



A whistle-stop for Rosebank (commentary)

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Rosebank needs a train station.

An odd situation exists in Rosebank. Every day, the Staten Island Railway (SIR) runs through this area, picking up in Grasmere and Clifton, but blasting past all of the residents of this vibrant and urban community.

Why? It is just one of those strange and ironic Staten Island transportation stories.

If you look at the route of the old Staten Island Rapid Transit South Shore line, you will see in a trip from St. George to Tottenville that if you get off the train, you are rarely more than 1/2 mile from a train station. The SIRT, installed in the 1860s is a classic walkable transit system. If you walk east from the Great Kills station, at about the 1/2 mile mark, you are now closer to the Bay Terrace station. Walk west, and then again at about the 1/2 mile point you are now within striking distance of the Eltingville station.

It is that way along the whole line. The planners who laid out the SIRT made it walkable for the residents — as they had no automobiles in 1860 — so you had to walk.

Except at Rosebank. And here the story gets odd. Staten Island used to have three lines on the SIRT — the South Shore line that exists today and two others — the North Shore Line ran from St. George to Arlington and the South Beach Spur ran to Wentworth Avenue. In 1953, facing various financial pressures, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad which owned the SIRT, closed the North Shore and South Beach Spur.

We almost lost them all — but the city stepped up and saved the South Shore line. But not for Rosebank. The Rosebank Station did exist — but it was on the South Beach Spur and when that closed they lost their station. So, today, they can hear the rattle of the train through their community, but they can't get on.

We could change that. Building an additional station is not a huge lift in terms of capital costs and it should have significant ridership. It would help promote economic growth in our community, reduce the need for cars and help support Rosebank as a livable and transit-focused community.

How about it MTA? Why not build a small addition to our transit network that would bring additional ridership to our one and only rail system. A transit tunnel to Brooklyn would be better — but I would settle for this for the

time being.

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