

# INSTITUTE FOR RATIONAL URBAN MOBILITY, INC.

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## **Statement at MTA Committee on Capital Construction, Planning and Real Estate April 24, 2006**

The Institute for Rational Urban Mobility, Inc. (IRUM) takes strong exception to comments by MTA staff circulated to this committee on March 24, 2006 about the merits of the Upper Level Loop Alternative (ULLA) to the Deep Cavern Terminal Station proposed for the LIRR East Side Access Project. IRUM's concerns were sent to the committee on April 10, 2006. Both documents are posted on the IRUM website – [www.irum.org](http://www.irum.org)

When compared with the MTA Deep Cavern Terminal, ULLA saves \$1.2 billion in construction cost, can be completed three years sooner and saves LIRR commuters from three to four minutes per trip each way.

The Deep Cavern Terminal would be some 150 feet below Park Avenue. In the past several weeks new concerns have been raised about security at the World Trade Center memorial. MTA's Deep Cavern Terminal Station for the LIRR East Side Access Project is three times as deep as the proposed memorial and is enclosed, not open to air. More than 8,000 commuters could be trapped in Deep Cavern Terminal in the event of a terrorist attack. Climbing up stopped escalators could be a real challenge, especially as firefighters attempt to descend down the same stairs.

In light of these concerns IRUM is requesting that MTA seek an opinion from NYPD Commissioner Ray Kelly and US Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff on the relative security risks associated with the Deep Cavern Terminal station compared with ULLA.

The key to moving ULLA ahead quickly is to put the resources of two MTA units to work: MTA Capital Construction and MTA Metro-North. Using their considerable talents an Environmental Assessment could be quickly completed with design and construction following immediately. Many of the engineers and construction managers available to MTA Capital Construction oversaw the speedy completion of the F train connection to the Queens Blvd. subway line several years ago. There were no weekday disruptions, and even weekend delays were kept to a minimum. The same could apply to ULLA. For over two decades MNR operated its Park Avenue tunnel and viaduct as a three track system, taking one of its four tracks was out of service for major structural repairs. MNR operations planning staff was so effective that commuters were unaware of this disruption. MNR could use this same resourcefulness to minimize any adverse impacts on MNR during construction or operation of ULLA.