

MTA Offered to Help Repair NYC Subway Tunnels After Terror Attack

By GARY WOSK

(Oct. 19, 2001) Not long after terrorists destroyed the World Trade Center, Sept. 11, the MTA offered to lend New York City Transit the agency's expertise in repairing a mile of subway system that was severely damaged by collapsed buildings.



Charles Stark

On Sept. 13, the chief engineer for NYC Transit, Mysore Nagaraja, received a cell phone call from Charles Stark, MTA executive officer, Engineering and Construction, who

oversaw much of the Metro Red Line construction project.

"At that point in time he wasn't even sure exactly sure what the damage was," recalled Stark, a native New Yorker. "I called him to offer any and all assistance that we could provide in terms of engineering or construction management to help them get subway lines 1 and 9 back in service. He really appreciated the contact."

Nagaraja would soon get an up-close look at the enormous repair job that lay ahead.

"Since my initial phone call with him, they've been able to go down and walk the tunnels and find out that the damage is pretty extensive," says Stark. "They have steel beams and debris that actually came through the street and punctured the tunnels and even filled one of the stations."

Tunnels partially collapsed

Other portions of the stations and tunnels have partially collapsed from the weight and one segment, in excess of 1,000 feet, is completely collapsed.

It will take approximately two years to repair the three stations – one situated underneath the World Trade Center – and up to six months to offer service again on the subway

Click image to view

Images of NYC
Cortlandt/WTC Station
Courtesy of NYC Transit



lines which run from the Bronx to the southern-most tip of Manhattan, says New York City Transit spokesperson Deirdre Parker.

Ridership on the subway, a 656-mile system used by 4.8 million daily boarding passengers, has returned to 97 percent of normal.

"One of the things that's going to impede the work is that they have decided to fill some of the collapsed portions of the tunnel with slurry concrete in order to stabilize and allow the street above to reopen to pedestrian and automobile traffic," says Stark. "Later on, they will have to rebuild the street and remove the debris from the tunnel."

Limited space will also hinder the pace of the reconstruction.

"Working in Manhattan is extremely constrictive," he adds. "The streets will be closed and contractors will be working in very close quarters. It's going to be tough."

So far, it does not appear as if NYC Transit will need the MTA's help.

"It looks like it's going to be a more paced-out process, which means there's less need for outside personnel than if it were a 'let's get it back in service situation,'" says Stark. "They have realized now that it's not going to be a quick fix. Extensive engineering work must be done before they can begin to remove the debris and repair the tunnels and stations."

[Back to MTA Report](#)