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Press Release

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LIRR

IMMEDIATE

Governor Cuomo Announces Groundbreaking of Historic Long Island Rail Road Third Track

\$2.6 Billion Expansion Includes 50 Projects to Modernize 9.8 Miles of the Congested LIRR Main Line Between Floral Park and Hicksville

Expansion Includes New and Renovated Bridges, Elimination of Grade Crossings, New Power Substations, Additional Parking, Renovated Stations, Modern Track and Signal Infrastructure

Part of Governor's Overall \$6 Billion Investment in 100 LIRR Projects to Transform Region's Commuter Rail Service and Bolster Economic Growth

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the Long Island Rail Road is breaking ground on the historic Third Track. The \$2.6 billion expansion effort includes 50 projects to modernize 9.8 miles along the congested Main Line of the LIRR between Floral Park and Hicksville. Those projects include adding a third track, eliminating all seven street-level grade crossings within the project corridor, adding new power substations and parking, and modernizing track and signal infrastructure. Forty percent of LIRR riders pass through the Main Line.

"Since the 1940s, people talked about adding a third track and modernizing the Main Line corridor - and now we're actually doing it," **Governor Cuomo said.** "These projects taken together will create smoother and more reliable service for LIRR passengers while at the same time improving public safety by eliminating dangerous grade crossings. The LIRR is the backbone of the region's economy and this expansion effort will boost growth for generations."

Benefits of the project will include smoother and more reliable commutes, safer and quieter crossings, improvements to stations and parking facilities, reduced noise along the project corridor as well as less congestion and cleaner air.

Project elements along the Main Line corridor include:

- 9.8 miles of a new third track;
- 7 grade crossing eliminations, including Covert Avenue, South 12th Street, New Hyde Park Road, Main Street, Willis Avenue, Urban Avenue and School Street;
- 7 bridge replacements and modifications, including South Tyson Avenue Bridge, Plainfield Avenue Bridge, Tanners Pond Road/Denton Avenue Bridge, Glen Cove Road Bridge, Meadowbrook Parkway Bridge, and Cherry Lane Bridge;
- 5 station improvements, including New Hyde Park Station, Merillon Avenue Station, Mineola Station, Carle Place Station, and Westbury Station; in addition to ADA-compliant elevators at Floral Park Station;
- 7 substation replacements, including Floral Park Substation, New Hyde Park Substation, Merillon Avenue Substation, Mineola Substation, Carle Place Substation, Westbury Substation, and New Cassel Substation;
- 7.5 miles of sound/retaining walls; and
- Additional improvements throughout the project corridor.

At the Governor's direction and after 70 years of stagnation, the state, MTA, local officials and Long Island communities are moving forward on this \$2.6 billion project. The transformative new plan differs significantly from past proposals. The plan takes no residential properties, eliminates the seven street-level grade crossings, and widens or increases the height of seven bridges across the line to prevent bridge strikes.

As part of the transformative project, the state is also undertaking a comprehensive noise abatement program - replacing all tracks and building the new Third Track with advanced dampening technology. The project also includes sound-reducing walls along nearly six miles of residential neighborhoods along the mainline, and features architectural treatments to complement the surrounding environments.

The LIRR will also replace power infrastructure throughout the system with seven new traction power substations to improve reliability and increase capacity enough to power three LIRR trains traveling simultaneously. In addition, to increase safety, the system will add positive train control to prevent operator error.

To ensure community input throughout the entirety of the project, the LIRR has entered into memoranda of understanding with the communities on the Main Line Third Track. The MOUs invite input on project design, including aesthetic design of certain project elements such as sound walls, consideration for traffic and parking, utilities, drainage, pest and dust control, transit-oriented development, construction schedule and duration and community safety and quality of life.

Metropolitan Transportation Authority Chairman Joseph Lhota said, "Today is a grandly historic day for the LIRR and the MTA. This project will help the railroad overcome day to day operational challenges and dramatically increase capacity, and it will unlock the railroad's potential to serve reverse

peak travel and propel Long Island as an economic growth engine. It has been a wish list item for as long as the MTA has existed, and today it is clear it will become a reality."

Janno Lieber, Metropolitan Transportation Authority Chief Development Officer said, "This project is innovative in many ways. It's a design build project, which delivers better budget and more certain schedule. And we have designed to minimize community impacts and created significant economic incentives for the contractor to respect community commitments. We're showing how the MTA is changing to deliver benefits to the public faster, better and less expensively."

Long Island Rail Road President Philip Eng said, "The complete transformation of the Long Island Rail Road is what this region needs. Thanks to the leadership of Gov. Andrew Cuomo, it's finally happening. With this historic investment, coupled with our LIRR Forward initiative, people across Long Island will begin to experience the world-class railroad they expect and deserve."

Senator Elaine Phillips said, "My job as State Senator is to be a voice for the communities and residents that this project directly impacts and I will continue to advocate on their behalf. As we work to transform and modernize the way Long Island residents commute and build a better and stronger region - we must take into account the quality of life of those affected by these new transformations. With that foremost in mind, I look forward to improved commuting experiences as well as public safety for those in my district."

Assembly Member Michael Montesano said, "I am so pleased we have finally broken ground on the 3rd track project for the LIRR. This is a much needed improvement which will help the Long Island economy and the transportation system as a whole. This nearly 10-mile addition will eliminate seven grade crossings, create 3,500 new parking spaces and give upgrades to the stations along the route. Commuters can rest easy knowing delays and cancellations will be decreasing and safety will be increasing. I look forward to these improvements being made to our communities."

Assembly Member Charles Lavine said, "I would like to thank Governor Cuomo for his leadership on the third track project. The third track would benefit my constituents who travel every day on the Oyster Bay, Huntington, and Ronkonkoma lines. By adding less than 10 miles of new track, we can alleviate the most congested corridor of the LIRR. I praise the Governor's leadership and advocacy on this project."

Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone said, "After decades of talk, I am grateful for Governor Cuomo's action in providing reliable transportation and bringing a third track to Long Island Rail Road's Main Line. A reliable infrastructure is the backbone of a thriving economy, and this groundbreaking action will serve millions of New Yorkers for generations to come."

Nassau County Executive Laura Curran said, "The Third Track will play a big role in supporting transit-oriented development throughout Nassau County. Once again we want thank Governor Cuomo for his continued and successful commitment to infrastructure improvements across New York State."

The Third Track expansion project is expected to be substantially completed by the end of 2022.

Work on the Main Line is part of the historic \$6 billion transformation of the Long Island Rail Road to strengthen the region's transportation infrastructure and usher in a new era of economic growth. In total, approximately 100 transformative LIRR capital projects are moving forward, including the Main Line Third Track, Double Track, Jamaica Station Reconstruction, 39 renovated Long Island Rail Road stations and grade crossing eliminations.

The project team has engaged in an unprecedented level of public outreach with a broad range of individuals and organizations, including community groups, elected and appointed officials, businesses, and residents. Many of the Project's elements and construction impact minimization measures are the direct result of input given by the public. A series of environmental and community commitments were developed over the course of the planning phase in coordination with many stakeholders along the Project corridor.