



For Immediate Release:
Monday, August 6, 2007

For More Information, Contact:
Neysa Pranger at (917) 532-0567 or
Nicolas Ronderos at (917) 696-7263

Spanish Speaker Available

Report: Hunts Point Ripe for New Metro-North Station

Area Population Growth, Ridership and Development Potential Cited

Neighborhood One of Dozens that Could Benefit from New Transit Service Under Mayor's PlaNYC Initiative

Today the Regional Plan Association released a report supporting a new Metro-North commuter rail station in Hunts Point in the Southeast Bronx. The report cites Hunts Point as fertile ground for such a project and an example of how new transit service can develop housing and jobs in inner city communities throughout the region.

“The new station could be the focus of significant new development, which could be a vanguard of development in the Bronx, reinvigorating an area that is making its way back from decline in the 1970s and 1980s,” said Jeffery Zupan, RPA Senior Transportation Fellow and report co-author.

The commuter rail station is one of three in the Bronx, along with ones serving Co-op City and Parkchester, which are under consideration by the MTA as an alternative for Metro North's Penn Station Access project. The project is also one of the new transit services that would receive funding from Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC initiative.

Penn Station Access, along with Long Island Rail Road's East Side Access and the Second Avenue Subway, will generate development opportunities in over two dozen city neighborhoods. Hunts Point was identified as having particularly high potential because of:

- more, more, more -

- growing population and increased subway and bus ridership trends in Hunts Point and the neighboring community of Longwood;
- projected reverse commute opportunities due to employment needs in areas to the north of the Bronx;
- community support for the construction of the rail station;
- ability to use existing track Metro-North tracks; and
- development-ready land in nearby vacant and industrial areas.

The 27-page report entitled, “South Bronx’s Hunts Point Station: An Urban Transit-Oriented Development Assessment” was the result of a year-long process that included an examination of a range of transportation, demographic and development criteria in neighborhoods around the city (see report, page 7).

The report incorporates recommendations from a wide range of organizations active in the Hunts Point area, including the Bronx Borough President’s Office, The Point CDC, Sustainable South Bronx, Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, the Pratt Center for Community Development, Bronx Community Board 2 and New York City’s Economic Development Corporation.

“The Hunts Point Community has been calling for a Metro-North station for some time. Given the City’s projected population growth, the time for Hunts Point is now,” said Nicolas Ronderos, Senior Planner for RPA and report co-author.

The report emphasizes that the Hunts Point Metro-North station is an appealing project since it does not require major new construction, just station facilities.

Chris Jones, Vice President for Research for RPA said, “Developing a Metro-North station in Hunts Point produces a big bang for the buck. Because of existing track there, the area is primed for new transit capacity with relatively low investment.”

Metro-North’s own analysis of potential new stations along the New Haven line concluded that Hunts Point would serve 2,200 riders during the morning peak period alone, in addition to 2,000 estimated riders at the Parkchester station and 1,500 riders at Co-op City.

The construction of the new station depends on additional capacity at Penn Station, which will become available only after the MTA’s East Side Access Project allows Long Island Rail

- more, more, more -

Road trains to divert to Grand Central Terminal in 2013. Metro-North riders from Westchester and Connecticut will save an estimated 9 minutes in each direction as the result of a direct ride to Penn Station.

Even though construction of a new Hunts Point station is several years in the future, development opportunities could take immediate advantage of the existing express subway station (#6) across the street. The prospect of new commuter rail service would accelerate development, and construction would provide an opportunity for new public spaces and amenities.

The report makes several recommendations for using both a new Metro North Station and the existing Hunts Point subway station to leverage community benefits for both Hunts Point and Longwood, including:

- Designing pedestrian-friendly street corridors and station areas to link the Hunts Point and Longwood communities;
- Developing affordable housing and commercial development in the area within walking distance of the subway and commuter rail stations. The report estimated the potential for 3,300 new units of housing in this area, or more if the Sheridan Expressway is torn down, an option now being reviewed by the New York State Department of Transportation.
- Implementing recommendations for a Cultural District, new open space, brownfield reclamation and other projects already being recommended by organizations active in the Hunts Point area.

This report is part of RPA's Community Links Initiative, which identifies urban transit-oriented development opportunities for low-income communities. The complete report can be found on web at <http://www.rpa.org/pdf/rpahuntspointsm.pdf>. This report was made possible through the generous support of the Ford Foundation, the JM Kaplan Fund and the Urban Land Institute.