



'Because Deadlines Matter,' Governor Promises Subway Line Proposed Nearly a Century Ago will Finally Open by New Year's

By Jose Martinez
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Governors usually keep their distance from the MTA, but Governor Cuomo has done exactly the opposite as the agency moved over the last week toward achieving an elusive goal —launching service on the Second Avenue Subway line. Transit reporter Jose Martinez filed the following report.

Upstairs on Second Avenue, work crews are racing to the meet an end-of-year deadline.

So that on New Year's Day, riders can step into three cavernous new stations that Governor Cuomo insists will change New Yorkers' often bleak subway commutes.

"A sense of space that you never felt before in a subway station," Cuomo promised at a press conference. "That claustrophobia that descended upon you when you walked into a subway station is gone."

The governor made it official — formally announcing a start date for the line — which has been in the works for nearly a century.

"We're gonna open on January One," the governor said of the long-delayed subway line. "Because deadlines matter."

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The declaration capped a lengthy — some might say choreographed — rollout.

The MTA, which is controlled by the governor, gave a series of increasingly upbeat forecasts in the last week that it would meet its year-end deadline for opening the line.

Then Cuomo led media tours of the new stations, which he likely would not have done if the deadline was in jeopardy.

Cuomo's latest victory lap came Monday at the Museum of Modern Art. He unveiled the public art placed in the first four stations on the line, billed as the state's largest public art installation in 50 years.

"This will be like a small museum underground, redefining what it means to be in the subways here in New York," said Glenn Lowry of the Museum of Modern Art.

The most notable might be "Subway Portraits" at 86th Street, by artist Chuck Close. Riders can also gaze at this tile installation by Sarah Sze at 96th Street and Vik Muniz's "Perfect Strangers" at 72nd.

Jean Shin's tribute to the old elevated lines on Second and Third avenues is beneath 63rd Street.

"I'm humbled by this opportunity," the artist said. "Because for me, working in the public space and having art for the people is such an important part of my trajectory as an artist."

"It is worth seeing just for the art," Cuomo said.

Though straphangers likely won't be hanging around for it, not when they're waiting to catch a Q train, which will make its first run out of 96th St. at noon on January 1.

After New Year's Day, trains will be running every six minutes between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. While overnight service will start Monday, January 9th.