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**TRANSIT EQUITY DEMANDS A QUEENSLINK ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)
SAY OFFICIALS TO GOVERNOR HOCHUL AND MAYOR ADAMS**

AUGUST 4, 2022: Seventeen (17) city, state and federal lawmakers and community boards are requesting that New York State Governor Hochul and New York City Mayor Adams provide funding for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to take a detailed look at restoring north-south rail service to transit-starved Queens.

[\[Transit Equity - QueensLink EIS\]](#)

The accompanying letter to the Governor and Mayor bears the signatures of Queens leaders who believe that fair, clean and equitable public transportation is vitally important to the health and welfare of the city and its residents. They agree that an EIS is needed to obtain a complete understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented by reusing a city-owned right-of-way to extend subway service south from Rego Park to the Rockaways. The project would combine clean, efficient and quiet rapid transit with community parks and other amenities, where possible. A comprehensive EIS with active community engagement will help define how we can achieve transit equity, environmental justice and additional public space.

The proposal, dubbed the QueensLink, would run along the former Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way, which was abandoned 60 years ago. Since then, an ever-increasing number of Queens residents have endured terrible traffic and long bus rides to get to work, school, or shop. Everyone benefits from better public transportation, but especially economically challenged areas like South Queens, which suffer some of the worst commutes in the nation.

“Transportation equity is a major issue in our city that must be confronted,” said City Council Member Selvena Brooks-Powers, “I have begun working on it as the new chair of the City Council's Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. It requires addressing the needs of neighborhoods that have suffered from divestment, long commutes, often in two-fare zones, and a lack of transit access. A comprehensive EIS for QueensLink will provide the information needed to achieve transit equity and be sensitive to the quality of life concerns of our neighbors along the right-of-way,” she concluded.

“In the New York region, the average Black resident can access about 45% fewer jobs in a 45-minute transit trip than the average white resident,” said Mike Scala, QueensLink’s Legal Counsel, citing data from the TransitCenter’s [Transit Equity Dashboard](#), which measures how well transit networks in six U.S. cities connect people who’ve been marginalized by segregation and discrimination to the jobs, services and amenities they need to thrive.



Transit, Economic and Environmental Justice

Assemblywoman Stacey Pheffer-Amato said, “My community for far too long has faced the label of a transit desert because we have not seen the true investment in transportation that we deserve. QueensLink is the transportation project my community needs. To move this project forward is common sense and will put years of just talking behind us. Funding the EIS will put our community on track to a future in which transit equity is the norm and investments will be plentiful.”

“Common sense projects like QueensLink provide additional benefits to the opportunities created by an enhanced subway system,” said City Council Member Bob Holden. “I’m very excited about QueensLink as it will provide motorists with a fast, efficient, and environmentally friendly alternative to having to drive on Woodhaven Boulevard and the Van Wyck Expressway. If we’re serious about reducing carbon emissions and making our local roads safer then we have to build the infrastructure to support it.”

Over one billion dollars have been set aside to expand the Van Wyck Expressway, which runs parallel to the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way. QueensLink has the potential to transport more people along its corridor than a highway expansion, while helping New York State meet its 2030 climate goals. It makes sense to spend a few million to study a project that will cost a few billion. An EIS would also put QueensLink on an equal footing with the proposed Interborough Express, which would add passenger service along an existing freight line in Brooklyn and Queens. Both projects are included in the [MTA’s 2025-2044 20-year Needs Analysis](#). Federal infrastructure funding can help projects like QueensLink get off the ground. The investment should pay for itself in economic and time-saving returns for generations.

The lawmakers and community board officials who signed the letter include:

U.S. Congress

- Gregory Meeks, 5th Congressional District

New York State Senators

- James Sanders, Jr., New York State Senate, District 10
- Jessica Ramos, New York State Senate, District 13
- Joseph Addabbo, Jr., New York State Senate, District 15

New York State Assembly Members

- Stacey Pheffer Amato, New York State Assembly, District 23
- Andrew Hevesi, New York State Assembly, District 28
- Khaleel Anderson, New York State Assembly, District 31
- Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas, New York State Assembly, District 34



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- Jenifer Rajkumar, New York State Assembly, District 38
- David Weprin, New York State Assembly, District 24

Queens Borough President

- Donovan Richards

New York City Council Members

- Nantasha Williams, New York City Council, District 27
- Robert Holden, New York City Council, District 30
- Selvena Brooks-Powers, New York City Council, District 31
- Joann Ariola, New York City Council, District 32

Community Boards

- Heather Dimitriadis Chairperson; Frank Gulluscio, District Manager – CB 6
- Delores Orr, Chairperson; Jonathan Gaska, District Manager – CB 14

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 Boulevard 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

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