



MTA Press Releases

Press Release

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LIRR

IMMEDIATE

Six Public Hearings This Week for Third Track Expansion Project

New Project Will Improve LIRR Service; Includes Safety & Quality of Life Benefits for Communities; 3rd Track to be Built Entirely Within LIRR Property; Project Requires No Residential Property Takings

There will be six public hearings this week on the LIRR Expansion Project, a new proposal to improve service options and reliability for hundreds of thousands of customers, reduce automobile traffic congestion, and improve safety and quality of life for people in the project corridor. Experts will be on hand to outline the benefits of the project and the public is invited to give their feedback.

The proposed project is completely different from prior proposals to expand track capacity on the LIRR's Main Line. This project will include:

- No residential property acquisitions
- Eliminating all grade crossings within the 9.8 mile project corridor
- Building sound walls to reduce noise
- Station upgrades
- Additional parking
- Increased reliance on private construction industry expertise to minimize construction duration, impacts and cost
- Unprecedented level of public outreach to engage local officials, homeowners and other stakeholders and use their input while the project is being planned

"When Governor Cuomo first announced this much-needed new project to enhance LIRR service, he promised an unprecedented level of public engagement to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the community and riders," MTA Chairman and CEO Thomas F. Prendergast said. "We have kept that promise and have also made numerous other significant commitments in response to public input - all to minimize impacts to local neighbors. We are continuing to listen to the public and I encourage regional commuters and local residents alike to come out to our hearings."

This is the second round of public hearings for this project and an opportunity for the public to learn more about and comment on the project's draft environmental study, which was published in November 2016 and is available on the project website at www.aModernLI.com.

The hearing schedule is as follows:

Jan. 17, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 6 to 9 p.m.

Yes We Can Community Center
141 Garden Street, Westbury

Jan. 18, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 6 to 9 p.m.

Mack Student Center at Hofstra University

Jan. 19, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 6 to 9 p.m.

The Inn at New Hyde Park

At these hearings, the public can speak to experts from the LIRR and New York State Department of Transportation, and enter their spoken or written comments about the project and its draft environmental study.

ADA-accessible shuttle buses to the hearing sites will be provided on a continuous loop between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. from Hicksville Station (south side of station building) on Jan. 17, and Mineola Station (near eastbound waiting room) on Jan. 18 and 19.

About the LIRR Expansion Project

The LIRR Expansion Project will add a third track to 9.8 miles along the congested Main Line of the LIRR between Floral Park and Hicksville, and eliminate all seven street-level train crossings within the project corridor, among other customer and community benefits.

With up to 40 percent of the LIRR's 308,000 daily passengers going through the Main Line, which serves as the main corridor through which many branches of the LIRR travel, the proposed project will improve service for more than half a million passengers per week.

The elimination and modification of all seven train crossings within the project area will reduce road traffic and pollution from automobiles idling at crossing gates; will eliminate noise from train horns, crossing bells and honking cars; and will greatly improve safety by removing areas where vehicles and pedestrians can collide with trains. Right now, trains are required to blow their horns as they pass through grade crossings, and additional noise

comes from bells that alert nearby drivers, who idle in long lines as they wait for trains to pass and honk their horns when gates open. The Department of Transportation will oversee the grade crossing component of the project.

The project will also result in significant noise reduction throughout sections of the project corridor from proposed retaining walls and sound attenuation walls along the railroad's right-of-way. While these structures will reduce noise from existing train traffic, they will have an even greater impact after the significant service increases from the future East Side Access Project go into effect in a few years.

The project also includes major track infrastructure upgrades like new switches, signals and power equipment, as well as station upgrades like new, longer platforms to accommodate full-length trains, removing delays and safety issues associated with passengers needing to move between cars on shorter platforms. The project also proposes more than 2,000 additional parking spots to address future ridership growth. These and other proposed components of the project are the result of months of direct consultation with local elected officials and community members, as well as analysis by experienced transportation engineers.

Other environmental benefits from the project, such as reduced greenhouse gas emissions, derive from reduced automobile trips as a result of additional and more reliable rail service.

The LIRR Expansion Project is part of a broader, ongoing effort by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to improve transit and transportation throughout New York State. On Long Island, projects like the Double Track Project between Farmingdale and Ronkonkoma, the Jamaica Capacity Improvements Project, and the East Side Access Project to bring LIRR to Grand Central Terminal, will all bring better service to LIRR customers and help ease congestion on clogged local streets and highways such as the Long Island Expressway, Northern and Southern State Parkways, and Grand Central and Belt Parkways.

Other Ways to Comment on the Project:

Those who cannot attend the hearings have numerous other ways to learn about and comment on the project and its draft environmental study:

Visit the project website, www.aModernLI.com

Email info@aModernLI.com

Visit the Project Information Center at Mineola Station. The Center is staffed five days a week (hours at www.aModernLI.com)

Write to: Edward M. Dumas, Vice President Market Development & Public Affairs
Long Island Rail Road Expansion Project
MTA Long Island Rail Road
MC 1131 Jamaica Station Building
Jamaica, NY 11435

The deadline to submit comments on the project's Draft Environmental Impact Statement is Feb. 15, 2017 at 5 p.m. The deadline was originally Jan. 31, but was recently extended by Governor Andrew Cuomo in response to public requests for more time. Even before the extension, the comment period for this document was longer than those for much larger recent projects, such as the 2nd Avenue Subway and new Tappan Zee Bridge.

All comments received by the deadline will be considered before the completion and publication of the project's Final Environmental Impact Statement. The Project Information Center, website, and email address will continue to be available to the public who wish to engage with project officials after the deadline.