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Press Release

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LIRR

IMMEDIATE

Governor Cuomo Announces Major Steps Forward for LIRR Expansion Project

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced major steps forward for the Long Island Rail Road Expansion Project, including a continued commitment to community outreach by holding four public meetings, expedited modifications to all train crossings along the project route, and increased transparency with the release of a new project scoping report, website and community center.

"A third track on the main line is crucial to the future of Long Island," said Governor Cuomo. "This project will make the LIRR more reliable for millions of customers, while also eliminating multiple dangerous train crossings along the main line. Our proposal will ensure that we can continue to improve the quality of life and grow the economy in the region, and I encourage New Yorkers to learn more about how we're working to build a brighter future for Long Island.

Extensive Public Engagement

Since Governor Cuomo unveiled the proposal in January, a project team composed of his executive staff along with key MTA, LIRR and DOT officials have worked non-stop to refine the plan in close consultation with elected officials, property owners, business and civic leaders and other major stakeholders.

To date, more than 80 meetings have been held with stakeholders, including the mayors of the Villages of Floral Park, New Hyde Park, Garden City, Mineola and Westbury, state legislators, local civic associations and school boards, chambers of commerce, officials from the Towns of Hempstead, North Hempstead, Oyster Bay, Babylon, Islip and Brookhaven as well as Nassau and Suffolk Counties. The Governor also met personally with the mayors to discuss the proposal and address concerns.

While only one public meeting is required, the four public meetings announced today will offer the public direct access to the project team and provide residents, business owners and other stakeholders an opportunity to discuss the project and comment on the scope of work needed, which will result in an environmental impact statement to be released late this summer.

Increased Transparency

Reaffirming his commitment to transparency, the Governor today released a detailed [draft scoping document](#) that outlines options for modifying the crossings and the proposed environmental analysis. The project has also launched www.AModernLI.com – a website where the public can learn more about the project and provide direct input.

The release of the scoping document comes nearly three weeks ahead of the first public hearing, ensuring that local residents, business owners, and elected officials have ample time to review the proposal. Governor Cuomo is committed to ensuring an extensive degree of public engagement about the project, and state officials will be holding four separate public hearings throughout the affected corridor. Those hearings will be held on:

- Tuesday, May 24, 2016 from 11 am to 2 pm at The Inn at New Hyde Park, located at 214 Jericho Turnpike, New Hyde Park, NY 11040.
- Tuesday, May 24, 2016 from 6 pm to 9 pm at Hofstra University, in the Mack Student Center's Student Theatre, located at 1000 Fulton Ave, Hempstead, NY 11549.
- Wednesday, May 25, 2016 from 11 am to 2 pm at the "Yes We Can" Community Center, located at 141 Garden St, Westbury, NY 11590.
- Wednesday, May 25, 2016 from 6 pm to 9 pm at Antun's, located at 244 W. Old Country Road, Hicksville, NY 11801.

MTA officials will also open a LIRR Expansion Project Information Center beginning May 6, located on the south platform at the Mineola Train Station. This information center will provide opportunities for people to review the scoping document and ask questions on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 11 am to 7pm, Thursdays and Fridays from 7am to 3pm, and Saturdays from 10am to 3pm.

Improving Grade Crossing Safety

The Governor has already committed to modifying all seven street-level train crossings in the project corridor but will now also do this on an expedited basis in order to dramatically improve safety for both vehicles and pedestrians; to sharply reduce noise by train horns and bells; and to reduce severe traffic congestion caused by crossing gates being down for prolonged periods of time during peak travel times.

MTA Chairman and CEO Tom Prendergast said: "We all know grade crossings are a chronic problem, complicating traffic flow and presenting round-the-clock safety challenges. The Governor's commitment to speeding up the construction to solve crossing issues along the project route is welcome news for everyone."

The draft scoping report presents a number of key safety-enhancing options for train crossing improvements along the project's 9.8 mile route. These construction improvements would also take place on an expedited timetable – with each grade crossing project completed in nine months or less – to significantly ease local traffic congestion.

The train crossings along the LIRR Main Line segment between Floral Park and Hicksville that will be modified are: Covert Ave., South 12th St. and New Hyde Park Rd., all in New Hyde Park; Main St. and Willis Ave., in Mineola; School St. in Westbury and Urban Ave. in New Cassel.

About the Project

With just two tracks to service Ronkonkoma, Port Jefferson, Hempstead, Oyster Bay and some Montauk Branch trains, the Railroad has historically been hindered by congestion during peak travel periods and frequent delays, whether caused by a disabled train, a track condition, a medical emergency or a trespasser. A third track will bring other improvements, including infrastructure upgrades at LIRR stations and parking facilities, the construction of retaining walls along portions of the corridor to minimize property impacts and the upgrading of railroad signal systems, substations, culverts, interlocking, crossovers, sidings, track bed, power systems and communications systems.

This LIRR Expansion will support current service plans, and is an important component to the future success of the LIRR's East Side Access Project, taking Long Island commuters to Grand Central Station and the East Side of Manhattan for the first time. Together the projects are expected to cut commuting time for many customers by up to 20 minutes in each direction.