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CITY SAYS 7-LINE STATION COULD STILL HAPPEN ... LATER ... ON SOMEONE ELSE'S DIME ... MAYBE

By Eliot Brown



There is, apparently, still hope that a second station could be built on the No. 7 subway's 1.5-mile West Side extension.

For months, the Real Estate Board of New York has been going with its hat in hand, looking for money--or at least paths to money--to build a planned station on the new line at 41st Street and 10th Avenue. The station was cut out in 2008 as costs rose for the line, and the real estate industry recently became energized in an attempt to revive it, fearing that if no action was taken now, it would be impossible to build later around moving trains.

The Bloomberg administration announced today, essentially, that it thinks it has found a way to build the station later, without shutting down the working train lines.

But there is little reason to throw up one's hands in victory. No one is offering to pay for this task of at least \$550 million--the city flatly ruled it out, as did the MTA--nor is the city even saying definitively that the idea is possible from an engineering point of view (the Bloomberg administration pledged to apply for a \$3 million federal grant to study this question).

Here's a statement from the mayor:

"We need engineers to confirm that it's viable, but we're confident we've found a way to keep the prospect of a future Tenth Avenue station alive without delaying the current extension. Our priority has always been extending the train to the Hudson Yards area to help spur major commercial and residential growth there, and we're on track to complete it by the end of 2013. The City is in no position to step in and pay for a Tenth Avenue station too, but it will be good news if we can finish the current extension without closing off the possibility of it happening in the future."

What's new today is that the city no longer believes that it is impossible to build a station at a later date. Now the task is to somehow find the \$550 million-plus, presumably from the federal government (although the project would likely need an expensive and costly environmental impact statement to do this). And, to date, the Congressional delegation has not jumped up in the air supporting the project.

REBNY, the driving force behind the city's second look at the station, issued a statement praising the plan.

"The Mayor's decision to apply for these funds is an important step to keep open the option for a station at West 41st Street in the future," said Mary Ann Tighe, chair of REBNY. "We recognize that funding for the full project is a goal we will need to work on collaboratively in the months ahead."