

The Suffolk Times.

Big N.Y. State projects won't reach East End

by [Chris Lisinski](#) |
01/17/2016 6:00 AM



As part of the buildup to his State of the State address and budget presentation Wednesday, Gov. Andrew Cuomo revealed a variety of initiatives last week designed to aid Long Island in a variety of ways.

Those plans include spending more than \$1 billion to reinvigorate the area's transportation infrastructure and protect local environments. For the most part, however, the East End seems to be left out of the mix.

Gov. Cuomo proposed a variety of projects to develop the island's transportation infrastructure, including installing a third track on the Long Island Rail Road's main line from Floral Park to Hicksville and a \$50 million renovation of the Ronkonkoma Hub.

Assemblyman Anthony Palumbo (R-New Suffolk) said the North Fork in particular "deserves more state attention" for its meager LIRR infrastructure. He recently met with representatives from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to discuss concerns that trains don't run to Greenport on weekends during tourism season due to low ridership.

"The more the North Fork gets discovered, so to speak, the more volume we will have," he said.

Mr. Palumbo said ridership numbers are “not an adequate justification” since qualifying employers on the North Fork pay the same metropolitan commuter transportation mobility tax as other areas with greater LIRR coverage.

“We pay into the MTA just like everyone else,” he said. “We’re financing the New York City contingency. We have a very limited use of public transportation anyway, based upon the way that our area is geographically situated.”

The assemblyman said he would attempt to get more funding to expand East End railroads in the 2016 state budget.

Gov. Cuomo has also proposed building a federal inspection station at Islip Town’s MacArthur Airport and examining the possibility of a car tunnel running beneath the Long Island Sound over to the Bronx, Westchester County or Connecticut, though the starting location of that tunnel will not be known until a study is conducted.

The governor proposed a variety of environmental measures for Long Island as well, including the investment of an additional \$182 million into the island’s state parks and an allocation of \$300 million to the state’s Environmental Protection Fund.

One of his largest ideas is to expand sewerage in Suffolk County to an additional 10,000 homes. A spokesman for the Department of Environmental Conservation said that project would focus on five watersheds: Carlls River, Connetquot River, Forge River, Patchogue River and a portion of the southwest sewer district no. 3 in southwestern Suffolk.

None of the areas targeted for sewer extensions are on the North Fork, though Mr. Palumbo said that’s likely because the area’s geography does not support total sewerage. However, he was “happy” to see the governor address water quality issues elsewhere in the county. Additionally, state economic development projects that were approved last month [OK’d over \\$2 million in denitrofication systems for the East End](#), which will aid the health of local waters.

Mr. Palumbo said nitrogen purification and upgraded septic systems are likely the best solution.

“These nitrogen elimination systems are probably the wave of the future more than sewerage for our district,” he said.

In December, a bill that Mr. Palumbo cosponsored along with Assemblyman Fred Thiele (I-Sag Harbor) passed, allowing towns to use up to 20 percent of their annual community preservation fund revenues to address water quality issues.

“This is probably one of the smarter things we could have done in light of the fact that because of the geography, we can’t sewer the entire East End,” Mr. Palumbo said.