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Press Release

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LIRR

IMMEDIATE

MTA LIRR Announces \$211.5 Million in Main Line Infrastructure Improvements, Including a \$55 Million Facelift for Hicksville Station

Other Projects Include New Bridge in Westbury & Track Drainage Fix in Mineola.

MTA Long Island Rail Road customers who travel along one of the busiest corridors of the Railroad will benefit from a series of capital improvements worth \$211.5 million over the next five years. Some 40 percent of the LIRR's daily ridership passes along this critical stretch of track called the Main Line, a place where trains from five branches of the Railroad converge every day.

Half of the investment - \$106 million – will go toward a major rehabilitation of Hicksville Station coupled with adjacent track and signal modernization that in its entirety represents a major commitment to one of the LIRR busiest stations and an historic hamlet where local business and civic leaders are trying to revitalize the downtown.

Other projects include replacing the Ellison Avenue Bridge in Westbury and improvements at Mineola Station to correct a persistent flooding problem and improve pedestrian flow.

MTA Chairman Joseph Lhota said: "The importance of the MTA Capital Plan to both the short and long term economic growth of Long Island is fully demonstrated by the impact of these construction projects. In the short term, construction means jobs, something that the MTA has provided continually over many years. Long term, these projects link to East Side Access, America's biggest public works project and one that promises to shave commuting time and make Long Island more attractive for living and doing business."

Long Island Rail Road President Helena Williams said: "These projects will improve our service reliability in a critical stretch of the LIRR. The signal and siding improvements at Hicksville will benefit thousands of customers who pass through this junction each day while the station improvements will make for a brighter commute for our Hicksville customers and we welcome community input as we go forward. The Mineola drainage and station work and replacing the Ellison Avenue Bridge also are key projects that will benefit the Main Line and the local communities."

Hicksville Station Improvements (\$106.6M)

Hicksville Station is one of the Railroad's busiest stops where both the Huntington/Port Jefferson Branch and the Ronkonkoma Branch converge into the Main Line. It is also the transportation hub of eastern Nassau County served by numerous county bus routes.

The Long Island Rail Road first reached Hicksville on March 1, 1837. The current elevated station, which was built in 1961, is showing its age and is plagued by poor drainage and cracked concrete as well elevators and escalators that are reaching their life expectancy. Though the street level ticket office was expanded and modernized about a decade ago, the rest of the station complex needs attention.

The LIRR has set aside \$55.1 million for the Hicksville Station facelift, which will include new station platforms, platform waiting rooms, canopies, stairways, platform lighting, elevators, escalators and a state of the art audio and digital communications systems.

Another improvement on tap for Hicksville is a \$37.7 million project that calls for the installation of over three thousand feet of new track, power and signal work. This effort will connect Track 1 at Hicksville to an existing track siding situated about one-half mile west of the station platform. The connection will enable the LIRR to add three trains to the AM and PM Peak service between Hicksville and Manhattan when Grand Central Terminal opens to the LIRR with the completion of the East Side Access project at the end of the decade. It will also improve the Railroad's ability to reroute trains in the event of maintenance, construction or service disruptions.

Finally, the LIRR will spend an additional \$13.8 million to modernize the signal system at Divide Tower, located just east of Hicksville Station. Divide controls all train movement on the Huntington/Port Jefferson and the Ronkonkoma Branches east of Hicksville.

Mineola Drainage and Station Projects

The project will include an improved drainage system along the north side of the Mineola Station to correct a problem has historically been plagued by flooding. The LIRR is working with the Village of Mineola on potential track and station improvements that will improve pedestrian flow.

Construction of a New Ellison Avenue Bridge (\$39.2M)

Built in 1941, the Ellison Avenue Bridge in Westbury shows clear signs of deterioration and its rehabilitation has been a priority for the Village of Westbury and its residents. The LIRR will demolish the old bridge and its abutments and then replace it with a new structure.

The environmental reviews for the Hicksville North Siding and the Ellison Avenue Bridge will begin this year with design contracts tentatively scheduled to be awarded in 2013.