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Press Release

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LIRR

IMMEDIATE

Mid-Suffolk Train Yard Information Center Opens Today at Ronkonkoma Station as Part of LIRR Public Outreach

Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone & Richard O’Kane, President of the Building & Construction Trades Council of Nassau & Suffolk, Endorse Project That’s Key to Better Main Line Service & Plan to Run Trains to Grand Central

MTA Long Island Rail Road today opened the Mid-Suffolk Train Yard Information Center at Ronkonkoma Station so customers and community residents can learn about the LIRR’s proposal for enlarging its train yard in Ronkonkoma.

The expanded train yard is key to improving Main Line service by providing more peak-hour trains, better cleaning and maintenance for train cars, and direct service to Grand Central Terminal as part of the East Side Access project. The project, currently budgeted at \$76 million, would expand the existing train yard, located east of Ronkonkoma Station, to adjacent property already owned by the LIRR. The expansion would on property south of the yard and further away from the local residential neighborhood.

“Enlarging the electric train yard in Ronkonkoma will give us the space we need to deliver the Main Line service improvements promised by East Side Access,” said LIRR President Patrick A. Nowakowski. “We hope customer and community residents attend the Open House to learn about the project.”

The Mid-Suffolk Yard plan, which would nearly double the LIRR’s track storage area, has the support of Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone as well as a union coalition representing thousands of local construction workers, the Building and Construction Trades Council of Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone said: “The Long Island Rail Road has been a great partner with Suffolk County in advancing our economic development plan “Connect Long Island” in which the goal is to reverse the decades-long trend of young people leaving our region. We can’t create a prosperous future without being able to attract the high-knowledge, high-skilled workers necessary to build an information economy. In order to attract them we need to create walkable downtown communities with strong public transit links. The LIRR has been investing in our downtowns and the expansion of the Mid-Suffolk Yard will create even greater opportunities for transit choices for Suffolk County residents and Long Islanders as a whole.”

Richard O’Kane, President of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Nassau and Suffolk said: “The Mid-Suffolk Yard Expansion Project is extremely important because we have a work force that’s close to 60,000 members. It’s an opportunity to go to work for good paying jobs and eliminate some of the brain drain that occurred on Long Island.”

The Mid-Suffolk Yard Expansion project is covered by a Project Labor Agreement announced by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo in 2013 between the LIRR and local private-sector unions that was designed to reduce the Railroad’s labor costs on seven major construction projects by nearly 11%, saving an estimated \$6.5 million over the next five years while protecting local trade union jobs.

The existing train yard is a 12-track facility that is fully utilized. The expansion plan would almost double the number of storage tracks to 23 and relocate a number of LIRR departments to a new building further away from local residents. The new facility would enable the Railroad to improve interior car cleaning and servicing and carry out mandatory Federal Railway Administration inspections.

All Part of the LIRR’s East Side Access Readiness Plan As the \$10.8 billion East Side Access project moves toward a projected 2022 completion, the LIRR is working simultaneously on six related-capital projects that comprise the East Side Access Readiness Plan. Those projects include the Mid-Suffolk Yard, new pocket tracks at Massapequa and Great Neck, a track extension at Port Washington and a new platform and train yard at Jamaica Station.

All of these projects are integral to the LIRR’s plan for more frequent service to both Penn Station and Grand Central Terminal. But Long Island Rail Road customers will not have to wait until the completion of East Side Access to see start seeing benefits. Once the Mid-Suffolk Yard is completed in 2018, the LIRR will be able to add peak hour trains to the heavily traveled Ronkonkoma Branch. That means more trains, more seats and more reliable service.”

The Mid-Suffolk Yard Information Center; located opposite the ticket office at Ronkonkoma Station, is part of the LIRR’s effort to reach out to customers and the community. LIRR will be completing an environmental assessment as part of New York State’s Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) evaluating the environmental impact of the Mid-Suffolk Yard project. LIRR anticipates completing the environmental assessment by May 2015, coordinating the review with the Town of Islip, the Town of Brookhaven, Suffolk County, New York State and the Federal Aviation Administration. Key areas to be evaluated include visual impacts, noise and vibration within the proposed Mid-Suffolk Yard site, traffic into and out of the yard site and any construction impacts. That will be followed by a public comment period, anticipated for June, followed by an environmental determination in July. The Information Center Open House affords local residents and other interested parties an opportunity to review the plans and have their questions about the project answered by LIRR officials.

Ronkonkoma Information Center Open Thursday & Friday

The Mid-Suffolk Yard Information Center at Ronkonkoma Station will be open today Thursday, January 29 from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. and tomorrow, Friday, January 30 from 6 a.m. to 12 p.m., staffed by LIRR representatives ready to discuss the project in detail. Interested members of the public who cannot make it to the Information Center at Ronkonkoma Station can find details about the Mid-Suffolk Yard project at the MTA LIRR website www.mta.info/lirr.