

The long-awaited connection of the 63d Street subway line in Manhattan to the Queens Boulevard lines is fast becoming a reality. CIB members and guests observed the progress for themselves during a field trip to MTA NYC Transit's Northern Boulevard offices and the nearby construction site. Because of great interest and the need to limit the number of people on the site, a second trip on April 29 was added to the original April 15 visit.

When completed in August 2001, the project will relieve passenger congestion on the E and F lines by extending the Q line into Queens via 63d Street. The connector joins the previously-constructed 63d Street line to the G and R local trains as well as the E and F express trains, and contains two Long Island Railroad tracks.

The trip was led by Joseph Siano, P.E., Program Manager, and Richard L. Mitchell, P.E., Technical Director of Capital Program Management/New

Routes Division. Reviewing the project's history, Mr. Siano noted that all work is now under-way under three construction contracts let in June 1993, March 1995 and March 1996 after MTA approval to proceed in 1990.

Like any project of this size and scope, the connector presented its challenging moments and its interesting vignettes. Mr. Mitchell, who has been with the project since its inception in 1963, described how swift currents in the East River complicated the placement of preconstructed boxes which comprised the under-river sections of the tunnel.

To accommodate public concerns on Manhattan's upper East Side, the TA built an elevator in the street to take trucks down to get construction spoils. The use of dynamite in New York City brings with it a \$5,000 per day fee as well as a requirement that all left

over dynamite must be taken out of the city limits at the end of the day, every day.

After negotiating a serpentine metal staircase and wooden ladders, the group was treated to the surreal world of construction deep underground. Utilities to be relocated were exposed to view, a massive slurry wall was on display, and jet grouting operations were underway.

Perhaps most remarkable was the presence of active E and F trains running at eye level some six feet from the group. (A protective barrier was, of course, in place.)

A massive concrete fan room, without ventilation equipment, was one of the last stops before the group emerged (via a conventional staircase) some 200 feet from where they entered.

This fascinating trip generated renewed respect for heavy

civil design and construction, even among those who are accustomed to its many complexities. ■



Posted on the wall in the NYCTA conference room:

If we are serious about creating a working environment of mutual trust and respect, we all must hold ourselves to a higher standard and avoid needless adversarial proceedings which only serve to engender animosity, waste precious time and resources and interfere with successful and timely completion of an important public project. - Mysore Nagaraga