



Connecting Communities with Rails & Trails

PRESS RELEASE

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## Official Statement Regarding US DOT Funding for the Rockaway Beach Branch

Today marks the first time in history that New York decided to substantively invest in transit on the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch. The recent New York State Senate Budget resolution includes \$10 million for an Environmental Impact Statement, which represents the next step in making QueensLink a reality. Concurrently, the U. S. Department of Transportation awarded \$117 million in funding for renovation of the right-of-way through Forest Park.

The proposed investment in Forest Park will create a safe North-South corridor for pedestrians and bikers alike. If the city saves space alongside the paths for future transit, it will one day be a corridor for subway riders as well. It is imperative that Mayor Eric Adams and the MTA stand by their previous commitment to not allow park development to block future transit restoration.





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While improvements to Forest Park will be a boon for those who live nearby, it will do nothing for those who live further South. These residents, who face some of the longest commutes in the city and lack nearby park space, will have no access to these improvements. Meanwhile, residents to the North will still have no convenient way to access the beach or JFK airport. Woodhaven Blvd will remain a dangerous and traffic clogged artery. This is especially troubling, considering the MTA's Congestion Pricing program, which fails to include any increased transit coverage for Queens.

If New York chooses to overlook transit now, the city risks losing out on Resorts World's potential \$6 billion investment in expanding its South Queens casino. Coupled with expansions to JFK airport and thousands of additional housing units in the Rockaways, the Resorts World expansion increases the desperate need for expanding public transit on this old rail corridor.

The State Senate and U.S. DOT allocations demonstrate widespread support for both rails and trails on the Rockaway Beach Branch. If the city fails to design both transit and parks together, Queens will forever remain a divided borough and forfeit the economic growth that a new subway line would bring. The QueensLink team looks forward to working with state and federal lawmakers to ensure they do not neglect this generational investment in transit.

Thank You

The QueensLink team

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