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MANHATTAN'S HIGHEST DAILY CIRCULATION NEWSPAPER



DOWNTOWN REBIRTH

Lower Manhattan hotel industry thrives as
commerce, real estate, tourism take center stage

PLUS Your first look
at the new PATH hub

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It induces awe.

— Jessica Lappin, director
of Alliance for Downtown New York

A HUB IS BORN

Sparkling new PATH platform
opens at WTC station today

BY DAN RIVOLI
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any corners — all cured and sleek. It is well lit and bright, in stark contrast to the city subway system's dank stations nearby.

The Oculus alone contains 12,500 tons of steel.

The opening marks the second of four permanent PATH platforms slated for the transportation hub.

At Platform A for the Hoboken PATH, which has been open for over a year, Sidney Lester, an attorney from New Milford, New Jersey, said he was a fan of the white marble station.

"The ingress and egress has been horrible," he said. "I'm glad to see what's happening."

"As far as the design, I think it's beautiful," he added.

Commuter Alex Wulwick of River Edge, New Jersey, praised the design.

"It's not my style of architecture. It's stark and soulless. I wouldn't have chosen the white marble," he said, pointing out that it is constantly swept.

Still, he said it's better than the temporary station he had used.

Veronica Vanterpool, director of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign said the WTC hub has gotten bad publicity for being \$2 billion over budget and overdue. "It's just an unfortunate example of the growing cost and delays associated with some of the big mega projects in our region," she said.

New Jersey commuters today will get to grace the newest PATH platform to open in the World Trade Center transportation hub designed by architect Santiago Calatrava.

Yesterday, crews were still adding coats of white paint and Windexing glass to get the platform ready for 50,000 daily riders.

At the center is the Oculus, which from the outside looks like the spine peeled out of a fish. Below, with half of the glass installed, light shines through its ribs, the longest one reaching 202 feet in the sky.

"It's awesome and I mean that in the actual sense of the word 'awesome.' It induces awe," said Jessica Lappin, director of the Alliance for Downtown New York.

PATH riders can get a view of the Oculus in the coming weeks when the temporary PATH station that went up after the 9/11 attacks gets dismantled.

The platform is the third part of the Port Authority's WTC hub that sprawls beneath the 16-acre site where the Twin Towers once stood.

It has earned the reputation of the world's most expensive train station, over budget at \$3.9 billion.

For that price tag, transit riders and visitors get a facility, decked out in white marble that is spacious, without

Commuters walk
the hub's Oculus.



The Oculus, which contains 10 tracks for the PATH train, will open to the public today.



The Port Authority estimates that 50,000 commuters will traverse through the hub per day.

Tourism, real estate, biz thriving downtown

BY IVAN PEREIRA
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The new World Trade Center, preparing for its huge opening, will anchor a lower Manhattan that's booming and has plenty of room for visitors.

The Alliance for Downtown New York's quarterly report found the area south of City Hall made huge gains with hundreds of new businesses, shops and residents moving in and providing a huge economic boon.

The tourism sector is particularly strong, having seen 12.4 million visitors in 2014, a 30% jump from the year before according to Jessica Lappin, the BID's president.

"The beauty of having someone stay downtown is they have more opportunity to explore and get a local experience. That's what tourists are craving," she said.

Catherine McVay Hughes, the chair of Community Board 1, which covers lower Manhattan, pointed to an increased diversity in the business climate, as the area has continued its shift away from

being exclusively focused on the financial industry.

Restaurants and bars now cater to crowds later at night and offer all sorts of menus.

"Everybody comes down for a different reason and ... there is something for everybody," she said.

That surge in visitors has helped to energize the local hotel industry. There are 5,100 rooms in 22 hotels throughout the neighborhood, a 25% jump from 2014, according to the report.

Vacancies in lower Manhattan outpace the rest of the borough because of a plethora of new hotels, Lappin said.

Seven more hotels are slated to open this year, which will add 1,300 new rooms.

Lappin said that those new rooms come at an ideal time because the city expects 3 million people to check out the World Trade Center's observatory annually.

"It's not every day you add an attraction like that," she said. "With things people wanted to see forever, you have the old and the new, which is a great symbolism for this neighborhood."

See photos of
the platform at
amny.com/transit

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