



Donovan Richards
Queens Borough President

Community Board No. 2

43-22 50th Street, 2nd Floor
Woodside, New York 11377

(718) 533-8773

Fax (718-533-8777

Email qn02@cb.nyc.gov

www.nyc.gov/queenscb2

Danielle Brecker
Chairperson

Debra Markell Kleinert
District Manager

March 8, 2023

Honorable Julie Won
NY City Council Member
Council District 26
37-04 Queens Boulevard, Suite 205
Long Island City, New York 11101

RE: **Letter of Support for Environmental Impact Study for Reactivation of the Lower Montauk Branch**

Dear Council Member Won:

The Transportation Committee of Community Board 2 is writing in support of conducting an Environmental Impact Study for “Reactivation of the Lower Montauk Branch” and to request that the City Council fund this study from the FY24 City Council Expense Budget.

Reactivating the Lower Montauk Branch, aka “the QNS”, means providing local passenger rail service on a nine-mile segment of the Long Island Rail Road’s Lower Montauk Branch that runs between Jamaica and Long Island City. The QNS is comparable in many respects to the proposed Interborough Express (“IBX”), which is making rapid progress towards being developed, and will connect Southern Brooklyn to Western Queens. In fact, by way of a connection in Middle Village, the QNS would make the proposed IBX accessible to hundreds of thousands more residents of Queens.

We can not have transit deserts if we are to have transit equity in New York City. Similar to the IBX, the QNS will use existing rights-of-way to rectify this inequity and deliver better transit for the residents that need it most.

With the continuous residential and commercial development of Long Island City, residents need more transportation options. Currently, there are 10 daily LIRR trains which run from Jamaica to the Long Island City terminus; 6 run east to west in the morning hours, and 4 run west to east in the evening hours. Expanding the service from these two stations would increase accessibility to the local areas as well as provide consistent and reliable transport to JFK Airport for LIC and Blissville residents.

“Serving the Communities of Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and Maspeth”

“Reactivation of the Lower Montauk Branch” is being considered in the MTA’s 2025-2044 20-Year Needs Assessment, set to be finalized and published in October 2023. The 20-Year Needs Assessment will inform the MTA’s 2025-2029 Capital Plan, due in October 2024. It is our intention to have the QNS funded in that Capital Plan, which is why we must move now to initiate the Environmental Impact Study. The study will offer greater detail on the QNS’s economic and environmental impact, as well as offer how to maximize the positive impact to the communities it serves.

Thank you and please feel free to contact CB 2 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Debra Markell Kleinert
District Manager, Community Board 2

DMK/mag

cc: Honorable Grace Meng, US Congress
Honorable Nydia M. Velazquez, US Congress
Honorable Michael Gianaris, NY State Senate
Honorable Kristen Gonzalez, NY State Senate
Honorable Jessica Ramos, NY State Senate
Honorable Juan Ardila, NYS Assembly
Honorable Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas, NYS Assembly
Honorable Zohran Mamdani, NYS Assembly
Honorable Steven Raga, NYS Assembly
Honorable Robert Holden, NYC Council Member
Honorable Shekar Krishman, NYC Council Member
Honorable Julie Won, NYC Council Member
Honorable Donovan Richards, Queens Borough President
Danielle Becker, Chairperson, Community Board 2
Sheila Lewandowski, Co-Chair Transportation Committee
Tom Mituzas, Co-Chair Transportation Committee
Denise Keehan-Smith, Friend of the QNS