



Transit, Economic and Environmental Justice

August 4, 2022

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

The Honorable Eric Adams
Mayor of the City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Governor Hochul & Mayor Adams,

We, the undersigned lawmakers, write in support of conducting an Environmental Impact Study for QueensLink. This proposed extension of the NYC Subway M Train from Rego Park to the Rockaways would run along a city-owned, 3.5-mile right-of-way that the LIRR Rockaway Beach Branch once used. The QueensLink is to South and Central Queens what the IBX is proposed to be for Brooklyn and Western Queens. Both projects would reuse existing rail assets to improve mass transit for neighborhoods that desperately need it, while simultaneously reducing carbon emissions.

Some of the many potential benefits of the QueensLink include:

- **New transit connections** that reduce commuting time by up to an hour a day, allowing for faster access to education, employment, and recreation opportunities.
- **Reduced traffic** on Woodhaven Blvd. and the Van Wyck Expressway, curtailing greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants.
- **Transit equity** for the underserved communities of Glendale, Woodhaven, Richmond Hill, Howard Beach, Broad Channel, and the Rockaways. The latter endure some of the longest commuting times in the country.
- **Faster, car-free access to ResortsWorld Casino/Aqueduct Racetrack, JFK Airport, and Queens' Beaches** from Midtown Manhattan and other parts of Queens.
- **A boost to business districts** along Metropolitan Ave., Jamaica Ave., 101st Ave., Atlantic Ave., Liberty Ave., Cross Bay Blvd., Queens Blvd., and in the Rockaways.
- **Returning the G train to Forest Hills** once capacity is increased along the Queens Boulevard Line (QBL). Increasing capacity along the QBL will be possible when the M is diverted south at Rego Park, instead of ending at Forest Hills.
- **Faster, more reliable travel** between Queens neighborhoods via one-train access.
- **Up to 33 acres of space for parks, trails or newly created farmer's markets** alongside and underneath the tracks.

In 2019, the MTA released its Rockaway Beach Branch Sketch Assessment. This study determined that subway reactivation is feasible and estimated it would serve nearly 50,000 riders a day. This approximation does not include the millions of travelers who could utilize QueensLink for access to

QueensLink

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attractions in south Queens, such as Resorts World or the Rockaways, or for shopping at the malls along Queens Boulevard. As described in the title, the MTA’s report is only a “sketch,” and many of the assumptions require further study. While the MTA estimated the project would cost \$8 billion, an independent transportation consultant (TEMS) determined it would cost far less – about \$3.5 billion.

QueensLink is an investment that could pay for itself in economic return in less than a decade while serving New York City for generations. An EIS would provide greater detail on QueensLink’s potential economic and environmental impact, as well as provide solutions to preserve the quality of life for people and businesses along the right-of-way. With the new federal infrastructure bill dedicating \$10 billion for transportation projects in NYS, we want to move as fast as possible to understand how best to allocate these funds.

An EIS for QueensLink will put it on a similar track to the IBX, another study-worthy initiative. Both projects are currently part of the [MTA 2025-2044 20-Year Needs Analysis](#) that will inform their 2025 – 2029 Capital Plan.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the elected officials and community boards who have affixed their signatures on the following pages.



Rick Horan

Executive Director

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ATTACHMENTS:



[Rockaway Beach Branch Sketch Assessment](#)
[MTA – SYSTRA Engineering](#)
[September, 2018, Released October 2019](#)



[QueensLink Corridor Analysis](#)
[Transportation Economics and Management Systems, Inc. \(TEMS\)](#)
[June 2021](#)

United States Congress, 5th District

[Gregory Meeks](#)

Note: House ethics rules required a separate letter from the Congressman

New York State Senate, District 10



James Sanders, Jr.

New York State Senate, District 13



Jessica Ramos

New York State Senate, District 15



Joseph Addabbo, Jr.

New York State Assembly, District 23



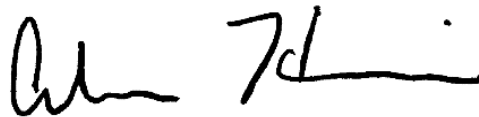
Stacey Pheffer Amato

New York State Assembly, District 24



David Weprin

New York State Assembly, District 28



Andrew Hevesi

New York State Assembly, District 31



Khaleel Anderson

New York State Assembly, District 34



Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas

New York State Assembly, District 38



Jenifer Rajkumar

Queens Borough President



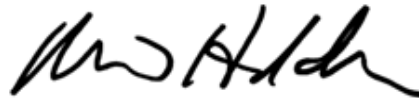
Donovan Richards

New York City Council, District 27



Nantasha Williams

New York City Council, District 30



Robert Holden

New York City Council, District 31

Majority Whip and Chair of Transportation and Infrastructure Committee



Selvena Brooks-Powers

New York City Council, District 32



Joann Ariola

Community Board 6



Heather Dimitriadis, Chairperson, Frank Gulluscio, District Manager

Community Board 14



Delores Orr, Chairperson

QueensLink is a 3.5-mile subway connection that links the A line to the Rockaways in the south to the M line on Queens Blvd. in the north. It also provides for up to 33 of the 47-acre right-of-way for use by parks and trails or whatever the local community deems most important. Learn more at www.QueensLink.org

The QueensLink Team: Miriam Bensman, Rick Horan, Jonathan Lazo, Andrew Lynch, Joe Page, Mike Scala, Paul Trust

QueensRail Corporation is a 501(c) 3 Not-for-Profit organized in 2015 to advocate for QueensLink