

A. Purpose of this Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI):

QueensLink seeks input from qualified firms and individuals to assist QueensLink in developing a related Request for Proposals (RFP) to be issued after the RFEI project closes. Our experience in community engagement is mighty, but limited to our existing activities, and the team wants to expand our reach and sustainability for long-term advocacy of the current QueensLink project and future accessibility and mobility options.

NB: Your participation in this RFEI does not disqualify you from applying for the upcoming RFP.

B. Background

QueensRail Corporation

QueensRail Corporation is an all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization created in 2015 to advocate for the reintroduction of rail transit on the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch (RBB) in the New York City borough of Queens. In 2019, the name “QueensLink” was adopted to better describe the combined rails AND trails vision for the RBB corridor. For the purposes of this RFP, all references to “QueensRail Corp.” and “QueensLink” refer to the same entity.

QueensLink Project Background



QueensLink’s goal is to reactivate the abandoned RBB as part of New York City’s subway network, bringing four new stations to critical transit deserts and struggling commercial corridors. The QueensLink



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vision will also provide bicycle trails, walking paths, and park space on the remaining 33 acres of land in the right-of-way. “In addition to reconnecting north and south Queens with the M train, the QueensLink project includes bringing the G train back to Forest Hills.”

QueensLink is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create a new backbone for sustainable transportation and recreation within New York City.

In early 2026, QueensLink released an Initial Business Case (IBC) study, authored by the Steer Group, solidifying the socioeconomic value the rail reactivation would bring to riders, nonriders, nearby community members, the MTA, and the State budget. The IBC should be used as a positioning document for future refinement and should keep the need for QueensLink urgent and relevant. Its findings demonstrated that the requisite ridership exists and will exist as the corridor develops and that the net benefit to the community means that the MTA should invest in this project over holding the capital long-term.

Reconnecting Communities Grant Background

QueensLink intends to build upon the success of the IBC study by running three simultaneous projects under the Reconnecting Communities Program grant administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). These concurrent projects are:

- Regional Input/Output Analysis Study
- Housing Tenure & Antidisplacement Study
- ***Community Engagement Plan and Program Delivery (& This Project’s Related RFP)***

Firms selected for these studies will work together on a parent timeline to deliver intermittent findings to be collated and distributed to interested stakeholders, elected officials, local champions, developers, and nonprofit organizations with keen interest in the success of the project. For the purposes of this study, the QueensLink primary impact area includes Forest Hills south to the Rockaways and LIC east to Rego Park.

C. The Role of this RFEI to QueensLink:

We are seeking a blend of activities, reports, and short-, medium-, and longer-term plans from professionals who have engaged with our type of nonprofit, advocacy organization before. We have a general idea of what outcomes we want to achieve, but are not certain about the right size and shape of the activities that would help QueensLink achieve its goals before, during, and after the rail line is operational in the 2030s. This is where you come in. We are open to all innovative ideas that make use of modern technology and tools and capitalize on the tried and true. We don’t expect your response to pull together a plan for us, but we do want a list of qualified ideas to choose from to then include in an RFP. We expect to release the RFP for solicitation on October 23rd, 2026 and expect to close the response window on November 18th, 2026 at 11:59:59pm EDT to sync with the solicitation responses of our other two projects.

D. Questions for Respondents:

1. Describe your understanding of the QueensLink project, the challenges it faces, and why engagement is an essential undertaking as the physical project is developed.
2. Provide details on Community Engagement Plans (CEP) and related activities you have completed for government organizations or nonprofits in the past, ideally those that are transportation or built-environment advocacy focused.
3. What activities might a *typical* CEP include for an organization like QueensLink? How would you describe these activities in more detail and the costs of administering them?
4. If your organization were given carte blanche and an unlimited budget for engagement activities related to a project you've worked on, what activities would you have planned and executed? Please feel free to describe your most out-of-the-box ideas and activities.
5. Given a budget of about \$175,000 to build and execute this CEP, describe how you would develop tasks and how you would estimate a reasonable cost to administer each of them.
6. How do you measure whether an engagement activity is successful? How have you communicated successes to key stakeholders?



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E. Responding to this RFEI:

To submit your response please submit a PDF to info@queenslink.org by October 16th, 2026 at 11:59:59PM EDT. If you have questions about this document before the due date, please also email the address above.

Please include the following along with your written response to the RFEI:

- Respondent name
- Respondent address
- Respondent website (if applicable)
- Point of contact for this RFEI and any related solicitations: name, title, email address, and phone number
- Basic information: year founded, number of employees, privately held or publicly traded, lines of business (if applicable)
- Potential project personnel resumes (2 pages total)
- 1-2 reference project sheets

NB: QueensLink is committed to compensating firms and individuals for their time and expertise in responding to this RFEI. We will be compensating up to five (5) qualified responses to this RFEI \$5,000 each. Any additional qualified responses will also be invited to apply for the RFP, but will not be compensated for their initial response to this RFEI. Submissions will be considered “qualified” under the following conditions, in addition to submission of information related to the above bullets:

- Each question has a substantive answer, citing firm or staff examples, best practices, and their application to QueensLink.
- You or your firm has a demonstrated track record developing and delivering community engagement plans and related activities.
- You have tailored your responses to the current challenge QueensLink faces; each response has a clear connection to the larger goal of rail reactivation along the Rockaway Beach Branch line and the potential re-extension of the G out to Forest Hills.

All submission qualifications are subject to the sole discretion of the QueensLink review team.

F. Scoring Rubric:

- Articulated understanding of the project and project approach
- Thoroughness of responses to each question

- Creativity and out-of-the box idea generation
- Pertinent experience and past performance of the consultant
- Overall quality of the proposal

Each of the scoring areas has a possible minimum to maximum score of one (1) to four (4) points for a maximum of 20 points.

G. Additional Information:

- **Generative AI policy:** Please do not submit responses to this RFEI that have been generated by an AI or LLM tool. It will be rejected and disqualified at our discretion. QueensLink will use available LLM-detection software to determine the veracity of responses.
- All responses become the property of QueensLink. QueensLink reserves the right to use the responses or derivatives of responses as it sees fit without reservation.
- Responding to this RFEI does not guarantee qualification or an invitation to apply for the RFP. QueensLink reserves the right to reject any response for any reason.
- QueensLink reserves the right to:
 - Withdraw this RFEI at any time for any reason.
 - Use the ideas and/or submissions in any manner deemed to be in the best interests of QueensLink, including but not limited to soliciting competitive submissions relating to such ideas or proposals.
 - Change any terms of the RFEI.
 - Communicate with any and all of the respondents to discuss this proposal by telephone or email.