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At long last, revamped GWB Bus Station set to open

Bus operations begin Tuesday, and the retail portion of the terminal is slated to open at a later date.

By Nikki M. Mascali

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Looking out onto Fort Washington from inside the revamped GWBBS. (Nikki M. Mascali)



Just inside the Fort Washington entrance of the GWBBS. (Nikki M. Mascali)



view of the new bus pavilion at the GWBBS. (Nikki M. Mascali)



The view of the exterior of the terminal, as seen from where riders caught buses during construction. (Nikki M. Mascali)



The new escalators to take riders to the upper level, where they can buy tickets and board.
(Nikki M. Mascali)



A view of the new bus pavilion at the GWBBS. (Nikki M. Mascali)

It looks like the long wait — and outdoor stair climbing — may be over for the thousands of commuters who come through the George Washington Bridge Bus Station on a daily basis.

Since 2014, the main concourse of the GWBBS has been closed while renovations were made to the terminal, but come Tuesday morning, a whole new experience for travelers is set to be unveiled, one that includes new

escalators and elevators, an indoor waiting area and, for the first time, a roof over where passengers board and exit buses.

“I’m looking forward [to the new terminal]. It’s very exciting,” said Karen Koppel, who grew up in the neighborhood and was heading to Nyack, New York. “I think the old terminal was horrible.”

Stan, who declined to give his last name and travels between New York and New Jersey several times a month, agreed.

“I am happy I’ll have cover over where I catch my bus, especially in winter,” he said. “I’ll be glad to see the escalators working because those steps got a bit rough.”

The GWBBS is managed by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) and is home to New Jersey Transit and carriers such as Express/Spanish Transportation, Ameribus/Saddle River and Rockland Coach/Red & Tan. The original station was built in 1963 and designed by Italian engineer Pier Luigi Nervi over a busy network of highways that feeds from the George Washington Bridge, the world’s busiest bridge.

While bus operations are set to move into their new home at the GWBBS, many tenants of the new 120,000 feet of retail space that was part of the redesign are expected to move in at a later date. The same goes for the tunnel between the bus station and the A-train station at 175th Street.

“I’m thrilled the bus station is finally ready to open, but I’m concerned smaller, neighborhood-based tenants have been put at a disadvantage by the delays and don’t have enough support,” Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer said. “Support for the smaller local businesses, who still need their

move-in dates, and local hiring for jobs in the bus station need to be priorities in the coming days.”

Douglas Slayton, director of leasing and tenant coordination for the GWBBS Development Venture and Stephen McBride, a member of the GWBBS development team, told Metro via email late Monday night that "the retail area of the terminal will open gradually, according to each store owner/lease holder's store construction plans. ... Store construction plans are independent from the station's developer and are based on each reatailer's needs, budget and the store-builder of choice."

Slayton and McBride added that there are 24 retail spaces at the GWBBS, but just Marshall's and Spectrum have built out their stores so far. GAP has begun construction, while work to build Blink Fitness is set to begin soon.

The reconstruction has been plagued with delays — to the point where the Port Authority has “to date collected \$1.5 million from the private developer, the GWBBS Development Venture” in fines for the hold up, as a PANYNJ spokesman said on Monday.>

"It is over now," Slayton and McBride said of the fines.

The terminal is slated to relocate its bus operations to its third-floor pavilion starting at 5 a.m. on Tuesday. Passengers can enter the facility on Fort Washington Avenue and take the stairs, escalator or elevator to the pavilion. There will be express elevators at the Broadway entrance as well. On the same level as the bus pavilion will be an indoor waiting area with 125 seats, ticket booths, public restrooms and interactive passenger information kiosks.