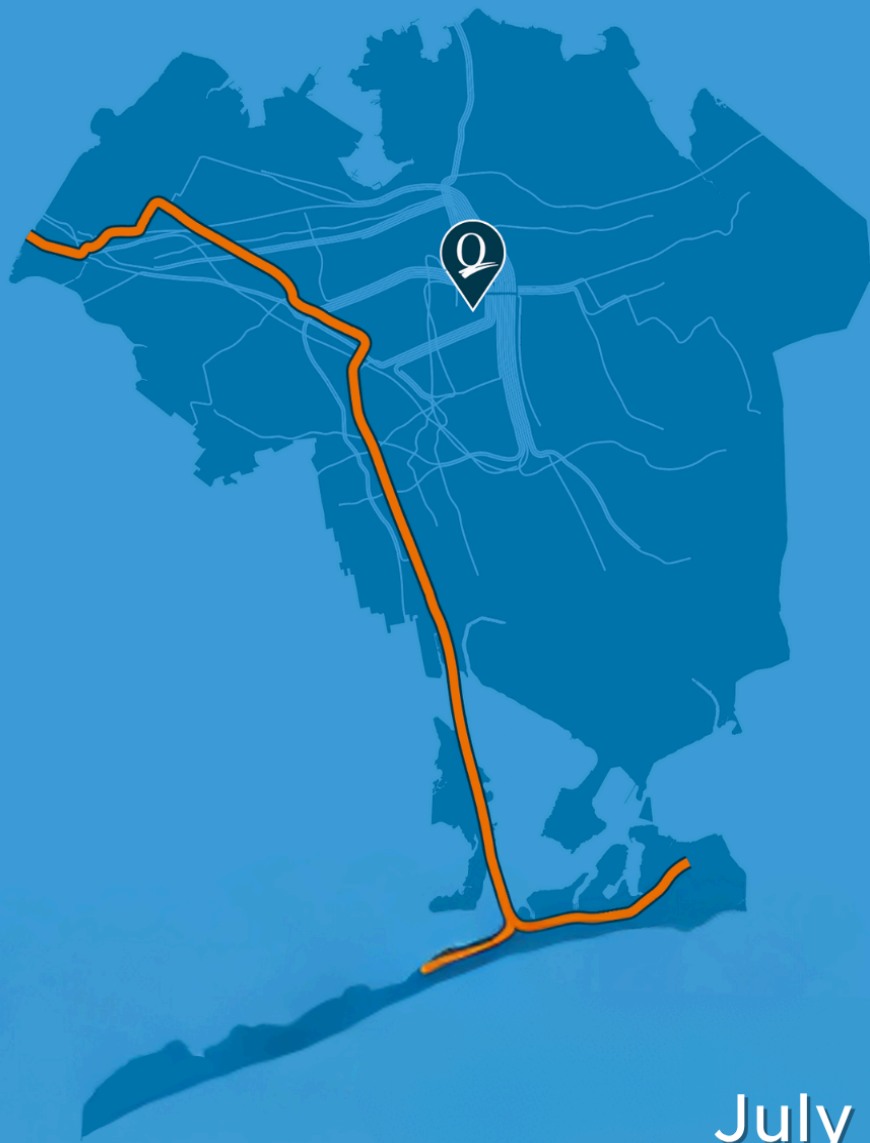


QueensLink Now:



July 2025

A Report from the Next Generation of Riders



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Introduction

The attached report, written by members of the New York Public Interest Research Group at Queens College alongside the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign, urges the gubernatorial and mayoral administrations to make the community-driven QueensLink proposal a top transportation priority for the City. QueensLink represents the most compelling and transformative vision for revitalizing the long-abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch by providing residents with a much-needed north-south subway connection and creating up to 33 acres of new open space. Together, these improvements offer a rare opportunity to expand transit access while investing in the health and connectivity of Queens communities..

The attached report includes firsthand testimonials from students, residents, and community members who attended a Town Hall at Queens College on April 28th, 2025. We are also delivering over 1,500 petition signatures gathered from Queens College students and staff in support of the QueensLink proposal. Jointly, these components provide both qualitative insight and quantifiable support for addressing the longstanding transit challenges in Queens.

The April 28th town hall, organized in partnership with QueensLink, was attended by more than 100 students and community members. It provided a platform for these voices and a vision for what a more connected Queens could look like. The event was covered by [The Wave Newspaper](#) and *QNS*: [Queens College town hall brings attention to QueensLink proposal](#).

The testimonies in this report reflect the daily hardships of navigating a borough underserved by cross-borough transit. Participants shared stories of how the radial nature of the Queens subway network does not support efficient interborough travel, often leaving them with much quicker commutes to Manhattan than it does for traveling to school or to see loved ones within the borough.



The QueensLink proposal presents a transformational opportunity for the next mayoral administration to champion a signature infrastructure project, one that delivers long-term economic, environmental, and mobility benefits for Queens and the entire city. Like the Bloomberg administration's legacy with the 7 train extension, QueensLink could become a defining project of your tenure, addressing historic underinvestment and unlocking improved access for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers.

This is about the future of Queens. The borough is growing fast along the I-678 and Woodhaven Boulevard corridors, with major projects like the JFK Airport expansion, proposed casinos at Aqueduct Racetrack and Citi Field, and hundreds of new housing units in the pipeline. All of these developments will bring more people, more cars, and more traffic to already overburdened north-south corridors. But there is a better way; QueensLink gets ahead of this growth and gives people a faster, cleaner way to get around for generations to come.

As a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, NYPIRG does not endorse nor oppose any candidate or party for public office. We submit this report to ensure that the priorities and needs of Queens residents are part of the conversation shaping the future of our City. We respectfully ask the administrations to place transportation improvements in Queens at the forefront and take the necessary steps to fully study, fund, and ultimately build the QueensLink.

Sincerely,
Matthew Paolucci, Queens College NYPIRG
Straphangers Campaign Project Leader

Natasha Elder, NYPIRG NYC Regional
Director and NYPIRG Straphangers
Campaign Coordinator

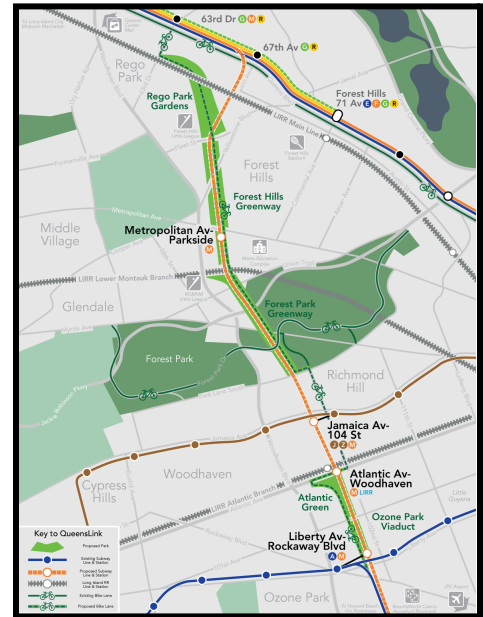


Pictured: Matthew Paolucci (Left), Natasha Elder (Right); Photo by Ramy Mahmoud

Executive Summary

QueensLink is a proposal to reactivate the long-abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch and integrate it into New York City's subway system. The project would create a new north-south transit corridor connecting Rego Park to the Rockaways, providing fast, reliable service to communities in Central and Southern Queens that currently lack efficient transit options. In addition to transit access, QueensLink includes plans for new public green space in the form of a linear park built alongside the corridor. The project addresses two critical needs in Queens: connectivity and open space, while also supporting broader goals of environmental sustainability, economic opportunity, and equity.

The New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization focused on civic engagement, public interest advocacy, and research.



Through its Straphangers Campaign, NYPIRG works to improve public transportation in New York City. During the Spring 2025 semester, NYPIRG's Queens College chapter led a months-long campaign to raise awareness and build support for QueensLink on campus. Student leaders held tabling sessions, gave classroom presentations, collected over 1,500 signatures from students and staff, and held a Town Hall that brought together more than 100 students, faculty, residents, and transit advocates.

This report presents a snapshot of the responses gathered during the Town Hall via five interactive stations. While not intended as a technical analysis, it offers a grounded, community-centered perspective on why QueensLink matters and what residents want from

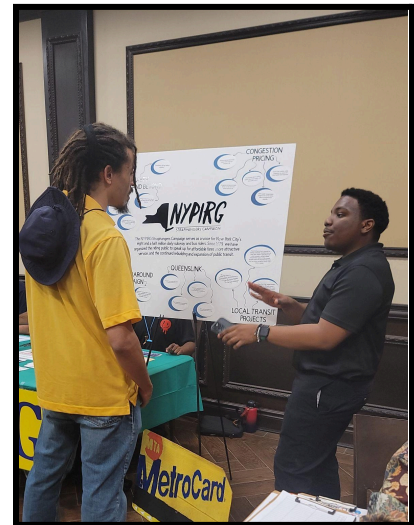
the transportation system they use daily. The findings reinforce what advocates have long argued: QueensLink is not just feasible, it is necessary and popular.

Key Observations:

- Of 83 people who took part in a straw poll at the event, 96% shared that they want to see a project that includes rail.
- Transit delays were a frequent occurrence. Of the 42 students who answered a survey about delays, 45% of students reported they considered themselves delayed 3–5 times in the past week and an additional 33% of students reported facing 1–2 delays.
- Of the participants who mapped their commutes, most shared that they used at least two modes of transit, such as bus-to-bus-to-subway or bus-to-subway-to-bus.

Participants engaged in five interactive stations designed to gather input on commuting experiences, route preferences, transit costs, and personal stories. The event was designed to listen to the community, not just talk at it.

Most of the feedback collected was qualitative in nature, including stories, reflections, suggestions, and firsthand accounts of what it's like to navigate Queens without strong north-south train transit. These stories help illustrate the day-to-day realities behind the policy conversations surrounding the future of the Rockaway Beach Branch.



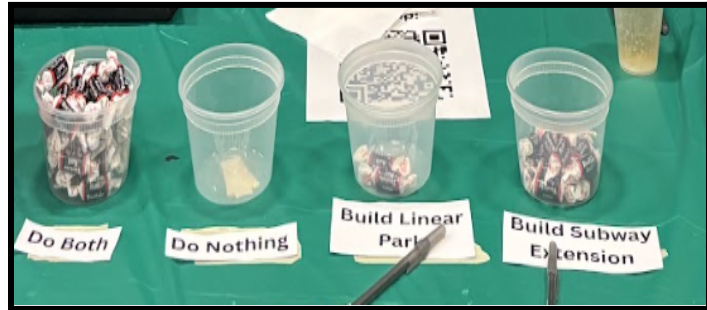
Key Recommendations:

1. Fund a Full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS);
2. Include Reactivation of the Rockaway Beach Branch in the MTA's 2020–2034 Capital Plan;
3. Develop a Coordinated Vision for Transit and Open Space;
4. Continue Community-Led Planning; and
5. Expand Outreach to Underserved Areas.

Station 1: Straw Poll

"What Should Happen to the Future of the Rockaway Beach Branch?"

At Station 1, attendees were asked to vote on what they believe should happen to the long-abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch. The straw poll offered four options: Build Subway Extension, Build Linear Park, Do Both, and Do Nothing. Participants cast their votes using tokens, giving us a simple way to measure opinions on the project's direction.



A total of 83 people took part in the straw poll. The results were:

- Do Both (Subway + Park): 57 votes
- Build Subway Extension Only: 23 votes
- Build Linear Park Only: 3 votes
- Do Nothing: 0 votes

Most participants supported a combined approach, choosing to both reactivate the line for transit and include public park space. Only three people voted for a linear park without transit, while nearly a third preferred focusing on the subway extension alone. No participants chose to leave the corridor as-is.

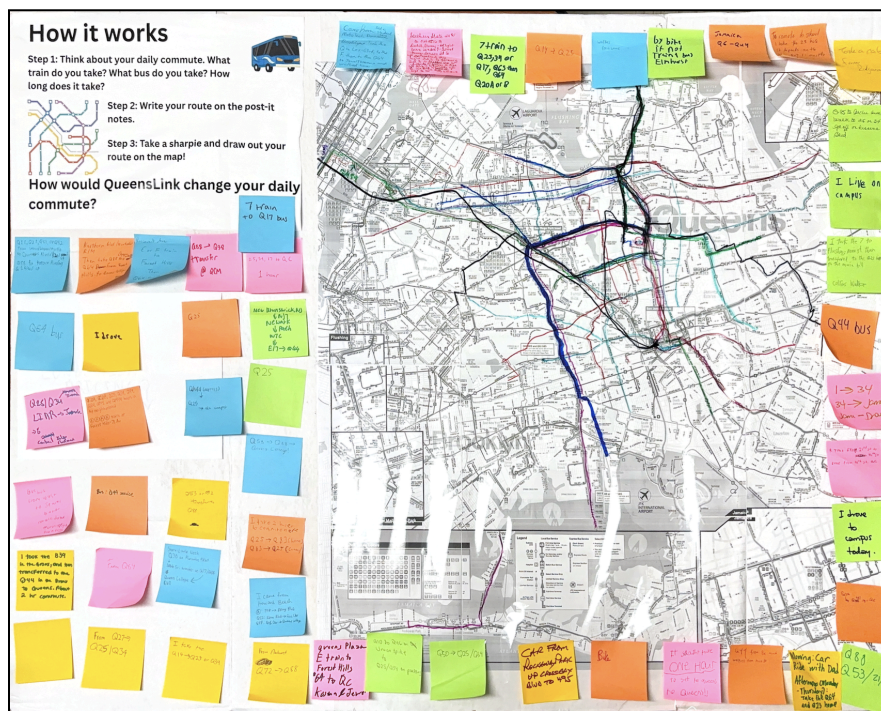


Of the participants surveyed, there was clear support for moving forward with the corridor in some form, especially with a dual-use approach like QueensLink proposes. While this isn't a scientific survey, the straw poll gave participants a quick and accessible way to share their views, and the results help illustrate where community preferences currently stand.

Station 2: Build Your Line + Commute Mapping

At Station 2, participants were asked to map their current commute to Queens College. They wrote out the routes they take on sticky notes, including bus lines, subway transfers, and time estimates, which were then displayed on a large borough map. The goal was to make visible how students and community members are navigating the borough and where the biggest gaps are.

This station generated a wide range of commute paths, but also revealed several clear patterns: more heavily reliant on buses than other modes of transportation, multiple transfers, and the near-total absence of direct north-south train travel options in Queens.



Participants commuted from all corners of the borough, and even beyond, including Howard Beach, Rockaway Park, Woodhaven, Elmhurst, Little Neck, the Bronx, and New Jersey.

Of the 42 students who participated in Station 2, regardless of where they started, the overwhelming majority (28) shared that they depended on two or more transfers, often combining east-west subway lines with north-south bus routes just to reach campus. Most relied on the Q64,

Q25, Q44, Q88, Q17, and Q53 bus routes to complete their trips, with many expressing frustration at the time, complexity, and reliability of their commute.

Transit Patterns and Recurring Issues

- Transfers were very common: Of the participants who mapped their commutes, most shared that they used at least two modes of transit, often more. Bus-to-bus-to-subway or bus-to-subway-to-bus was common.
- Heavy bus dependency: Of the participants who mapped their commutes, students shared that they largely rely on buses to access subway stations or complete their trips.
- Time costs were high: Commutes often took between 60 and 120 minutes, one way. Several students mentioned two-hour round trips or missing classes due to delays or transfers.
- Workarounds by car, bike, or walking: A number of participants said they drove or biked to campus, not out of preference, but out of necessity. "Walked from Main Street," "I drove to campus today," and "Morning: car ride with Dad, afternoon: Q64 and Q23 home" were among several responses that illustrate how people adapt when transit fails.



How QueensLink Would Help

The QueensLink proposal would reactivate the Rockaway Beach Branch as a north-south subway extension through Central and Southern Queens. This would create new transfer points with the E, F, M, R, J/Z, and lines, along with the LIRR, while directly serving underserved neighborhoods along the corridor. If built, QueensLink could:



- Give southern Queens residents direct rail access to the subway network without detouring through Jamaica or Downtown Brooklyn.
- Offer faster, more reliable commutes, especially for students currently stuck with two-hour trips across the borough.
- Improve access to Queens College by better connecting students to the bus routes that serve the campus, particularly the Q64, Q25, and Q88.
- Make cross-borough travel more equitable, giving working-class communities access to jobs, education, and services without punishing travel times.

Some Quotes From Students

Below are some of the transit journeys students take day after day to get to Queens College. A full list of quotes from students for this table can be found in Appendix A.

"I took the B39 in the Bronx, then transferred to the Q44 in the Bronx to Queens. About a 2-hour commute."

"It shouldn't take ONE HOUR to get to Queens from Queens!!"

"Southern State to Exit 16 to Dutch Broadway... right turn Sunrise X-Island Pkwy... Cross Bay Blvd to 183rd... took over an hour."

"Q10 to Q46 on Union Tpke to Q25/Q34 on Parsons."

"From New Brunswick, NJ: NJ Transit to Newark, to PATH, to WTC, E to 71st → Q64."

"J/F from Howard Beach to 63rd Drive → Q64 to Jewel/Kissena and walked."

"Q50 → Q25/Q34 – it's always slow and crowded."

"I take two buses to get here—Q25 and Q83 (home), Q88 and Q25 (to campus)."

Station 3: How Much Do Delays Cost You?

This station collected detailed data on the time students lose each week due to unreliable transit. Using a short survey, 42 students shared what transit modes they used, how often they were delayed, what caused those delays, and how it impacted their daily lives. We asked students to consider an experience a “delay” if it fell outside of an average commute without disruptions, no matter the reason.

Modes of Transit Frequently Used

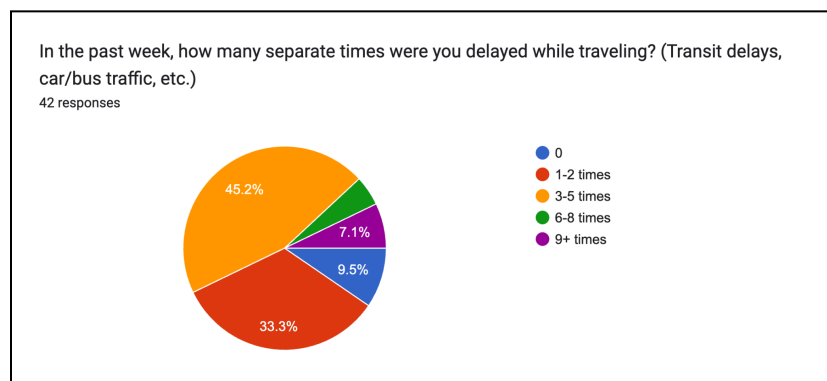
Most respondents relied on a mix of bus and subway service to get to and from campus, often combining multiple systems in a single trip. The bus was the most commonly used mode, reported by 37 students. The subway followed closely behind, used by 27 respondents. About a dozen students used cars, either driving themselves or using a rideshare. Commuter rail (like the LIRR) was listed by 10 students, and 5 respondents incorporated bikes, e-bikes, or scooters into their commute. The data reflects the fragmented and multi-modal nature of commuting in Queens, a borough with long distances between destinations and no direct subway access to Queens College.

Frequency of Delays

Transit delays were a frequent occurrence. Of the 42 students surveyed at this Station:

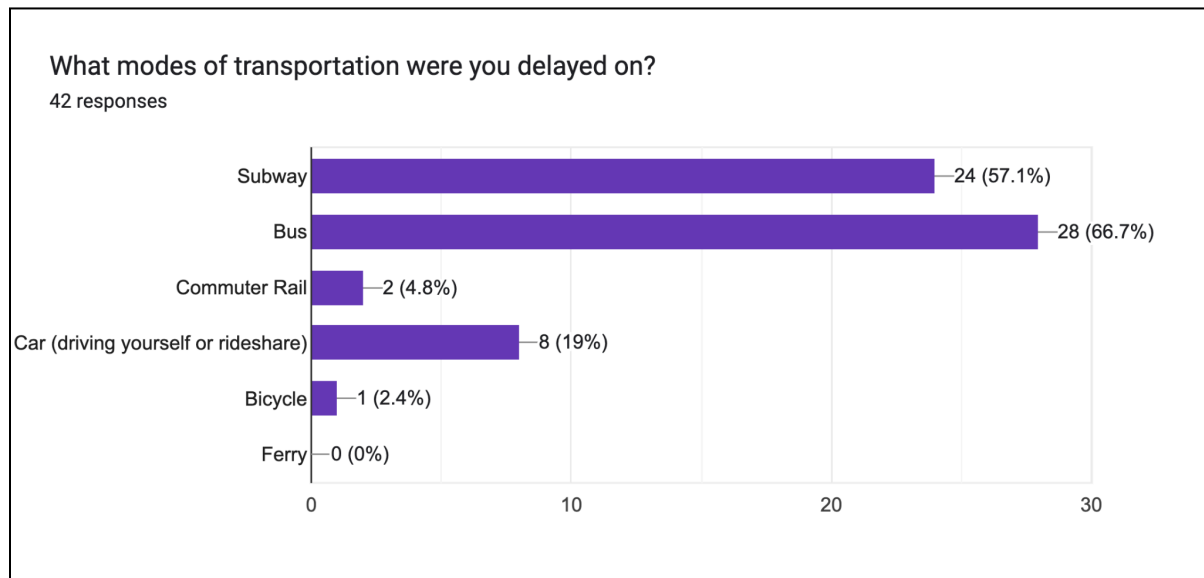
- 45% of students reported they considered themselves delayed 3–5 times in the past week,
- 33% of students reported facing 1–2 delays,
- 7% reported 9 or more delays,
- 5% reported experiencing 6–8 separate delays, and
- 9.5% of students reported experiencing no delay at all.

In other words, nearly 90 percent of respondents lost time due to transit failures over the course of a week.



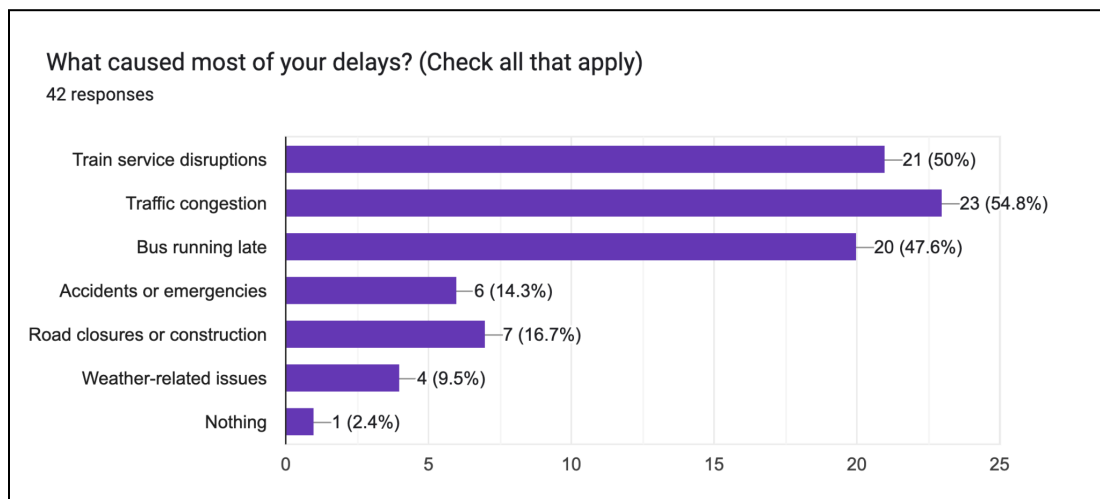
Where the Delays Happened

Most delays occurred on the subway and bus, but several respondents also experienced setbacks using commuter rail and cars. This shows how transit reliability problems are not isolated to one agency or service, but instead span public and private systems alike.



Why Delays Happened

Students cited train service disruptions, bus lateness, and traffic congestion as leading causes of delays. Several also mentioned accidents, road closures, and weather-related issues. A few respondents noted they encountered multiple types of delays in a single week. The scale and variety of disruptions suggest a system-wide problem rather than a few isolated hiccups.



Consequences of Delay

Students reported that transit delays had serious effects on their schedules. Of the 42 respondents:

- 48% of students reported missing class or that they were late to school
- 38% of students reported missing work or arriving late
- 31% of students reported missing appointments
- 45% of students reported missing key transit connections

Multiple students selected three or more of these categories, showing how even short delays can cascade through a person's day. One student wrote, *"Delays made me miss a quiz and my shift — then I didn't get home until 11 p.m."*

The Financial Cost of Delay

Based on self-reported data, these 42 students lost a combined 3,191 minutes, or 53.18 hours, to delays over just one week. If that time were valued at the New York City minimum wage of \$16.50 per hour, the cumulative financial loss would total \$877.47. On average, each student lost \$20.89 in this one week alone. Over a year, this would add up to over \$1086 lost per student, simply due to transportation delays.

Why This Matters

The lack of a true north-south subway connection in Queens forces students to rely on slow buses, expensive rideshares, or indirect subway routes through Manhattan. This inefficiency clogs major corridors like the Van Wyck Expressway and Woodhaven Boulevard, driving up commute times and economic costs. QueensLink would ease this pressure. By adding real transit capacity, it would speed up buses, cut commute times, and save riders, and the economy, from the daily cost of an overburdened system.

Station 4: Share Your Story

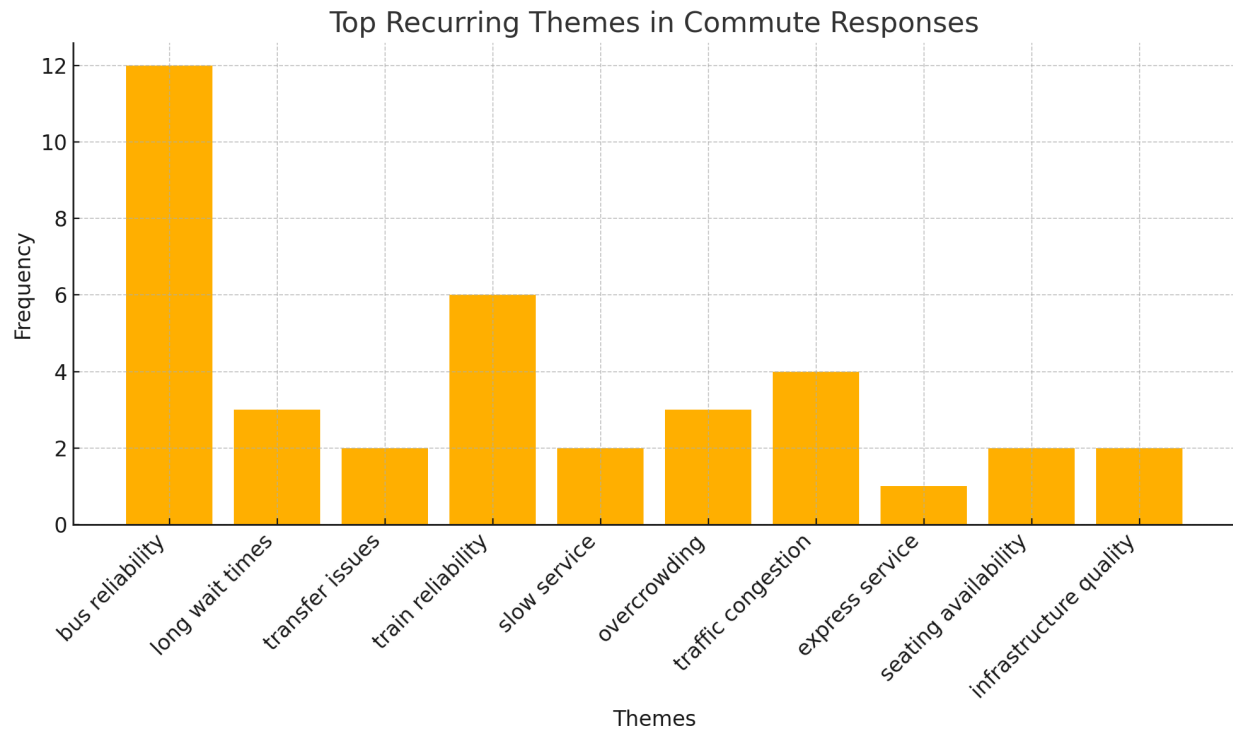
This station collected qualitative data through written responses from participants who were asked to reflect on their daily commute and how public transit has shaped their lives. Attendees responded to prompts about missed opportunities, frustrations, aspirations, and their everyday life experiences with transit in Queens. These written submissions garnered detailed, firsthand accounts of how transit issues affect students, workers, and residents across Queens. While not quantitative, the stories provide a narrative that illustrates common patterns in commuter struggles, highlighting the real-world stakes of the QueensLink proposal and improving transit in Queens more broadly.



Word Cloud: *"What's one word to describe how delays make you feel?"*

Prompt 1: Everyday Life: "What do you like — and what frustrates you — about your daily commute?"

This section asked participants to describe what they like and what frustrates them about their daily commute. Across 22 responses, a clear set of themes emerged: bus unreliability, long travel times, overcrowding, and issues with transfers were by far the most common concerns. Despite these challenges, a few respondents mentioned positives—scenic views, express buses, and courteous drivers helped make tough commutes more bearable.



Top Recurring Themes in Everyday Life Prompt Bar Chart

Bus reliability was the most common issue. Respondents described long waits, buses arriving in bunches, and skipped stops. Commute length was another major concern, particularly for students traveling to Queens College and other subway-inaccessible areas. Transfers themselves were also a source of stress. One of the student responses noted how missing one bus could mean waiting 20 to 30 minutes for the next, throwing off an entire commute. A couple of students reported overcrowding as a source of headaches, and reported having to wait for a second or third bus just to board at peak travel times.

Most Impactful Quotes from Students:

"Yesterday, it took me 2.5 hours to get from Kew Garden Hills to JFK to pick up my parents in a car. Note: That's not my everyday commute, but it's a reminder that the more public transit, the less I have to drive."

"My daily commute is usually a one-seat ride from my home station to my work station. What frustrates me is that the A train does not go to JFK often. There needs to be more frequent service to and from the Rockaways."

"The traffic, the overcrowding, the delays in the train or bus coming from South Richmond Hill, it is not easy."

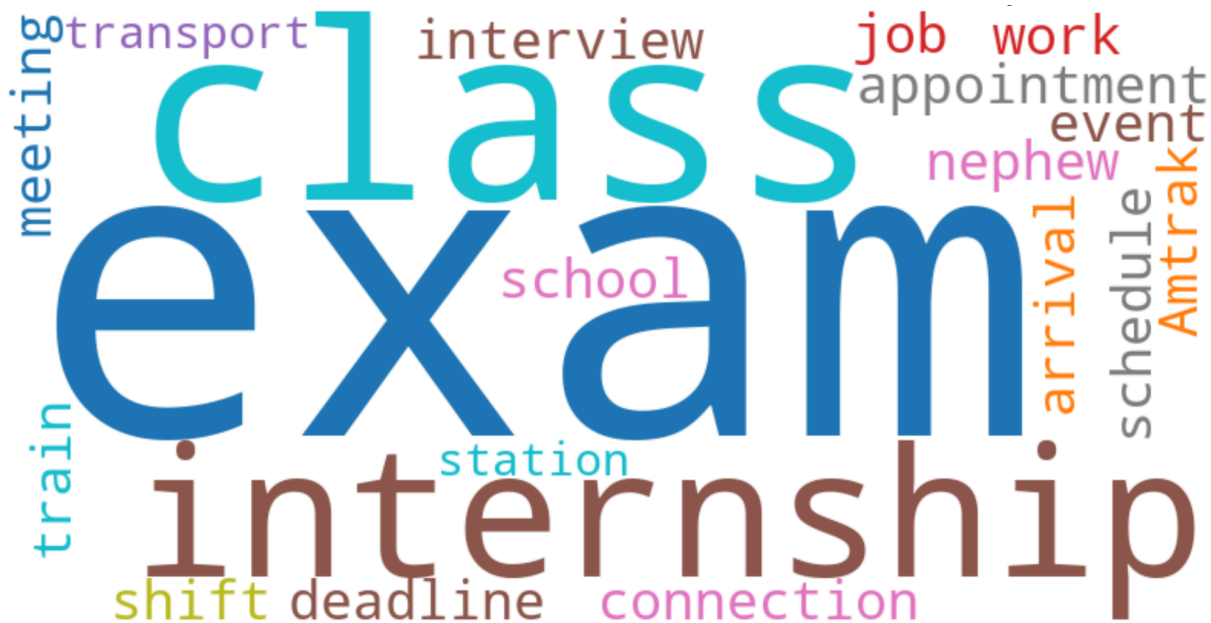
"I live in Queens and commute to Queens College—it's only like six miles, but it takes one hour."

"I do not commute as often as I used to. Back then, I worked at McDonald's at Bayside and took the Q31 every week. Something I became aware of was how inconsistent the buses were at times, especially in the evening slash night. If I missed the bus by the time I got out, I would need to wait 30 minutes to get another, or bite the bullet and Uber home. Very frustrating, hoping for a more consistent service in the future."

A full list of quotes for Everyday Life can be found in Appendix B.1

Prompt 2: Missed Moments: "Tell us about a time transit caused you to miss something important."

This section asked students to describe a time when public transit caused them to miss something important. The responses show that delays and unreliable service don't just cause inconvenience, they have real impacts on students' academic, professional, and personal lives.



Word Cloud: Events and Commitments Missed Due to Transit Delays

Several participants shared stories of missed or delayed arrivals to critical commitments. One student reported missing a final exam for a computer science course due to infrequent Q19 bus service. Another recounted showing up an hour late to an internship at Lighthouse Guild because of F train delays. One person had to cancel a dentist appointment in Alley Pond and rush across the city to pick up a family member, all because of delays on both bus and train lines.

Others spoke about missing entire classes or relying on expensive alternatives like Uber to avoid missing long-distance trains. A student who commutes to downtown Manhattan shared that chronic delays on the 1, 2, and 3 trains resulted in repeated lateness, requiring them to use paid time off to avoid penalties at work.

The issues described here are not isolated. They reflect a broader experience of students across Queens, especially those who rely on buses or live far from subway hubs. Whether it's academic penalties, lost wages, or canceled appointments, the cost of unreliable transit goes beyond frustration. It limits opportunity and adds unnecessary pressure to already demanding schedules.

The quotes for this section can be found in Appendix B.2

Prompt 3: Student Voices: "How has public transit impacted your experience as a student?"

The responses in this section—from bus delays to safety concerns—mirror those provided in the *Everyday Life* section and go into more detail about students' ability to get to class on time and affordably. While a few students mentioned experiencing improvements like newer trains or better buses.

Students coming from areas like Woodhaven, Elmhurst, and Southeast Queens described inefficient routes requiring multiple transfers, often with no train alternative. Because the Queens College campus lacks a direct subway connection, a majority of students we spoke to rely on buses to get them to class. In particular, one detailed student response stressed how traveling from Woodhaven to Queens College often led to them being late to class

"I live in Woodhaven right next to Q53 bus. Just to get to Queens College, I need to take the Q53 to the Q88 which will take me straight to school. This is not ideal because many people, especially students, take the Q88 and I usually have to wait for the second bus which results in me being late to class. There is also no efficient way to get to school through train since no train goes to Queens College."

What Some Students Said

"Public transit has been both good and bad. The continuous spending of \$3 multiple times a day adds up especially having 3 jobs and classes to get around to."

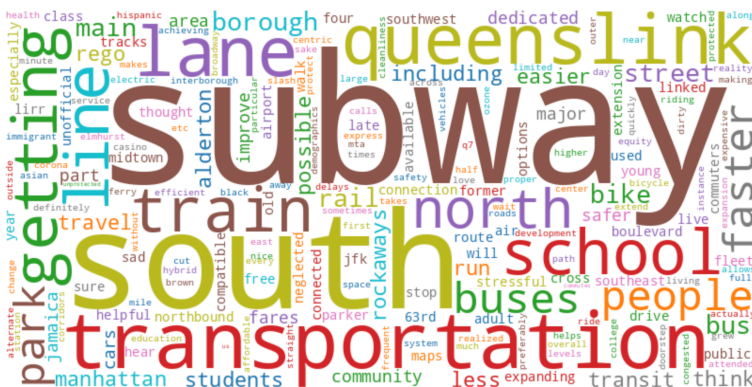
"I'm an exchange student and the first thing I noticed and impacted in my experience as a student is the fear that I have if I have to go to Manhattan alone after 8:00 pm. Also, one of the easiest ways to go to Times Square from Queens is to take the QM44 as it arrives near the middle of Manhattan but the problem is that it is a bus that only comes 2-3 times per hour and I think that it would be better if they put more bus schedules as 7-8 in one hour than 2-3 because it affects my time as a student."

"I am a student at Queens College and I take the LIRR 2x a week, from campus to my house is a 40 min drive, I am not able to afford a car so in order to get home I take 2 buses and the railroad which takes around 2 hours. The buses are always delayed and it's very annoying."

A full list of quotes can be found in Appendix B.3

Prompt 4: Vision and Possibility: "What's your dream for getting around Queens in 5 years?"

The responses in this section reflect what many Queens residents want most from their transit system: functionality, fairness, and better access. Across submissions, students asked for a system that works better for the people who rely on it.



Vision and Possibilities Word Cloud

Subway expansion was the top theme overall. Of the 18 students that participated in this prompt, 14 students mentioned in their response that they want faster service, shorter wait times, or stations closer to their origin and destination. 5 student responses also mentioned a desire for better connections that don't route every trip through Manhattan. Several responses included calls for lower fares or free transit, especially for students and low-income riders. Four students explicitly talked about the need for a north-south transit connection. These riders pointed to the lack of direct access between neighborhoods like South Ozone Park, Jamaica, Rego Park, Elmhurst, and the Rockaways. Projects like QueensLink came up as a way to fix these gaps.

Some Student Quotes

"The dream would be expanding the subway from south to north. This would make it easier for commuters, including students, to commute northbound, to make the commute possible for our young people who live in the south, southeast, and southwest Queens."

"In five years, I see a faster connection to JFK from Queens Boulevard. As a former Rego Parker, I used to walk to school and would stop to watch the trains. I thought a train would run by Fleet and Alderton, just because the 63rd Drive had the LIRR. Four-year-old me would be sad to hear that the tracks are neglected. As an adult, I want a linked Queens and a faster route to the airport. Not only would the Rockaways and Rego Park be connected, and we'd have a better connection to Midtown, but we could also get an unofficial air train extension."

"In about five years, I really would like to see better cross-borough options available, like the Interborough Express, Queenslink, more efficient and faster buses, etc. Most of the travel is definitely Manhattan-centric. I think we need more calls for better outer borough transit that helps the community get to and makes more development possible."

"My dream is for a transit system for Queens in 2030 is achieving full equity of the black, brown, Hispanic and Asian immigrant community demographics riding the Queenslink rail line from Elmhurst to the Rockaways."

"I would love to be able to get to other parts of my own borough without having to take the subway into Manhattan first. It would be nice if the subway actually cut across Queens north-south."

[See Appendix B.4 for a full list of quotes](#)

Station 5: Final Reflections

After going through the different parts of the event, Station 5 asked attendees to reflect and answer three questions in their own words: What would you say to your elected officials about QueensLink? How would it change your daily life? What needs to happen next?

"How Would QueensLink Change Your Daily Commute or Life?"

The clearest theme was time, specifically how much of it is spent navigating long or indirect commutes across Queens. Several people described daily routines built around slow buses and routes that take them out of the way just to reach nearby neighborhoods. One respondent said it could save them 20 minutes on the way to school. A few mentioned areas they don't visit as often as they'd like; not because they're far, but because getting there takes too long.

Referenced Quotes:

"I would be able to commute to school at least 20 minutes faster." — Omar Ahmed, 11421

"Especially to Far Rockaway, my commute time would be cut in half." — Kevin Zumba, 11369

"I live in Woodhaven, so the Queenslink would make my life significantly easier by opening up a method of transportation that will allow me to get around way faster and easier." — Sairah Ahmed, 11421

A full list of quotes can be found in Appendix C.1

"If You Had 30 Seconds With Your Elected Representative, What Would You Say About QueensLink?"

Responses for this section were varied, but a majority of 18 responses emphasized QueensLink's practical benefits and broader community impact. Merlin Nieves directly addressed congestion relief, calling QueensLink a "better alternative to the QueensWay" that would ease pressure on the overcrowded Q52 and Q53. Joshua Martinez noted the injustice of transit isolation: "It is not fair for Rockaways to be so disconnected." Quotes like Omar Ahmed's call to "reduce traffic and CO2 emissions across Woodhaven," and Oliver Powell's warning that demolishing infrastructure would be a mistake, show a concern for sustainability and long-term vision.

Referenced Quotes:

"Better alternative to the Queensway, Relieve Q52, Q53 select bus service congestion."
— Merlin Nieves, 11373

"All Queens residents should have ease of access to the rest of the borough. It is not fair for Rockaways to be so disconnected." — Joshua Martinez, 11101

"We need more options to get to the beach and we need to get to places in neighborhoods that only have overcrowded buses... If we do [lose this infrastructure], we will be sorry." — Oliver Powell, 11210

A full list of quotes can be found in Appendix C.2

"What Do You Think Needs to Happen Next in Order to Make QueensLink a Reality?"

When asked about what needs to happen next, 16 of the 19 total responses for this prompt landed on one of two ideas: clearer communication and stronger political support. Several participants emphasized the importance of explaining the project to the public, making sure people understand what's being proposed and how it would affect them day to day. One student focused on momentum. In their view, QueensLink is feasible, but only if decision-makers move it forward with purpose and coordination. A couple of respondents talked about the need for greater local involvement by the community.

Referenced Quotes:

"Get as much political backing for this. We don't need Queensway. We need QueensLink." — Joshua Martinez, 11101

"I think QueensLink needs to be supported by its community and local government in order to be made a reality." — Mia Castillo, 11421

"I think that we need to spread awareness." — Zanoria Dicks, 11435

A full list of quotes can be found in Appendix C.3

Petition Campaign Summary

As part of its advocacy campaign during the 2024-2025 academic year, the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign at Queens College launched a student-led petition in fall 2024 to build support for the QueensLink proposal. Titled *"Tell the MTA and Elected Officials: We Need Rails and Trails! We Need QueensLink!"*, the petition was addressed to New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York State Governor Kathy Hochul. It called on both leaders to support the project by directing the MTA to initiate an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and to include funding for the EIS in the state budget.

The petition stated:

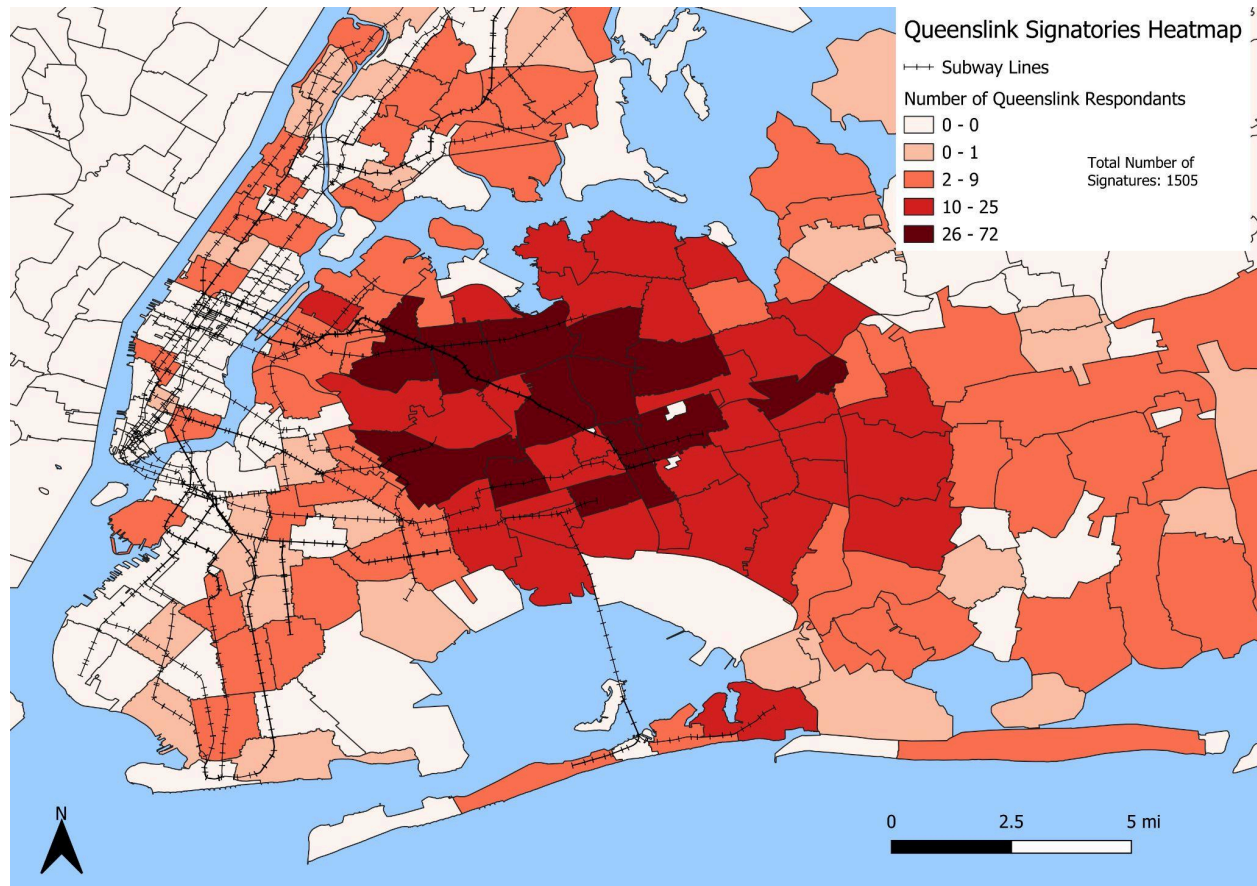
"We, the undersigned students, faculty, staff, and community members of Queens College, urge you to support the QueensLink plan to extend the M train from Queens Boulevard to the Rockaways via the underutilized Rockaway Beach Branch. This plan would serve an estimated 47,000 daily riders and address the urgent need for transit in central and southern Queens, where there are no north-south subway lines."

"Central and Southern Queens residents face long commutes and limited transportation options. For Queens College students, this means hours of travel and missed classes, undermining their education. The QueensLink will provide much-needed access to subways, the LIRR, and improve connections to the rest of the city by extending the M train down the abandoned Rockaway Beach branch. The plan will also include bicycle paths, walking trails, and new parks along the 33-acre corridor, enhancing quality of life. QueensLink must be adopted as a way to reduce travel times, increase transit and economic justice, and provide park space for Queens!"

"We call on Mayor Eric Adams and Governor Kathy Hochul to support the QueensLink by directing the MTA to initiate an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and to urge NY State Elected Officials to support the inclusion of EIS funding in the State Budget. The EIS is a crucial step in advancing this project and ensuring it benefits both the community and the environment."

In total, over 1,500 students, faculty, staff, and community members at Queens College signed the petition, demonstrating clear, broad-based support for moving QueensLink forward. As a commuter school with no direct subway access, Queens College students rely heavily on buses and face long, multi-transfer trips across the borough. For many, QueensLink represents a long-overdue investment in reliable, connected public transit.

Heat Map of Petition Signers



Map by Kevin Mscichowski, Queens College '25 Urban Planning Graduate

Recommendations

The QueensLink project represents an opportunity to deliver transformational infrastructure to one of New York City's most transit-starved boroughs. The feedback gathered during the Queens College town hall reinforces the need for decisive action to advance the QueensLink proposal. The community's responses reflect a broad consensus: the status quo is failing too many Queens riders, and the Rockaway Beach Branch must be reactivated to serve both transit and open space needs. Based on the input collected and the priorities expressed by participants, the following policy recommendations and next steps are proposed:

1. Fund a Full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS):

The City of New York should commit immediate funding for a comprehensive EIS for QueensLink. This is the foundational step required to fully assess the project's feasibility, environmental impact, community benefits, and construction challenges. Without an EIS, QueensLink cannot advance toward implementation. The city must act now to move the proposal from concept to serious planning.

2. Include Reactivation of the Rockaway Beach Branch in the MTA's 2030–2034 Capital Plan:

The MTA's next capital plan presents a critical window of opportunity. The next mayoral administration must actively push the MTA to include Rockaway Beach Branch Reactivation as a funded project in the 2030–2034 Capital Plan. This inclusion is essential for securing long-term investment and committing the agency to the timeline needed to deliver on this proposal.

3. Develop a Coordinated Vision for Transit and Open Space:

QueensLink's dual-purpose design, as both a subway extension and a linear park, requires coordination between the MTA and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. While expanding green space is a shared goal, it must be achieved in a way that does not undermine the core transportation function of the corridor. Any planning related to park elements should be aligned with, not in conflict with, the reactivation of transit service.

4. Continue Community-Led Planning:

The Queens College town hall demonstrated the value of and interest in community participation and planning. Going forward, stakeholders, including students, residents, local organizations, and transit riders must remain central to the decision-making process regarding

the future of the Rockaway Beach Branch. As planning progresses, future workshops, public hearings, and design charrettes should be organized to maintain transparency and build trust.

5. Expand Outreach to Underserved Areas:

Future engagement efforts should prioritize outreach in Southeast Queens, the Rockaways, and other neighborhoods most impacted by limited transit access. Expanding the coalition of support will strengthen the project's political viability and ensure that all communities affected by the corridor are heard.

Conclusion

The work done at Queens College these past few months sends a clear message: Queens residents are not only interested in better transit -- they are engaged and ready to advocate for it. From mapping existing problems to imagining future solutions, and from identifying policy gaps to sharing everyday frustrations, participants made it clear that the current system is falling short of serving their daily travel needs.

People came with specific concerns and practical suggestions. They pointed out where the system breaks down, how their commutes could improve, and what steps they believe need to happen next. The input we received came directly from those who live this reality every day: students, workers, families, and stakeholders who rely on public transit to move through the city.

QueensLink provides a significant opportunity to shorten commutes, connect neighborhoods, and give Queens the infrastructure it deserves. This report is a snapshot into what people are already asking for. Now it's up to decision-makers to take the next step and move the project forward.

Appendix A

Post-It Note Quotes

- "Q64 bus"
 - "I drove"
 - "Q25"
 - "Q44 (express) → Q25 → QC campus"
 - "Q53 → Q88 → Queens College"
 - "7 train → Q17 bus"
 - "2, 5, 3, 4, 17 to QC – 1 hour"
 - "Roosevelt Ave → F train to Forest Hills → Q64 bus to 150 St"
 - "Northern Blvd (Woodside/RM) → Q64 from Forest Hills to Queens College"
 - "Q21, Q12, Q53, Q52 from Woodhaven/Myrtle to Queens Blvd/82nd → Q53 to Horace Harding and 159th St"
 - "Q65 bus from Q64 to Jewel → walk down Main right to the map"
 - "Bus: Q44 service"
 - "Q53 or Q52 → transfer to Q88"
 - "I take 2 buses to commute here: Q25 → Q83 (home), Q88 → Q25 (coming)"
 - "I came from Howard Beach → J/F to Bway Blvd → Q52: Bway Blvd → Bass Club → Q88: Bass Club → Queens College"
 - "From Q64"
 - "I took the B39 in the Bronx and then transferred to the Q44 in the Bronx to Queens. About 2 hr commute."
 - "From Q27 → Q25/Q34"
 - "I take the Q19 → Q25 or Q34"
 - "From Elmhurst: Q72 → Q88"
 - "Queens Plaza E train to Forest Hills Q64 to QC – Kissena & Jewel"
 - "Q10 to Q46 on Union Tpke to Q25/Q34 on Parsons"
 - "Q50 → Q25/Q34"
 - "Car from Rockaway Park up Crossbay Blvd to 495"
 - "Bike"
 - "I drove to campus today."
 - "Q31 → Q41 → QC"
 - "Morning: Car ride with Dad. Afternoon (Monday–Thursday): Take the Q64 and Q23 home"
 - "Q88, Q53, 21/n"
 - "It shouldn't take ONE HOUR to get to Queens to Queens!!"
 - "Q44 from BX, walked from Main St"
 - "Q88 to Archer Ave, Walk to Q25 or 34 get off at Kissena Blvd"
 - "I live on campus"
 - "I take the 7 to Flushing Main, then transferred to the Q25, got off at the main hall – Collins Walker"
 - "Q44 bus"
 - "Came from Brooklyn – Took the Q to Lex-63rd to F, then to the Q64 to Jewel & Kissena and walked here."
 - "Southern State 20E to Exit 16 to Dutch Broadway → right turn under X-Island Pkwy service Rd to left Hempstead Ave, left 223rd to Jamaica Ave to Braddock Ave → right turn to 182nd, left at Kissena"
 - "Q19 + Q25"
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- "Walked from home"
 - "By bike (if not transit bus) – Elmhurst"
 - "Jamaica Q6 → Q44"
 - "To commute to school, I take the Q25 bus. It depends on the hour, but I'm mostly impacted."

Appendix B.1

Everyday Life Quotes

- "I do not commute as often as I used to. Back then, I worked at McDonald's at Bayside and took the Q31 every week. Something I became aware of was how inconsistent the buses were at times, especially in the evening slash night. If I missed the bus by the time I got out, I would need to wait 30 minutes to get another, or bite the bullet and Uber home. Very frustrating, hoping for a more consistent service in the future."
 - "I like the views that the bus has to offer, along with the 7-line views. For example, views of the Q88 offer views of the Pavilion Tower. While the 7-line offer views of City Field and the World's Point redevelopment, With Queenslink, we could get views of the steel structure J trains and A trains, along with the park that will be public."
 - "For my commute, I like that service is reliable for the most part, and that I can get from point A to point B. I can't stand the constant delays, buses skipping stops, and trains constantly going out of service."
 - "Transferring from one bus to another bus is terrible. If the first bus is late, then I might miss the second bus transfer, and I will have to wait another 20 minutes for a bus, because it is infrequent and could be very packed. Delays add to make the buses more packed."
 - "One of my biggest frustrations as a commuter is the frequency of LIRR in Metro-North. Mainly when I'm trying to travel to either White Plains or Tarrytown, there is only one train an hour each way. I'm always rushing whenever I need to get somewhere, because since I don't want to wait an hour for a train, or I need to get to White Plains in a timely manner."
 - "I like the bus drivers. They are usually very nice."
 - "It's very frustrating when buses take very long, and when they finally come, it's packed."
 - "I take two buses to school. It takes about an hour and 30 minutes. The Q30 to QCC is very bad. It takes, it's always crowded and takes so long. It's also very slow and I've missed class."
 - "One of the most effective parts about my daily commute is that I took and ride the bus. I get a lot of craziness because I know that it's a bumpy ride per commute."
 - "I enjoy riding the express bus every day to work. It's much easy and safe from the crazy stuff going on, but what frustrates me is the traffic during the p.m. rush hour in Manhattan and Queens on weekdays. Queens Boulevard and Long Island Expressway get cramped every day, and I can't stand it."
 - "The R/M/E trains slow down when they approach Woodhaven Boulevard to Forest Hills. The Q88 bus runs frequently enough, but it is often crowded with high school and college kids. The Q64 bus is a little less crowded sometimes, but there are more delays. I take one of the buses to Queens College every day. After I get out of the subway train, I also take the 7 train to work at Citi Field, and sometimes it is crowded as well."
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- "I like it when my bus/train is on time, frustrating when it is delayed."
 - "Something that frustrates me about my daily commute is the speed of trains or buses between stops and stations. Even during rush hour, I feel as if the signals of current systems, traffic, and or work being done, construction, utility servicing, or track signal replacement. Also, I believe that there are more direct routes to my destination, but those would require a bus-to-train transfer, and the bus during the morning gets too crowded and stuck behind construction on the streets (B44 Select Bus Service). I hope that in the future, the time between train stations and bus stops can be shortened to as little as safely possible, therefore competing with car travel."
 - "Yesterday, it took me 2.5 hours to get from Kew Garden Hills to JFK to pick up my parents in a car. Note my everyday commute, but as a reminder that the more public transit, the less I have to drive."
 - "I've always missed the bus due to a lack of time and terrible delays. My words to the MTA, and I wish it was better."
 - "I want more buses, less bus waits, and more frequent service. I want to see less congestion in Brooklyn and Queens."
 - "I like that I am commuting the opposite of peak service. I always get a seat, and I am frustrated that I live in Queens and commute to Queens College, where it takes one hour typically, it's only like six miles."
 - "My daily commute is usually a one-seat ride from my home station to my work station. What frustrates me is that the A train does not go to JFK often. There needs to be more frequent service to from the Rockaways."
 - "The traffic, the overcrowding, the delays in the train or bus coming from South Richmond Hill, it is not easy."
 - "I love the idea of public transportation and have seen how it implemented in other places. New York has the infrastructure for incredible public transportation, but it is bogged down with expensive fares, lack of access, and dirty subways. That makes my commute frustrating because I know it could be better."
 - "How much time it takes. It genuinely aggravates me that I lose so much of my day to commuting. Especially when it's worsened by traffic and poor infrastructure."
 - "The unpredictability of when I will arrive at work stresses me daily. If I took public transit, the time ride would be 90 minutes and the car ride about 40–55 min. Accidents or congestion are the main reasons for delays and even when I leave early I'm still late sometimes."

Appendix B.2

Missed Moments Quotes

- "One of the most important things I had missed was a final exam for my computer science class which was a c++ class all beacause Q19 had very little shuttels and doesnt come by often. It was very frustrating that Q19 has only 5 bus shuttles."
 - "I had an internship at Lighthouse Guild. I was supposed to arrive at 9:45 am, but I showed up an hour later because of F train delays."
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- "I was supposed to go to a dentist appointment in Alley Pond, A/E takes about 1 hour to get there, yet when I was going to Forest hills in Elmhurst the train itself took an hour so I had to cancel since the bus also takes an hour with no delays, this was the same day I had to run to pick my nephew up to watch in Manhattan. I had to pick him up 30 mins early since I was scared to miss it"
 - "Due to infrequent A trains to/from the rockaways (my home station is JFK). I had to take an uber to go to Penn Station so I wouldnt miss my Amtrak train."
 - "Missed a whole class because a bus did not arrive for a long while"
 - " I currently work in the downtown area and the 2,3 and 1 trains are constantly delayed. Either by individuals pulling the emergency break to track problems. I have been to work late costing me to have time deducted from leave balance in order to cover my lateness."

Appendix B.3

Student Voices Quotes

- "To have a good, reliable transit network is an imperative to solve many of the social and environmental issues. As a student, good transportation will help me to get to a better change in my professional career."
 - "Public transit has made it possible to travel between two boroughs."
 - "I love being independent and self-aware about my surroundings."
 - "It has made me late on so many occasions that I just view it as a way of life as an NYC student."
 - "As a student, I've been taking transit for around seven years. In middle school, I was grateful to take only one bus, which came selectively to pick up school students. Starting in high school, getting the bus I needed wasn't terrible, but as a step up otherwise. I started taking the subway, which is a wake-up call to commuting around the five boroughs. I would say that it's good to see big changes happening to our routes."
 - "As a CUNY student, I take public transportation to and from school. However, bus delays are constantly an issue. Bus delays are so prominent that if there wasn't any, I would believe that it would be too good to be true. I believe if the MTA were to have more buses on a route that has lots of people, things would go by smoother."
 - "It's been an incredible hassle trying to take transit to school, as I have to go the wrong way up to Main Street just to transfer back down to Queens College, making the trip twice as long as it needs to be, and easily making me late."
 - "The MTA has impacted us with numerous plans for improvement. Examples include the R211 subway cars, zero-emission bus fleet, cutting-edge locomotives, CBTC, positive train control, and congestion pricing. Many of us would strongly appreciate it even more if QueensLink can exist. The MTA can reduce the number of interlining issues in the New York City subway system, especially the BMT and IND divisions. Congestion pricing can be at least a little cheaper for truck drivers and essential workers. The New York City subway system can be 100% ADA accessible. All buses and locomotives rely on green energy instead of fossil fuels, and if there can be a plan to combine the Staten Island Railway and proposed Interboro Express line into one rapid transit system."
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- "I'm an exchange student, and the first thing I noticed and impacted in my experience as a student is the fear that I have if I have to go to Manhattan alone after 8pm. Also, one of the easiest ways to go to Times Square from Queens is to take the QM44 as it arrives near the middle of Manhattan, but the problem is that the bus only comes 2-3 times per hour. I think that it would be better if they put more buses scheduled to go 7-8 times per hour instead of the 2-3 times per hour. It would help me as a student."
 - "I sometimes arrive late because a bus does not arrive for nearly an hour."
 - "Public transit has been both good and bad. The continuous spending of \$3 multiple times a day adds up especially having 3 jobs and classes to get around to."
 - "I am a student at Queens College and I take the LIRR 2x a week, from campus to my house is a 40 min drive, I am not able to afford a car so in order to get home I take 2 buses and the railroad which takes around 2 hours. The buses are always delayed and it's very annoying."
 - "I live in Woodhaven right next to Q53 bus. Just to get to Queens College, I need to take the Q53 to the Q88 which will take me straight to school. This is not ideal because many people, especially students, take the Q88 and I usually have to wait for the second bus which results in me being late to class. There is also no efficient way to get to school through train since no train goes to Queens College."
 - "It impacts a lot, for example delays and missing classes or work. Some buses do not have access to the credit cards to tap and pass. It happens to me in the N22 bus, so I would add a machine to tap our card to do a pass."

Appendix B.4

Vision and Possibility Quotes

- "The dream would be expanding the subway from south to north. This would make it easier for commuters, including students, to commute northbound, to make the commute possible for our young people who live in the south, southeast, and southwest Queens."
 - "There would be free public transportation, and there would be more helpful maps to make sure getting to class isn't stressful."
 - "In five years, I see a faster connection to JFK from Queens Boulevard. As a former Rego Parker, I used to walk to school and would stop to watch the trains. I thought a train would run by Fleet and Alderton, just because a 63rd Drive Alderton had the LIRR. Four-year-old me would be sad to hear that the tracks are neglected. As an adult, I want a linked Queens and a faster route to the airport. Not only are Rockaways and Rego Park connected, and we have a better connection to Midtown, but we can get an unofficial air train extension."
 - "My dream is in five years, Queens will be more easier, especially in transportation. Like, I wish buses and subways are more compatible and less late for people."
 - "In about five years, I really would like to see better cross-borough options available, like the Interborough Express, Queenslink, more efficient and faster buses, etc. Most of the travel is definitely Manhattan-centric. I think we need more calls for better outer borough transit that helps the community get to and makes more development possible."
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- "I've been living in Queens for a few years. I think most of the area in Queens sometimes are dirty. I would like to improve the cleanliness on the Queens area."
 - "My dream is to get around Queens and making MTA buses electric or hybrid."
 - "My dream is for a transit system for Queens in 2030 is achieving full equity of the black, brown, Hispanic and Asian immigrant community demographics riding the Queenslink rail line from Elmhurst to the Rockaways."
 - "Through my school years, I've been going to school by and for transportation. And as I grew and attended higher levels of education school, I realized how expensive transportation, like bus and train fares, have been. So in five years, I would like for transportation fares for students to be more affordable and not limited."
 - "I would love to be able to get to other parts of my own borough without having to take the subway into Manhattan first. It would be nice if the subway actually cut across Queens north-south."
 - "A proper subway line from South Ozone Park near the casino or a change in the Q7 line that takes you straight to Jamaica."
 - "I would like to ride a bicycle on its dedicated lane all around Jamaica. Queens in particular. The dedicated bike lane would be for the sake of safer safety from cars as well as overall health."
 - "I would like to see more bus lanes along major streets, preferably in the center when space allows for it, such as Main Street, to improve travel times for getting around outside of the subway."
 - "In an alternate reality, I would like a subway line that runs north-south in Queens."
 - "To not have any major delays, I want to commute quickly."
 - "Bike lanes that extend east of Corona Park, a much less congested path between Main Street and Queens College."
 - "My dream is for more subway expansion where no one's doorstep is more than half a mile away from a subway/rail station. I dream of frequent subway, rail, bus, and ferry service. No more than a five-minute wait."
 - "My dream for getting around Queens is getting protected bike lanes on main roads. Every day, I have to protect myself from cars and large vehicles. For instance, all of Broadway is unprotected. This is a part of many people's commutes, including mine. Make it safer for us!"

Appendix C.1

"How QueensLink would change your commute?" Quotes

- "Not by much." — Mia Castillo, 11421
 - "For me, it wouldn't change so much to commute. However, I would know that new jobs and new stores have the potential to be created."
 - "I may go to Coney Island more."
 - "Easier access to places easier access to places that would have once taken forever."
 - "It would help me plan my commute schedules better so I don't miss a meeting or class."
 - "It would make my commute easier around Queens. Overall, faster service, less crowded buses and trains, and less fares to pay."
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- "They helped me a lot."
 - "A lot easier to do north-south travel in Western Queens. Also, quicker to get around the Rockaways during the summer and to see some friends that live in Ozone Park and Howard Beach."
 - "Save so much time that the Q52, Q53, um, uh, that I wouldn't need to take it and there would be new parks to explore." — Merlin Nieves, 11373
 - "Especially to Far Rockaway, my commute time would be cut in half." — Kevin Zumba, 11369
 - "Rockaway would be, would no longer be unreachable for leisure of Long Island City residents like myself." — Joshua Martinez, 11101
 - "This would directly affect me living in South Ozone Park and it would cut my commute quite effectively, giving me the option to take the Q7 to the M and straight to Forest Hills."
 - "Lessening traffic on major streets such as Woodhaven Boulevard and Queens Boulevard would be great. Having Queenslink would decrease commute times by at least 33%." — Ryan Ng, 11367
 - "It would make commutes to Rockaways easier." — Brian Chow, 11764
 - "I would be able to commute to school at least 20 minutes faster." — Omar Ahmed, 11421
 - "It would take Queens Boulevard more efficient and it would change access to remote neighborhoods that I visit." — Oliver Powell, 11210
 - "Having Queenslink could help me make it to my places on time." — Zanoria Dicks, 11435
 - "I live in Woodhaven, so the Queenslink would make my life significantly easier by opening up a method of transportation that will allow me to get around way faster and easier." — Sairah Ahmed, 11421
 - "It would produce more parks and bring communities together as well as lower crime rates."

Appendix C.2

30 Seconds with a Rep. Quotes

- "It is a very good cause." — Mia Castillo, 11421
 - "Better alternative to the Queensway, Relieve Q52, Q53 select bus service congestion." — Merlin Nieves, 11373
 - "That it can provide more jobs and even create a better community within the new transit and park corridor." — Kevin Zumba, 11369
 - "All Queens residents should have ease of access to the rest of the borough. It is not fair for Rockaways to be so disconnected." — Joshua Martinez, 11101
 - "Queenslink is a wonderful and helpful project to improve environmental protection." — Ryan Ng, 11367
 - "Faster access to JFK." — Brian Chow, 11764
 - "Let's reduce traffic and CO2 emissions across Woodhaven with Queenslink." — Omar Ahmed, 11421
 - "We need more options to get to the beach and we need to get to places in neighborhoods that only have overcrowded buses. Let's be a leader for the rest of the country and keep our
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greatest transit infrastructure running instead of demolishing it. If we do, we will be sorry." — Oliver Powell, 11210

- "I would say that they are doing amazing work. Amazing work." — Zenoria Dicks, 11435
- "I would say how it is an incredible project that could improve so many lives. Queenslink would allow people to have better access to transportation and greatly improve travel efficiency." — Sairah Ahmed, 11421
- "Queenslink is the next project to update the MTA and it will help New York City residents."
- "I would like to visit my friends in Brooklyn more."
- "I'm happy I was able to make it to the event and hear more about the Queenslink project."
- "That they should take this plan into account because every year bus train lines increase on top of that more bus train lines increase on top of that more traffic happens."
- "I think it is a great alternative transit route. It's better than taking local trains and buses from Northern Queens to the Rockaways."
- "Nice service."
- "Publicly support Queenslink so we have less traffic on Woodhaven Boulevard. Less gridlock is better, right? At least I think so in my opinion."
- "I'd let them know how big of a difference this would make for the commutes of many, many people I know and urge them to get working on it."
- "This is how the community feels heard. Community space and efficiency is needed."

Appendix C.3

"What needs to happen next?" Quotes

- "I hope it does."
 - "We need a campaign and widespread awareness of the economic benefits and people benefiting from it."
 - "A push from the government to endorse the proposal."
 - "Get the approval for a go on the project by representatives."
 - "It needs way more exposure and advocates."
 - "More federal and state funding to help construct it. Also, more people need to be aware of it and be more vocal with locals for their support. It should make more headlines and news articles."
 - "Very helpful."
 - "More town halls potentially, maybe going door-to-door in the neighborhoods addition to the abandoned tracks."
 - "I don't know, but let's others know about Queenslink in my school." — Merlin Nieves, 11373
 - "Getting the mayor on our side." — Kevin Zumba, 11369
 - "I think representatives and other higher-ups need to take it much more seriously and have more consideration for Southern Queens residents."
 - "There has to be a swap for Queens Manhattan tunnel for the F and M trains. CBTC has to be implemented. If Queenslink becomes a reality, the M should be rerouted onto the Nassau Street
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4th Avenue and West End lines again. There should be an H train running between 2nd Avenue, IND 6th Avenue line, and the Rockaways 24-7." — Ryan Ng, 11367

- "Explain the construction proposal so people don't scream about the noise complaints."
- "We need support from the Woodhaven community." — Omar Ahmed, 11421
- "More support as well as investment in green spaces and transportation."
- "We may need a new administration in City Hall who is happy to help support transit expansion." — Brian Chow, 11364
- "Get as much political backing for this. We don't need Queensway. We need QueensLink." — Joshua Martinez, 11101
- "I think QueensLink needs to be supported by its community and local government in order to be made a reality." — Mia Castillo, 11421
- "I think that we need to spread awareness." — Zanoria Dicks, 11435

Appendix D

Queens College QueensLink Petition Signatures:

[LINK TO SIGNATURES](#)

Acknowledgements

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