

DAILY NEWS

Bright idea! Street signs light way

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The signs they are a changin'. The usual drab, rectangular green street signs in midtown are being replaced by eye-catching blue signs that pay homage to the past while using technology of the present.

The upgrade, the work of the 34th St. Partnership, is taking place in a region bordered roughly by 10th and Park Aves., and 31st and 36th Sts.

You can hardly miss them: They're illuminated by brighter and long-lasting bulbs called light emitting diodes.

And in a throwback to earlier city signs, these new signs offer the range of numbered street addresses on an individual block — so pedestrians and drivers don't

"They all get their impressions of New York partly through us," Biederman said.

All 179 signs in the program are up, and most are equipped with the lighting. The remaining 80 or so should be lit by Jan. 25.

But they don't come cheap. The partnership had trouble with earlier designs and each sign costs \$1,000 — so don't expect the city Transportation Department, which had to approve the signs, to put them up all over the city.

But other business improvement districts have taken note.

"We think it's attractive," said Andrew Flamm, executive director of the Lower East Side Business Improvement District. "It's not on our immediate radar screen but we are eager to see



MATTHEW ROBERTS

New street signs are powered by LEDs and list range of addresses.

have to guess where say, 350 W. 33rd St. is (between Eighth and Ninth Aves.).

"We're going back to some of the good ideas the city had earlier on," said Dan Biederman, executive director of the 34th St. Partnership.

Improving the streetscape enhances a neighborhood's image, and business potential, Biederman said, especially in high-traffic areas that attract tourists and business travelers.

the response the folks on 34th St. get and have been impressed so far with the design."

The Grand Central Partnership has been researching possible illuminated street signs for years, Dave Roskin, director of public affairs said.

"We are hoping to come up with a prototype that meets our standards and is economically feasible."

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority, in conjunction with an advertising management company, is placing LED billboards above entrances to scores of subway stations. The DOT has installed brighter walk/don't walk signs using international symbols across the city using the same technology.