



PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday, July 16th, 2025

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Students, Electeds, and Advocates Rally for QueensLink Proposal

Students Share “QueensLink Now” Report, and Deliver Over 1,500 Petition Signatures to Mayor and Governor to Highlight Growing Momentum for QueensLink as an Equitable Transit Solution for Train-Starved Queens

Rego Park, Queens – Today, students and community advocates delivered over 1,500 petition signatures to Governor Hochul and Mayor Adams urging City Hall and the MTA to advance the QueensLink proposal alongside recent milestones that signal growing support. Students also released “*QueensLink Now: A Report from the Next Generation of Riders*” at the LIRR Bridge at 63rd Drive & Alderton Street in Rego Park.

This year has brought renewed attention and progress in regards to the QueensLink project. In January, QueensLink received a \$400,000 federal grant from the U.S. DOT’s Reconnecting Communities program (with a \$100,000 local match), launching a comprehensive impact study. And in April, a Town Hall event hosted by NYPIRG at Queens College and featuring QueensLink staff saw strong grassroots engagement, with students and residents contributing anecdotal data and personal stories for the report.

The report—produced collaboratively by students and advocates—captures the frustrations, hopes, and priorities of borough residents. It also features a petition signed by over 1,500 students, demanding a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to move QueensLink forward. At the event, Public Advocate Jumaane Williams’ office joined students and community leaders, emphasizing the urgency of building equitable, neighborhood-serving transit infrastructure.

“QueensLink is more than just a transit project—it’s about equity, climate resilience, and opportunity,” said **Natasha Elder, Regional Director of the Straphangers Campaign**. “This

report and the 1,500 petition signatures from students show that the next generation of Queens riders is demanding bold action to transform their borough.”

The QueensLink proposal seeks to repurpose the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch as a north–south subway line from Rego Park to the Rockaways, paired with green space in a "rails and trails" design. Advocates say it would deliver fast, reliable service, close transit gaps, and reduce carbon emissions. This event comes amid accelerating transit conversations in New York City—particularly around equitable access and outer-borough infrastructure.

“Southeast Queens needs a more robust, more accessible subway network. This is why I joined my fellow elected officials to invest in the bold idea known as QueensLink,” **said Assembly member Khaleel M. Anderson**. “Together we can advance transit equity and fulfill the need for expanded public transportation in Queens.”

“Queens deserves a world-class transit system that truly serves the people, not just the privileged few. The QueensLink proposal is more than a transportation project; it’s a vision for equity, connection, and opportunity. Too many communities in our borough have been left out of the conversation for far too long. I applaud the continued push to bring bold, people-first solutions to the table and look forward to seeing Queens move forward together,” **said State Senator James Sanders Jr.**

Queens is a transit-dependent borough but too many of our neighborhoods still aren’t transit-connected. This report shows exactly what riders are dealing with: delayed commutes, limited transfers, and a lack of investment in outer-borough infrastructure. A full Environmental Impact Statement would force the city to take a hard look at how QueensLink could improve access, shorten travel times, and connect more people to jobs, school, and care. That level of planning is critical to meeting the needs of the Queens riders who rely on transit every day,” **said Councilmember Nantasha Williams**.

"We're incredibly fortunate and grateful to have hard-working activists at NYPIRG fighting for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said **Rick Horan, Executive Director of QueensLink**.

"These commendable students are leading the way, showing our communities and lawmakers that we can't pass up this generational investment. Queens deserves parks and transit NOW!"

“Queens has seen tremendous growth and change over the past few decades, but for too long we’ve overlooked an important resource in our backyard that would better help connect our diverse communities,” said **Lisa Daglian, Executive Director, Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA**. “QueensLink presents an amazing chance to use existing infrastructure to stitch together many of the borough’s most dynamic neighborhoods, improve equitable transit access to economic opportunities, and encourage recreation all at the same time. We urge City Hall and our elected officials to get on board and seize the moment.”

“Good public transportation connects New Yorkers and creates new opportunities,” **said Emily Chingay, Advocacy and Engagement Associate at Open Plans**, “and that’s exactly what QueensLink is poised to do. The insights in this report make it clear—Queens residents need more transit. Revitalizing this corridor is how we get it. Kudos to QueensLink and all the

collaborators who helped elevate the voices of residents to demand expanded transit service for a safer, healthier, more connected Queens!"

"If there was any doubt that Southeast Queens transit riders have some of the nation's worst commutes and need better options to access work, school and other opportunities throughout the city, this landmark report proves it. We urge our elected officials to prioritize the needs of underserved communities and make the most of existing infrastructure to deliver better access for those who need it. NYPIRG and the Queenslink team have done exemplary work to lift up both the challenges and the opportunities facing the transit network and millions of riders who rely on it," **said Jolyse Race, Senior Organizer at Riders Alliance.**

"The Queens Civic Congress supports the vision and goals of the QueensLink initiative, which exemplifies the kind of infrastructure planning our borough deserves. Reconnecting underserved communities, revitalizing transit access, preserving green space and providing much needed recreation opportunities are values that align with our longstanding commitment to sustainable and inclusive civic development," **said Warren Schreiber, President of Queens Civic Congress.**

"The push to fund a complete feasibility study for the reactivation of the QueensLink railway line marks a bold step toward improving mobility and equity across Queens. This initiative represents more than a transit upgrade—it's an investment in the future of our communities. QueensLink has the potential to revolutionize north-south connectivity within the borough, linking neighborhoods that have long, support sustainable growth, stimulate economic development, and promote transit equity," **said Felicia Johnson, District Manager of Community Board 14.** "The feasibility study is a critical first step—ensuring a comprehensive, data-driven analysis of engineering, environmental, and community impacts. Funding it means we're committed to doing this right, with input from residents, transit experts, and urban planners. We urge policymakers, stakeholders, and citizens alike to support this initiative and help shape a future where every corner of Queens is connected, vibrant, and thriving.

"It is a contradiction to have Queens be the fastest growing borough in NYC, yet have large transit deserts. Queens needs a transit revolution, and Queenslink represents a step towards that: by providing the borough's first much-needed circumferential rail line, and cutting travel times for South Queens and Rockaway residents. I am proud to support Queenslink, and the NYPIRG's report only strengthens the need for Queenslink," **said the Joint Transit Association.**

About NYPIRG at Queens College:

The New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit student-directed advocacy group focused on environmental protection, consumer rights, higher education, government accountability, and mass transit.