offers Real-Time Bus Location Information for B63 Customers

*Information Available Online, by Text Message and on Your Smartphone;
MTA BusTime Coming to Staten Island Next*

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced the arrival of MTA BusTime – the MTA’s real-time bus information pilot – on New York City Transit’s B63 bus route in Brooklyn. The program is the latest initiative to alert riders to the status of their commute in real time, with actual bus locations available on the web, by text message and on your Smartphone. If this pilot is successful, MTA BusTime will be expanded across the city, with every bus on Staten Island due to receive the new technology this year.

“Today, the transit system is quickly catching up with our 21st century expectation that real-time information is available on the go for all New Yorkers,” said MTA Chairman Jay H. Walder. “That means knowing if your bus is on time before you leave home, getting updates on delays while you’re out and about, and unlocking opportunities for better service across our entire network. MTA BusTime is a big part of this new vision for bus service in New York.”

MTA BusTime will take the guesswork out of waiting for next bus ride through enhanced global positioning system devices, installed on 30 buses along the B63 route, that triangulate bus locations in real time. Accessible through cell phones and other electronic devices, all bus customers have to do is text us a code that will be prominently displayed at their bus stop. They will immediately receive a return text with the real-time locations of the next several buses.

But if they've forgotten the cell phone at home, they won't have to worry. We're working with area merchants, who will soon be installing LCD signs that will display bus locations in real-time at the bus stop nearest the merchant's location. So, bus customers can pick up their newspapers while waiting for the arrival of the next bus.

Electronically-savvy customers can also use their Smartphones to snap a picture of a two-dimensional barcode we've installed at every B63 stop. A barcode-reading app, available free of charge, can then interpret this information, and take you directly to our mobile website.

The MTA BusTime website, www.MTA.info/bustime, is accessible from any computer with an Internet connection. The site presents map-based moving images representing the real-time location of every B63 bus in service. The same information will be available through Smartphones, on a simplified website we've designed specifically for mobile phone browsers.

Unlike the Manhattan cross-town pilots on the M16 and M34 routes, the B63 system was developed by the MTA in collaboration with a non-profit civic group called OpenPlans utilizing non-proprietary, open standards and software for development and deployment allowing for increased flexibility and a cost reduction approaching 70 percent, compared to the vendor pilots. This means MTA BusTime can be expanded to more bus routes more quickly.

"We are working hard to provide up-to-the minute travel information for both bus and subway customers," said NYC Transit President Thomas Prendergast. "There are few things as frustrating as having to guess when the next bus is going to show up at your stop. With MTA BusTime, next bus arrival times are right in your hand."

"With a variety of ways of accessing MTA BusTime, customers will find it extremely convenient and useful. No more looking into the distance and guessing," said Darryl Irick, Acting VP for Department of Buses and Acting President for MTA Bus.

"This project demonstrates that open, standard hardware and software can meet the needs of the biggest transit authorities and their riders at a fraction of the cost and in a fraction of the time required to deploy legacy solutions," said Nick Grossman, Director of Civic Works at OpenPlans.

MTA BusTime is the most recent MTA customer communications innovation which provides riders with the information they need. Currently, customers at more than 140 subway stations are now benefitting from next train arrival information. That number is scheduled to swell to 200 stations by the end of the year. Subway customers can also sign up for email and text alerts letting them know about service interruptions both planned and unplanned.

We have also introduced electronic signs alerting customers to the status of subway service before they pay their fares, giving them the opportunity to utilize an alternate route. Know before you go. Now, that's the way to travel.

For complete information on MTA Bus Time, customers can pick up the smart-looking green and white brochure on the B63 buses, or log onto MTA website at www.MTA.info/bustime.

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