



# Upgraded LIRR terminal arrives



BY ALFONSO A. CASTILLO  
[alfonso.castillo@newsday.com](mailto:alfonso.castillo@newsday.com)

For years, as commuters to Penn Station arrived at a state-of-the-art transit hub, those taking the Long Island Rail Road to Brooklyn were greeted with a dark and gloomy train terminal.

That's no longer the case with the completely renovated new Flatbush Avenue LIRR terminal, officially opened yesterday. The new Atlantic Terminal Pavilion is the product of more than five years of work and \$108 million — and transit officials say it shows.

"The visual impact is stunning," LIRR president Helena Williams said at a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by transit and elected officials. "It is truly a space that we can enjoy."

The terminal, which connects the LIRR to 10 subway lines, has been completely overhauled and now features a street-level entry pavilion and a glass atrium that casts natural light down to the subterranean level.

A massive art installation envelops a grand staircase, and granite tiles cover the new floors. The renovated terminal also includes a new ticket office, waiting area, restrooms, elevator, public address system and electronic signs.

"It is a place, simply put, where you would want to take a train from or to," Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz said.

The transportation hub serves 25,500 LIRR customers each day, many of whom work in lower Manhattan. The LIRR first opened its Flatbush Avenue terminal in 1907.

Williams said the project was only one step in a broader plan to improve LIRR service into and out of Brooklyn. A project to replace all the steel spans along a 1½-mile stretch of track along Atlantic Avenue is already under way, and the LIRR proposes replacing most scheduled trains into and out of Brooklyn with a more frequent shuttle service to and from Jamaica Station over the next several years.

The LIRR is also due to get a new rail yard as part of developer's plan to build a new arena for the New Jersey Nets



The new Atlantic Terminal Pavilion in Brooklyn was officially opened yesterday.

in downtown Brooklyn.

MTA chief executive and chairman Jay Walder heralded the new terminal as a "21st century transit experience" and noted it couldn't have been built without a strong capital budget.

The MTA's currently proposed \$28-billion capital budget, which would support major infrastructure projects from 2010-2014, is in limbo after being vetoed last week by a representative of Gov. David A. Paterson on the four-person board. The board must approve the spending.

"I don't think in any way we could forget the importance of keeping that capital plan going," Walder said.

While praising the new facility's looks yesterday, some commuters questioned if it was a wise investment by the MTA.

"They're always crying about how they need money, but then they spend all that money on that? I don't understand it," said Blue Mecker, 37, of Flatbush, who frequently takes the LIRR to visit his parents in Island Park. "It's very pretty, but I don't know how needed it was."

But John Litke, 64, of Huntington, was unconcerned by economics. "I appreciate it as a commuter," Litke said. "It's welcome. It's been a long time coming. ... It's a big improvement."

PHOTOS BY DAVE SANDERS

The Atlantic Terminal Pavilion is the product of more than five years of work and \$108 million.