



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 390

Resolution calling upon the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to conduct a comprehensive Environmental Impact Study on the viability of the proposed QueensLink project.

By Council Members Brooks-Powers, Ariola, Holden, Restler and the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams)

Whereas, The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is the entity in New York State (NYS) responsible for providing the public transit needs of its residents, including operating service locally through New York City Transit and the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR); and

Whereas, There are several neighborhoods in New York City (NYC or the City), particularly in areas of the Borough of Queens, that have limited subway access and are considered transit or subway deserts: and

Whereas, According to a recent report published by the Office of the NYS Comptroller, the use of public transit in NYC fosters foot traffic and economic activity in and around travel hubs, neighborhood stations and bus stops, and improves the affordability of living in the City by reducing the need for personal vehicles; and

Whereas, One proposal, being advanced by a not-for-profit organization dedicated to that purpose, seeks to add an additional public transit option in the City through the 3.5-mile-long transit and park corridor project called QueensLink, which would connect northern and southern Queens; and

Whereas, The proposed QueensLink would run along the corridor formerly known as the Rockaway Beach Branch (RBB), which is a segment of a former LIRR rail line that has not been in use since 1962; and

Whereas, Under the current proposal, QueensLink would extend service on the New York City Transit M Train from Rego Park to the Rockaways, offering local residents a more direct route from Southern Queens into Midtown Manhattan, and potentially serving an estimated eighty-eight thousand daily riders; and

Whereas, Proponents of the QueensLink proposal argue that an MTA investment of more than \$3 billion in this project would create up to 150,000 new jobs, result in a \$13 billion increase in personal income, and potentially increase property values along the corridor by up to \$75 billion; and

Whereas, The proposal for QueensLink also includes up to thirty-three acres of space for parks, trails or newly created farmer's markets alongside and underneath the railroad tracks; and

Whereas, In 2019, the MTA released their RBB reactivation feasibility study which found that restoring service on the line is possible, albeit at a higher estimated cost, and the MTA estimated it could potentially serve 47,000 daily riders; and

Whereas, Potentially reactivating the RBB along the former LIRR right-of-way in Central Queens is currently being evaluated, along with other projects, for potential inclusion in the MTA's 2025-2044 20-Year Needs Assessment which will form the basis for the agency's 2025-2029 Capital Program; and

Whereas, In August 2022, 17 City, State, and Federal officials from Queens signed on to a letter of support asking the Governor and the Mayor to fund an Environmental Impact Study for the QueensLink proposal; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York, calls upon the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to conduct a comprehensive Environmental Impact Study on the viability of the proposed QueensLink project.

RA
LS #11,132
11/2/2022