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City to launch 'must-see' TV on Monday

Real-time cameras will help Islanders plan for their morning commute

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Beginning on Monday, those brave or foolhardy souls who drive into Manhattan during rush hour will have a new tool to help them pick the easiest route: A television show all about traffic.

The city has installed 22 real-time TV cameras at bridges, tunnels and expressways in all five boroughs, and will air live pictures on the city's Crosswalks Channel 74 from 6:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. each day.

Drivers with five minutes to spare before they rush out the door will see the screen flashing through all 22 trouble spots.

The Web-savvy can also see pictures at www.nyc.gov/calldot or at www.silive.com, a similar service offered by the Staten Island Advance.

Dubbed "Morning Drive Live," the TV show will feature still shots showing both directions of traffic at two Staten Island locations, updated every five minutes on TV and five seconds on the Web:

- Staten Island Expressway at Richmond Avenue
- West Shore Expressway at Victory Boulevard

There's no camera yet showing the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. But the city is planning to add a camera soon at the Staten Island Expressway and Clove Road, which will show the bridge, said Commissioner Iris Weinshall of the Department of Transportation. Also, a camera will eventually be added at the Outerbridge Crossing at Tyrellan Avenue.

Other shots available starting Monday include the Gowanus Expressway at the Prospect Expressway and Hamilton Parkway, the Brooklyn Queens Expressway at Sackett Street, and the Brooklyn Bridge at Centre Street. There's no camera showing the Manhattan Bridge, which is undergoing renovation, or the Williamsburg Bridge.

"We hope to eventually be able to expand," said DOT spokesman Thomas Cocola.

The city also announced its yearly holiday ban on construction of sidewalks and roads. Starting Monday, the Department of Transportation will issue no new permits for construction projects that interfere with the heavy holiday traffic. The ban will last until Jan. 2.

Meanwhile, the Single Occupancy Vehicle restrictions will stay in place for the "foreseeable future" at the East River bridges, Brooklyn Battery Tunnel and Lincoln Tunnel, Bloomberg said yesterday. The ban on vehicles with a single occupant lasts from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m.

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