

DAILY NEWS

October 1, 2014

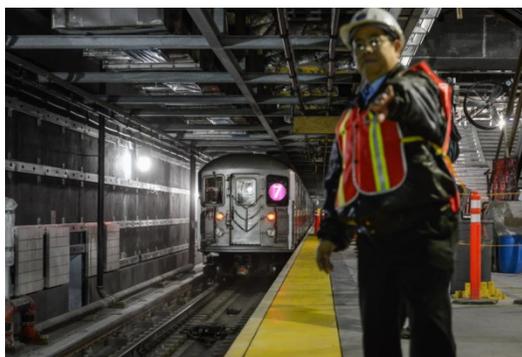
No. 7 subway line extension to West Side on track to open in February: official

EXCLUSIVE: The Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the project's general contractor have signed an agreement that includes up to \$4.75 million in incentive payments if the job is completed by Feb. 24, according to a copy of the pact obtained by the Daily News.

By Peter Donohue



The No. 7 subway line extension to the far West Side is on track to open for riders in February, a top transit official said Tuesday.



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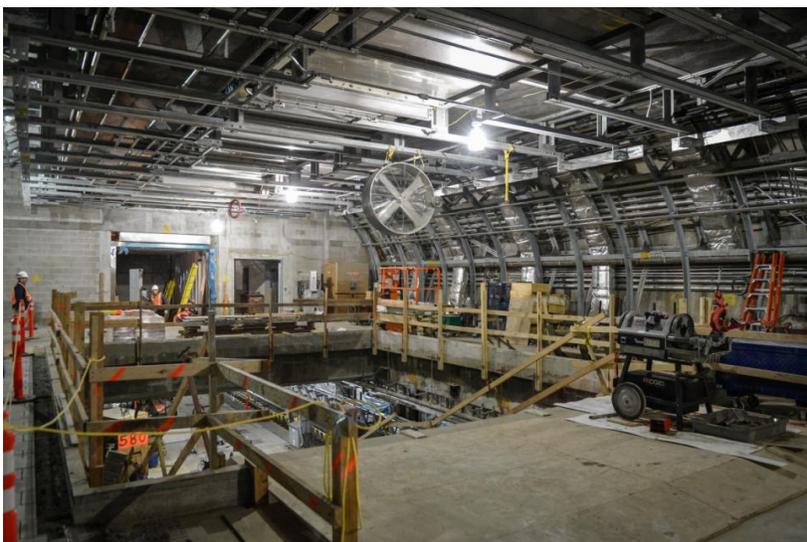
The station features two “inclination” elevators, which have glass compartments that travel along a 170-foot route at an angle of 27 degrees, and an air-cooling system, which reduces platform temperatures 10 degrees below the mercury level outside, officials said.

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The \$2.4 billion project originally was scheduled to be completed by last December. But that target was pushed back to the end of this year, and moved back again, to early 2015.

“People are going to be impressed,” said Michael Horodniceanu, MTA capital construction division president. “This is a station that’s very airy and modern. You don’t have any claustrophobic feeling. The experience is going to be dramatically different.”

The city-funded construction was part of former Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s plans to redevelop the West Side. The original schedule called for the extension to be open before he left office.



The \$2.4 billion project originally was scheduled to be completed by last December. But that target was pushed back to the end of this year, and moved back again, to early 2015. Most of the more recent delays were the result of key equipment failing during factory tests for the two inclined elevators and five ventilation fans used in the air-cooling system.

After the Italian manufacturer

identified software changes expected to solve the elevators' problems, the units were installed and will undergo final testing in the station in the coming weeks, Horodniceanu said. Three of the five exhaust systems have been installed; the other two could be in place later this month, he said.

Riders aren't surprised or particularly agitated by the project's delays, problems with the inclination elevators or not, said Gene Russianoff of the Straphangers Campaign. "Many subway riders are already inclined . . . to expect delays on big MTA projects."

The city-funded construction was part of former Mayor Michael Bloomberg's plans to redevelop the West Side. The original schedule called for the extension to be open before he left office. But the delays forced the MTA to stage a subway ride along the still-closed extension for Bloomberg during one of his final days in office.