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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Begins Study of Bay Ridge Branch Passenger Service

Agency Awards Contract to Engineering Firm to Evaluate Feasibility

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced that it has awarded a contract to an engineering firm to begin studying the feasibility of initiating passenger service to a freight-only rail line running from Bay Ridge / Sunset Park, Brooklyn, through to Astoria, Queens. The southern part of the line is owned by MTA Long Island Rail Road and used exclusively for freight trains operated by the New York & Atlantic Railway. The northern part is owned by CSX Transportation, a freight railroad.

The study will evaluate the potential for subway, commuter rail, light rail or bus service that would operate in conjunction with existing and planned freight rail service to help residents travel within Brooklyn and Queens and create a potential for reverse commutation to suburban destinations.

New transit service could offer potential connections or transfers to intersecting subway lines and the LIRR. The line is nearly 16 miles long and runs from the New York Harbor waterfront to Astoria via Midwood, East New York, Brownsville, Bushwick, Glendale, Middle Village and Elmhurst. It crosses or nears 19 subway lines and the Long Island Rail Road. Click link below for map.

"This project is hugely exciting – partly because it is based on the concept of squeezing more out of our already existing infrastructure so we don't always have to build new subway lines from scratch," said **MTA Chief Development Officer Janno Lieber**. "Putting mass transit on the Bay Ridge Branch could allow the MTA to serve more neighborhoods and provide better connections to thousands of people throughout Brooklyn and Queens – all while also creating opportunities for increasing environmentally-friendly freight rail in years to come."

Tom Wright, President and CEO said: "Regional Plan Association is thrilled that the MTA is moving forward on this study, which is the crucial first step to realize our Triboro vision. Transit service on the Bay Ridge Line would not only provide better transit service between the outer boroughs but also cut construction and acquisition costs since the rail tracks are already there. This study will build on our initial concept, and evaluate cost, feasibility, among other issues, to help push the project forward. We are excited to keep working with the MTA and all other partners on this."

The MTA has awarded the contract, valued at \$1.3 million, to engineering firm AECOM, who will work with subcontractor WSP.

