



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Local Officials Urge Governor's Office to Release Full Details About Third Track Proposal

JACK M. MARTINS May 19, 2016

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A coalition of state, county, and village officials today urged the Governor's office to release full details about the proposed third track project to residents living in the affected communities. The coalition included officials from the villages of Mineola, Floral Park, New Hyde Park, and Westbury, Senator Jack M. Martins (R-7th Senate District), Assemblyman Ed Ra (R-19th Assembly District), and Nassau County Legislators Rich Nicolello, Laura Schaefer, and Vincent Muscarella.

In January, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced a proposal to add a third track along the LIRR mainline running through the communities of Floral Park, New Hyde Park, Garden City Park, Mineola, Carle Place, Westbury, and Hicksville. A prior version of this proposal was defeated years ago because of community opposition and the impact it would have on residents' quality of life.

Five months after the Governor's announcement, the Governor's office is meeting with local leaders about the project but has yet to provide many critical details about the plan and the impact to local communities. These details include:

- The length and timeline of construction, as well as staging and sequencing of the project;
- How and where will traffic be re-routed during construction and the impact those traffic patterns are expected to have on the affected communities;
- Whether new freight rail traffic will be coming through the communities following the project's completion, and if so, how often and what types of materials;
- The impact to LIRR service during construction and the duration of those impacts; and
- Whether existing train stations along the mainline will have to be completely rebuilt to accommodate a third track.

"You can't get accurate feedback on a plan without providing all the details. We appreciate the Governor's office meeting with local officials about this project, but the community has many unanswered questions and concerns because we don't have the full specifics. This proposal shouldn't move an inch without them. The Governor's office needs to provide this information immediately so residents can measure the impacts to their quality of life, share their concerns, and ultimately make an informed decision about whether the third track

plan is in their best interests,” said Senator Martins.

“All of us have questions and concerns as do our neighbors and business owners regarding the 3rd Track Project. Something on this scale needs to be properly evaluated and its short term and long term effects properly assessed. Allow our voices to be heard. Allow our questions to be asked. Allow us time to hear what our neighbor’s thoughts are. A project this large requires it and our communities deserve it,” said Mineola Mayor Scott Strauss.

“The Village of Westbury and our residents continue to be concerned about the potential impacts that the LIRR Third Track project might bring. Many questions remain unanswered, and we need to have full and complete information in order to be well informed and to make intelligent decisions pertaining the project. We are pleased that LIRR and the Governor’s staff have been proactive and open, and shared the information that they currently have. However, it is incumbent on them to continue to provide all necessary information in a timely manner. We urge our residents, and all concerned residents, to attend one of the scoping sessions that will be held in the coming days, to express their concerns and comments on the proposed scope of the project. Public input is vital to a successful outcome. The Village intends to submit formal response and input prior to the close of the scoping period,” said Westbury Mayor Peter Cavallaro.

“The Villages are asking for an extension of the commenting period. This project will forever change the villages along the Main Line, we simply ask for time to review the plan. We must have full disclosure of the entire plan including track alignments, retaining wall details, new bridge and superstructure details, drainage solutions, impacts on parking, operational improvements, schedule enhancements along with the myriad of other issues a complex project like this entails. The Governor asked us to participate with his agencies and we have, but our manner should not be mistaken as assent,” said Floral Park Mayor Thomas Tweedy.

"Many homes and businesses would be impacted by this proposed expansion. The Governor should provide detailed information about the project to allow those communities whose quality of life would be affected both during construction and once this project is completed to be informed participants in the process," said Assemblyman Ra.

Public hearings are being held next week on the project, but without knowing the full details of the plan, the affected communities cannot provide informed feedback. The officials encouraged residents to attend one or more of these public hearings and ask these questions. Hearings are being held on the following dates and times:

Tuesday, May 24th:

The Inn at New Hyde Park

214 Jericho Turnpike, New Hyde Park

11 am-2 pm and 5 pm-9 pm

Hofstra University-Mack Student Center's Student Theatre

1000 Fulton Avenue, Hempstead

10 am-2 pm and 6 pm-9 pm

Wednesday, May 25th:

"Yes We Can" Community Center

141 Garden Street, Westbury

11 am-2 pm

Antun's

244 West Old Country Road, Hicksville

6 pm-9 pm