

Reprints

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to colleagues, clients or customers, use the Reprints tool at the top of any article or [order a reprint of this article now.](#)

# Let the LIRR third track go forward

May 24, 2017 By The Editorial Board



The MTA on Wednesday, May 24, 2017, voted to fund the proposed \$2 billion LIRR Main Line Expansion Project, to construct a 9.8-mile third track between Floral Park and Hicksville beginning this year. (Credit: Newsday / J. Conrad Williams Jr.)

The Long Island Rail Road's third track project has been chugging along. Now it's on the verge of full speed ahead. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority board has approved an amended capital plan that includes \$1.95 billion for the critical project.

The only hurdle left is an MTA review board, which has 30 days to accept or reject the plan. Any of the three members — one each chosen by the governor, State Senate and Assembly — can block it. With two Long Island senators expressing misguided opposition, Majority Leader John Flanagan (R-East Northport) is in the hot seat. He has to step up.

Flanagan must let the third track go forward. It's too important to let often-parochial protests trump what's best for Long Island.

The opposition of Sen. Elaine Phillips (R-Flower Hill) has seemed centered on questions that largely have been answered. Sen. Kemp Hannon (R-Garden City) has said improvements to signals and switches should be made first, but doing that wouldn't mean the third track is no longer needed. Both are out of step with the many Long Islanders who want the third track and its benefits for reverse commuting, reducing traffic on the roads and helping to jump-start the region's economy.

Blocking the amended plan means also rejecting the elimination of seven street-level LIRR grade crossings, station renovations for both the LIRR and city subways, part of the Second Avenue subway extension, new railroad and subway cars, and several new parking garages for LIRR stations, all badly needed and in the plan.

There are times when local leaders must make decisions for the good of the region. This is one of them. — *The editorial board*

advertisement | [advertise on newsday](#)

[< back to article](#)