

My name is Norma Nazario and I'm Zackery's mom. Zack was an amazing son. He was so smart, funny, and he had many friends. He was an old soul, and his favorite music was Nat King Cole and Frank Sinatra. Zack was also looking forward to serving his country by joining the Marines after high school graduation. Zack always had an interest in history and his teachers called him "the Historian." I loved learning new things from Zack. Zack especially loved to research the history of New York and the New York Subway System.

Zack's interest in New York history led to him being targeted by TikTok and Instagram's algorithms. For those of you who do not know how an algorithm works on social media: it sees that you like particular content and gives you more of it; if you continue watching, the algorithm will continuously feed you like being in an all you can eat buffet. Zack's interest in the New York Subway System led him see subway train surfing videos on TikTok and Instagram and then Zack was constantly bombarded with the same type of subway surfing content, all powered by TikTok and Instagram's algorithms. I often monitored Zack's phone and he even shared with me harmless videos and funny pictures he saw online. But I had no idea he was being shown subway surfing videos or that he would attempt to subway surf at all. And on February 20, 2023, I was blindsided when the NYPD came to my home to tell me that my son had died in a subway surfing accident.

I believe the dangerous subway surfing we are seeing in New York is made worse by social media. Social media can have a detrimental impact on the mental health of our young people. It leads to feelings of inadequacy, heightened levels of anxiety and depression, and a fear of missing out. My son Zack developed some of these traits because of social media, but I couldn't imagine he would die by being influenced seeing subway surfing on Instagram and TikTok.

Even though the MTA pushes initiatives to tell kids not to subway surf, young people have complete access to unlocked subway doors and other access points that have no alarms or other systems in place to keep them out. Zack was shown exactly how to easily access dangerous areas in the MTA system and encouraged to do so on TikTok and Instagram.

I urge parents to keep their children off social media as much as possible and talk to them about the dangers of subway surfing. What parents see on social media is much different than what children see on social media. I am here today holding Zack's funeral card. No mother should have to carry their child's funeral card. The MTA needs to have systems in place like alarms and locking doors to keep children from accessing the tops and sides of the trains. Social media companies need to immediately remove subway surfing content and stop pushing these trends to our children. And we as a city need to take this danger seriously and warn both children and parents of the consequences of subway surfing. I wish I didn't have to be here today. But I hope change will come so that what happened to Zack doesn't happen again to any other kid. Thank you.

Good morning and thank you for having us, especially to the Committee Chairs -- Chair Brooks-Powers, Chair Joseph, Chair Salaam, and Chair Stevens. I'm Michael Kemper, Chief Security Officer of the MTA, and I'm joined by Special Counsel Jeremy Feigelson as well as Franck Joseph, Acting Chief of Staff for New York City Transit.

Today's hearing is an important one. I think we all agree on the need to stop the dangerous trend of people of all ages – but especially young people – riding outside of subway cars. This year alone, six New Yorkers have tragically died doing it (up from four last year) and seven people have been seriously injured.

Even though 350,000 kids use our system daily and the overwhelming majority do the right thing, any loss of life is unacceptable, so our team at the MTA is taking a broad approach to get that number down to zero.

We're working closely with City Hall, the NYC Department of Education, and the NYPD because none of us can solve this problem alone. Together, we launched the student-led "Ride Inside, Stay Alive" campaign more than a year ago. All the announcements, graphics and social media outreach were developed by young people for young people to help us get through to that .1 percent who want to ride outside of train cars and tempt fate.

To serve as a deterrent, my former colleagues at the NYPD also started deploying additional officers to stations on outdoor elevated lines – where riding outside trains is most common – and using drones to spot so-called subway surfers in action. I hesitate to use that term, since it glorifies the behavior. But police are also doing home visits with young people known to ride outside of trains, because it's true that many of them are recidivists.

Perhaps most important, MTA is pressing social media companies to take down viral videos of this dangerous behavior. We are searching for this kind of content every day, and so far, we've flagged more than 10,000 posts to be deleted on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat. That work will continue.

We believe news organizations also have a role to play here, and we've asked them to avoid sharing images of riders on top of trains that can encourage people to try it themselves.

Bottom line: we want riders to stay where they belong – safely inside trains and on platforms, which is another issue. For the last few years, all over the system, there's been a growing problem of people going into locations where they should not be, including on tracks. Signs are there for a reason. When you trespass or break the rules, bad things will happen.

So, we need your help, the Council's help, to get the word out that these risky behaviors are dangerous – not only for the people engaging in them, but also for MTA workers and first responders. We are willing to explore all avenues to get through to young people -- and their parents -- and we look forward to working with the Council.

Now we're happy to take your questions.



Monday, November 18, 2024

**STATEMENT OF JOSEPH GULOTTA  
CHIEF OF TRANSIT  
NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC SAFETY, TRANSPORTATION AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE, EDUCATION AND CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
NOVEMBER 18, 2024**

Good afternoon Chair Salaam, Chair Brooks-Powers, Chair Joseph, Chair Stevens and members of the Council. I am Chief of Transit Joseph Gulotta of the New York City Police Department (NYPD). I am joined today by Josh Levin, the Director of the Department's Legislative Affairs Unit, as well as colleagues from New York City Public Schools and the Department of Youth & Community Development. On behalf of Interim Police Commissioner Thomas Donlon, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to discuss an important subject that particularly affects our City's youth. Our top priority in the NYPD is always to ensure safety and protect life, and I view our efforts in addressing subway surfing as just that. Our focus is on preventing future tragedies. Already, too many people – too many children – have lost their lives or sustained life-altering injuries while subway surfing, and too many families and friends have had to endure heartache.

The dangerous and unlawful act of riding on the exterior of train cars, known as 'subway surfing' is not a new phenomenon. Yet, we have seen a resurgence in police contacts with surfers in recent years. This can be attributed to two factors: the NYPD taking a more proactive approach towards curbing this activity, and greater awareness by the public leading to increased reporting. Not only has the number of police contacts with individuals subway surfing gone steadily up, the number of 911 calls from concerned New Yorkers has grown exponentially. To be clear, when we speak about individuals who are subway surfing, we are primarily speaking about juveniles. The average age of the subway surfers we encounter is 14 years old, with some surfers as young as 9.

What we see is that social media is a major driver of this behavior. The constant one-upmanship we see from surfers trying to capture and share edgier content on social media platforms is a phenomenon that we did not see in decades past. So, in order to address this reckless activity, the NYPD has implemented a multi-faceted approach that incorporates community outreach and education, as well as proactive enforcement of the law.

Turning to our community outreach, NYPD emphasizes affirmative and informative contact with juveniles who have subway surfed. Officers will visit their residence to speak to them and their family to enhance that line of communication, offer support, and reinforce the seriousness of their actions. I, myself, have sent detectives – detectives that grew up in the same neighborhoods as these kids – to visit a number of these families. When we speak to them, and we show them the dangers of this action, they truly realize the seriousness and impact of this issue.

This issue also heavily impacts our schools, as the trauma of the death or injury of a student affects



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all students and staff. In an effort to inform juveniles on the dangers of subway surfing, we've coordinated with our partners at NYC Public Schools to hold awareness presentations. This school year, we've visited over a dozen schools across the City, and given presentations to about 3,000 students, with many more scheduled. We have also held presentations for school staff, including principals, teachers, guidance counselors, and safety directors, because these are individuals equally invested in the safety and future of our children.

In regards to our proactive enforcement of the law, beginning in late 2023, the NYPD began utilizing aerial drones to strategically address subway surfing. The use of drones provides an actionable vantage point to assist officers in spotting surfing activity, identifying surfers, and radioing ahead to officers on the ground. Apprehension of surfers was, until recently, often hindered by the fact that surfing activity typically takes place in between subway stations, where observation by officers or 911 callers was limited. The deployment of drones over the past year has shown great promise in our mission to save the lives of our students who ride the subway. Drones allow us to record and livestream footage of the act while it is happening, allowing fellow officers to see what is occurring on top of a nearby train, and has positively impacted our ability as an agency to save young lives.

In the case of juveniles, our goal is not to punish young New Yorkers for a foolish and incredibly dangerous act, it is to create meaningful intervention that provides off-ramps away from this deadly behavior. We encounter those who think subway surfing is a game and who view the subway system as a thrill-seeking playground. NYPD officers who have responded to scenes of a victim of subway surfing know all too well the consequences, and how life-shattering this activity is. Sadly, there are no second chances for some of these victims. The only thing that awaits a repeat subway surfer is potential disfigurement, tragedy, and death.

While the drone footage offers tremendous value when given to Family Court, the real value lies in the ability to show parents what their kids were doing – because parental buy-in is the key. We can have this discussion every day inside the stationhouse – but this conversation needs to happen at the dinner table. After all, there is no better partner in the campaign against subway surfing than an involved, informed, and concerned parent. Our officers have encountered parents, who insist their child would never subway surf – and they are shocked and horrified when they see the footage of their loved one on top of a moving train car. We understand that in this emotional moment, it may be difficult to process information, including how to spot signs of surfing in the future or find healthier activities for their child. We've created an informational flyer, available in multiple languages, that includes this information, and is handed out to parents or guardians of every juvenile subway surfer that we encounter.

We are also constantly looking at new ways to collaborate with our partners. We participate in recurring meetings on this subject with a number of stakeholders, including NYC Public Schools, the Department of Youth & Community Development, and the MTA. Last year, we worked with them to create a public service campaign, specifically to address the dangers of subway surfing. You may have seen the products of that campaign within the subway system, both in audible announcements as well as visual messaging on digital displays. We've even posted some original public service announcements and anti-surfing content on our own social media platforms.



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We at the NYPD take this issue of subway surfing very seriously, there are no higher stakes than the lives of our young people. Once again, our priority in our efforts is to save lives and prevent tragedies. We are dedicated to committing resources, embracing technology, collaborating with anyone willing to tackle this issue, and working tirelessly until there are no more lives senselessly lost or altered by subway surfing. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today, and I am pleased to answer your questions.

## Exhibit A.

### Frequently Asked Questions

Ride Inside, Stay Alive.

#### What is subway surfing?

Subway surfing is riding outside of a subway car—whether that be on top, on the side, or on the back of a train.

#### Is subway surfing dangerous?

Yes, there is no safe way to ride outside of a subway car. In 2023, five teenagers were killed while subway surfing, with a number of others sustaining serious, life-changing injuries.

#### Is subway surfing illegal?

Yes, it is against both the MTA Rules of Conduct and the New York State Penal Law. Individuals caught subway surfing can face legal consequences, such as being arrested, having to go to court, or becoming a Person in Need of Supervision (PINS).

### Tips for Parents and Guardians

Ride Inside, Stay Alive.

#### How do I know if my child is subway surfing?

- **Ask them outright.** It is worth having these conversations. Make sure to explain the dangers of subway surfing and how the negative consequences (arrest, injury, or even death) from subway surfing can affect their loved ones and their future.
- **Look for items used by subway surfers.** Surfers frequently use ski masks and gloves, even when the weather is warm, in an attempt to hide their identity. They may also possess illegally obtained MTA employee equipment—like subway train keys, reflective vests, or radios. Their clothes may be stained with black-brown dust after accessing prohibited areas of the subway system.



**NYPD Community Center** – Located at 127 Pennsylvania Avenue in Brooklyn, this center is where members of the NYPD and partners from the community provide youths aged 12 through 19 with athletics, tutoring, career planning, graphic design and digital media skill development, music exploration, conflict resolution, and more.

**New York Public Library – Teen Center** – Hang out, get creative, and much more at the Library's newly expanded and enhanced Teen Centers! These welcoming spaces have been created just for teens and are open for them to collaborate, make new friends, read, and enjoy all the Library has to offer. From video equipment to gaming consoles to art supplies - everything is free to use!

### Scan for direct links

to parental guides for social media and information on youth activities.



# NYPD

New York City Police Department

## Subway Surfing Kills!

Ride Inside, Stay Alive.





- **Find out what activities your child is doing after school.** When not supervised by parents and with no alternative activities after school, some teenagers decide to try subway surfing as an exciting activity to pass the time and gain popularity.
- **Ask about unexplained injuries.** Kids are prone to injury due to their natural curiosity, so do not be afraid to ask your child where their injuries come from. Major injuries such as broken bones are usually easily accounted for; however, minor injuries, such as random bruises, cuts, and scrapes, that your child cannot explain may be an indication of subway surfing.

**How do I better monitor what my child is doing after school?**  
 No parent can keep their eyes on their child 24/7. However, there are several apps you can use to monitor your teen's location remotely. It is important to have open and honest communication with your teen about why you want to track their phone location and how you can respect their privacy while also ensuring their safety. Setting clear boundaries and discussing the reasons for monitoring their location can help build trust and understanding between parents and children.

The Find My iPhone app, which is free and preinstalled on all iPhones, and other third-party tracking apps will help parents to better monitor their child's location in a non-invasive way for their own safety.

**How do I better monitor what my child is doing on social media?**  
 Subway surfing is fueled by social media, especially on Instagram and TikTok, with teenagers posting videos of themselves engaging in this reckless behavior in the pursuit of "likes."

Instagram's Family Center has helpful guides for parents and guardians on managing your child's activity on the platform. Instagram includes tools to allow setting time limits, managing who can message your teen, viewing of their activity, and controlling who can see your teen's posts. For more information, scan the QR code on the next page.

TikTok offers "Family Pairing," which pairs your account with your child's account. This gives you access to more privacy, content, and well-being settings. It can also help you see what your kids are watching. You can also turn on Restricted Mode. This hides content that might not be appropriate for kids and teens. For more information, scan the QR code on the next page.

There are also many third-party tools that can filter or monitor your child's social media content across all platforms. Find the solution that works for you and your child.

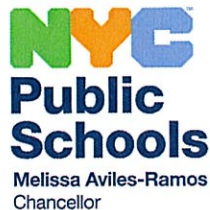
## Youth Activities

*Ride Inside, Stay Alive.*

**What other activities can I get my child involved in?**  
**NYPD Explorers Program** - The Law Enforcement Explorers program provides youths aged 14 to 20 with an introduction to a career in law enforcement or a related field in the criminal justice system. Explorers are taught the importance of higher education, self-discipline, and respect for diversity and human dignity through training, involvement in community service projects, and other Exploring events.







**Testimony of the NYC Public Schools  
on Riding Safely – Addressing the Dangers on Subway Surfing  
Before the New York City Council Committees on Transportation, Public Safety,  
Education and Child & Youth.**

*Testimony of Mark Rampersant, Chief of Safety and Prevention Partnerships*

Good morning, Chair Brooks-Powers, Chair Salaam, Chair Joseph, Chair Stevens and all New York City Council Committee members here today. My name is Mark Rampersant, and I am the Chief of Safety and Prevention Partnerships for the New York City Public Schools (NYCPS). I am here today on behalf of New York City Public Schools to speak about our ongoing efforts to address subway surfing amongst our youth. From the outset, let me be clear that we believe that no parent, guardian, caregiver, family member, or friend should endure the unnecessary pain of losing a loved one to this reckless and dangerous activity. Subway surfing inflicts needless and tremendous pain to families, peer groups, and entire communities. I am joined today by several partners who will also share testimony about our collective efforts to end this reckless behavior.

Subway Surfing, defined as riding anywhere on the exterior of a train car, is an illegal and perilous activity that, unfortunately, some youth engage in for reasons as minor as social media popularity or the mere thrill of the act. Some are attempting to emulate characters in a video game and others are seeking peer acceptance. Whatever the reasons, our youth are risking their lives by participating in this activity.

In response, last year NYC Public Schools, along with the NYPD, started a working group with the New York City Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) to address this behavior. In an effort to ensure that a multitude of strategies were considered, the working group expanded to include agencies and partners from across the city and across sectors, including the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), the New York City Department of Probation, and the New York City Law Department.

In September 2023, New York City Public Schools collaborated with our partners to launch an anti-subway surfing public service campaign, “Ride Inside, Stay Alive.” The educational component included the following:

- In recognition of student voice, we partnered with students from Art and Design High School to create and design anti-subway surfing digital and print posters that were displayed on all MTA subway lines;
- Electronic versions of the posters were made available to all 1,800 schools across NYCPS; printed posters and palm cards were hand-delivered to schools in close proximity to the train lines such as the J, M, Z, and 7;

- Additionally, students recorded anti-subway surfing public service announcements (PSAs) that have been broadcast in stations throughout the system;
- NYCPS students, in continued partnership with the MTA, are currently designing new digital and print campaign assets to be displayed systemwide;
- In further recognition of student voice and perspective, a subway surfing presentation was given to the Borough Student Advisory Council (BSAC) in Staten Island, and they have established an Anti-Subway Surfing Committee to help inform the design and implementation of strategies tailored to the unique conditions of the Staten Island Railway. We welcome the opportunity to work with Council Member Hanks to address Staten Island subway surfing concerns as well as other council members in our efforts regarding surfing in other boroughs;
- With respect to presentations, in collaboration with the NYPD Transit Bureau, over 1,300 students have participated in anti-subway surfing presentations to-date;
- Moreover, subway surfing presentations have been given to superintendents citywide in Summer 2023, to Superintendent teams, school staff, and school safety personnel in Summer 2024, and most recently, to Brooklyn High School Principals this past September; and
- New York City Public Schools is currently working with the MTA to develop anti-subway surfing lesson plans and resource guides that teachers may use in their classrooms;
- Through our continued partnership with the NYPD Transit Bureau, under the leadership of newly appointed Chief Joseph Gulotta, we are increasing communication channels so that New York City Public Schools will receive notification of every instance of student-involved subway surfing. This will allow us to ensure that the students involved receive direct services such as counseling, social work or other supports and their school community receives the appropriate resources; and
- We continue to collaborate with the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) to hold youth focus groups to hear directly from students about how best to spread this important message on the dangers of subway surfing and to better understand some of the drivers for this behavior.

We acknowledge that there is still a lot of work to do, and we are committed to continuing our efforts to educate our school communities about the dangers of subway surfing. We also invite your thought partnership and influence in brainstorming additional ways of doing this work. As you would agree, our children are worth every effort. Thank you again for the opportunity to address the Council today on this extremely imperative topic. We welcome any questions.



PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK

# Jumaane D. Williams

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**STATEMENT OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS  
TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION, CHILDREN  
AND YOUTH, PUBLIC SAFETY, AND TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
NOVEMBER 18, 2024**

Good morning,

My name is Jumaane D. Williams and I am the Public Advocate for the City of New York. I thank Chairs Joseph, Stevens, Salaam, and Brooks-Powers and the Committee members for holding this hearing.

This year alone, we lost six lives to subway surfing and even more have suffered injuries.<sup>1</sup> This decades-old dangerous trend has surged in popularity due to social media. Though the city and the state have launched multiple strategies to prevent subway surfing, this behavior persists.

Platforms like TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram previously promoted videos of subway surfing, just one of many dangerous viral challenges that have proliferated on social media. Some attorneys general and families of victims have resorted to suing the social media platforms for spreading dangerous trends.<sup>2</sup> The city, state, and MTA have worked with these platforms to take down videos of subway surfing and to spread the city's "Ride Inside, Stay Alive" public service announcement campaign as seen on screens and posters, and heard via announcements throughout subway stations.

Some experts say that the impact of PSAs are minimal on young people, who are more susceptible to peer pressure and less able to assess risks.<sup>3</sup> Young people should be directed to an alternative exciting activity in addition to warning them against subway surfing—as Kevin Dahill-Fuchel, executive director of Counseling in Schools, said to Chalkbeat, “Just say no’ doesn’t work so much because you’re not saying what to say ‘yes’ to.”

So far there’s been 181 arrests related to subway surfing this year, with arrests for young people spiking by 46 percent.<sup>4</sup> Police found that 25% of those arrested were arrested more than once, indicating that being arrested is not an effective deterrent for everyone.<sup>6</sup> The NYPD has recently

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2024/11/02/us/nyc-subway-surfing-teen-deaths/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2024/11/02/us/nyc-subway-surfing-teen-deaths/index.html>

<sup>3</sup>

<https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2024/10/31/subway-surfing-nyc-schools-public-awareness-campaign-ride-inside/>

<sup>4</sup>

<https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2024/10/31/subway-surfing-nyc-schools-public-awareness-campaign-ride-inside/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2024/11/02/us/nyc-subway-surfing-teen-deaths/index.html>

<sup>6</sup>

<https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2024/10/31/subway-surfing-nyc-schools-public-awareness-campaign-ride-inside/>

announced that it has deployed drones over the past year to combat subway surfing, and reports that 900 drones have saved 114 lives.<sup>7</sup> However, exactly where and how the drones are used, and what happens after a drone spots a subway surfer is not entirely clear. It is important to pair transparency with the increased use of surveillance technology, especially considering the NYPD's troubling history of surveilling New Yorkers, and I request that the NYPD is clearer about what happens after a subway surfer is spotted, and how many subway surfing arrests involve the use of drones.

I am also concerned about the increase in arrests of young people, especially considering many subway surfers are young enough to be in elementary or middle school. Children do not have the same ability as adults to fully understand how dangerous subway surfing is and think through the potential consequences, and arresting them is not the best solution. Some young people have reported that they started subway surfing as a thrilling escape from a troubled home life, or as a distraction from mental health needs that are not being met. We must continue to expand resources for youth, including mental health treatment and safe, engaging after-school programs.

It is clear that we must continue to try new ways to combat subway surfing. We can make infrastructure investments that will make it physically harder to get on top of trains, like the open gangway trains currently running on the C line, or barriers on the subway platforms. We should maintain efficient emergency communications systems, so people can quickly report and respond to subway surfers. We should also engage people at the community level, who know the needs of their neighborhoods best and can recommend interventions specific to their communities. Anybody who has or spends time with youth knows that adults telling them not to do something is often an effort made in vain; sometimes, kids need to hear from their peers. Schools are already engaging students in peer-to-peer messaging about the dangers of subway surfing, which should be happening in every school with students old enough to ride the subway by themselves.

Thank you.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/subway-surfing-new-york-city-eric-adams-nypd-drones/>



# PCAC

PERMANENT CITIZENS  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MTA

2 Broadway, 16th Floor, New York, NY 10004  
(212) 878-7087 [mail@pcac.org](mailto:mail@pcac.org)

GERARD BRINGMANN CHAIR · MTA BOARD MEMBER · LIRRCC CHAIR  
ANDREW ALBERT NYCTRC CHAIR · MTA BOARD MEMBER  
RANDOLPH GLUCKSMAN MNRCC CHAIR · MTA BOARD MEMBER

LISA DAGLIAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
BRIAN FRITSCH ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR  
KARA GURL PLANNING & ADVOCACY MANAGER  
JACK CONNORS RESEARCH & COMM. ASSOCIATE  
JESSICA SPEZIO ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

## Oversight Hearing on Riding Safely: Addressing the Dangers of Subway Surfing New York City Council Testimony November 18, 2024

Good afternoon and thank you for accepting this testimony on behalf of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC). PCAC was created by the state legislature in 1981 to be *The Official Voice of Riders* on subways, buses, the LIRR, Metro-North, and Staten Island Railway.

We appreciate your holding this hearing on subway surfing, a deeply upsetting and deadly trend that must be stopped. We're glad to see the MTA taking steps to reduce subway surfing, including working with social media companies to have videos taken down before they can influence young people; launching an advertising campaign with students to publicize the dangers of subway surfing; and working with the NYPD to limit repeat surfers. We are also glad to hear about the steps the NYPD is taking to use drones to capture footage of those responsible.

We're disturbed that the average age of subway surfers is just 14 years old, with some children as young as nine. These are young lives being lost to a dangerous trend, and it's clear that current efforts are failing. It is reprehensible that some of the teens are led to this deadly activity by older New Yorkers who should know better. When caught, they should be charged with endangering the welfare of a minor at the very least.

To combat subway surfing, it's essential to use messengers that young people listen to most. We urge the Department of Education—often the city agency that young people interact with most—to share the dangers of subway surfing with at-risk students and monitor those who may be skipping school or participating in unsafe activities, and to work with parents to ensure that children are not falling into this deadly activity. Children trust their teachers; therefore, teachers should have all the tools they need to educate their classrooms on the life-threatening dangers of subway surfing.

The “ride inside, stay alive” campaign was a great start, but more needs to be done to share the dangers of subway surfing. Harsher language is clearly necessary—“subway surfing kills” would be more in line with the reality—and sharing the stories of young people killed or injured by subway surfing may help humanize this dangerous activity. We suggest putting stickers or posters on the doors that lead between train cars and at the end of train sets saying that “subway surfing kills— it killed [subway surfing victim name], age 13” may help shock and dissuade would-be surfers by showing the real-life victims close to their own ages. Showing the graphic aftermath of subway surfing incidents that take limbs and lives may also make an impact.

We also know that young people don't always listen to authority figures, but they may listen to other young people or influencers and public figures they respect. The MTA made a good effort in its audio campaign in stations recorded by students, but it's also important to take to social media and have figures already listened to by teenagers post about the dangers and stupidity of subway surfing.

Lastly, we urge the MTA to look at physical ways and engineering methods to stop subway surfing, potentially by altering the design of train cars. Some ideas include adding sensors on top of subway cars to quickly alert train crews when surfers are present, and making it more difficult for people to access the top of the train from between cars and the rear of the train. The Transit Tech Lab may be a good partner to further explore options.

Thank you for taking this important topic seriously.

CC:  
Chancellor Melissa Aviles-Ramos  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007



# TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION

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### **Testimony of TWU Local 100**

**Before Council's Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, Public Safety, Education, and Children and Youth**

**Hearing on November 18th, 2024**

**Regarding Res. No. 59**

Good morning, Chairperson Brooks-Powers, members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Public Safety, Education, Children and Youth, and distinguished colleagues.

It is with deep concern that TWU Local 100 addresses the rising trend of children engaging in subway car jumping—a dangerous and illegal act that has tragically claimed the lives of too many young kids.

This growing phenomenon is not only a safety crisis but a call to action for our entire community. Subway systems are designed to transport people safely and efficiently, but when misused, they can become deadly. TWU Local 100 members that operate the train and work in the subway system see the devastation in the loss of young life firsthand. Children may see this as a thrill or challenge, but TWU Local 100 sees these risks as much greater than what they realize.

Despite past efforts by the NYPD and MTA to curb this dangerous behavior by spreading public awareness campaigns and transit safety initiatives, the problem persists. Traditional measures have fallen short. Which is why we, at TWU Local 100, believe there needs to be a multi-faceted approach that not only prioritizes safety measures but also addresses the broader societal factors contributing to this trend.

One critical step is recognizing the role social media platforms play with normalizing this behavior. Videos of subway car jumping often go viral. Enticing impressionable young minds to participate. Platforms must take responsibility and act decisively. There must be a collaborative effort among these companies and the city to ban content that promotes or glamorizes life-threatening stunts. Without a relationship of understanding and accountability between these platforms and the communities they serve, tragedies will continue to unfold.

The loss of even one life is a tragedy, and we are heartbroken over recent incidents where vibrant futures were cut short. We urge parents and guardians to talk openly with their children about this issue and its consequences. Let them know and understand that their lives are irreplaceable, and no momentary thrill is worth risking everything. Let us unite in protecting our youth and preserving their potential. Together, we can ensure that our subway is a safe transportation outlet—not a place that could have prevented a tragedy.

Thank you for your time.

Richard Davis, President



**Monday, November 18, 2024,**

**Testimony in Support of Resolution 59**

**By Council Members Brooks-Powers, Holden and Ariola**

***Resolution calling upon the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to conduct a comprehensive Environmental Impact Study on the viability of the proposed QueensLink project.***

My name is Rick Horan, Executive Director of QueensLink, a non-profit, all volunteer group to reconnect the Rockaways and south Queens with the rest of the borough and City that was disconnected more than 60 years ago,

Thank you to Council Members Brooks-Powers, Holden and Ariola for proposing Resolution to have the MTA conduct a QueensLink EIS.

My 6-minute oral testimony will be submitted as written testimony and supplemented one document that features fifty elected officials and community organizations that support a QueensLink EIS, and another, where elected representatives share specific reasons why.

New Yorkers, especially those in the outer boroughs, depend on subways as distance and traffic conspire to make buses impractical. It's part of our DNA. This was confirmed in a recent poll by Senator Addabbo where his constituents favored using this skinny strip of land for transit over parks by 3 to 1, QueensLink includes both.

Yet as we meet here this morning, City planners are busy designing two small parks that will be built directly on top of Queens' only north-south rail corridor. How did this happen?

The MTA claims that as a New York City owned transit asset, they are not responsible for decisions on its use. That could not be further from the truth. Their pattern of delaying studies, inflating costs, and reducing ridership have served to diminish its value to provide cover to anybody who is against reactivation. Here's some history for context:

In 2016 when the MTA agreed to do a feasibility study, it sandbagged the results for over a year while denying that it had been completed. When it was finally released in Oct. 2019, it still showed its Sept 2018 cover date. But at that point it was too late for consideration in the 2020 – 2024 Capital Plan. Mission accomplished.

The study did confirm however that it would carry 47,000 daily riders and recommended that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be performed. But consistent with the MTA's desire to kill this project, it claimed a build cost of \$8.1 billion. That's all that reactivation opponents needed to claim that the project was too expensive to even consider. Again, Mission Accomplished.

Since the MTA would not release any data to substantiate its figures, we had to hire a well-respected transportation consultant who put the construction number closer to \$3 billion. The MTA admitted in their last report that this lower figure was much closer to the actual cost.

Even if the MTA had no interest in promoting this project, the underlying data collected for this million-dollar feasibility study was valuable. To date the MTA has refused to release any data, despite an Article 78 ruling requiring them to do so. By limiting information, the MTA controls outcomes. Mission accomplished.





Unfortunately from the last Capital Planning cycle to this one, nothing has changed, Of the 28 projects that were considered for the 2025 -2029 plan, favored ones like the Interboro Express (IBX) that were already being actively promoted did well (90%) while disfavored projects like the Rockway Beach Branch (RBB) reactivation – AKA QueensLink, fared horribly (40%).

That is what happens when you get to choose the criteria, models, assumptions and estimates to confirm a predetermined outcome without any oversight. But we have questions.

Why were riders south of Howard Beach, including the Rockaways, not counted towards ridership or in transit equity scores? Why was train frequency reduced by 25% from their own 2019 study? Why is the cost of the 3.5-mile RBB project more than the 14-mile IBX?

The MTA released only summary scores and chose not to show their work or defend their assumptions and conclusions. Again, we had to file FOIL requests and again we're waiting.

But this subjective, unsubstantiated Comparative Evaluation served its purpose, to take QueensLink off the table for another 5-year planning round. Mission Accomplished.

Transportation capital planning has tremendous consequences that affect millions of commuters and billions of dollars. This process must be open and beyond reproach. Sadly, it is neither. The MTA is not transparent, and its studies are not objective, yet we rely on this agency to fairly decide what gets funded and what does not. The people of New York deserve better.

We have a duty to dismantle harmful and pervasive systems of inequity. We recognize that our most critical decisions, like what transit projects should be built are important to all New Yorkers, but especially the poorest neighborhoods at the end of the line. How we make these decisions form the foundation of our racial and socioeconomic justice. Indeed, they define who we are.

QueensLink is a project that can reconnect our poorest, most remote communities, and make New York City a healthier, and more equitable place to live.

*Towards that end we call on the MTA to do the following:*

1. Release all supporting data from both Rockaway Beach Branch studies.
2. Fund an independent, transparent and objective study to accurately quantify the value of the Rockaway Beach Branch (RBB) reactivation – AKA QueensLink
3. Conduct a transparent and objective EIS as called for in today's Resolution 59

The city and the MTA are at the crossroads. Only when we use funding from the USDOT Reconnecting Communities Program for that purpose, rather than erect parks that will permanently disconnect them, can we say, Mission Accomplished.

Yours for a Connected Queens and a Just Society,

**Rick Horan**, Executive Director

917.345.3700 - [RickHoran@QueensLink.org](mailto:RickHoran@QueensLink.org)

*QueensRail Corporation is a 501c3 not-for-profit.*

**Connecting Communities with Rails & Trails**



Selvena Brooks-Powers  
City Council Member

"Transportation equity is a major issue in our city that must be confronted. I have begun working on it as the new chair of the City Council's Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. It requires addressing the needs of neighborhoods that have suffered from divestment, long commutes, often in two-fare zones, and a lack of transit access. A comprehensive EIS for Queenslink will provide the information needed to achieve transit equity and be sensitive to the quality of life concerns of our neighbors along the right-of-way."



James Sanders Jr  
NY State Senator

"Queens Borough is home to over 2.4 million residents. Yet, much of Southeast Queens lacks good mass transit access to other parts of the City. Queenslink would solve this major problem while significantly reducing car congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. This project would create many jobs and spur economic development. Queenslink is what is necessary to improve public health and address climate change for now and future generations to come. Queens can move into the 21st century for mass transit with Queenslink. It's a game changer for Queens, the City and the State."



Donovan Richards Jr.  
Queens Borough President

"Southeast Queens has existed in a transit desert for far too long. The Queenslink proposal would give Southeast Queens residents a new transportation option that would make getting around much easier. The time is now to get the train moving and the Environmental Impact Statement that is needed to turn the vast promise of Queenslink into a reality."



Bob Holden  
City Council Member

"Common sense projects like Queenslink provide additional benefits to the opportunities created by an enhanced subway system. I'm very excited about Queenslink as it will provide motorists with a fast, efficient, and environmentally friendly alternative to having to drive on Woodhaven Boulevard and the Van Wyck Expressway. If we're serious about reducing carbon emissions and making our local roads safer then we have to build the infrastructure to support it."

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Nantasha Williams  
NYC Council Member

"Mass transit is the artery that feeds the neighborhoods of this city, and for too long parts of New York have been prevented from free-flowing travel. The Queenslink and projects like it are forward thinking ways to grow the city with transit-oriented neighborhood planning. We can not let this opportunity to reactivate rail lines pass us by."



Stacey Pheffer Amato  
NYS Assemblywoman

"My community for far too long has faced the label of a transit desert because we have not seen the true investment in transportation that we deserve. Queenslink is the transportation project my community needs. To move this project forward is common sense and will put years of just talking behind us. Funding the EIS will put our community on track to a future in which transit equity is the norm and investments will be plentiful."



Joann Ariola  
City Council Member

"Since well before my time in office, I have been a strong supporter of the Queenslink project. As a lifelong resident of District 32, I am well aware of the transportation problems that we face in Southern Queens. To rectify those issues, I have supported this initiative both through funding as well as through political support, and I fully intend to continue this support in the future.

Most recently my office has been vocal in calling for an environmental impact study to be conducted, so that we can better understand the impact that the re-establishment of this rail line would have on the areas it will run through. I am certain that once this happens, we can then take the next concrete steps towards truly improving the infrastructure in our part of the borough ... We can keep pushing for a better, and we cannot stop until Queenslink is finally made a reality."

# QueensLink

More than fifty City, State, and Federal officials and community groups have voiced their enthusiastic support for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the QueensLink.



Gregory Meeks  
United States  
Congress, 5th  
District



Jumaane  
Williams  
Public Advocate



Brad Lander  
New York City  
Comptroller



Brad Hoylman-  
Sigal  
New York State  
Senate, District 47



Joseph  
Addabbo, Jr.  
New York State  
Senate, District 15



Julia Salazar  
New York State  
Senate, District 18



James Sanders,  
Jr.  
New York State  
Senate, District 10



Michael  
Gianaris  
New York State  
Senate, District 12



Jessica Ramos  
New York State  
Senate, District 13



Kristen  
Gonzalez  
New York State  
Senate, District 59



Stacey Pheffer  
Amato  
New York State  
Assembly, District  
23



David Weprin  
New York State  
Assembly, District  
24



Donovan  
Richards  
Queens Borough  
President



Nantasha  
Williams  
New York City  
Council, District 27



Robert Holden  
New York City  
Council, District 30



Andrew Hevisi  
New York State  
Assembly, District  
28



Khaleel  
Anderson  
New York State  
Assembly, District  
31



Jenifer  
Rajkumar  
New York State  
Assembly, District  
38



Jessica  
Gonzalez-Rojas  
New York State  
Assembly, District  
34



Zohran K.  
Mamdani  
New York State  
Assembly, District  
36



Ron Kim  
New York State  
Assembly, District  
40



Selvena Brooks-  
Powers  
New York City  
Council, District 31



Joann Ariola  
New York City  
Council, District 32



Queens  
Community  
Board 6



Queens  
Community  
Board 10



Queens  
Community  
Board 14



Alliance of  
South Asian  
American Labor  
Richmond Hill  
Chapter (ASAAL)





Sunrise  
Movement NYC



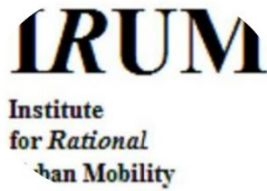
Together We  
Serve



Tri-State  
Transportation  
Campaign



Far Rockaway  
Arverne  
Nonprofit  
Coalition



The Institute for  
Rational Urban  
Mobility



Joint Transit  
Association



Sunrise  
Movement NYC



Together We  
Serve



Tri-State  
Transportation  
Campaign



Khalsa  
Community  
Patrol  
(Richmond Hill)



Muslim  
Entrepreneur  
Association



New York Sikh  
Council



Queens Civic  
Congress



QEDC



Riders Alliance



Cityline Ozone  
Park Civilian  
Patrol



Waterfront  
Alliance



Diverse Streets  
Initiative



Our Neighbors  
Civic  
Association of  
Ozone  
Park, INC-ONCA



Permanent  
Citizens  
Advisory  
Committee to  
the MTA



Queens Climate  
Project



RISE Rockaway



Rockaway  
Beach Civic  
Association



Surfrider NYC

[QueensLink Website](#)

**Rachel Kellner**  
**Metro Village of Forest Hills Inc.**  
**November 13th, 2024**

**New York City Council**  
**City Hall**  
**New York, NY 10007**

**Support for the QueensWay Project**

Dear Members of the New York City Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for the QueensWay project, which aims to transform a 3.5-mile stretch of unused railway in central Queens into a vibrant public park. This initiative is vital for enhancing the quality of life for residents by providing new recreational spaces, promoting healthier lifestyles, and fostering connections among diverse communities.

The QueensWay would not only provide a safe, scenic route for walking and biking but also help reduce congestion and support local businesses by drawing visitors and residents alike to explore the area. For communities that have limited access to green spaces, this project represents a long-overdue investment in our borough's well-being.

Moreover, the QueensWay would preserve the historical significance of the railway while repurposing it to meet current community needs. The project's focus on environmental sustainability ensures that future generations will benefit from an improved urban ecosystem that balances nature and development.

I believe that initiatives like the QueensWay can redefine how we utilize urban spaces, creating accessible outdoor areas that celebrate the unique culture and diversity of Queens. It is projects like these that strengthen community bonds and highlight the forward-thinking vision of our city.

I urge the City Council to support the QueensWay and encourage others in our community to lend their voices to this cause. This project has the potential to become a cherished public space that all New Yorkers can enjoy.

Thank you for considering this testimony in favor of the QueensWay.

**Sincerely,**  
**Rachel Kellner**  
**Board Chair, Metro Village of Forest Hills Inc.**

Submitted by [Friends of the QueensWay \(501c3\)](#)

November 18, 2024

Honorable Members of the NYC Council,

Thank you for allowing Friends of the QueensWay the opportunity to provide testimony on the matter of Resolution 59 regarding an EIS for the QueensLink.

The Friends of the QueensWay is committee of local volunteers from Rego Park to Ozone Park working together for 10+ years to advocate strongly for the advancement of the QueensWay rails to trails project, a transformative initiative that promises to bring immense benefits to the Central Queens community.

For years, residents and civic groups have been hosting community events, seeking public input and planning The QueensWay, a 3.5-mile, 47-acre linear open space that will serve as a green oasis for several diverse and low-middle income communities in Central Queens. This project, supported by substantial City funding and a sizeable federal grant, is shovel-ready and poised to make significant progress.

The QueensWay will provide a safe, off-road greenway that caters to at least 300,000 people living within a mile of the corridor, as well as the students of the 12 adjacent schools. The project is aligned with the City's Vision Zero and green infrastructure policies, significantly advancing safety and sustainability in our city. It addresses the shortage of parkland in Ozone Park and Richmond Hill and builds healthy infrastructure in the most diverse neighborhoods in the city. The improved access to Forest Park from surrounding communities through The QueensWay also aligns with the City's park equity and greenways initiatives. And finally connecting the QueensWay to business corridors like Metropolitan Avenue, Jamaica Avenue and Atlantic Avenue presents a tremendous economic development opportunity for local businesses.

Friends of the QueensWay are also advocates for better mass transit in Central Queens – as local residents, we are all commuters and understand that transit needs are a valid concern. However, recent MTA studies confirmed that upgrading the corridor to carry passenger rail would involve an extraordinary cost of at least \$7 billion to \$9 billion. This cost includes significant impacts to the quality of life of those living near the tracks, the complete rebuilding of nine bridges, the construction of four new bridges, possibly a tunnel, and minimal transit benefit. The MTA has not allocated any funding for this in the recent capital plan. Given the MTA's current infrastructure needs for new rail cars, power stations, and physical structures for elevated tracks, subway tunnels, and rail yards, we believe these priorities are a more prudent use of scarce funds.

In contrast, the QueensWay will greatly enhance the quality of life and transportation needs of Central Queens at a fraction of the cost—2% or less compared to the rail

reactivation. The QueensWay project offers a far more feasible and beneficial solution. It adaptively reuses existing infrastructure without major disruptions, has significant local support as evidenced by thousands of signatures on petitions and extraordinary public feedback at a September Community Day along Metropolitan Avenue in Queens. We overwhelmingly heard excitement for this project and an urgency to get this done!

In light of these considerations, I urge you to advance the QueensWay rails to trails project and pass on the exploration of rail reactivation given the substantial shortcomings, costs, and complexities associated with that alternative.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Support for the resolution calling upon the MTA to conduct an Environmental Impact Study on the viability of Queenslink.

Hi. My name is Agostino Sasso. I'm a resident of Bed Stuy Brooklyn, City Council District 36. I grew up in Cypress Hills, East New York. I attended Franklin K. Lane High School. I used to run at Victory Field in Forest Park. I still go there from time to time. My two train stops were the Grant Avenue stop on the A train and the Crescent Street station on the J train. I'm very familiar with the area. Even though I haven't lived there since 1981, I'm constantly in that part Queens.

The area needs the Queenslink because the area needs more trains. Especially the north south connection that the Queenslink provides. The Queenslink, as proposed, will also include a bike trail.

I urge the council members to vote yes on this proposal. The area needs more transit. This proposal provided both transit and bike trails.

Thank you.

Honorable Members of the NYC Council,

I am submitting testimony to oppose Resolution 59 regarding an EIS for the QueensLink. The abandoned railroad tracks are adjacent to my home and I believe strongly that we need to advance the plans for the QueensWay because it will bring more benefits to the community.

Discussion around what should be done with this abandoned rail line have been debated for years and I know from experience that there is excitement and a great deal of community support for the funded plans to turn the former rail line into a thriving green space. Not only will this plan contribute to the health and safety of Queens residents, it will also support economic development for local businesses.

The Queensway is an opportunity to address the increased flood risks associated with global warming as well. As a victim of hurricane Ida, I know the toll floods can have on homes. Parkland will help absorb excessive rain, a rail line will not. The City has a responsibility to do what it can to address flooding issues and this is a chance to do just that.

While I am sympathetic to the desires of some to have access to better public transit, I do not think the QueensLink is the answer. The benefits and support for the QueensWay are substantial and we should move this important project forward and stop pushing forward the idea of a revived rail line.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Allison Sesso

Resident of Forest Hills



Andrew Thompson  
Brooklyn 11215  
17 November 2024

I write today to urge the council to adopt resolution 59 and call upon the MTA to conduct a Comprehensive Environmental Impact Study on the [QueensLink](#) proposal.

In my view this project should move forward to provide the benefits below and performing a proper study to determine feasibility is a vital step in this process.

The [QueenLink](#) project to reactivate the Rockaway Beach Branch as a modern subway line is the right direction for New York for many reasons

1. To provide both new transit and new parks to communities in Queens underserved for both
2. To complement the IBX light rail proposal with a seamless transfer free extension to existing subway service
3. To provide another cost-effective connection to JFK airport which is still underserved vs. other major airports in the country
4. To free up capacity at the terminals on the Queens Boulevard lines. This will enable the MTA to reexamine service patterns on other lines, e.g. making it [possible to resume G train service to Forest Hills](#), improving connectivity between Brooklyn and Queens as many of your colleagues have [recently been calling upon the MTA](#) to do.

It is vital that this proposal is properly studied and the full benefits and costs understood.

Andrew Thompson

My name is Anna Taktachev, I live in Forest Hills, and I support Proposition 59 to grant QueensLink an EIS because I believe in equitable planning and development.

Allowing QueensLink EIS is foremost a matter of equitable planning: when there are two proposals for a site that would significantly change the trajectories of multiple neighborhoods for generations to come (as is the case here, with QueensWay proceeding while East Queens residents beg for QueensLink), it is only fair to compare the two EIS side by side, and only then proceed with a chosen project.

East Queens is part of New York City, too. Without QueensLink, East Queens will have more in common with Long Island than the rest of NYC as the city continues to grow, while East Queens remains relegated to car dependency and “just one more lane...” development. Building only a park over the tracks means supporting the status quo in East Queens and permanently severing East Queens from NYC; building a train and a park, like QueensLink proposes, will change history and allow for greater mobility and economic development in East Queens. It is short sighted to not take advantage of the existing rail infrastructure and right of way.

As a resident of Forest Hills, lack of reliable North South connection in East Queens means for me:

- + Rejected employment opportunities in Brooklyn and Queens; I only look at jobs in Manhattan and Westward along Queens Boulevard; I wish this was not the case.

- + Going through Manhattan and crossing the East River twice just to get back onto the same landmass. I am tired of this. I suffer long commute times and only visit areas South of Queens Boulevard via car. I have lived my entire life in Forest Hills and there are areas of Queens and Brooklyn that I have only seen once — and some not at all — because the commute is unnecessarily long and cumbersome. This impacts my social life, because I rarely see my friends and family who live in BK, and they rarely visit Forest Hills, for the same reason.

- + I drive or take LIRR to Long Island beaches, just like Robert Moses intended, because it's unfeasible to commute to a beach in my own borough. There is far too much traffic on Woodhaven Boulevard, and the Q53 is incredibly overcrowded and unreliable. I want to see shows at Rippers, I want to experience all of the effort the City put into redeveloping the Rockaways after Sandy, but it's too cumbersome to commute from Queens to Queens. Similarly, I often commute to Long Island for shopping and recreation, and it's a shame that it is so difficult to support the local economy in Queens because of underdeveloped transit.

- + QueensLink means people can finally get rid of their car and the associated expenses. I know many people who work in East Queens yet drive to adjacent neighborhoods, because driving is 15 minutes, versus over 40 using unreliable and overcrowded busses. Have you ever waited 20 minutes for a bus in the cold winter rain, only for it to show up and be so crowded that there is no room for you? Having a North-South train means people, especially those who have mobility issues or other disabilities, can also finally lessen their dependence on cars, and access more of NYC than West Queens and Manhattan.

I strongly urge that, at the very least, QueensLink be permitted to conduct an EIS.

Anthony Phung

11/18/24

I am writing this to the Committee of Transportation and Infrastructure to state the increasing need for the Queenslink project and to start funding for the Environmental Impact Study of Queenslink in resolution 59. Queenslink, which will reuse the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch for both new rail and parks, is a project that will benefit the local communities and others in the surrounding area the most. The new rail link will allow for faster connections from the Rockaways to Midtown Manhattan, while increasing capacity and reducing crowding on existing subway and bus lines. The Q52/Q53 buses, which run parallel to the proposed Queenslink corridor are very crowded, not to mention the high amounts of private vehicle traffic along the same corridor. Since Queenslink will run along an already existing right of way, this is the best chance we have to build a new subway that is cost effective but will also allow for easier travel between northern and southern Queens. This in turn will reduce traffic and pollution that exist along this corridor while adding high quality transit and parks into this area.

Thank you for reading, Anthony

Written Testimony on Resolution 59 (QueensLink EIS)

November 20th, 2024

As a Forest Hills resident without a car who has had friends in Glendale and a job in East New York, the QueensLink would be hugely helpful to me personally in getting around the city. I am lucky to have the access I do to Manhattan, but access to Brooklyn and other parts of Queens is extremely lacking, and the QueensLink would go far to remedy that problem.

Benjamin Gallai

November 12, 2024

Benjamin McFadden

[REDACTED]

Vestal NY 13850

[REDACTED]

Dear City Council Members,

I am reaching out to urge your support for a comprehensive Environmental Impact Study on the QueensLink project. Queens residents have long been underserved by public transit options, with limited connectivity to other parts of the city. Projects like QueensLink represent an essential step toward improving transit equity, reducing congestion, and supporting local economies. Ignoring this opportunity without a fair study would mean continuing to overlook the needs of Queens communities.

Please ensure this project receives the consideration it deserves for a more connected and inclusive New York City.

Sincerely,

Benjamin M. McFadden

I am testifying in support of Resolution 59, calling on the MTA to conduct an EIS on the Rockaway Beach Branch (RBB)/QueensLink

I am a former Richmond Hill resident and a longtime transit advocate who has been involved since the 1990s to restore the RBB. I was vice president of the sadly now in abeyance Committee for Better Transit whose co-founder and president, the late Dr. Stephen Dobrow, rode the last train from Ozone Park in 1962. I also have a dog-eared copy of the definitive but alas out-of-print book "Change at Ozone Park" that I highly recommend reading to understand the RBB and QueensLink.

Having the MTA conduct a proper EIS will settle once and for all this issue. For there have been efforts to restore or abandon/convert the RBB almost since the last train stopped running.

I can attest to the need for QueensLink. I undertook the long and arduous commutes and non-work travel to midtown Manhattan: the choices of either the A from Lefferts (when I lived close to there), the J/Z and F from 121<sup>st</sup> or the Q10 bus to the LIRR at Kew Gardens or the E and F at Union Turnpike/Kew Gardens are not great.

I've also flown out of JFK Airport direct from my office: including when there was a bus from Howard Beach, which was also not a pleasant experience with luggage. I've since taken the AirTrain out of Jamaica and navigating the corridors from the E or J/Z or the LIRR platforms with bags would not be fun either.

Yet every time I rode the A or the J/Z over the LIRR right-of-way or saw the same right-of-way curve into the LIRR main line at Rego Park I could not help thinking how much shorter, faster, and more convenient my trip would have been had the RBB been there. Giving back to me the most precious asset of them all: time. Time to be with my friends, to catch up with any extra work, and move ahead in my career, and more time to spend enjoying all the greatest city in the world has to offer.

I can also attest to the potential value and ROI of QueensLink/RBB. The much shorter journey times it promises to midtown Manhattan, and with its connections to The Bronx, Westchester, and Connecticut (from Grand Central), and New Jersey (from Penn Station), as well as direct to Long Island City the easier it would be for Rockaways and South Queens residents to access employment and educational opportunities there as well as for entertainment and recreation and yes to see family and friends. This is the "personal ROI".

If you want to check out the time savings compare the old LIRR schedules from before 1950 (when the Jamaica Bay trestle caught fire that severed the line) – factor in a short connecting trip on the E or 1/2/3 to Times Square/Broadway area – with the options available today. There's quite a difference for such a relatively short mileage-wise journey.

Building the QueensLink would correct the great social injustice that was perpetrated when the City of New York – and the State of New York that took over the New York City Transit Authority – failed to complete longstanding plans to convert the RBB from railroad to subway and connect it into the Queens Blvd lines at 63<sup>rd</sup> Drive at Rego Park; a bellmouth was built there in anticipation of conversion. The Pennsylvania Railroad that bought the LIRR principally to gain access to Sunnyside to build its yards to serve its new Penn Station and connect with the New Haven Railroad via its then-new East River tunnels saw the writing on the wall in the 1930s for the LIRR Queens commuter trains when the subways were built. But to the best of my knowledge and research no such explanation for why the conversion was never finished.

Time also is money. And the shorter the commute/non-commute trip the more valuable the real estate. And that means higher property values, increased taxation revenues, and good-income-generating construction and permanent jobs. Hence the financial ROI. There is no reason why the Rockaways and South Queens should *not* be booming with their best-of-all worlds access to the ocean, Manhattan, and to the world through JFK Airport: except for the slow, long about, and butt-bruising subway ride.

Having lived in Richmond Hill I am also acutely aware of the longstanding concerns – and resulting strident if understandable opposition – of trackside residents to restoring the RBB/QueensLink principally for noise/disruption reasons. But these residents (like me) inflict noise and air pollution impacts on other communities when they leave and enter theirs in their cars, car services, and buses and yes flights like the Rockaways/Howard Beach. That's just life. We give and take the footprints. Why should one or two neighborhoods be protected when their residents are allowed to harm other neighborhoods?

The QueensLink plans call for proven state-of-the-art noise mitigation methods to protect trackside residents along with rail-and-trails. Rail/transit lines have successfully been restored/built new above-ground since the RBB was abandoned north of Ozone Park in cities like Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami, San Diego, San Francisco Bay area, and Seattle, and in Edmonton, Alberta and Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. I can attest to them having ridden, commuted, and also wrote about most of these for leading transportation trade publications.

These examples are worth checking out. I am quite familiar with Vancouver from having lived in the city and in one of its suburbs, White Rock, where I also vice-chaired its transportation committee. The SkyTrain system, first opened in late 1985, uses the same and yes admittedly loud LIM propulsion as AirTrain; AirTrain is descended from SkyTrain. The core Vancouver-Burnaby-New Westminster-Surrey section passes through residential neighborhoods and parks along with bustling commercial cores; there is a rail trail, the BC Parkway, built underneath it. Yes, one of those parks is



named Central Park. And SkyTrain is built on top of an abandoned electric interurban commuter railroad, the British Columbia Electric Railway Central Park line. And it is being extended to Langley.

Since SkyTrain's initial opening station-side resident and commercial development has boomed: just as it was intended, generating strong positive ROI. The Langley extension is key to enabling smart green high-density job-generating growth in Metro Vancouver.

But don't take just my word for it, Have a conversation with former MTA chair Tom Prendergast. He was briefly chair of Metro Vancouver's transit system, TransLink. He presided over the 2010 opening of the Canada Line rapid transit line, which uses conventional propulsion and is part subway/part elevated from downtown Vancouver to Richmond and Vancouver International Airport (YVR).

Thank you for your time.

Brendan Read

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING

NOVEMBER 18, 2024

To Chair Brooks-Powers, Chair Joann Ariola, and the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee:

Thank you for hearing my public comment on Monday. Here are a few items in hopes of clarifying it:

**FOR HIGH CAPACITY AND FREQUENT SCHEDULING  
THE ROCKAWAY BEACH BRANCH MUST BE CON-  
NECTED TO THE LIRR AT REGO PARK,  
AND ANY EIS DOCUMENTATION  
SHOULD REFLECT THAT**

The best way to arrange for the quickest possible rail service to Rockaway Beach and Far Rockaway - with the highest capacity possible - is to rebuild the existing connection to the LIRR at Rego Park. I've been trying to convince both the MTA and QueensLink for some years that a four-track connection there would afford tremendous capacity and passenger draw, and be cheaper to build than any subway connection that could possibly be devised.

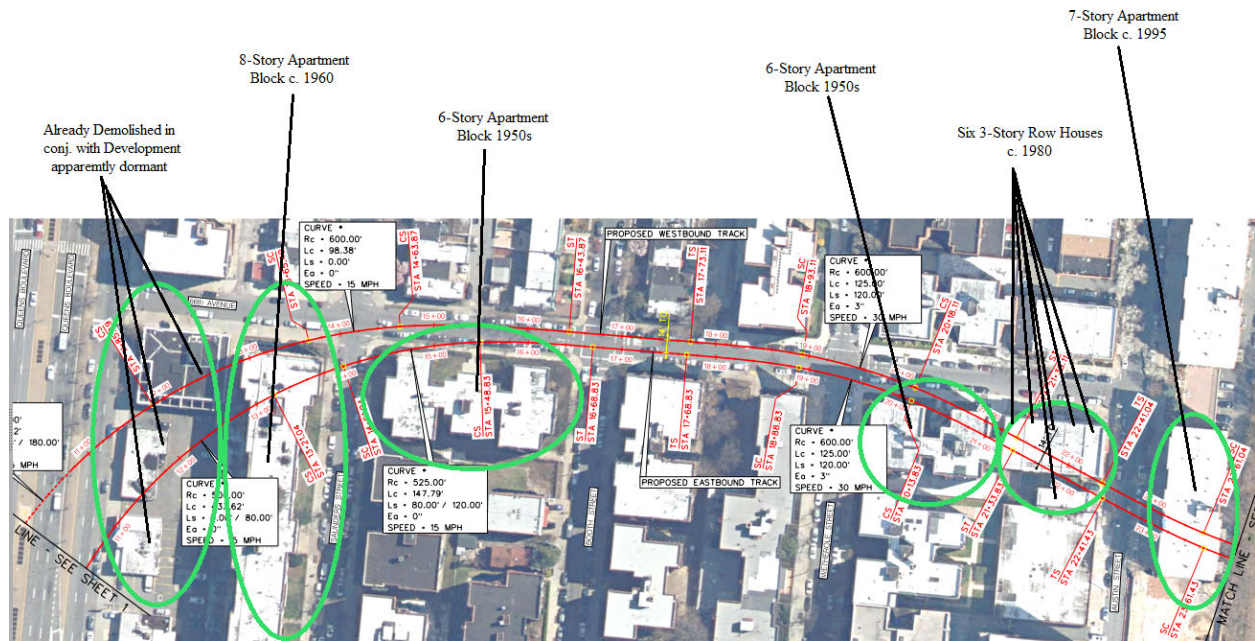
Investing in capital improvements is supposed to target the biggest passenger draw, though it's not always done that way. For example, the East Side Access Project has resulted in the necessity to run about twice as many trains in order to serve two termini in Manhattan, yet currently the LIRR is only carrying about 80% of the passengers they did in 2019. The ridership will recover, but at that point train capacity and the ability to schedule convenient service will have become seriously strained owing to all the additional trains.

By building a four-track LIRR connection, and a new station at Rego Park, you can ultimately serve three sectors: Eastbound by way of Glendale Junction, making for six continuous tracks all the way to Jamaica; the Airport, diverging at Howard Beach; and the Rockaways, ultimately connecting through to West Hempstead. The Rockaway Beach Branch has the breadth and capacity to handle all those services, plus the A-train: ultimately with new fixed-span bridges at Jamaica Bay. The bulk of AirTrain service would ultimately be switched to the Rockaway Beach Branch for a one-seat ride to the airport originating at Grand Central Madison, and later the Financial District/Calatrava Oculus (under West Street, specifically) by way of Atlantic Avenue.

This is the correct way to husband the enormous capacity and utility of the Rockaway Beach Branch for our future passengers.

**SEE ILLUSTRATIONS BELOW**

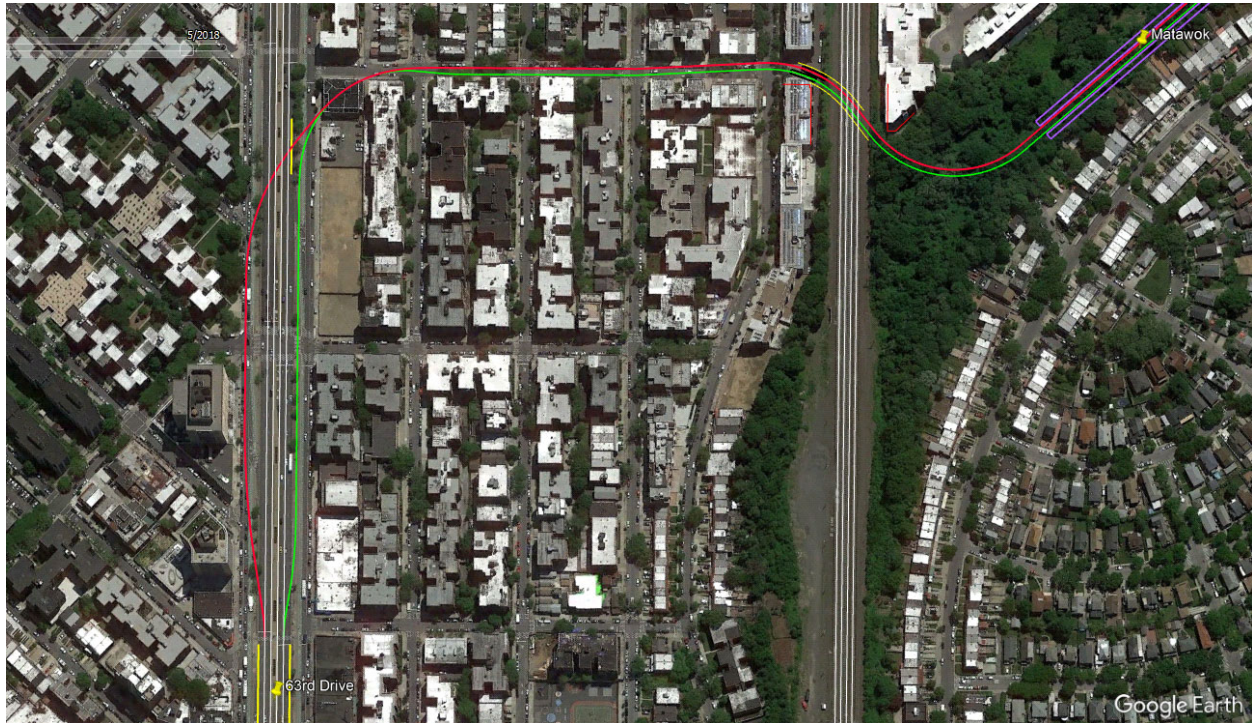
## 66TH AVENUE BUILDINGS REQUIRING DEMOLITION UNDER THE SYSTRA SUBWAY CONNECTION PLAN



The \$800,000 study commissioned by the MTA from consultant SYSTRA gives a highly improbable layout for the subway connection. As illustrated in the SYSTRA document (above) the subway connection would take out **thirteen buildings**, eleven of them residential. Since the study appeared in 2019 the three commercial buildings on Queens Boulevard (left) have been demolished and preparations are under way for new construction. The remaining buildings include: Four Large Apartment Blocks of 6, 7 and 9 stories, and six 3-story townhomes. (The number of stories given in the illustration is wrong. Apartments at right and left are 7 and 9 stories respectively.)

(Continued Below)

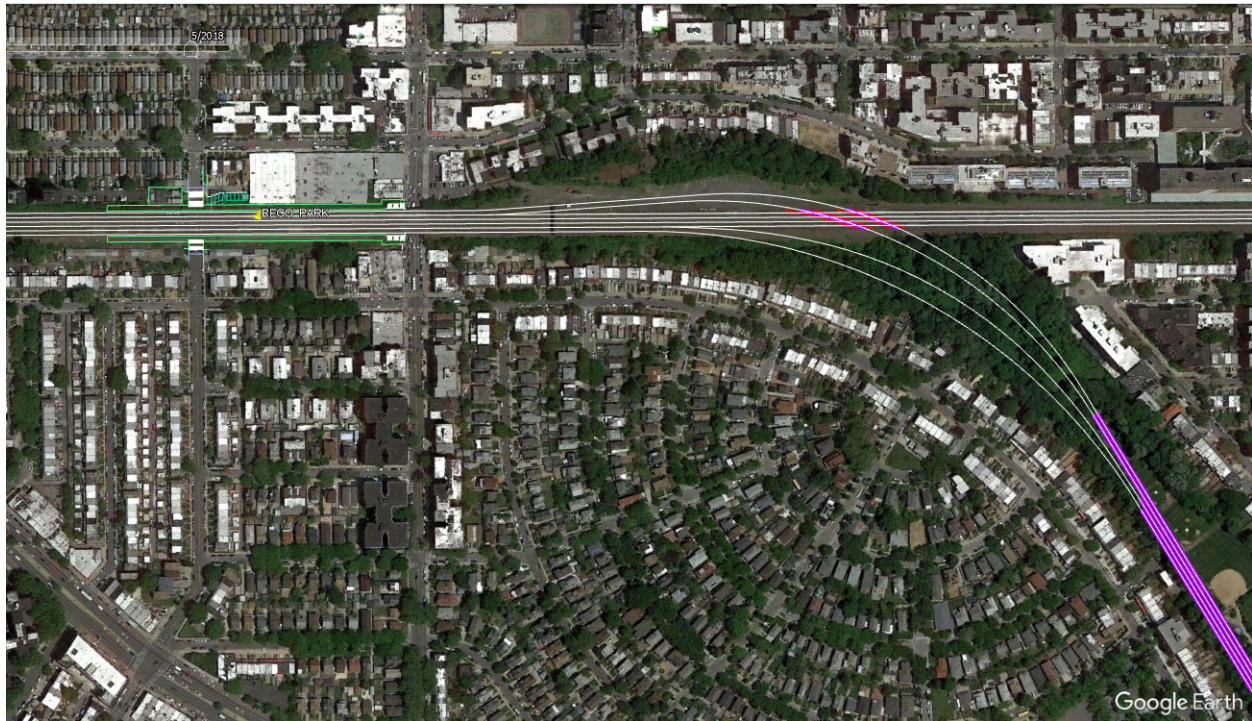
## MY VERSION OF THE SUBWAY CONNECTION



*In December of 2019 I sent QueensLink a copy of this Alternate Plan for the subway connection, along with a description explaining my reasoning for the revision. In the drawing, the eastbound leg (Green) - which was left unbuilt at the time of the subway's construction - would diverge from the subway east of the 63rd Drive Station under Queens Boulevard, and descend to a point under the westbound leg (Red) at the corner of 66th Avenue, thus avoiding demolition of two then-extant buildings on Queens Boulevard. The funeral home on the corner though, would have required removal in order to put the subway through, as would a substantial part of the already-built westbound leg of the subway connection. These modifications would have addressed the problems at the corner as far as possible, as well as those encountered at two of the apartment blocks noted above. But... THAT'S NOT ALL...*

*Rather than a tangent segment extending south (right) along 66th Avenue, varying degrees of contortion to accommodate a big reverse curve required to avoid two apartment blocks on opposite sides of the LIRR tracks would extend almost back to Queens Boulevard, commencing where the two legs separate from their "stacked" configuration near the corner there. The reverse curve is not the best, but with the the unified fleet of B-Division cars now restricted in length to 60' it is certainly possible. The two 250-foot radius curves with a 80' tangent in between doesn't leave much space for speed or superelevation, but is possible to traverse at not-unreasonably-slow speed with the 60' cars. Perhaps the apartment block in close quarters to the right of the LIRR Main Line could be truncated or demolished. The Matawok Station is my idea, taken after another station of the same name that was located nearby. There are a couple of cross streets now dormant and semi-dormant to provide access, and the long curve adjacent makes for a good stopping place.*

## COMPARE THE TORTURED SUBWAY ALIGNMENT TO THIS SPEEDY FOUR-TRACK LIRR CONNECTION



*The four-track format was no doubt anticipated when this canyon of a grade-separated connection was introduced circa 1930. At the same time the LIRR Main Line was widened to six tracks running west to Elmhurst, with now-vacant girder bridges to accommodate Tracks 1 and 6 located at 51st and 57th Avenues, the Long Island Expressway, Woodhaven Boulevard and 63rd Drive. The side tracks thus exit the Main Line here without necessity of any track switches. Overall, its characteristics would make construction of this high-capacity interlocking a lot less expensive than that of any possible subway connection, having even so, lower capacity and speed. In the four-track configuration shown, the below-grade Rockaway Beach Branch would run south to-and-through Glendale Junction (see below) before emerging to the open air - and so the QueensWay folks would hopefully be appeased.*

*The Rego Park station as shown is located at 63rd Drive - a five minute walk from the subway station with the same street name - and has had an additional set of stairs added for access at 63rd Avenue, whereas its earlier incarnation had only the set on the south side. (outbound: the side with fewer steps) I believe the provision of elevators at the 63rd Avenue entrances would be considered legally not "practicable" for ADA purposes, though small lifts might be appropriate if they could be secured. The ability to differentiate fare-paying passengers digitally for that purpose is always improving. The platforms are shown as being 850' long, and could be expanded to a thousand or more, but would require further entrance accommodations including ADA accessibility, in case the area in question to the west is redeveloped sometime.*

# GLENDALE JUNCTION



*The Glendale Junction station has two platform levels, with the track seen on the top in the picture being the inbound track from Jamaica, approaching by way of the Montauk Branch through Forest Park to the upper platform level, and crossing over the inbound track from Rockaway at lower left. Its platform forms a balcony opposite the track, within the pie-shaped enclosure of the station. The inbound track from Rockaway is at the lower platform level, forming the main level within the station enclosure. The balcony platform is connected by two below-grade bridges, one being circular with stairs to both the surface and down to the main level, and the other, at the edge of the pie, having two stairs to the main (lower) level only. The bridges extend across the main level to one of the open-air outbound platforms between which the two outbound tracks of the Rockaway Beach Branch run, on the upper platform level, and from one of which the eastbound track to Jamaica (and Richmond Hill) diverges by way of the station's only track switch. All four platforms are just over 1000' long.*

*The drawing shows six elevators: three at the north end (left) of three of the platforms, and two at the central, doughnut-shaped bridge and stair landing. A sixth elevator is shown behind the two stairs giving onto the main level from the southern, curved balcony. A seventh elevator would be located within Queens Metropolitan High School to keep it secure, and the double sets of stairs in front of the school should be securable at both street level and at the platform, the same being accessible also from the central part of the station. Three tracks run south from the station. The new below-grade configuration of these three tracks would obviate the deep cut that Union Turnpike is subjected to in order to get under the the Rockaway Beach Branch tracks passing over on a bridge. Instead, the road would be raised up to the approximate level of the sidewalk, thereby eliminating time consuming walking to accomplish vertical extremities by pedestrians, with the tracks passing unintrusively under the road. Both of the existing railroad bridges flanking the station on the Rockaway Beach Branch line would need to be removed in order to build the below-grade configuration of the new vertical alignment.*

*The station would be good for transfers, taking some of the strain off of Jamaica in that respect, which is expected to worsen with increasing demand for train capacity in coming years. It might also eventually become the transfer point for airport passengers from Long Island, as the gangly bridgework running down the middle of the Van Wycke may be expected to wear out in 60 years or so, at which point the more direct one-seat ride via the RBB should be ready to roll.*

*The improvements contemplated here would make little or no demand in terms of property-taking or demolition of private property, which sometimes seems planned as if it was a desirable characteristic for linear transportation projects to have.*

*With Hope for a Brighter Rail Transit Future, and for Cooperation within the agency/planning/construction matrix to achieve it,*

Bruce W. Hain

Jamaica, NY 11435

<https://www.rail-nyc-access.com>

To the Council:

I am submitting testimony in favor of Res 0059-2024, introduced by committee Chair Brooks-Powers, calling for a comprehensive EIS for the QueensLink project, also known as the reactivation of the Rockaway Beach Branch.

As someone who grew up in Southeast Queens, I know the great impact reactivation of this line, and potential integration into the subway system, could have on the area. Not only could the line provide an additional radial toward Manhattan, but it would also provide a critical north-south intra-borough connector, which Queens greatly lacks. And contemporary technology will allow for quieter service and the opportunity for parkland along the right of way, rather than squandering the transit opportunity as with the QueensWay plan.

Finally, QueensLink would connect with a project most intriguing to my district, the Interboro Express. Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights would, from these two lines, be connected to Jackson Heights, Forest Hills, Rego Park, Woodhaven, and the Rockaways — trips that would have required either multiple transfers, interminable ride times, or most likely both. And since both projects almost exclusively use extant rights of way, the need for easements or eminent domain is minimal and the net positive impact on residents is high.

I urge you to pass this resolution to show Janno Lieber, Jamie Torres-Springer, and the rest of the MTA that QueensLink deserves a clear, honest look, with an eye toward its addition to at least the 2030-2034 Capital Plan.

Best regards,  
Daniel Pecoraro  
Bay Ridge, Brooklyn



Dave Ciolino-Volano

Woodside, NY 11377

To the New York City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure:

My name is Dave Ciolino-Volano, and I am Resident of Woodside, Queens, and a high school teacher at EPIC High School North in South Richmond Hill, Queens. I am writing to express my strong support for Resolution 59, which would require the MTA to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement on the QueensLink project.

As an educator who witnesses daily the transportation challenges faced by our students, families, and community members, I can attest to the critical need for expanded transit options in South Queens. Every morning, I see my students struggling with long, complex commutes that often involve multiple bus transfers or reliance on private vehicles, simply to reach their school. I personally experience these challenges during my daily commute from Woodside to South Richmond Hill, a journey that could be significantly shortened by the QueensLink.

The QueensLink proposal would utilize the existing defunct LIRR Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way to create a crucial north-south transit connection that would serve 47,000 riders daily. The buses along Woodhaven Boulevard are among the most crowded and slowest in the entire city, with riders suffering through lengthy delays despite their "Select Bus Service" designation. The QueensLink could reduce commute times by up to 30 minutes for residents traveling between South Queens and Manhattan, providing a reliable alternative to the overburdened Woodhaven Boulevard corridor

Converting this valuable transit corridor into the proposed "QueensWay"-only park would be a missed opportunity of historic proportions. The QueensLink plan demonstrates we can have both: a vital transit connection alongside 33 new acres of green space. While the mayor and his wealthy donors push for only a park, the QueensLink proposal proves we don't have to choose between parks and transit – we can create both side-by-side, serving our community's needs for both transportation and green space.

The QueensLink would remove thousands of car trips from our roads daily, leading to reduced carbon emissions and improved air quality throughout Queens. In the face of accelerating climate change, we cannot afford to miss this opportunity to shift more commuters toward sustainable public transit while creating better connections to essential services throughout the borough.

I strongly urge the Committee to support Resolution 59 and require a full Environmental Impact Statement on the QueensLink. The results will demonstrate what many of us who live and work in South Queens already know: this project is essential for the future of our borough.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dave Ciolino-Volano  
NYC DOE Teacher, EPIC High School North  
Woodside and South Richmond Hill, Queens

Testimony to New York City Council Committee on Transportation and  
Infrastructure-11/18/24

Greetings committee members,

I want to thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Resolution 59. This resolution would call on the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to conduct a comprehensive Environmental Impact Study for the QueensLink Transit proposal. This would be a major step in proving its viability, thus making the proposal one step closer to becoming reality.

The QueensLink project would use the abandoned LIRR Rockaway Beach Branch to build a new New York City Subway line as well as a park trail. This would provide thousands of Queens residents transit relief **and** access to greenspace.

As someone born in the neighborhood of Far Rockaway, Queens, I and many of its residents experienced the struggle of transit access. Delays on the A Line, buses, and LIRR have made us have some of the longest commutes in the five boroughs. Crowding on the Q52/Q53 bus and constant traffic has made travel to the rest of the borough difficult and time-consuming. This is especially true for residents of other Queens neighborhoods trying to go to the beach for the summer.

With QueensLink, the M Line would be extended and not only just provide Rockaway residents with a quicker commute to the city, but also give us greater connectivity to multiple Queens neighborhoods. Visiting friends in Astoria, eating at restaurants in Jackson Heights, shopping at the Queens Center Mall in Elmhurst, and enjoying a Mets game at Citi Field in Flushing. All would now be a convenient one or two-train ride away with QueensLink. At least 47,000 riders from Rego Park to the Rockaways and more would benefit from this service.

This would also allow the MTA the opportunity to provide operational changes that would benefit the subway system and riders as a whole. Diverging the M Line from Rego Park would make terminal operations easier at Forest Hills-71 Av station, thus allowing more turnaround. There are also existing provisions that the proposal can use to turn Woodhaven Blvd station into an express station, quickening trips for users of the station and providing much-needed relief for crowding on the Jackson Heights express station.

This is not a fight between rails or trails. QueensLink would give us **both** rails **and** trails with up to 33 acres of new parks and protected bike paths along the new transit line. To ensure the park trail does not prevent the new rail line, it is of the utmost importance that we convince the MTA that QueensLink is a viable project and has the support of many communities in Queens. This is why an EIS is urgently needed for this.

I strongly urge this committee and the council as a whole to support Resolution 59 and make it so that several years from now, the people of Queens can ride and walk along QueensLink.

Thank you for your support.

**David Acheampong**

Honorable Members of New York City Council,

I urge you to call upon the MTA to conduct a comprehensive Environmental Impact Study on the viability of QueensLink.

I believe that rails and trails can coexist here in Queens. And that an extension of the M train to these four new stops would ease a transit desert here in The World's Borough. Creating economic opportunity, and making it easier to move throughout the city for work, care, and joy.

Thank you very much,

David Lawson  
Astoria, Queens, NYC  
11103

To whomever it may concern,

As a long time resident of Queens, I am writing to express my support for Queenslink, the plan to restore the currently abandoned 3.5 mile long Rockaway Beach Branch.

Interconnectivity of Northern and Southern Queens has long been exceedingly poor. The only rail connection between the two is either the G train on the far west side of Queens, or taking the E/J to Jamaica and back.

The construction of Queenslink would allow countless new travel opportunities that were once entirely infeasible, and reduce congestion near the corridor by creating a fast, efficient subway line. The project is also financially prudent, as the Right-Of-Way for the trains to travel through already exists, and would allow for a far less cost-intensive subway line compared to projects like the Second Avenue Subway.

Furthermore, the Queenslink plan also creates 33 Acres of new parks, allowing Queens residents to get the best of both worlds, with new green space and a much-needed mass transit line both being accounted for.

The Queenslink plan would vastly improve the Quality of Life of countless Queens residents by providing them with fast and efficient train line, 33 Acres of new parks, and the reduction of congestion along Woodhaven Boulevard.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
David Marocik

My name is Douglass McDonough. I am an autistic 19-year-old living on Long Island, New York. I have been an avid train enthusiast since I was two years old, especially if it's the MTA. As a matter of fact, I happen to be originally from Queens. Here is my testimony on why I believe QueensLink should be built.

QueensLink is a very important project because it will allow for a much faster and much more efficient transit option between Northern and Southern Queens. While it is true that there are major bus routes on the nearby Woodhaven Boulevard Corridor (the Q52 and Q53 Select Bus Services), the problem with buses is that they are not always entirely efficient or reliable, because they can easily get caught in traffic congestion just like the countless other commuters who drive their cars on the roads alongside them. If QueensLink is built, it could greatly relieve traffic congestion along Woodhaven Boulevard, as many commuters who use it might choose to shift their mode of transportation to the new subway line instead of driving and risking getting stuck in traffic. If it is built before Phase 3 of the Second Avenue Subway is completed, it will allow for the G Train to have service restored on Queens Boulevard. Personally, I think the G Train can be extended either back to Forest Hills or on QueensLink itself.

Another problem with cars and buses is that most of them run on fossil fuels, which emit gasses that can be very harmful to the environment. Subway trains never do this, as they run entirely on electricity. By building QueensLink, the amount of pollution in the air will be reduced dramatically, which will lead to a healthier way of living for current and future generations.

If QueensWay is built instead, then QueensLink can never be built, thus leading to Queens being permanently and irreversibly divided. With the existence of QueensLink, the Borough of Queens will be much better connected, as commuting will become much easier. So I ask that the MTA please build QueensLink, because it would mean a lot to me and countless other commuters in the Borough of Queens. Thank you.

-Douglass

Good evening,

I am writing this to testify in favor of Resolution 59. Resolution 59 calls for the MTA to conduct an Environmental Impact Study for reactivating the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch for subway service. Reactivating the Rockaway Beach Branch akin to Queenslink's proposal would do wonders for Queens transit.

Queenslink would parallel Woodhaven Blvd and Van Wyck Expy, two of the most congested roads in the city, in addition to giving relief to the overcrowded Q52 and Q53 buses.

Queenslink would build on the model of circumferential transit, as the Rockaway Beach Branch would connect Queens neighborhoods without detouring to Manhattan. Nationwide studies have shown that this type of trip has been the most popular in recent times.

Queenslink would shave up to 15 minutes one way for Rockaway commuters heading into Manhattan by opening a more direct route into Midtown Manhattan. This would come as a major benefit when Queens commuters suffer from one of the highest commute times in the nation.

Queenslink would add extra trains to the Rockaways, allowing wait times to go down by as much as 50 percent. This would come as a major relief to Rockaway residents waiting 12-15 minutes for a train.

Queenslink would also create new park space. This would come as a boon for pedestrians and cyclists, as Woodhaven Blvd has some terribly designed overpasses. Queenslink provides newer and more direct overpasses, like over the Lower Montauk Branch.

In conclusion, with the numerous benefits above, this is why I support the Queenslink proposal and the aim of Resolution 59: conducting an EIS for the Rockaway Beach Branch.

Hello,

I am writing in support of the Queenslink project. Using this space to reestablish train service would provide vital connections for the surrounding communities and the entire city. I stand with Queens to demand better transit. I support the QueensLink as a way to reduce travel times, increase transit and economic justice, and provide more park space for Queens.

Best,  
Emma Stephens



My name is Gregory K. Williams and I am a professional musician living in Ozone Park. My wife and I have been homeowners in Ozone Park for almost four years, and have been a resident of New York City for the last fourteen years. I am a constituent of Councilwoman Ariola's, and I stand in strong support of Resolution 59 and the plan for the MTA to do an Environment Impact Statement on the viability of QueensLink.

I am writing to you to express my strong support for the QueensLink Project, which would restore subway access on the former LIRR corridor, as well as provide opportunities for new park space along that corridor. As someone who frequently takes either the subway (A train from either Aqueduct or Rockaway Blvd) or the LIRR to work in Manhattan (from the Forest Hills stop), having a subway link that connects Ozone Park to Manhattan more directly than the A train would save precious time when getting to work. It would also make it much easier to take mass transit directly to other parts of Queens that I frequent regularly.

I want to extend my support to this cause, and would love to find a way to help to make sure that the Environmental Impact Statement can come to fruition on this, and that it is put on the fast track for transportation projects in our wonderful city. I want to be part of the solution of being able to get around ALL parts of the city without having to rely heavily on a car. I also sense that there are many like-minded voters throughout the corridor of Queenslink who would be eager to have additional subway options connecting the northern and southern parts of Queens.

I hope that the city council will vote to support an Environmental Impact Study to see if the QueensLink will be viable.

Sincerely,

Gregory K. Williams

11/18/2024

November 12, 2024

Jacob Shamash

[REDACTED]

Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520

[REDACTED]

New York City Council,

I am writing this letter to strongly urge the MTA to conduct a comprehensive Environmental Impact Study on the viability of QueensLink. Having lived in Queens, it has become very clear to me that this borough lags far behind others in terms of public transit and with regard to access and development. Expanding mass transit in Queens isn't just overdue, it's essential to the continued growth of the borough. Such a project would bring economic growth and revitalization to parts of Queens that have long been overlooked and neglected.

New York City imposes some of the highest income taxes in the United States, while residents face one of the highest costs of living globally. For those of us in these communities, projects like QueensLink offer a chance for relief, greater equity, and economic progress, and a reassurance that our tax dollars are being used effectively. If this project is dismissed without even a fair study, it would all but confirm that our government is neglecting the very communities it is meant to serve.

An Environmental Impact Study is the bare minimum to give this project a fair chance. It's a critical step to ensure we're making informed, responsible choices for Queens' future and for the city as a whole. The QueensLink could be transformative, potentially reducing commute times, increasing property values, and stimulating local economies. Queens residents deserve a transit network that matches the demands of the 21st century, and it's time for our government to step up and deliver.

I urge the MTA to move forward with this study to make way for an equitable future, one that invests in all five boroughs, not just a select few.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Jacob D. Shamash

Hello city council members,

As a long-time resident of Central Queens, I strongly support properly studying reactivating the rail line for the project called the "Queenslink". While a park may sound good on paper, this is one of the few chances we have to future-proof transit in the area as the neighborhood has been evolving rapidly. Many of my neighboring communities are transit deserts as it is, more transit options would benefit all of the neighbors, as well as NYC in general.

There are already plenty of parks, and I fear we won't see the growth developers promise if it is just money thrown at a new park. We need sustainable long term solutions, and transit has to be at the forefront of that.

The city is on the verge of realizing the potential of more outer borough transit with the IBX. It is clear that as the outer boroughs have been growing, transit has not kept up.

I do equally support a park/transit hybrid, but transit has to be the center piece as this is a once in a generation opportunity to fix a major connectivity issue for the area.

Thank you,

James

# MEMORANDUM

**TO:** New York City Council

**FROM:** Jay Sherman, Resident of Forest Hills, Queens

**DATE:** November 14, 2024

**SUBJECT:** THE QUEENS LINK IS VITAL FOR NYC!

The QueensLink project has the following advantages:

1. The 3.5 mile long Rockaway Beach Branch is one of the last remaining rail right-of-ways left in New York City.
2. The project includes four new stations with transfers to the A, J/Z, E,F,R, M and 7 trains, as well as the LIRR.
3. It creates up to 33 acres of new parks and protected bike paths along the right-of-way.
4. The project is expected to provide subway access for at least 47,000 daily riders.
5. Significantly reduce car congestion and traffic jams.
6. Create many jobs and spur economic development.
7. Bring inexpensive mass transit to the transit deserts of Queens.
8. Improve public health & address climate change by reducing vehicle emission pollution.

There is a debate over whether we can have rail restoration or a park.

We at QueensLink say that Queens can have both a park and a rail line. By designing both a transit line and a park space together can we move Queens closer to the transit equity we all deserve.

We are asking that the City Council look past the NIMBY attitude of those few people who feel threatened by the rail line and work for the greater good of all the citizens of NYC who would benefit from this new transit line.

We are asking the city and the MTA to build the QueensLink, which will provide a one seat ride between Midtown, northern Queens and southern Queens, and provide up to 33 acres of new park space along the right-of-way.

Let's do it!

Jenna Tiplado

In Support of an Environmental Impact Study for the QueensLink

I'm a Queens resident and I'm writing to support an Environmental Impact Study for the QueensLink project. The QueensLink is a win-win-win from a climate, health, and equity perspective. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change tells us that the science is clear - climate change disproportionately impacts already marginalized people and drastic, timely action is needed to reduce the likelihood of the worst projected impacts such as extreme weather. We can reduce these health impacts by reducing our greenhouse gas emissions to meet New York's climate goals by expanding public transit infrastructure. The QueensLink will also benefit some coastal communities like mine in the Rockaways that have some of the longest commuting times in the city and experience climate-exacerbated flooding. But that's not all. QueensLink will benefit the health & wellbeing of our communities. People living in Queens will have more and faster transit options, get some relief from traffic-related air pollution that harms health, and experience the recreation and health benefits of greenspace. The QueensLink would give the residents of the Rockaway peninsula, which experience some of the longest commute times in the city and are facing a 5 month A train shutdown in 2025, a direct train ride to parts of Queens we are disconnected from and cut travel times to work and other destinations. Studies have shown that long commute times are associated with decreased sleep, decreased physical activity, decreased time to cook your own food, and more visits to your doctor and lost days of work and these effects may be worse for people who drive versus people who take a train. Expanding public transit infrastructure through the QueensLink project will not only make moving around the city easier but it can give people a choice to leave their car at home, reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and also reducing the harmful air pollution that has so many negative health impacts. The QueensLink is a smart project that is a win for commuters, a win for the economy, a win for the climate, and a win for public health. Please support an Environmental Impact Study! Thank you!

Hello To Those Whom This May Concern,

I am writing this to express my wholehearted interest and support to link our communities together through the smart use of land, by enabling the QueenLink to go forward. This will help serve many people and bring a more equitable way of navigating, living, and working in the city.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

-Jeran Halfpap, Flushing Resident

Hearing: Monday, November 18, 2024, 10:00am, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Written testimony submitted by: Jessica DaPolito

Topic: Proponent of QueensLink

Hello committee members,

As a resident of Forest Hills, I strongly support the development of the QueensLink public transportation project. This project presents a unique opportunity across multiple facets:

- Allows for cost efficiency by using a significant stretch existing infrastructure and right-of-way
- Brings much needed transit relief to an extremely auto-congested corridor, which in turn reduces reliance on single-passenger vehicles, amount of smog, and noise pollution from excessive honking
- Provides additional greenspace and recreation areas
- Generates economic influx for southern Queens
- Increases property values near train stops and parks
- Creates the only train line to run north/south in Queens

I understand those in opposition say the project isn't feasible and it will cost more than estimated. But we need to think and plan for the long-term. Investments in infrastructure have favorable returns in the long-run, and this investment is one that will benefit generations to come.

I hope you will consider these benefits to the estimated 47,000 daily riders in addition to countless park goers, and add your support to making this project happen. I would be proud to know my taxes are going a project that would bring such positivity and prosperity to so many people's lives.

Thank you for your time,

Jessica DaPolito

Resident of Forest Hills, Queens

City Council Members,

The QueensLink project is a once in a lifetime opportunity to greatly improve our mass-transit infrastructure. The current corridor is already zoned for rail and the open area will help facilitate efforts to extend the subway lines in the most economical way possible. This is our chance to leave our thumbprint on the evolution of NYC's mass-transit infrastructure.

Regards,  
John

John Ellis

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
Flushing, NY 11365




**Public Statement from Joseph Sortland re: Queenslink**

As a member of the Transportation, Sanitation & Environment Committee for Brooklyn Community Board 3, I am proud to express my support for QueensLink, a transformative project that would enhance transit options for thousands of New Yorkers.

By repurposing the underutilized rail line, QueensLink will create faster, more efficient connections between Queens and the rest of New York City, reducing congestion and improving commute times for underserved communities.

This initiative aligns with our goals of promoting sustainable, equitable, and accessible public transit across the city. I urge the City Council to prioritize and support QueensLink, building a more connected, resilient New York.

Sincerely,  
Joseph Sortland

  
Brooklyn, NY 11238

Hi,

The QueensLink project is extremely needed. In the quest for increasing mobility across NYC, and in alignment with initiatives across the city to reduce car congestion and pollution for resident's quality of life, QueensLink furthers all of these goals.

It further connects Brooklyn and Queens, an area of transportation that has long been reduced to far more limited (and packed) bus coverage and the G train, which serves the western sections of Brooklyn..The increased relevance of the M train has expanded over the 10 years proves the demand for this extension is needed.

Thank you

Julien Tregcoat  
Lifelong NYC resident

Keith Falcon & Esther Fingerhut

Forest Hills, NY 11375

November 15, 2024

Dear New York City Council,

I'm writing to show my support for Resolution 59, asking the MTA to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the QueensLink project. My wife and I recently moved to Forest Hills, and while we love the neighborhood, the lack of nearby public transportation has been a challenge for us.

A new Metropolitan Avenue station would be a huge help for our commutes, cutting down our travel time and giving us easier access to the city. We're also excited about the possibility of adding more walkways and bike lanes around Forest Park, which would make it safer and more enjoyable for everyone.

I think the QueensLink project could be a game-changer for the area, bringing better transit options and making the community even more connected. I hope the MTA moves forward with the EIS to get a full picture of the benefits.

Thanks for considering my thoughts on this. I'm really looking forward to seeing what the QueensLink could bring to our neighborhood.

Sincerely,



Keith Falcon

I would like to see the transit between Queens and Brooklyn drastically improve through pursuit of the QueensLink initiative.

Marvin Blugh

To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I am testifying in support of the Committee calling upon the MTA to conduct a comprehensive Environmental Impact Study (EIS) for the QueensLink project.

QueensLink brings transit justice to the communities of southeast Queens, which have been historically neglected transit options. The new rail line brings an efficient travel alternative to the communities that suffer from some of the longest commute times in the country and will provide a cleaner alternative to the congested, polluting roads of Woodhaven Blvd, Cross Bay Blvd, and the Van Wyck Expressway.

Additionally, the project will connect residents from both ends of the line and spur economic development. Residents of midtown Manhattan and northern Queens will be given a one-seat ride to Ozone Park and vice versa. This is a perfect opportunity to activate existing infrastructure and provide a public good to the diverse boro of Queens.

It is crucial that the MTA conduct a comprehensive EIS for this project to continue moving forward. The communities of southeast Queens deserve a project that incorporates access to transit *and* greenspace, and the QueensLink proposal delivers on both.

Thank you for your time,

Matt Sieracki

My name is Nealesh Guha, and I am a resident of Elmhurst in Queens. I am writing to express my strong support for the QueensLink project, which seeks to revitalize the long-abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch and transform it into a dual-purpose corridor with both rail and trail components.

For over 60 years, the Rockaway Beach Branch has remained dormant, representing a missed opportunity for enhancing connectivity and community in our borough. The QueensLink project presents a unique chance to address this by introducing the first north-south subway line in Queens, stretching from Queens Center Mall to the Rockaways.

By integrating four new stations with connections to the A, J/Z, E, F, R, and 7 trains, as well as the LIRR, we can significantly improve transit access for thousands of residents. This is especially crucial for the communities in southern Queens, who currently endure some of the longest commutes in the nation. Reducing car congestion and emissions through this sustainable transit corridor will not only make travel more efficient but also benefit our environment.

Moreover, the QueensLink project promises to create up to 33 acres of new parks and protected bike paths, enhancing recreational spaces for our community. This dual approach of rails and trails ensures that we meet diverse needs, promoting both transit equity and environmental sustainability.

As a grassroots initiative, QueensLink embodies the values of community-driven development. By incorporating input from local residents, the project addresses key concerns such as safety, noise, and job creation, ensuring that it serves the best interests of our neighborhoods.

In conclusion, the QueensLink project is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create a new backbone for sustainable transportation and recreation in New York City. I urge the NYC Council and the MTA to support Resolution 59 and move forward with the Environmental Impact Statement for QueensLink.

Good afternoon, Chairperson Adams and members of the New York City Council,

My name is Nicholas Ljeskovac, and I am a resident of Forest Hills in Queens, but I am originally from Woodhaven, Queens. I am here today to express my strong support for Resolution 59, which calls on the MTA to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the QueensLink proposal. This project seeks to reutilize the abandoned LIRR Rockaway Beach Branch by extending subway service from the IND Queens Boulevard Line (QBL), creating a vital connection between northern and southern Queens.

The need for this EIS is both urgent and essential for several reasons:

1. **Transportation Equity:** Southern Queens, particularly neighborhoods such as the Rockaways, Broad Channel, and Ozone Park, has long suffered from inadequate public transportation options. Many residents face disproportionately long commutes to reach job centers, educational institutions, and healthcare facilities. The QueensLink would bridge the gap between the north and south, providing a faster, more reliable transit alternative. The EIS is a necessary step in fully understanding the potential benefits and challenges of this proposal, ensuring that underserved communities finally get the transportation access they deserve.
2. **Economic Growth and Opportunity:** By conducting a thorough EIS, the MTA will be able to assess how the QueensLink can stimulate local economies. Easier access to transportation hubs and commercial districts will attract investment, drive local commerce, and create jobs in both northern and southern Queens. The EIS will help quantify these economic benefits, providing a clear picture of how the project can serve as a catalyst for growth and revitalization in communities that have been historically overlooked. Additionally, the construction of the new line will mean new job opportunities in construction.
3. **Environmental and Sustainability Impact:** As New York City strives to reduce its carbon footprint, expanding the city's mass transit system through projects like QueensLink is a critical step toward sustainability. The EIS will allow for a comprehensive analysis of how this project can reduce reliance on cars, lower carbon emissions, and improve air quality. With more commuters using public transportation, traffic congestion would be reduced, resulting in less pollution and a healthier environment for all residents of Queens. With congestion pricing on the horizon, many Queens residents will be discouraged from driving but will also not have a viable alternative to reach Manhattan and Brooklyn without Queenslink.

4. **Utilizing Existing Infrastructure:** The Rockaway Beach Branch has been unused for decades, representing a significant underutilized resource in our city. The QueensLink proposal aims to repurpose this abandoned right-of-way, making use of existing infrastructure to improve transit without requiring the level of disruption or cost associated with entirely new construction. An EIS will provide the necessary data to determine how best to reintroduce this infrastructure in a way that maximizes its potential and minimizes any negative impacts.
  
5. **Community Connectivity and Quality of Life:** The QueensLink will create a direct connection between northern and southern Queens, cutting down on travel times and making it easier for residents to access cultural, recreational, and economic opportunities across the borough. The EIS process will evaluate how this project can enhance quality of life, particularly for working-class and minority communities who often lack efficient transit options. Understanding the social and community impacts of this project is key to ensuring that the benefits of QueensLink are shared equitably across all neighborhoods.

In conclusion, the QueensLink project represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform transportation in Queens. By calling on the MTA to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement, Resolution 59 takes the necessary first step in making this vision a reality. The EIS will provide the detailed information needed to assess the feasibility, benefits, and challenges of this critical project, ensuring that it is pursued with the community and environment in mind.

With congestion pricing on the horizon, and an inbound federal administration that aims to slash environmental regulations and push for more car infrastructure, I strongly urge the City Council to pass Resolution 59 and support the QueensLink proposal, helping to create a more connected, sustainable, and equitable future for the working class residents of Queens and all of New York City.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Nicholas Ljeskovac

██████████ Forest Hills, NY, 11375



## **Testimony to NYC City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**

**Subject:** Support for QueensLink Over QueensWay

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am a native New Yorker and a current resident of Dutch Kills, Queens. As a regular rider of the Queens Boulevard local train line (M and R trains), I urge the Council to prioritize the QueensLink project over the QueensWay proposal for the future of the Rockaway Beach Branch.

### **Broad Benefits of QueensLink**

QueensLink offers material transit improvements that would benefit hundreds of thousands of Queens residents, including many low-income and minority communities. By providing a full-time subway connection along the Rockaway Beach Branch, QueensLink would ensure reliable transit for those currently underserved by the infrequent shuttle service.

This project would also connect 6th Avenue in Manhattan directly to JFK Airport via Howard Beach, a vital link for my neighborhood, Dutch Kills, where hotels are significant employers. Improved airport access would support local businesses and create better job opportunities for residents.

Moreover, QueensLink would enhance the entire Queens Boulevard line by reducing delays caused by train turnarounds at 71st Avenue, improving service for all riders.

### **Quality of Life Improvements**

QueensLink would significantly improve access to Rockaway Beach and Forest Park for all of Queens, not just the neighborhoods directly along the line. For areas like mine, which lack large local parks, this connection to major green spaces and the beach would enhance quality of life, offering recreational opportunities to a much broader population than the QueensWay proposal.

While QueensWay would create a linear park for one corridor, QueensLink incorporates park elements such as bike access while addressing borough-wide transit needs. It's a solution that balances recreational and transportation priorities. It is also a solution that prioritizes all Queens' residents, rather than a special few.

### **Equity and Political Risks**

Though not the primary focus of my testimony, as a black man, I would be remiss not to point out that the QueensWay project largely benefits wealthier, predominantly white neighborhoods while offering little to low-income and minority communities. In choosing QueensWay, the

Council continues a long term trend of prioritizing affluent areas over the broader, more diverse population of Queens.

Additionally, QueensWay's close association with Mayor Eric Adams, whose administration has been marred by allegations of corruption, casts a shadow over the project's integrity. This association reinforces concerns about whose interests are truly being served.

## **Fiscal Responsibility**

The MTA already owns the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way, and repurposing it for transit avoids the exorbitant costs of future land acquisition. Abandoning this corridor would be fiscally irresponsible, especially when QueensLink offers both transit improvements and green space.

## **Conclusion**

QueensLink is a rare opportunity to deliver long-term, borough-wide benefits by improving transit, enhancing access to green spaces, and supporting economic growth. I respectfully urge the Council to prioritize QueensLink by agreeing to an environmental review. It is time to invest in a more connected, equitable, and prosperous future for Queens.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Niger Little-Poole  
Dutch Kills, Queens

Dear Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Please support Resolution 59 in support of Queenslink! Please do not support using the right-of-way for a park. This city has had its public transit infrastructure frozen since the 1940s, and it shows. All the lines are focused on Manhattan-based commuting, something out of date in the 2020s. There is not nearly enough north-south transit through Queens, and it takes way too long to get north-south. This project would take so much traffic off Woodhaven Blvd and connect North Queens to the J/Z, JFK Airport, and the Beach. Everyone I have talked to would rather have a new subway than a park, including people who live in JACKSON HEIGHTS and FOREST HILLS, some of the most relevant neighborhoods. Not using this Right-of-Way for a new transit line shows a real lack of vision and integrity. Queens residents already have some of the longest commutes in the country, and creating further connections will help improve many people's commutes. Investing in this line will create thousands of jobs and take thousands of cars off the road. It would increase the frequency of the Rockaway line from 20 minutes to 7 minutes and increase the frequency on Queens Blvd from 7 minutes to three. I beg of you, please support Queenslink and Resolution 59, for a better future for New York City!

Thank you for your time,

Owen Barbagallo

Now is the Time for QueensLink!

As a Richmond Hill resident, musician, cyclist and father of three daughters that also depend on mass transit, I am asking this committee to consider passing Resolution 59, which calls for an environmental study to be conducted on the viability of QueensLink.

When I first moved to New York in 1997 I lived in Astoria and for almost 20 years, I lived in Jackson Heights. North Queens was where my wife and I moved in together and started a family. As our family grew and we needed a house to accommodate us we decided upon the neighborhood of Richmond Hill for our forever home. And while we love it here, having made new friends and connections, we feel disconnected from our past lives. QueensLink would provide one train access to connect North and South Queens, uniting the borough and allowing greater opportunity for hundreds of thousands of residents to have access to jobs, employment, and for visiting friends and family.

Without QueensLink, certain opportunities are just too difficult to get to because they require too many transfers, reducing our quality of life. For example, my daughter, who is interested in art, would like to attend either the High School for Art and Design or Frank Sinatra HS to pursue her passion. Queenslink would provide one train access between both. Using mass transit today, getting to both schools would require an infrequent bus coupled with two train transfers. Yuck! The same is true for access to Hunter College, an institution I took classes at and my daughter would like to consider for college when that time comes. I am aware of parents here in Richmond Hill/Woodhaven that did not send their children to Hunter simply because it was too difficult to get to. Queenslink would change that.

QueensLink means greater accessibility to schools and work. Currently, my wife works at John Adams and my daughter goes to MS 151, and both are situated right by the abandoned right of way. Instead of having to endure multiple transfers, QueensLink could take them and many other students and staff right to the doorstep of these schools.

The Rockaway beaches are a city treasure that unfortunately is too challenging to get to for many New Yorkers, including fellow Queens residents! QueensLink would provide one train access from Midtown through North Queens down to the Rockaways, which also provides wonderful economic opportunities for the borough. I would love the chance to whisk down to the rockaways with my bike to enjoy the boardwalk, take in the sites and entertainment that the Rockaways have to offer. As the Ramones famously said in their song Rockaway Beach, "The bus is too slow." And, you can't take your bike on the bus!

Speaking of cycling, QueensLink would open up a world of great cycling opportunities for New Yorkers. QueensLink would connect cycling destinations such as the Long Island City waterfront, Forest Park, and the rockaways, making these travel destinations, even more accessible. Can someone say "Staycation!"

With QueensLink, the economic opportunities are endless as it would connect Midtown with the ResortsWorld/Aqueduct complex as well as quicker access to JFK via the AirTrain. QueensLink would also provide transit equity for many communities of color, from Far Rockaway up through Little Guyana and Little Punjab, communities that suffer from a lack of great transit options. As a musician, QueensLink would allow me to have access to the gigs I used to play in neighborhoods like Jackson Heights and Astoria that are impossible to get to now because I can't bring my upright bass on a bus. The only way I can play these shows is if I am willing to Uber there and back, which usually ends up costing more than I would make in playing a three hour show.

For all these reasons, I strongly think that it is a worthwhile endeavor to fund an Environmental Study on QueensLink. Thank you so much for your time.

Paul Trust  
Richmond Hill Resident and QueensLink Team Member

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to voice my strong support for the QueensWay project. Our community has long deserved a solution to the abandoned rail corridor that currently brings blight and misrepresents the vibrancy of Forest Hills. Parks are always a good idea, and the QueensWay offers a chance to turn this neglected space into a cultural and environmental asset for all of Queens.

As a parent, I am particularly excited about the opportunities the QueensWay could provide for future generations. I want my daughter to grow up surrounded by a park that celebrates the arts, fosters creativity, and brings the community together. A space like the QueensWay would not only improve the aesthetic and safety of our neighborhood but also give us a much-needed place to connect with nature, engage with local art, and enjoy meaningful interactions with our neighbors.

Forest Hills itself is a testament to what can be achieved when the city, planners, and architects come together to reimagine a space. The QueensWay would continue this tradition, turning an eyesore into a dynamic hub of nature and culture. I urge the NYC Council and the MTA to support Resolution 59 and take the next step by conducting an Environmental Impact Statement.

Thank you for supporting this visionary project.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Sussman



████████████████████ ██████████  
Forest Hills, NY 11375

Phone: ██████████

E-Mail: r ██████████

November 18, 2024

New York City Council  
250 Broadway  
New York, NY 10007

Re: Testimony in support of QueensLink

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Robert Frederick. I am a resident of Forest Hills, Queens and work as a social service worker in Far Rockaway in Queens, travelling six (6) days a week on public transportation. I am writing in support of QueensLink and its reinitiation into revenue service. My reasons for my support are mentioned below:

- I currently take three (3) buses or take two (2) buses and a train each day to get to work
- My current commute time takes anywhere between 90 minutes & 2 hours due to huge volumes of traffic on the Long Island Expressway, Woodhaven & Cross Bay Boulevards – This is a ridiculous amount of time to invest just to travel within my own borough to get to and from work
- Too much overcrowding on the buses
- There are currently no rapid transport services servicing the corridors I travel each day
- The current transport services in place to take passengers between The Rockaways, central and northern Queens is not sustainable for any climate change initiative. People will increasingly not rely on public transportation and instead use cars
- QueensLink will connect the borough of Queens, as well as other places throughout the City of New York.

I strongly urge the City of New York to please reconsider its decision not to go with QueensWay and please actively support the QueensLink project instead.

If there are any other questions, I can be reached at my contact information listed above.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "R. Frederick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "R" and a prominent flourish at the end.

Robert Frederick



I write simply as a long-time Queens resident, living off the M train in Ridgewood, in strong support of the efforts to move QueensLink forward. I am also a lover of parks and a biker, and I certainly hope that this once-in-a-generation opportunity allows for parkland and a new bike path, but the essential nature of the rail link is primary. For me and my family, this will be transformative. Please keep this project moving forward!

Ross Perlin  
Queens resident

Dear City Council Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for the QueensLink plan, a transformative project that will revolutionize transportation and public space in East Queens. As a resident of the outer boroughs, I've experienced firsthand the challenges of car dependency and limited transit options. The QueensLink proposal offers a visionary solution by converting an underutilized rail corridor into a multi-use transit and recreation corridor. This plan will not only provide a critical new Express route connecting communities but also create a comprehensive multi-use path that promotes cycling, walking, and reduced car dependency. By supporting this project and allowing QueensLink to the City Council can take a significant step towards more sustainable, accessible, and community-centered urban infrastructure. I urge you to move forward with this innovative approach to reimagining our city's transportation network.

Sincerely,  
Ryan Quinn  
Astoria, Queens

To whom it may concern,

I am a Queens resident and have lived in several parts of the borough now. I currently reside in Forest Hills however, the issue of transporting from Queens to Brooklyn is universal to any part of those boroughs. It is very frustrating as it is far more timely to travel between these two boroughs on the subway than it should; being that they are side by side. I frequently have to travel from Queens to Brooklyn in early morning hours when the trains are local, unreliable and I have no choice but to detour by going into Manhattan. Public transportation is pivotal for the working class and we are not able to afford cars to drive us back and forth between these two neighborhoods. So I am testifying in support of Resolution 59 to make transportation between these two more accessible and affordable. It is important that the general public have access to transportation that is half the time of the current commute between Queens and Brooklyn especially at late night and early hours.

Thank you for your time,  
Sarah Daigle

**November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Testimony of Sean Ogle for Resolution 59**

Councilwoman Brooks-Powers, Councilman Holden, Councilwoman Ariola:

My name is Sean Ogle, I am a lifelong resident of Middle Village and I am writing to testify in support of Queenslink, a reactivation of the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch.

I am a regular user of the Q11/Q21 and Q52/Q53 buses, which travel North and South on Woodhaven Boulevard. During rush hour, these buses become dangerously overcrowded, slow, and completely at the mercy of traffic generated by private automobiles and trucks. For example, there are times when traveling from Queens Boulevard to Eliot Avenue, a distance of a mere 1/3rd of a mile, takes upwards of 15 minutes because of traffic; it is literally faster to walk. Dedicated bus lanes, although helpful and a step in the right direction, are constantly blocked by double-parked cars and trucks making deliveries, and are only present for parts of the bus route.

Supporting Queenslink and building a subway extension using the old Rockaway Beach Branch will alleviate congestion on Woodhaven Boulevard and greatly improve the lives of commuters: Those traveling from South Queens to North Queens via the bus will have one fewer bus to subway transfer to make, commuters packed into the Q52/Q53 buses can take the new subway line instead, motorists may be inclined to leave their cars at home knowing there's a one-seat ride up Woodhaven Boulevard, relieving congestion for those who have to ride in private automobiles and for trucks.

In addition to relieving congestion on Woodhaven Boulevard, Queenslink would allow for the return of the G Train back to the Queens Boulevard line, something we have not had in 20 years. Throughout all of high school I commuted from Middle Village to Downtown Brooklyn using the G Train every day, which required a lengthy and irritating transfer because the G Train terminated in Long Island City. Queenslink would allow Queens residents living along the Queens Boulevard Line to once again have a one-seat crosstown ride from Queens to Brooklyn, as the G Train would once again be able to run all the way to Forest Hills.

I ask you to support at the very least an environmental impact study for this project, a recent survey by Senator Addabbo's office published in August shows that this project has considerable support from your constituents<sup>1</sup>.

Thank you for time and consideration regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Sean Ogle

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1 <https://qns.com/2024/08/updated-results-insights-and-new-data-visuals/>

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of the QueensLink plan and to urge the City Council to take decisive action toward making this vision a reality. The QueensLink plan is a vital opportunity to enhance New York City's infrastructure by connecting neighborhoods, promoting sustainable transit, and creating economic opportunities. By transforming existing, underutilized rail space, QueensLink offers a practical and much-needed solution to address many pressing needs for Queens residents and the city as a whole.

Currently, New Yorkers in Queens endure some of the longest and least reliable commutes in the city. By linking the Queens Boulevard subway line with the Rockaway Beach Branch, QueensLink would provide residents with a direct route to Manhattan and other parts of the city, significantly reducing travel times for many and making jobs, schools, and resources more accessible. The creation of a four-stop extension could increase subway ridership by as many as 22,000 riders per day, taking thousands of cars off the road and reducing traffic congestion, air pollution, and noise pollution.

New transit projects like QueensLink benefit all New Yorkers—especially those who rely on public transit—rather than catering primarily to car owners or tourists. By providing an efficient, affordable, and sustainable means of transportation, we are investing in the well-being of city residents and prioritizing the needs of everyday New Yorkers. Improved transit infrastructure remains one of the best ways to ensure a resilient, equitable city for generations to come. Quite simply, you cannot go wrong with investing in transit.

In addition, QueensLink would play a transformative role in the local economy. By boosting connectivity, the project would attract new businesses, support local economies, and increase property values—all while preserving much-needed park space. The inclusion of green spaces, like the proposed linear park alongside the transit corridor, offers substantial recreational and social benefits that enhance quality of life and foster a stronger sense of community. The plan also includes protected bike lanes, offering another safe, sustainable transportation alternative for New Yorkers that will help remove more cars from the streets. Queens has a pressing need for protected bike lanes between North Queens and the Rockaways, making this addition even more impactful.

QueensLink represents a rare opportunity to make a generational investment in New York City's infrastructure and quality of life. We have the chance to restore and adapt existing resources to benefit both current and future New Yorkers without the disruption and expense of entirely new construction. I encourage the Council to consider the broad benefits of this plan and prioritize funding and support for QueensLink. By moving this project forward, New York City can take a major step toward a more connected, sustainable, and economically vibrant future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Seena M  
Queens Resident

To the New York City Council (Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure),

I write this testimony to show my support for the creation of Queenslink while, simultaneously, opposing the idea of Queensway. From my understanding, Mayor Adams has recently given the greenlight on Queensway which would consist of a highline through Queens and act as more greenspace for the residents of the borough. This build would come at the cost of Queenslink which would easily connect both northern and southern Queens (which desperately need another transportation option outside of the Q52 and Q53) and would also have green space if built properly . I hope this testimony can help encourage the city to build Queenslink and help bring more transportation options to the transit desert that is (arguably) the borough of Queens.

- Steven Marte Cuello

The QueensLink can provide major health, equity, and climate benefits to Queens residents and all New Yorkers. It is essential that its future be protected.

**Written testimony of Thomas D Matte, MD, MPH, Adjunct Senior Lecturer in Environmental Health, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University. [Bio](#)**

***New York City Council Hearing, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Jointly with the Committee on Public Safety, Committee on Education and the Committee on Children and Youth. 11/18/2024 10:AM***

I am an environmental epidemiologist and physician with more than 35 years of public health practice and research experience in government, academia, and non-governmental organizations. Recently I served on the 4th New York City Panel on Climate Change (NPCC4), led the health working group of that body, and contributed as a lead author on the health chapter of the NPCC4 climate assessment and co-author on two other NPCC4 chapters. Earlier in my career I was an assistant commissioner at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene where I led air quality and climate and health teams that conducted policy relevant studies and surveillance. At Vital Strategies, a global health NGO, I worked on projects to reduce health impacts of air pollution and advance healthy mobility policies in cities around the world.

I support of resolution 59 because the QueensLink offers major health, equity, and climate benefits to Queens residents and all New Yorkers. To realize these benefits, the future potential of the QueensLink must be protected and supported, and the environmental impact study resolution 59 calls for is one important step towards that end.

## Poor transit options and traffic congestion are citywide and metro area problems

Traffic congestion is just one of several ways in which a lack of access to fast and reliable public transit harms the wellbeing of New Yorkers. An oft cited source on our traffic woes, measures congestion at “[the geographic scope of a city as defined by its road network density, more akin to a metropolitan area](#)” and shows that New York City’s traffic congestion is not [limited to midtown or to trips to and from it](#). Residents of so-called “transit deserts” in the outer boroughs and suburbs experience congestion, whether they commute to midtown Manhattan or elsewhere around the NYC metro area.

Our transit deserts, car dependence, and worsening traffic congestion are the consequences of actions taken and not taken in the past. Actions and inactions by NYC government today, such as those related to the future of solutions like the QueensLink, will determine whether these problems continue to grow or begin to abate.

## Harms of poor transit and car dependency

Those unable to drive or afford a car, taxis, or ride hail trips, those who live far the subway, and those unable to access stations without elevators must rely on New York City's slow and unreliable bus transit service. Their struggles are well described in the [Bus Rider Blues](#) and come with a heavy cost of [reduced access to jobs, education, services and opportunities for a better life](#).

Often overlooked in discourse public transit are *car-dependent households* with middle or lower incomes who are also harmed by a lack of affordable, reliable, safe, and healthy transportation options. Their burden of health and social costs are insidious but large and growing.

Long, congested, frustrating drives mean less time for family, socializing, sleep, and [exercise](#). Drivers miss out on large health benefits from physical activity built into active commutes by foot, bike, and [transit](#). The latter typically involves one of the other two active modes to get to and from stations and stops. The generous health dividend of active commuting includes greater fitness, [healthier weight](#), [reduced risk of multiple chronic physical and mental health conditions](#), and [mortality rates reduced by 5 to 10 percent or more](#). In fact, substantial mode shifts away from driving to active mobility could yield [population health benefits](#) far greater than air quality improvements from electric cars. Car dependence also makes it harder to create streets safe for pedestrians and cyclists, depriving children of the health and learning benefits that walking or cycling to school could provide.

Our transit system, by replacing many car trips and reducing vehicle miles traveled, plays a critical role in the low per household greenhouse gas emissions [in many NYC neighborhoods relative to the suburbs](#). But transit has not improved enough to prevent a 17% increase in passenger vehicle miles driven within the city and an 11% increase in the energy they consume from 2013 through 2023, according to [NYC's own emissions inventory](#). There is no reason to think that congestion pricing alone can address congestion across the outer boroughs, a fact acknowledged in the [congestion pricing plan advanced by the city in 2007](#).

Car dependence also means more street space, land, and pavement devoted to moving and parking cars. The asphalt required amplifies the urban heat island and increases flooding risk during extreme rain events as noted in the [most recent assessment](#) of the New York City Panel on Climate Change.



Reducing car dependence and traffic congestion requires providing drivers across the five boroughs transportation options that are faster, safer, more reliable, and much less costly than the costs of owning or leasing and operating one or more private motor vehicles. Better transit, protected cycling routes, and safer streets for pedestrians are all needed. The QueensLink can enhance access to all three of these alternatives to driving.

In the near term, QueensLink would create a shared linear park with paths for cycling, walking, recreation and enjoying nature. The QueensLink will preserve a dormant rail right-of-way for future activation to serve an estimated 50,000 or more riders and dramatically shorten their commutes from some currently transit-poor Queens neighborhoods.

Many decades ago, [Robert Moses](#) leveraged the public's love of parks – a good thing - to gain control of transportation budgets and policy. His “parkways” for cars afforded some middle-class, car-owning families with better access to beaches and parks in the region. But the [parkways were designed](#) in ways that reflected the car-centric thinking of the time, with overpasses too low for transit buses. While this part of Moses's legacy is not easily undone, the QueensLink plan makes clear that today there is no need to choose between a new park and better transit as the use for a strategically located right of way. Both can be accommodated, providing many with time savings needed to enjoy parks and better access to parks around the city.

I urge the Council to approve resolution 59 and take other actions – such as expanding dedicated bus lanes - to improve outer borough public transit now and in the future.

## Testimony in Opposition to Resolution 59 Regarding an EIS for the QueensLink

Chair Brooks-Powers and Honorable Members of the New York City Council,

My name is Travis Terry, and I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to Resolution 59, which calls for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the QueensLink transit proposal. I am speaking as someone deeply engaged in the Central Queens community, having lived in the community for decades and serving as a member of Friends of the QueensWay since its founding in 2011.

The QueensWay has made substantial progress, securing \$154 million from both the City (through Mayoral and City Council support) and the Federal government via the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). This project envisions transforming the long-abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch into a 3.5-mile linear park that meets critical community needs, including creating green space, improving health outcomes, and fostering economic opportunities.

### **Historical Context: Prior Studies on Rail Reactivation**

Resolution 59 revives a proposal that has already undergone extensive analysis and has consistently been deemed impractical. Moreover, it relies on a deeply flawed and unscientific proposal put forth by QueensLink proponents rather than actual transit experts. Since 1962, at least five studies have assessed rail reactivation, including the thorough 2019 MTA report conducted by respected engineering firms. These analyses have repeatedly highlighted significant technical, financial, and community challenges, underscoring the unfeasibility of the project. This report, available [here](#), identified significant obstacles:

1. **High Costs:** The estimated capital cost of reactivation is \$8.1 billion, representing a staggering financial burden for a transit project with speculative benefits. The MTA's current fiscal constraints and pressing state-wide transit priorities further emphasize the impracticality of this proposal.
2. **Operational Complexity:** Integrating the Rockaway Beach Branch into the subway system would create numerous technical and logistical challenges, including conflicts with existing service patterns and the need for costly infrastructure upgrades.
3. **Community Impact:** Rail reactivation would disrupt neighborhoods along the corridor, leading to increased noise, vibration, loss of housing, and the elimination of a unique opportunity to add vital green space.

These findings align with the concerns of community members who consistently advocate for practical, achievable initiatives like the QueensWay—projects that provide immediate and tangible benefits rather than speculative, costly transit solutions. This alignment likely explains why the MTA excluded the QueensLink from its most recent capital plan, focusing instead on State projects with greater feasibility and larger transit impact.

### **The Case for the QueensWay**

The QueensWay provides a cost-effective, community-focused alternative to reactivation:

1. **Expanding Green Space:** The QueensWay would create much-needed recreational space in areas with limited access to parks, connecting directly with Forest Park and improving the quality of life and public health for thousands of residents.
2. **Environmental Sustainability:** By encouraging walking, biking, and active transportation, the QueensWay supports the City's sustainability and climate resilience goals while reducing reliance on cars.
3. **Reconnecting Communities:** Over a decade of community engagement has shaped the QueensWay project, earning strong support from local residents, businesses, and organizations who prioritize green space over rail reactivation. The QueensWay's current design incorporates educational, recreational, and cultural programming, all tailored to community needs and aspirations, reflecting their valuable input and collaboration.
4. **Economic Benefits:** Studies show greenways increase property values, attract investment, and stimulate local economies. The QueensWay will directly benefit businesses through promotion and the attracting of a new customer base.

### **Concerns About Resolution 59**

Calling for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the QueensLink disregards the extensive body of research already conducted, which has consistently concluded that rail reactivation is both financially burdensome and operationally unfeasible. Such a proposal overlooks the thorough analysis by respected engineering firms, including the comprehensive 2019 MTA study, and ignores the well-documented challenges of integrating the rail line into the current transit system.

Moreover, this resolution risks undermining the substantial progress made on the QueensWay, which has already secured significant funding and is poised to deliver transformative benefits to our communities within a few years. The QueensWay enjoys strong public support and directly aligns with the City's objectives for equity, environmental sustainability, and economic development.

Finally, redirecting resources to study the flawed QueensLink proposal jeopardizes other critical transit projects across the State that address more pressing transportation needs.

### **Conclusion**

The Friends of the QueensWay have steadfastly championed realistic and actionable transit solutions to improve mobility for residents of Central and Southeastern Queens, ensuring that resources and efforts focus on feasible projects that align with community needs.

The QueensWay represents a rare, once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform an abandoned rail corridor into a vibrant linear park, delivering tangible benefits such as expanded green space, environmental sustainability, and economic growth. Revisiting the QueensLink concept not only detracts from this achievable project but also disregards decades of evidence showing that rail reactivation is neither financially viable nor broadly supported by the community.

I urge the City Council to reject Resolution 59 and reaffirm its support for initiatives like the QueensWay that address real community priorities while reflecting a shared vision for a greener, more equitable New York City. Thank you for your time and consideration.

To whom it may concern:

I would like to testify in support of the Queens link, or proposal for the MTA to eventually build a train expansion on the existing tracks that cut through Rego Park, Forest Hills, Woodhaven, Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, and others.

Every neighborhood in Queens (and NYC) is incredible in its own way, but these are brimming with culture and lifestyle that could flourish even further if connected by a train line.

Atlantic Ave., Jamaica Ave, Metropolitan Ave. and others are all shopping and leisure “downtown” areas that could be connected laterally for a more immersive Queens experience. When you bookend them with Queens Center and a connection to the rest of the city on one end and connections to the A and J lines plus the airport on the other, with beautiful Forest Park in the middle, it really speaks for itself - especially considering most of the infrastructure is already there.

I remember when I was a kid living in Jackson Heights, and how the 7 train afforded me the connection to the main queens lines. My mother would drop me off at the 7 train platform, and my grandmother, who lived and was coming from Brooklyn, would meet me at Roosevelt ave. That's a core New York memory I have no matter where I live. Now that I'm back in Queens, I would love for my child to experience the same memories.

These neighborhoods deserve a train line - that much is obvious for many reasons, stated above and otherwise. I happily support this project and would be willing to speak on it further.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

- V. Sokirko

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**Valerie Sesso**

[REDACTED]  
Forest Hills, NY 11375  
[REDACTED]

November 15, 2024

**City Council**

New York City Hall

Dear Council Members,

As a teacher at Metropolitan Expeditionary Learning School (MELS) and a resident of Forest Hills, I am writing to request that you vote no on Resolution 59 for which there will be a Hearing for on Monday November 18, 2024.

I believe the Queens Way project is vital to the overall health of our community. The entrance to our school is at a very busy intersection and having the ability to circumvent that congestion would greatly benefit all community stakeholders. Additionally, as a school for a sustainable city I believe having access to safe bike lanes in New York City should be a non negotiable.

In my opinion, there is no need to revive a defunct train line that the city likely does not have the money to fund. Instead I ask that you support the local community vote no to the Queens Link Project and YES to QUEENSWAY!

Sincerely,

Valerie Sesso

To the NYC City Council:

I am a resident of Brooklyn and an advocate for transit expansion. I am testifying in support of Resolution 59 to call for the MTA to conduct an EIS for the QueensLink project. The MTA is currently planning the IBX to support crosstown travel in Brooklyn and Queens. Similarly, QueensLink would reactivate a passenger rail corridor to provide a vital north-south connection in Queens, where only east-west rail connections exist. It is much cheaper to reactivate an existing ROW than to create an entirely new one, so Queens residents could reap the benefits at lower cost to the public than a brand new subway.

QueensLink would run within about a quarter mile of Woodhaven Boulevard, a corridor with very high bus ridership. The Q11/21/52/53 have approximately 17 thousand riders per weekday on average in 2023. Strong bus corridors are often the best candidates for new rail service, like the Second Avenue Subway in Manhattan. Riders are already making those trips, and the faster and more reliable subway service would lead to even higher ridership. Subway expansion is also an excellent opportunity for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) like the Penn Station Access plan in the Bronx.

Even riders who will not use QueensLink itself would benefit. The terminal at Forest Hills is a severe bottleneck for the local Queens Boulevard Line (QBL), which limits service on the M and R train. By adding a branch to the QBL, all local riders west of Rego Park could see increased service without reducing the amount of service east of Rego Park. Additionally, converting Woodhaven Boulevard to an express station—which it is already designed for—could actually speed up many commutes by reducing dwell times at Roosevelt Boulevard. An EIS could tell us the benefits of all of these changes.

It is essential that we advance the QueensLink. Please pass Resolution 59!

William Meehan  
Brooklyn, 11238

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the QueensWay project. Transforming the abandoned rail corridor into a vibrant park would bring immense benefits to our community and beyond. As a Forest Hills resident, I've seen firsthand how this neglected space has become a magnet for vagrancy and misrepresentation. The QueensWay offers us the opportunity to replace an unkempt, unused area with a place that reflects the creativity and collaboration that originally built Forest Hills.

With the QueensWay, I envision a thriving space for all Queens residents to enjoy. As someone passionate about food and sustainability, I dream of establishing a small restaurant and farm along the QueensWay—creating a self-sustaining system to serve exceptional food, host diverse events, and foster community connection in a natural setting. Parks are always a good idea, but the QueensWay is more than a park. It's an opportunity to redefine how we experience urban life, blending nature, creativity, and sustainability for the benefit of all.

This project will remind us of the remarkable legacy of city planning and landscape architecture that shaped Forest Hills and set a new standard for what Queens can achieve. I urge the NYC Council and the MTA to support this vision by advancing Resolution 59 and conducting an Environmental Impact Statement for the QueensWay.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Yvan Lemoine

Yvan Lemoine

[REDACTED]

Forest Hills, NY 11375

[REDACTED]

I stand with Queens to demand better transit. The QueensLink program is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to provide better transit and greenspace access to underserved communities in Eastern Queens. I support the QueensLink as a way to reduce travel times, increase transit and economic justice, and provide more park space for Queens. I am asking that Mayor Eric Adams and Governor Kathy Hocu support the QueensLink with an Environmental Impact Statement to develop the Rockaway Beach Branch corridor with both transit and park space together.



Dear MTA and Councilmembers,

I've lived in Queens for over 20 years and I've noticed that, besides traveling to Manhattan, it takes a while to get anywhere by subway. That's because Queens is missing a subway line that connects the northern and southern parts of the borough. But it doesn't have to be this way since there is an available right-of-way in a location where trains used to run. While the costs of new subways are generally very high, building on the existing right-of-way would reduce costs significantly. With the rise in traffic congestion in Queens, it is important that we enable more people to get around quickly in the subways. We can't let an opportunity like this go to waste. Thank you

Please pass Resolution 59, which calls on the MTA to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement on the Queenslink. This needs to pass so that residents of ALL NYC boroughs have fair and speedy access to rapid rail transit. Queenslink will lessen car ownership, environmental pollutants, and traffic violence, while simultaneously boosting transit use, housing and job opportunities, and local economies.

Dear New York City Council and all,

This is my testimony in support of Resolution 59, which calls for the MTA to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement for the QueensLink proposal. I think it's important for QueensLink to potentially be a full scale project that the MTA should work on. There is a lack of subway service on the east side of Queens, specifically ones that bridge access between the north and south communities. The proposal aims to reutilize the abandoned LIRR Rockaway Beach Branch, and repurpose the Right of Way into a subway line that branches off from the IND Queens Boulevard Line after 63rd Drive Station. Such a project would not only help the East Queens residents become less car dependent and give them an option that's more efficient and reliable than the buses, it can provide a quicker route into Midtown Manhattan while still moving the subways past it's Manhattan-centric roots, it would also provide a park trail, with bike paths, that runs alongside the new subway branch. Even though it's elevated, it can also be constructed in ways that can make the trains run quieter than cars, given the right methods, like sound barrier parapets, platform screen doors, low vibration tracks with continuous welding etc. Elevated rail allows trains to have natural lighting, cell service, and scenic view of the neighborhoods and parks that the trains pass by. More good transit increases economic justice for us all.

With all that's been said, I'm asking the New York City Council, Mayor Eric Adams of New York City and Governor Kathy Hochul of New York State to please support the QueensLink proposal with an Environmental Impact Statement to develop better transit the Rockaway Beach Branch corridor with both transit and park space together.

Sincerely,

a resident of Queens who believes in better public transportation for all.

The QueensLink will be a vital transportation artery for the borough. Not only will it bring the City closer to transit equity for all, but it will also support Queens economically, through the creation of new local businesses that benefit from foot traffic near the line, and offers opportunities for new green spaces.

An Environmental Impact Study on the viability of the QueensLink is the next step in bringing this project to reality. I strongly encourage and support Resolution 59. I am a life-long Queens resident and I highly encourage the City Council to back this Resolution as I know it will make life easier and better for thousands of my fellow New Yorkers.

Good and extensive public transportation will keep NYC a world leader in the 21st century.

Thank you.

I support Resolution 59 to conduct an EIS for the Queenslink.

I believe the Queenslink would revolutionize transportation in this borough by creating a direct north-south train connection.

This would provide residents of southern Queens much easier access to the businesses and jobs in northern Queens and midtown Manhattan, and would allow residents of northern Queens to access places in southern Queens that would take multiple train transfers or a long bus ride (>1 hour of travel time to get from one part of the borough to another!)

Additionally, I am supportive of the plans to add park space and bike lanes in the Queenslink project - there are some neighborhoods along the planned right-of-way that could use a lot more bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure to improve safety and family-friendliness.

Dear Members of the Committee,

I would like to express my demand and support on the reactivation of the Long Island Railroad Rockaway Beach Branch as a subway line in Queens. This new subway line will cut commute times for Rockaway residents, who have one of the longest commutes in the city. This new line will also create a convenient connection between Northern and Southern Queens. I demand for the MTA to conduct an Environmental Impact Study on the reactivation of the LIRR Rockaway Beach Branch. With climate change, it is time for more public transit projects to be built!

Thanks for your time!

I am writing in support of QueensLink. As a long-time resident of Queens, I know firsthand how we need better transit options. We've been left out too often, forced to rely on slow, overcrowded buses and subways. The city can't continue to prioritize Manhattan and Brooklyn over the fastest growing borough. Our communities are some of the most diverse and hard-working in the city, yet we're cut off from many opportunities because our transit infrastructure is outdated and insufficient.

QueensLink would change that. It would bring a new rail line, opening up faster and more reliable connections to Manhattan, Brooklyn, and other parts of Queens. This isn't just about shaving off commute time—it's about creating better access to jobs, education, healthcare, and family. A transit line that runs through Central and Southeast Queens would be a game-changer for neighborhoods that have been underserved for too long.

I live in Forest Hills, and faster access to the beach and friends in Brooklyn would be enormous for me, and let me drive far less often.

I urge the city to make QueensLink a reality. Let's bring modern, convenient transit to Queens. We deserve it.



We need a rail link from North to South Queens to relieve the Van Wyck Expressway. Getting to JFK Airport from Manhattan, Bronx, or NJ requires using this highway, as do many trips between suburbs of Long Island. The traffic is almost always bumper to bumper and barely moving. Getting people into a parallel train route will free up space on this critical roadway and keep us all moving. Noise dampening barriers and concrete guide ways can be used to mitigate disruption to the environment around the rail line.

Hello, I'm an advocate for Queenslink, and I believe the project would be a great inclusion to Queen's. That specific area of the borough (South/East Queens) lacks a proper North South train line. There are buses in the area, but they normally get too crowded, get caught in traffic, and only add to the pollution of multiple cars on the road. The right of way already exists, so why not use it for transit? Queensway would be nice to see, but it's not as necessary as a train line to help move people through Queen's easier.

There are plenty of parks in the area already, and a pseudo Highline is just not a mandatory addition to the area. Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Forest Park, Spring Creek Park, Phil Scooter Park, and the list goes on. There are places to go already. Transit is already an afterthought in this country, and it's high time it changed. We can be better, we can be more efficient, cleaner, and above all else, helpful to the people who are in need of more transit options. Adding a park near the train is doable, as certain places in Europe and Japan have parks right next to the train (separated safely of course). N.I.M.B.Yism (Not in my backyard) is a huge problem for so many transit projects, as it gets in the way of progress. We need to make sure that we show N.I.M.B.Y's that transit can be quieter, and safer than they initially think.

We need transit as a whole to make a bigger step forward, and Queenslink can be a part of that big first step. Parks are great, and I enjoy being in them, and I daresay that even if Queensway beats out Queenslink, I'll still enjoy it, but I'm not blind to what Queen's really needs. Please support Queenslink. You'll be saving Queen's a lot more time, money, connections, and hopefully, less cars on the road. Below is a link to a video that brings up great points about the Queenslink, and will give more information on it.

<https://youtu.be/9gWmGXWwX2Q?si=jfmv95yuqP4gTkEe>

I stand with my fellow Queens residents to demand better transit. I support the QueensLink/extended M train to the Rockaways as a way to reduce travel times, increase transit and economic justice, and provide more park space for Queens. I am asking that the Council support the QueensLink with an Environmental Impact Statement to develop the Rockaway Beach Branch corridor with both transit and park space together. I also support the QueensLink as an alternative to driving on heavily congested Woodhaven and Cross Bay boulevards. Many intra-Queens trips can be made by public transit, but they often take too long because the buses do not run often enough or are forced onto the same congested roads with cars and trucks. So people drive. It would be great to have an alternative to that. The City Council and the Mayor need to be taking a much more serious look at creating alternatives to driving in Queens and that includes subway extensions such as the M train.

I am testifying in support of Resolution 59, which calls upon the MTA to conduct an environmental impact study of reactivating the disused subway branch commonly referred to as the "Queenslink" project. This Resolution 59 is already sponsored by Council members Selvena Brooks-Powers, Bob Holden, and Joann Ariola, and I appreciate their support and call for more from their fellow council members. I do not live in Queens but I frequent the borough and know that reactivating this rail corridor would provide a vital transportation link to many of our city's residents and visitors. As you all know, reducing personal automobile usage is one of the most vital fronts in the fight against rapidly accelerating climate collapse. This is particularly evident in the past week as we see an extended, historic, unprecedented, and record-breaking drought plaguing our region. Our city is now constantly blanketed in smoke as our parks slowly burn to a crisp from brush fires. Even before the outbreak of these fires, the vegetation of our city was so sad: dry, shriveled trees and shrubs who bypassed the typical beautiful fall foliage and accelerated straight into overstressed states and dropped their brown shriveled leaves. We are in an emergency of climate and we must move with more urgency to expand mass transit. Please support and boost the effort to complete the vital Queenslink project. Thank you for reading/listening to my testimony.

**Overview:** I believe the Queenslink project would be a valuable addition to the NYC Subway system and Queens as a whole. Queenslink would provide both the first north-south Subway connection in Queens, creating much needed connections to other Subway lines as well as the LIRR. It also will make the surrounding area into a more lively public space with parks, and trails.

**Transit:** I want to begin with the fact that Queens has a lot of transit deserts so any form of transportation to be added is a good thing for residents and other commuters alike. The first major reason why I'm in support of Queenslink is because the majority of the right of way for a subway line is already there, of course a lot of reconstruction would need to be done but it'll be cheaper to restore and reactivate the line then bore out an entire new subway tunnel. And would be unfortunate to let that opportunity go to waste with the Queensway opposition. If the Queenslink plan goes through it'll provide a much needed connector from north and south Queens because as of now there's only east-west subway connections. What about the north-south bus lines you might ask, well the buses that run along Woodhaven Blvd are very crowded and are prone to get stuck in traffic which is not ideal for commuters. So the fact that the Rockaway Beach Branch is parallel to Woodhaven Blvd it'll alleviate the ridership on those bus routes. The other reason why rerouting the M down the Rockaway Beach Branch would be great is it'll divert capacity from the Queens Blvd Line, Forrest hills terminal which extra capacity if they want to send the G back there, as well as boosting Rockaway services which currently isn't great with only seeing about 6 tph with the A and the Shuttle running every 15-20 minutes which adds up if you just miss the transfer to the A.

**Recreation & Community:** There's plans to include recreational greenways for walking and biking which is always great for the general community. It allows for a place to escape and just take in the greenery in a chaotic city environment. Additionally the creation of these recreational parks is a great way to promote others to come to the area which will incentivize people to come to the area who normally wouldn't, which is facilitated by the ease of access with the reactivated Rockaway Beach Branch. Regardless of the parks and greenways a new rail line would promote economic growth in the area, more people will want to live near public transit, and more people will be able to have access to the neighborhood. You could look to the rest of the city to see that the city expansion and growth directly correlated to mass transit routes. Now, while this isn't a major transit desert compared to other parts of Queens, 4 new stations over 3 miles will benefit the area a lot. The parks adjust the cherry on top.

**Opposition:** Queenslink is being opposed by another group, Queensway who want to convert the entire Rockaway Beach Branch right of way into a park. In itself isn't a bad thing, however it's the fact that they completely disregard the benefits of reactivating a rail line for potential north-south Queens commuters. It's also not like that area is already devoid of parks, Forrest park is already in the middle of where the Rockaway Beach Branch is and Flushing Meadows Corona Park isn't too far off. So while a park would be amazing, it isn't going to have much of an impact in the general community besides removing the dilapidated viaduct and beautifying the area. Oh wait Queenslink already plans on adding recreational spaces while keeping the transit a live. Another issue I have with Queensway is how it claims this park will be a "subway link" where you could walk to the other subway lines that would connect with the M if Queenslink passes. The kicker is, this doesn't help north-south

commuters at all as you still would need to get off the train and walk to another station with no guarantee of a free transfer, while a free transfer would be guaranteed with Queenslink as well as having a more direct and quicker north-south commute.

**Conclusion:** Overall I view Queensway as a pointless project as Queenslink will do the same and more by creating a much needed north-south transit line in queens which will help decongest the Woodhaven Blvd bus routes, allow for more capacity on the Queens Blvd Line, and add service to the Far Rockaway Branch. Along with creating a Park and recreational trails, which in addition to having the new transit route will create a higher amount of foot traffic in the neighborhoods which will lead to the area growing economically.

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. 59

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Faran A. Sharif

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Senator James Sanders Jr.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: WADZMA WAZARD

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ NY NY 10009

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

Date: Nov. 18 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Bruce Hain

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Queens 11435

I represent: mail-wgc-access.com / Self

Address: Same

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

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 in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/18/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jessica Vides-Hernandez

Address: Dxcp - Assistant Commissioner for Strategic

I represent: Partnerships

Address: 2 Lafayette Street

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 in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/18/24

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Name: Kevin Datzler

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NVCPS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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 in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/18/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mark Rampersant

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NVCPS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: 11/18/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chief Joseph Gulotta

Address: NYPD

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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 in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/18/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Director Joshua Levin

Address: NYPD

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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 in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/18

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Francis Joseph, Acting Chief of Staff, NYCT

Address: 2 Broadway

I represent: MTA - New York City Transit

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/18

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jeremy Ferguson, Special Counsel

Address: 2 Broadway

I represent: MTA

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/18

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chief Michael Kempfer

Address: 2 Broadway

I represent: MTA

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/18/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sharon Brown Jeter

Address: 130-10 140 Street Suite 1

I represent: ROSE OF Sharon Enterprises

Address: 43 Madison Street 3F Bklyn

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms