QueensLink

Corridor Analysis

Executive Summary

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Prepared by

TEMS

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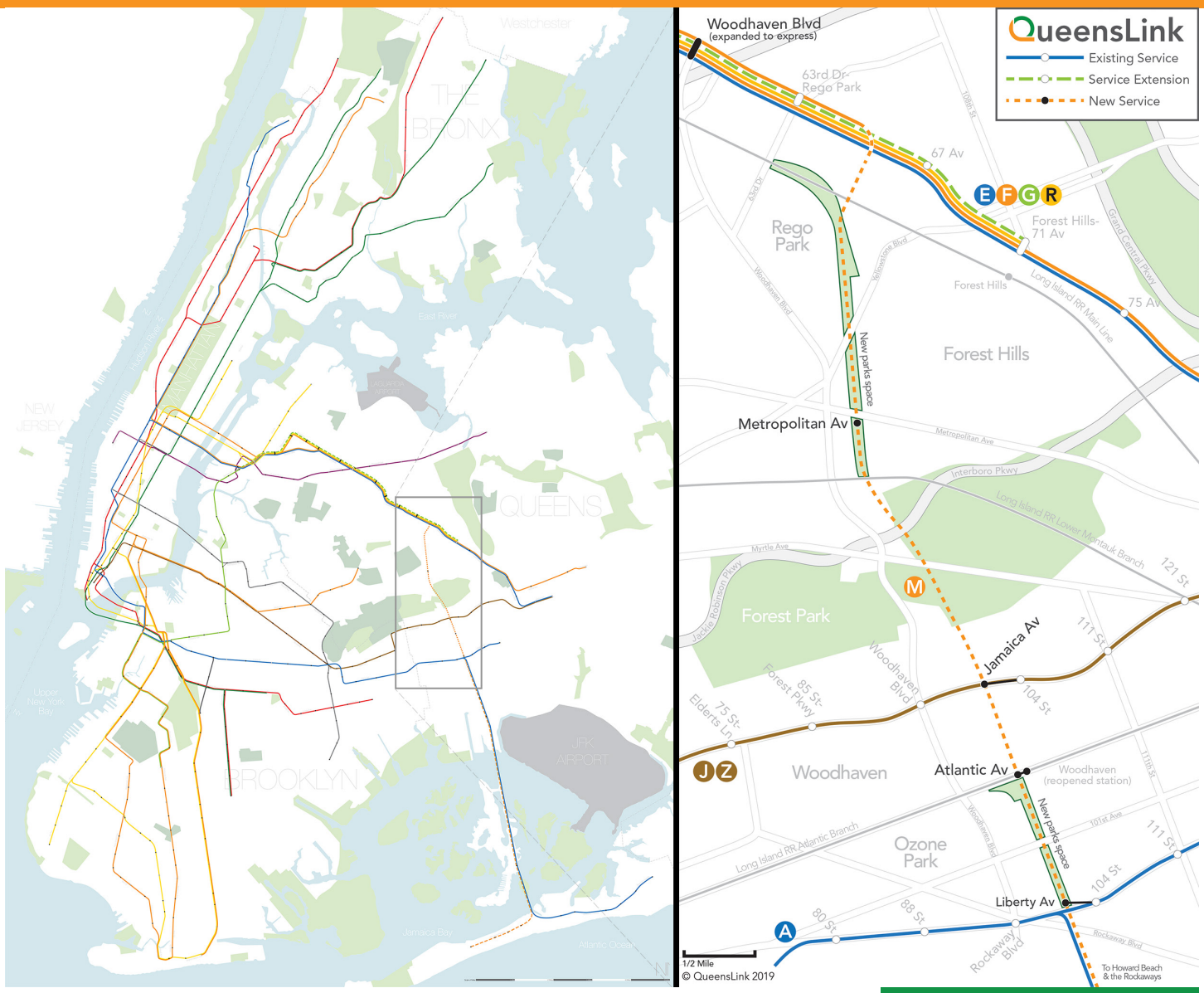
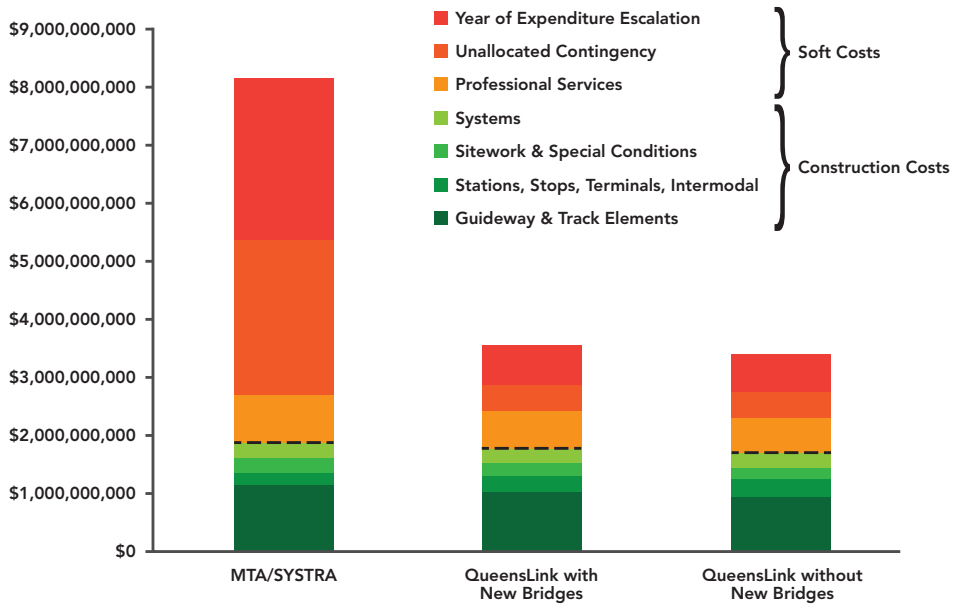
QUEENSRAIL



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This preliminary study is of a disused segment of the former Rockaway Beach Branch of the Long Island Railroad that has been lying idle since 1962. The proposal is to bring the segment, now named **QueensLink** back into service as part of a subway and trail project.

The **QueensLink** is one of very few north south lines in Queens, as most rail lines run east-west to Manhattan and the suburbs of Long Island. As such, the **QueensLink** corridor can play a critical role in improving movement, accessibility and efficiency of travel within Queens, by providing much needed integration of Queens communities, by connecting the existing east-west NYCTA and LIRR commuter lines to provide access across the city.



The preliminary analysis found that:

Previous studies showed that the project was feasible but greatly overstated the cost of the project by **inflating the cost** of the project from $1.8 Billion to $8.1 Billion.

It did this, by adding "Unallocated Contingencies" over and above normal contingencies and expressing the capital cost in estimated "Year of Expenditure dollars" rather than the "real" dollars that are typically used for feasibility studies (e.g., USDOT submissions).

The former study used costs based on 2030 dollars after inflation was factored rather than present dollars. The four-fold increasing of costs made the project seem ultra expensive.

Although the basic engineering costs developed by SYSTRA appear to be reasonably solid on an overall basis, the escalation and contingency factors they applied to develop the $8.1 Billion estimate are out of line with industry standards, exceed the levels recommended by USDOT FTA guidance and would not likely be accepted by FTA.

This review suggests that the capital costs for the QueensLink project are likely to be in the **$1.8 Billion** range, and cost **$641 million per mile**. Professional services and an unallocated contingency would raise costs to **$3.4 - $3.7 Billion.**

Benchmarking of the project against similar projects in Maryland (Purple Line) and New Jersey (Hudson-Bergen) suggest that the project would result in the following economic benefits to the community over the life of the project:

Employment: 100,000 – 150,000 annual jobs.
This work will be across all sectors of the economy.

Income: $9 Billion to $13 Billion increase per year.
This increase is due to the greater level of employment in the economy.

Property Development: $50 Billion to $75 Billion.
This is due to the greater value of property in and around the stations, where the QueensLink intersects with NYCTA and LIRR rail lines, and the redevelopment of key market locations at and around these stations because of their greater accessibility generated by the development of QueensLink. A large portion of this development will occur in the first 5 to 10 years after the opening of the QueensLink.

While the Cost Benefit Analysis has not yet been completed for the QueensLink corridor it will undoubtedly generate a wide range of demand-side benefits. These include:

Travel time savings in moving around Queens, and in accessing jobs and travel to Manhattan, Queens and JFK. Travel time from Howard Beach, Queens to 34th St in Manhattan will be reduced from over an hour to 45 min.

Reduced emissions (such as CO2, and particulate matter) from reduced auto use given the availability of foot, transit and bicycle connections provided by QueensLink.

Reduced accidents and improved safety savings due to reduced auto use on local roads and regional arterial highways.

Reduced auto congestion costs and time.

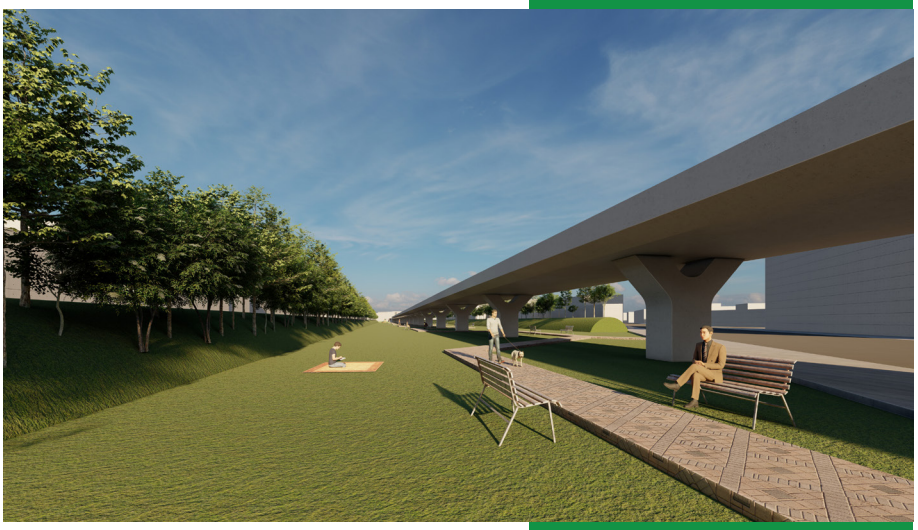
Short-term **construction jobs** in addition to **long-term productivity jobs.**

Up to
150,000
more jobs

$13 billion
increased
income

$75 billion
increased
property value

125 hours
(5 full days)
saved a year



Top Left: Potential park integration below new viaduct at Fleet St.

Top Right: Potential park integration below new viaduct at Yellowstone Blvd.

Bottom: Potential park integration below new viaduct at 103 Ave.

Finally, the integration of new park space within the QueensLink rail project will create a new leisure and business corridor that will provide real benefits to the community along the corridor. This will include:

A leisure corridor connecting the existing park land of Queens that can be used by citizens for walking, bicycling, and recreational sports (such as baseball, soccer, etc.) to a much greater degree due to the improved accessibility to the facilities.

A transportation corridor ensuring effective access to QueensLink's stations by bicycle and pedestrians.

This can be achieved by utilizing the existing right-of-way land which is not needed for transportation purposes. Up to 33 acres of new park space could be added depending on how the right-of-way is restored.

In areas where the right-of-way is widest, parks could be added alongside the existing tracks or below a new viaduct (which would replace the existing earth berm and viaduct).

Sections in the northern end where the QueensLink would have to transition to subway could have parks on top of the tunnel.

Final park locations, designs and costs will be determined after further analysis of construction methods and community input.