

Sneak Peek for Commuters

Cable show to offer drivers live a.m. traffic updates

By Pete Bowles
STAFF WRITER

Motorists will be able to preview their routes into Manhattan on live television under a new program announced by city officials Friday.

The officials also disclosed that 59th Street had flunked out of the city's much-heralded "Thru Streets" program — an initiative introduced Oct. 15 to improve the traffic flow in midtown Manhattan.

On the television front, Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced that 22 real-time traffic cameras on Monday will begin televising traffic patterns on heavily used roadways into Manhattan and across the five boroughs.

The "Morning Drive Live" transmissions will be aired between 6:30 a.m. and 9 a.m. weekdays on Crosswalks

NYC Channel 74 — a cable network launched by the city in 1992 to improve government services.

The network is available to 1.8 million households on Time Warner Cable and Cablevision.

Before they leave home, drivers will be able to tune in to live screenings to make a choice on which route is best for them, said Transportation Commissioner Iris Weinshall.

"For example," she said, "a Queens commuter might choose the Queens Midtown Tunnel over the Queensboro Bridge, or vice versa, depending upon driving conditions that they will see on television that particular morning."

The program also will include weekly and monthly travel advisories.

Turning to the special "Thru Streets" program, Bloomberg and Weinshall said the plan has been successful on nine of 10 designated cross streets where no turns are permitted between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. weekdays.

But they said that because of construction problems, 59th Street had proved unworkable and will be dropped from the program on Monday.

In addition, motorists now will be allowed to make turns off the streets onto Park Avenue.

Under the revised program, turns will continue to be barred between Third and Sixth avenues — except onto Park Avenue — between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. on weekdays on 36th, 37th, 45th, 46th, 49th, 50th, 53rd, 54th and 60th streets.

In anticipation of the holiday season, officials designated 10 "gridlock alert" days — Nov. 22 and 27, Dec. 4 (lighting of the Rockefeller Center tree), and Dec. 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19 and 20.

A "gridlock alert" day is when the Transportation Department expects at least an 8 percent increase in vehicular traffic.

How to Beat the Streets

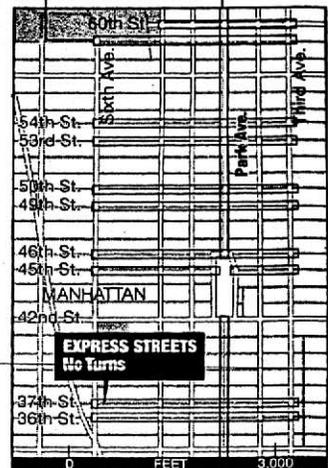
Three new traffic plans

THRU STREET CHANGES

The city has made two changes to the Thru Streets program, which bans turns from designated streets 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays.

59th Street removed from program

Turns allowed onto Park Avenue



TELEVISED TRAFFIC

Starting Monday, Crosswalks NYC Channel 74 will feature shots from 22 real-time traffic cameras weekdays from 6:30-9 a.m.

HOLIDAY TRAFFIC PLANS

The city has designated 10 "gridlock alert" days, during which people are urged to take mass transit: Nov. 22, 27 and Dec. 4, 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20.

Single-occupancy vehicle restrictions on lower Manhattan crossings will be lifted Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day, as will the high-occupancy vehicle restriction on the Gowanus Expressway.



Photo by Robert Macas

City officials will eliminate 59th Street, seen here at its intersection with Fifth Avenue, from a plan to prevent congestion in midtown.

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