



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins Facilitates Agreement for New Bridge in Village of Thomaston

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For over a decade, Village of Thomaston Mayor Robert Stern has been trying to have the century-old Colonial Road Bridge rebuilt. It seems Mayor Stern's diligence has paid off. In a meeting at the District Office of State Senator Jack M. Martins between Mayor Stern, Long Island Railroad (LIRR) President Helena Williams, and Senator Martins, the railroad unveiled plans for a bridge that will replace the existing one that is over 100 years old.

The project entails extending an existing pocket track in Thomaston and rebuilding the bridge as the railroad and Mayor Stern came to an agreement over the design of the bridge. The mayor had expressed concerns over the potential impact to the community over extending the pocket tracks.

Since taking office in January, Senator Martins has been trying to facilitate discussions between Mayor Stern and the railroad in an effort to get the old bridge rebuilt with no impact to the residential community. In a letter to Senator Martins, Williams outlined a new plan that, she wrote, accomplishes a major element that the community requested.

The \$36 million project now calls for retaining the existing alignment of the bridge and 325 feet of the 1,500-foot proposed pocket track extension will be located in a covered archway supporting the roadway above. The plan mitigates the noise concerns with the covered archway as well as the addition of sound absorbing materials on the retaining wall.

"The commitment to rebuild the bridge closes a 10 year chapter of negotiation. I was very happy with the plan. It wouldn't have happened without the help of Senator Martins," said Mayor Stern.

"The bottom line is a bridge that is over 100 years old will be rebuilt so that it is safe. It was extremely important that residents in the area not be impacted. This project was designed with the concerns of the community in mind," said Senator Martins. "This project is coming to fruition because of Mayor Stern's diligence and his concern for the village. I also want to thank Helena Williams for the railroad's work in designing this needed project with the community's concerns in mind."

According to Williams, the project will improve service for the 43,000 customers who use the LIRR Port Washington branch each day. "These changes were made as a direct result of the

input we received from the community and from the discussions with Mayor Stern, Senator Martins and Congressman Gary Ackerman. We are very grateful for their leadership on this issue. This project will immediately improve service on one of our busiest branches and will create jobs while replacing a 100-year-old bridge,” she said.

The railroad anticipates the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) releasing the Environmental Assessment in March 2012 for public review. Informational sessions with commuters and residents should take place in April.