

Rothman Pushes For New Rail Lines To Redeveloped Arena Site

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Says Rail Plans Are Key To Reduce Road Congestion, Improve Quality of Life

East Rutherford, NJ - Testifying before a special hearing of the New Jersey State Assembly Light Rail Transit Panel at Giants Stadium, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) today pushed for new rail access to the Meadowlands Complex in light of the recent selection of a redeveloper for the Arena site. While saying that new rail access to the Meadowlands is needed, Rothman cautioned officials that the site's redevelopment plan must not overwhelm the area's current road infrastructure.

"I believe that rail must play a role in the future of the Meadowlands Complex and that a rail spur to and from the Meadowlands site will not only provide new travel options for local Meadowlands workers and visitors, but will allow those from farther away an opportunity to get to the site by rail," said Rothman, who pledged to use his position on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation to secure funding for the rail solution that is selected. "We need to examine all of the rail options that are out there to see which ones accomplish our goals."

Rothman specifically discussed two options he sees as the most likely rail scenario for the Meadowlands Complex. The first involves building a commuter rail hub and spur into the Meadowlands, which would allow people to travel south along the Bergen Line, Pascack Valley Line, and Main Line directly to the Meadowlands, or to stop at a new, nearby terminal and switch to a "shuttle" train into the Meadowlands Complex. The second option is to extend the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail system, which already has a proven record of success, into the Meadowlands Complex and farther on to an intermodal hub providing access south to the Secaucus Transfer Station and north to either the Bergen Line, Pascack Valley Line, or Main Line. This light rail extension could be incorporated into road and bridge projects that are already planned.

"It is imperative that new rail service be thoughtfully incorporated into the redevelopment of the Arena site in order for this Meadowlands Complex project to fulfill its promise of creating good construction and permanent jobs for our people and providing entertainment, business, recreation, retail, and other destinations for our region, increasing tax rates to be shared by our local communities, while enhancing and not negatively affecting the quality of life of the surrounding towns," Rothman said. "With the county, state, and federal governments working together, along with the redeveloper, we can utilize this uniquely valuable piece of property to its fullest with a well-planned development that won't overburden our already congested roads."

Since coming to Congress more than six years ago, Rothman has been working to relieve congestion on roads by not only unclogging outdated intersections and roadways, but also by getting Congress to invest in our rails. As part of the Fiscal Year 2003 budget, Rothman was able to use his position as a member of the House Appropriations Committee to secure \$69.2 million to continue construction on the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail system, \$60 million to continue building the Newark-Elizabeth Rail Link, \$2.25 million for the development of a new rail service in Bergen County, and \$100,000 to design ways to end gridlock on Route 17.

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[Go back](#)