



News from Mayor Frank Huttie III

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MAYOR HUTTIE ANNOUNCES FORMATION OF MAYORS COMMISSION TO FINALLY MAKE LIGHT RAIL A REALITY FOR BERGEN COUNTY

Bi-County Commission will be Co-Chaired by Huttie and Jersey City Mayor Fulop

ENGLEWOOD – Englewood Mayor Frank Huttie III today announced the formation of a mayors’ commission to spearhead an ambitious plan to extend the long-awaited northern portion of the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Line through Bergen County.

The Mayors’ Hudson/Bergen Light Rail Commission will be co-chaired by Huttie and Jersey City Mayor Steven M. Fulop and is comprised of all of the mayors from Hudson and Bergen counties representing towns along the rail line and its proposed extension, as follows:

Co-Chairs

Mayor Frank Huttie III of Englewood
Mayor Steven M. Fulop of Jersey City

Mayor James Rotundo of Palisades Park
Mayor Vincent Bellucci, Jr. of Fairview
Mayor Felix Roque of West New York
Mayor Richard F. Turner of Weehawken
Mayor John DeSimone of Leonia

Mayor Anthony Suarez of Ridgefield
Mayor Nicolas Sacco of North Bergen
Mayor Brian Stack of Union City
Mayor Dawn Zimmer of Hoboken
Mayor Mark Smith of Bayonne

The Commission will be a single focused entity which will unify each of the independent municipalities of the line together and speak with one voice. It will coordinate ground-up planning and consultation between the local government entities within each municipality, both counties and amongst stakeholders while providing a direct conduit to NJ Transit, the lead agency in the project.

The move comes on the heels of the city’s recent adoption of a comprehensive new master plan that places a high priority on extending the light rail line through Bergen County and ending in Englewood in order to foster economic development and smart growth in one of the most densely-populated areas of the state.

“Hudson and Bergen counties are fully developed and host mature economies,” said Mayor Huttie. “For the most part, it’s not feasible to build new roads, bridges or tunnels for people to get to work between Hudson, Bergen and New York City. New Jersey is still struggling to rebound from the recession and lags behind New York and Pennsylvania in job growth. We need improvements in our transportation infrastructure to grow and create jobs in New Jersey and

improve the quality of life for area residents. Light rail will do just that.”

“We have seen the success the Light Rail has had in stimulating residential and commercial development in Jersey City and Hudson County, and know that a full expansion into Bergen County will only benefit Jersey City and add to commerce in our region,” said Mayor Fulop. “Providing more northern New Jersey residents access into Jersey City and Hudson County is good for development, job growth and small business alike. This Commission will allow mayors along the route to have a more active role in this important transit system and its future growth.”

The restoration of passenger rail service to the Northern Branch of the Hudson Bergen Light Rail Line has been under discussion for years. Huttle noted that Englewood has been working extensively with NJ Transit in recent years to hone the project to adequately meet the needs of the eastern Bergen County region it is intended to serve.

Chief among Englewood’s concerns in a Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) created by NJ Transit were a potential loss of roughly 128 on-street parking spots in the city’s central business district and the exclusion of a stop at Englewood Medical Center.

During the official comment period on the DEIS, Englewood proposed in a letter that the last stop on the line be Englewood Hospital and Medical Center and that there be two other stops in the city at Englewood Town Center and Route 4.

NJ Transit has been receptive to Englewood’s concerns and not only agreed to restore the parking spaces, but under the DEIS the transit agency finally approved last May, proposed stations now include: 91st Street in North Bergen, Ridgefield, Palisades Park, Leonia, Englewood Route 4, Englewood Town Center and Englewood Hospital.

“The light rail service, if accomplished properly, will transform the region for the better, easing congestion, raising property values and providing myriad other benefits,” added Huttle. “A coordination of planning and consultation between local government entities will ensure the light rail service will be the best it can be.”

To this end, Englewood has already begun the process of gathering the municipalities of the light rail service line in a collaborative group that will not only coordinate individual municipal planning but will also serve as a repository of institutional knowledge over what will certainly be a long planning and build process.

The Mayors Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Commission will serve as a semi-permanent body to fulfill the needs of the line communities, individually and collectively, through the following primary objectives:

1. Connection of the two largest and most congested counties in New Jersey to promote transportation to and from Englewood to North Bergen, Hoboken, Jersey City and Bayonne, as well as NYC;
2. Creation of jobs and development along the line connecting all residents living in Bergen County to Hudson County and NYC; and
3. Focus on economic growth.

The Commission is timely formed because of the imminent finalization by NJTransit of the DEIS and Supplemental DEIS which should be completed by the Summer of 2015.

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