

**EIS for Improved Station Access and Additional Parking
at the North White Plains Station
Final Scoping Information Document**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Summary

The FTA, in cooperation with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Metro-North Railroad (Metro-North), and the Westchester County Department of Transportation (WCDOT) will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on a proposal to improve station access and provide additional parking at Metro-North's North White Plains Station, Westchester County, New York (Proposed Action).

The FTA is the lead federal agency under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The project is being developed by Metro-North and WCDOT, the project co-sponsors. The EIS will be prepared in accordance with NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508) and USDOT FHWA/FTA Environmental Impact and Related Procedures (23 CFR 771).

This study is being funded initially as part of UMTA Grant NY-03-0231, in which WCDOT is the Federal Transit Administration grantee, and Metro-North is providing the local match for the Federal grant as sub-recipient. Once this grant has been expended, the subsequent phases of the study will be funded through the 2002-2004 New York Metropolitan Transportation Council's Unified Planning Work Program funds, in which the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), Metro-North's parent company, is the grantee.

The EIS and the environmental review process will also satisfy any applicable requirements of the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

Metro-North and WCDOT recognize that the current parking and access situation at the North White Plains Station is not optimal. The current parking deficiency of approximately 300 spaces is forecast to grow to approximately 1600 spaces in 2015 and to 3300 spaces in 2025. Access to the station is hampered by its location amidst a series of one-way roads such as Fisher Lane. The roadway provides the only means of access to the parking areas located west of the tracks, areas which today provide approximately 80% of all parking at the North White Plains Station. All Metro-North customers who use these parking areas must travel through the Bronx River Parkway–Fisher Lane intersection for access. This intersection currently experiences heavy traffic during the morning peak hours. Improved station access considered in this EIS would improve traffic movement through and/or reduce the site's dependence on the Bronx River Parkway-Fisher Lane intersection.

The project sponsors also recognize that some commuter parking west of the station is located on land of the Bronx River Parkway Reservation (BRPR). This commuter parking area also serves as a through route for the Bronx River Parkway Bike Path. The BRPR is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and has been designated as a Critical Environmental Area by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. It is desirable to restore the portions of the parking area that are within the BRPR to parkland and to reroute a portion of the bike facility in order to minimize or eliminate conflict with automobiles in the parking area.

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As a result, items that will be considered in the Proposed Action are:

- Expansion of parking capacity through the construction of a multi-level parking structure at Metro-North's North White Plains Station;
- Improved access to/from the proposed expanded parking facilities from the east and west sides of the railroad tracks;
- Enhanced customer service facilities for intermodal connections and parking demand management strategies such as: jitney services, feeder busses supported by park-and-ride lots, carpool and vanpool arrangements, bicycling and walking;
- Restoration of a portion of the Bronx River Parkway Reservation which is currently used for customer parking back to parkland; and
- Rerouting a portion of the Bronx River Parkway Reservation bike pathway in the study area.
- Improvements to surface parking to reduce the risk of flooding from the Bronx River.

The EIS will evaluate a proposal that includes a parking garage alternative at North White Plains Station comprising a multi-level parking structure and intermodal elements. Eight access alternatives for this structure were deemed sufficiently reasonable to be carried into the EIS where they will be analyzed for fatal flaws. The reasonable alternatives surviving the fatal flaw analysis will undergo a complete environmental review in the EIS. Expansion of parking at existing Westchester County owned parking facilities at the White Plains Station, and a No Action Alternative were also deemed sufficiently reasonable to be carried into the EIS where they will be analyzed for fatal flaws. The EIS will be prepared through an open process consisting of meetings and correspondence with interested persons, organizations, and Federal, State, regional, and local agencies.

1.2 Public Scoping Process

The public was invited to participate in a scoping meeting on June 14, 2005 commencing at 7 p.m. at the location identified under ADDRESSES below to ensure that all significant issues were identified and considered. Presentation boards depicting the project concept were available for review at the meeting. Metro-North and WCDOT representatives were present at the meeting. Attendees consisted of interested individuals and organizations and elected and appointed officials of municipalities served by the North White Plains Station.

Formal presentations by Metro-North and WCDOT regarding the project were made at 7:00 p.m., followed by the opportunity for the public to make comments on the scope of the EIS. Registration to speak began at 6:30 p.m. and remained open until 8:30 p.m. A stenographer recorded all oral comments. Those wishing to speak were requested to register at the meeting location upon arrival, and registration to speak remained open until 8:30 p.m. The meeting concluded when all registered speakers had been heard.

The scoping comment period remained open through July 11, 2005. Written comments on the scope of the EIS were accepted at the scoping meeting, or were sent to Mr. James Hoegler, PE, AICP at Metro-North Railroad, or Ms. Patricia Chemka, AICP at WCDOT at the addresses given under ADDRESSES below.

This Final Scoping Information Document reflects the input from the public scoping process. Printed versions of the Final Scoping Information Document are available at a number of public libraries and municipal offices. A list of these locations can be obtained by contacting Mr.

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James Hoegler, PE, AICP, or Ms. Patricia Chemka, AICP, at the telephone numbers listed below under ADDRESSES, or by visiting the following websites: <http://www.mta.info> (click “MTA-Home” then “Planning Studies,” and “North White Plains Station”) and the WCDOT website: www.westchestergov.com/transportation. The Final Scoping Information Document may also be requested by writing to these individuals, or may be viewed on-line by visiting the websites listed above.

1.3 Addresses

The public scoping meeting was held on Tuesday, June 14, 2005 in rooms C and D at the Westchester County Center, 198 Central Avenue (at the Bronx River Parkway), White Plains, NY 10606. The meeting was accessible to mobility-impaired people and interpreter services for persons with hearing impairments was offered, although no one requested such services.

Written comments were accepted at the meeting or were sent to the following addresses through July 11, 2005: Mr. James Hoegler, PE, AICP, MTA Metro-North Railroad, 345 Madison Avenue, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10017, phone (888) 836-8301; or Ms. Patricia Chemka, AICP, Westchester County Department of Transportation, 100 East 1st Street, 9th Floor, Mount Vernon, NY, 10550, phone (914) 813-7753.

1.4 Supplementary Scoping Information

1.4.1 Scoping

FTA, Metro-North and WCDOT invited interested individuals, organizations, and Federal, State, and local agencies to provide comments on the scope of the Proposed Action. During the scoping process, comments were to be focused on specific social, economic, or environmental issues to be evaluated, and on suggesting alternatives that may be less costly or have fewer potential environmental impacts while achieving similar transportation objectives. To assist interested parties in formulating their comments, this Scoping Information Document included a description of the purpose and need for the Proposed Action, preliminary alternatives, environmental issues that will be addressed during the course of the study, and an outline of the on-going public participation program.

1.4.2 Planning Study

Metro-North and WCDOT conducted a Planning Study for the Proposed Action in advance of the EIS. The purpose of the Planning Study, entitled “Planning Study for Improved Station Access and Additional Parking at North White Plains Station”, dated May, 2005, was to identify area constraints and determine the viability of the Proposed Action. The Planning Study is available on Metro-North and WCDOT websites. Copies can also be viewed at the Metro-North and WCDOT offices by contacting Mr. Hoegler or Ms. Chemka at the telephone numbers or addresses listed above.

The study identified a range of improvement alternatives to address the parking and access deficiencies at the North White Plains Station. Two garage concepts and eleven access alternatives were developed and analyzed. The garage concepts were sized to meet demand in 2015 and 2025. The access alternatives fell into four (4) varied categories: new access from Cemetery Road; new access from I-287; new bridge or tunnel access to the west side of the tracks in the vicinity of Glenn Street and Haarlem Avenue; and construction of a two-way Fisher

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Lane between the west-side parking area driveways and Haarlem Avenue. Access into and from the parking structure could be accommodated through any of the access alternatives.

Planning study findings indicate that:

- The current station parking supply is approximately 1,250 spaces; the current demand is approximately 1,560 spaces.
- The station parking demand in 2015 is forecast to be approximately 2,800 spaces; and approximately 4,550 spaces in 2025.
- Constraints in the project area such as parkland, wetlands, and the area roadway network preclude the ability to satisfy full parking demand for 2025 (approximately 4,550 parking spaces). Metro-North and WCDOT will not pursue this larger structure.
- The aforementioned constraints coupled with the mature development pattern in the study area preclude any further surface parking expansion. The construction of a parking structure is the most efficient means to increase and consolidate the station's parking supply on the west side of the tracks.
- It is feasible to increase parking supply by approximately 1,450 spaces above current parking supply levels (approximately 1,250 spaces) for a total of approximately 2,700 spaces in an effort to address the projected parking demand for 2015.
- Implementation of parking demand management strategies such as jitney services and feeder buses supported by park-and-ride lots, carpool and vanpool arrangements, bicycling and walking could not alone, without the construction of a parking structure, accommodate current or future estimated parking demand. However, these strategies will be an element of a future project.
- Four of the eleven access alternatives and one of the garage alternatives evaluated in the Planning Study were determined to be sufficiently reasonable on a conceptual basis and will be progressed into the EIS process. The other alternatives were dropped from further consideration because of their significant environmental and community impacts.
- The southern portion of the parking area owned by Metro-North and located west of the Metro-North tracks was studied for a new parking structure as it appears to be the most feasible site for a new parking structure. The parcel is the largest contiguous property owned by Metro-North in the study area.
- All existing Metro-North customers who use the parking areas west of the Metro-North right-of-way must travel through the Bronx River Parkway–Fisher Lane intersection for access. This intersection currently experiences heavy traffic during the morning peak hours. New access from either the north, south and the east would reduce the site's dependence on this intersection.

Metro-North and WCDOT will use the information developed in the Planning Study to progress a proposal through an open and formal environmental review consistent with both NEPA and

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SEQRA. Additional information on potential impacts and more specific description and analysis of access alternatives and station area improvements will be included and evaluated in the environmental impact statement.

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 Study Area

The North White Plains Station is located along Metro-North's Harlem Line on Haarlem Avenue west of Broadway (NY Route 22) and east of the Bronx River Parkway, approximately 0.25 miles north of Interstate 287 (I-287), in the northern section of the City of White Plains, Westchester County, New York. The station is located near the municipal boundaries of the City of White Plains and the Towns of North Castle and Greenburgh (see attached map).

The Harlem Line, which generally runs north-south through the City of White Plains, is one of three major passenger rail lines which provide regularly scheduled daily train service between New York City (Grand Central Terminal) and various locations in Westchester County. The northern terminus of the Harlem Line is in Wassaic, in the Town of Amenia, Dutchess County, New York.

The Primary Study Area is defined as the area west of Haarlem Avenue and east of the Bronx River Parkway Reservation (BRPR) between Holland Avenue to the south and Fisher Lane to the north. This area consists of Haarlem Avenue, the land currently occupied by station parking areas, the station itself, and immediately adjacent facilities (e.g., drop off/pick up; intermodal area). A Secondary Study Area is defined by and limited to the area where site-related traffic impacts associated with the proposal are located outside the Primary Study Area. Information collected in the Secondary Study Area will be relevant to specific potential project changes.

Towards its goal of improving access to public transportation, Metro-North has identified the North White Plains Station as a Strategic Passenger Facility due to its central location and the level of train service provided to the station. Metro-North currently provides a level of train service to the North White Plains Station that is among the top five on the Harlem Line and among the top ten system-wide. Three parking areas currently serve Metro-North customers at the North White Plains Station, with Metro-North and Westchester County owning the majority of the approximately 1,250 available parking spaces.

Vehicular access to the station from the north and south is provided primarily by Broadway to the east and the Bronx River Parkway to the west. However, the majority of parking spaces that serve the station are located on the west side of the tracks and can only be accessed via the Bronx River Parkway at Fisher Lane. A one-way travel restriction on Fisher Lane in the vicinity of the railroad underpass prevents full west to east travel across the study area.

2.2 Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

The need for the Proposed Action is due to the current parking deficiency, forecasted growth in ridership and projected customer diversions from other stations. In addition, access to the North White Plains Station is hampered by its location amidst a series of one-way roads such as Fisher Lane.

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The DEIS will include information relevant to Metro-North efforts to improve service and access/parking at other Harlem Line stations.

Parking utilization at the North White Plains Station is approximately 90 percent on any typical weekday. Metro-North experience suggests that drivers perceive a lot as full when the utilization exceeds 85 percent. A separate effort by Metro-North to estimate parking demand system-wide at its rail stations in New York State, which included a survey of the waiting lists for permits to park at the North White Plains Station, indicates the total current demand at the North White Plains Station to be approximately 1,560 spaces. Parking demand is forecast to be approximately 2,800 in 2015 and approximately 4,600 in 2025. The construction of a multi-level parking structure would provide additional parking capacity to Metro-North customers to accommodate both current and future demand for parking.

Regarding access, Fisher Lane currently provides the only means of access to the parking areas located west of the tracks, areas which provide approximately 80% of all North White Plains Station Parking. All Metro-North customers who use these parking areas must travel through the Bronx River Parkway–Fisher Lane intersection for access. This intersection currently experiences heavy traffic during the morning peak hours. Improved station access would reduce the site’s dependence on the Bronx River Parkway-Fisher Lane intersection.

3.0 PROPOSED ACTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES TO BE CONSIDERED

The EIS will evaluate Build and No-Action alternatives. The Build alternative will provide improvements that enhance connections to the existing transportation system and will meet the anticipated increase in parking demand.

As a result of the Planning Study (see Section 1.4.2 “Planning Study”) and in response to public input in the scoping process, one garage concept and eight access alternatives to the North White Plains Station will be progressed into the EIS for further evaluation. These alternatives both improve site access to/from the east side of the railroad tracks and increase parking capacity. In addition, potential expansion of parking on property owned by Westchester County at the White Plains Station will be evaluated. Specifically, the alternatives to be evaluated include:

A) Parking Garage Concept

The Planning Study examined two parking garage concepts that ranged in size from a) a parking structure with a capacity of up to approximately 2,200 spaces, able to accommodate parking demand through the year 2015, located in the southern portion of the Westchester County-operated parking area west of the tracks, to b) a parking structure with a capacity of approximately 4,300 spaces, able to accommodate parking demand through the year 2025, which would span both the Metro-North tracks and much of the entire Westchester County operated parking area. The Planning Study revealed that:

- a) constraints in the project area such as parkland, wetlands and the area roadway network preclude the ability to satisfy full parking demand for 2025, and
- b) constraints in the project area limit the number of feasible sites for a new parking structure to the southern portion of the Metro-North-owned (Westchester County-

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operated) parking facility. This is also the largest contiguous property owned by Metro-North.

Currently, there are approximately 1,250 surface parking spaces at the North White Plains Station. The Proposed Action would result in up to approximately 2,700 parking spaces, a net increase of up to about 116% (approximately 1,450 spaces). This would be accomplished through the construction of an approximate 2,200 space parking structure. The structure would contain the 1,450 net new spaces as well as approximately 750 spaces relocated into the garage from surface lots, permitting the most efficient use of the limited available space. Approximately 500 surface spaces would remain.

B) Site Access Alternatives

1. New access from the North - Construction of a new single lane underpass located south of the existing Fisher Lane underpass that would be used for eastbound travel. The existing Fisher Lane underpass would be converted to westbound travel;
- 2a. New access from the East - Construction of a new two-way underpass from an extended Glenn Street under the Metro-North tracks;
- 2b. New access from the East - Construction of a new two-way underpass from Holland Avenue under the Metro-North tracks;
- 3a. New access from the South - Construction of a one-way (ingress-only) surface driveway from Cemetery Road;
- 3b. New access from the South - Construction of a two-way surface driveway from Cemetery Road;
- 4a. New access from the South - Construction of a reversible one-lane ramp over Metro-North tracks on the south side of proposed partial two-way Cemetery Road.
- 4b. New access from the South - Construction of a two-way ramp over Metro-North tracks on the south side of proposed partial two-way Cemetery Road.
5. Improved access from the West – Improved access from the Fisher Lane/Bronx River Parkway intersection only (no new access from the east).

C) White Plains Station Parking Expansion

Provide additional parking at existing Westchester County owned lots at the White Plains Station.

D) No Action Alternative. This alternative provides for minor improvements, repairs, and other maintenance actions to the existing parking areas and access points. All Build alternatives will be compared to this No Action Alternative.

All reasonable alternatives for implementing improvements that result in improved station access and additional parking will be evaluated. Reasonable alternatives are those that a) meet the purpose and need for the project, b) address regulatory requirements, c) are available and capable of being implemented, and d) are prudent and feasible. Over the course of study, alternatives may evolve and specific elements of any one alternative may change.

4.0 IMPACT AREAS TO BE CONSIDERED

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will be prepared to analyze the potential for impacts associated with the Proposed Action during both construction and operation. The EIS will also identify any feasible mitigation measures to minimize or avoid any potential significant impacts. The EIS will address the project purpose and need, alternatives considered, existing conditions, and direct and indirect short-term and long-term impacts of each alternative. As described below, detailed studies addressing a range of environmental issues relevant to the proposed project and its alternatives will be included.

Impacts that may occur as a result of the Proposed Action will be evaluated in the EIS. Metro-North and WCDOT have identified several environmental areas of concern including: traffic; historic and archaeological resources; parkland; wetlands; visual character; and safety and security. The EIS will describe the methodology used to assess impacts; identify the affected environment; and identify opportunities and measures for mitigating adverse impacts.

The following sections briefly discuss each impact area to be evaluated, and the level of analysis to be undertaken.

4.1 Social/Economic Factors

4.1.1 Land Use, Zoning, Public Policy, Community Character, and Social Conditions

This section will evaluate the compatibility of the proposed project with surrounding land uses. The EIS will assess the impacts on land use, zoning, public policy, neighborhood character, and community facilities.

4.1.2 Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898 calls for “each Federal agency to make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its program, policies, and activities on minority populations and low income populations”.

A population profile of the surrounding community will be developed using the socioeconomic data gathered from the US Census. The project’s impacts on that population, based on the technical assessments conducted for the EIS, will be considered to determine whether there would be any disproportionate effects on low-income or minority populations. Should the evaluation show that there are potential impacts for the population, Metro-North and WCDOT will reach out to these groups regarding the scope of the project and potential impacts.

4.1.3 Historic and Archaeological Resources

This section will identify historic and archaeological resources within the study area and describe any potentially significant impacts that may result from the Proposed Action.

Historic resources are defined as those that are National Historic Landmarks, properties listed on or determined eligible for State/National Registers of Historic Places, and properties recognized as historic by local Governments. Direct and indirect effects to these resources will be described. Investigations of historic resources will be conducted with coordination of local organizations, as well as the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) at the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

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During the aforementioned Planning Study, MNR and WCDOT identified the following four sites that have historic designations: The Bronx River Parkway Reservation, the White Plains Rural Cemetery, the Miller House and Miller Hill Park.

In accordance with Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Metro-North and WCDOT will identify and evaluate potential impacts associated with the construction and long-term operation of the proposed improvements on historic resources on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Investigations will also be conducted to identify any known archaeological resources buried around the project site. The EIS will describe the site's background and history. Investigations of archeological resources will be conducted with coordination of local organizations and the SHPO.

At the start of the evaluation of historic or archaeological resources, Metro-North and WCDOT in consultation with FTA, will identify an Area of Potential Effect (APE).

If impacts will occur to historic or archaeological resources, the 4(f) evaluation, as discussed in section 4.3.7 will also apply.

In addition, it will be determined whether the provisions of section 6 (f) as also discussed in section 4.3.7 are applicable.

4.1.4 Safety and Security

This section will consider the potential impacts of the proposed project on safety and security, and will describe potential measures to be taken to safeguard the proposed project and railroad station. Discussion will also include the ability of local emergency service providers to access the site and conduct operations.

4.1.5 Construction Impacts

This section will describe the construction process and requirements for the proposed project. Impacts to be considered include potential short-term construction related impacts on: surrounding land uses; the road network resulting from the presence of construction vehicles and temporary road closures, pedestrian access; air quality, noise and vibration, and natural resources.

4.2 Transportation Factors

4.2.1 Parking Demand

This section will document the current and future demand for parking at the North White Plains Station. The analysis will include a review of population and development trends, current and projected growth in ridership, Metro-North rail service projections and potential diversions of customers from other stations that may result from the proposed access improvements and additional parking supply at North White Plains Station.

The feasibility and effectiveness of meeting projected parking demand through opportunities and facilities for enhanced intermodal connections, and parking demand management

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strategies such as jitney services, feeder bus supported by park-and-ride lots, carpool and vanpool arrangements, bicycling and walking will be analyzed. Provision of jitney service as a complementary strategy for managing parking demand will be analyzed for both service between certain northern Westchester communities and Upper Harlem Line stations as well as from those communities and residential areas closer to the North White Plains Station and the North White Plains Station.

4.2.2 Station Access, Traffic and Transportation

This section will review current road access to the North White Plains Station and discuss possible impacts resulting from the proposed construction of new or improved access to and from the east side of the tracks. This section will also review vehicular access alternatives from the south, east or north which would reduce the site's dependence on the Bronx River Parkway–Fisher Lane intersection for station access.

As part of the Planning Study, Metro-North and WCDOT reviewed traffic under existing and future No Build conditions. Metro-North and WCDOT will summarize this information and analyze traffic conditions under the Build alternative. The analysis will consider the existing and proposed road network around the station, traffic volumes and levels of service. Potential impacts under future No Build and Build conditions will be analyzed and mitigation measures will be presented, if applicable.

4.3 Physical and Natural Environment

4.3.1 Air Quality

The project area is within the New York metropolitan area that is designated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as “severe non-attainment” for ground-level ozone and “maintenance area” for carbon monoxide. The project will be included in the conformity determination for the Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO's) Long Range Plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

This section will describe the potential for increases in localized pollution that may result from the Proposed Action. Analysis will include any pollution that results from increased motor vehicle use.

4.3.2 Threatened and Endangered Species

This section will describe any potential impacts to threatened or endangered species within the study area. The EIS will identify any such species that may exist within the vicinity of the proposed project site and describe the potential effects of the proposed project on those species.

4.3.3 Water Quality

Metro-North and WCDOT will examine the potential for impacts to any existing surface and ground water resources. Metro-North and WCDOT will conduct a field survey and consult with state and local agencies to determine the presence of surface water resources in the project area. Metro-North and WCDOT will also examine existing stormwater facilities and whether or not the project will result in impacts to stormwater. Although Metro-North and WCDOT will attempt to avoid surface water impacts, should these impacts be likely, the sponsors will consult with Federal, State and local agencies to determine which permits, best management practices

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(BMPs) and mitigation measures will be required to comply with all applicable water quality regulations and to minimize any potential impacts.

4.3.4 Geology, Soils and Topography

This section will evaluate the potential impacts to the existing physical landscape. The chapter will describe the suitability of soils and surface topography on the study site for the proposed project.

4.3.5 Wetlands and Ecologically Sensitive Areas

A comprehensive identification of waters of the United States, including wetlands, was completed in the Planning Study. The study identified 18 wetlands under United States Army Corps of Engineers jurisdiction in the area adjacent to the station. Of particular note are several large wetland areas located adjacent to existing parking lots.

This section will describe any potential impacts to wetlands or other ecologically sensitive areas within the study area. The EIS will identify all such wetland areas, waterways and ecologically sensitive areas in the vicinity of the proposed project site and delineate their boundaries, including that of the Bronx River.

4.3.6 Parkland

Metro-North and WCDOT will examine the potential for impacts to the Bronx River Parkway Reservation (BRPR). The BRPR is located along the western boundary of the study area. The public park and recreation area was created in 1925 in conjunction with the development of the Bronx River Parkway. The BRPR is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and has been designated as a Critical Environmental Area by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

A portion of the BRPR is currently used for commuter parking. This section of the study will assess the restoration of the parking area within the BRPR to parkland.

The BRPR also contains the Bronx River Parkway Bike Path. This facility utilizes the Westchester County operated parking area for a portion of its through routing. The EIS will examine the potential to reroute a portion of this facility in order to minimize or eliminate conflict with automobiles in the parking area.

4.3.7 Sections 4(f) and 6(f) Properties

Section 4(f) refers to properties defined as publicly owned park, recreation area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge, or historic site. The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Act of 1966 stipulates that no USDOT agency will approve a project which requires the use of these properties unless (1) there is no prudent and feasible alternative to the use of the land, and (2) the project/program includes all possible planning to minimize harm to these properties.

Section 6(f) refers to the conversion of parkland properties to a use other than for public outdoor recreation and requires the replacement of such converted property with property of equivalent worth and utility.

Once potential Section 4(f) properties have been identified, Metro-North and WCDOT will evaluate alternatives, and in consultation with FTA, determine if any of the alternatives would be

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likely to result in the use of such properties. Metro-North and WCDOT will make every effort possible to avoid impacts to Section 4(f) properties. However, should agency consultation determine that the project would result in the use of any Section 4(f) property, a Section 4(f) evaluation will be prepared. This evaluation will document the characteristics, special features, associated activities and significance of the affected properties. In addition, the evaluation will discuss all planning efforts made to minimize harm, why the use cannot be avoided, and how the use will be mitigated.

FTA will make any required 4(f) and/or 6(f) finding at the time of the issuance of the Record of Decision.

4.3.8 Aesthetic Resources

The EIS will consider potential changes to the visual character of the surrounding community. This section will evaluate any potential visual impacts that may result to aesthetic resources within the study area such as the Bronx River Parkway, Bronx River Parkway Reservation, and White Plains Rural Cemetery.

4.3.9 Hazardous Materials

This section will investigate whether soil and groundwater contamination resulting from previous and existing uses exists or potentially exists at the site. The chapter will describe the location and extent of potential contamination and discuss possible implications those contaminants may have on the proposed project and appropriate handling of any such materials.

4.3.10 Noise

The EIS will describe the potential for increases in noise that may result from the proposed project. Analysis will only include effects of an increase in the number of motor vehicles coming to the North White Plains Station as increased train traffic resulting from the proposed project is not foreseen.

4.3.11 Utilities

This section will assess the suitability and available capacity of the project site to handle any increased utility needs of the proposed project. Any potential impacts on these utilities will be identified.

4.3.12 Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF's)

This section will identify the nature of the EMFs associated with the existing third rail and whether the project will result in any increase in exposures to those EMFs.

4.3.13 Cumulative Impacts

This section will summarize any potential cumulative impacts that may result from the proposed project and likely to be built within the study area in the future. Secondary impacts ("growth inducing impacts") resulting from the proposed project will also be assessed.

5.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement is a critical component of both the scoping and EIS processes. The following sections briefly discuss the public involvement plans for the project. These plans may be expanded in order to meet any changing demand in public outreach.

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5.1 Website and Contact

Project information is available on the MTA website: <http://www.mta.info> (click “MTA-Home” then “Planning Studies,” and “North White Plains Station”) and the WCDOT website: <http://www.westchestergov.com/transportation>.

The following individuals may be contacted for further information: Mr. James Hoegler, PE, AICP, MTA Metro-North Railroad, 345 Madison Avenue, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10017, phone (888) 836-8301; or Ms. Patricia Chemka, AICP, Westchester County Department of Transportation, 100 East 1st Street, 9th Floor, Mount Vernon, NY, 10550, phone (914) 813-7753. Requests to be placed on the project mailing list may be made by calling or by writing to these individuals.

5.2 Interest Group Meetings and Presentations

In June 2004, representatives from Metro-North and WCDOT conducted two stakeholder meetings to introduce the study and obtain input from resource agencies, local planning departments and local governments. During the meetings, attendees advised of local conditions that are important towards any project development.

Also in June 2004, Metro-North and WCDOT held a “Meet and Greet” at the North White Plains Station to introduce the study to Metro-North customers and solicit ideas. It was held in the late afternoon/early evening at a convenient time for customers arriving at North White Plains Station upon their return home from work. During the event, Metro-North customers advised of improvements they want to see at the station.

In October 2004, the study was also introduced to attendees at Metro-North’s annual Open House at Metro-North’s Croton-Harmon Maintenance Facility in Croton-on-Hudson (Westchester County), New York. As a result of this effort, several people signed up for the EIS mailing list.

On June 14, 2005 a Public Scoping Meeting was held to receive comments on the specific social, economic and and/or environmental issues to be evaluated in the Environmental Impact Statement.

Following the Public Scoping Meeting in June 2005, Metro-North and WCDOT met with the North Broadway Citizens Association to discuss the EIS for the proposed project.

In August 2005, Metro-North and WCDOT attended the Miller Hill Homeowners’ Association meeting to discuss the EIS for the proposed project.

In October 2005, boards depicting study information and updated fact sheets were available for review at Metro-North’s annual Open House at Metro-North’s Croton Harmon Maintenance Facility in Croton-on-Hudson (Westchester County), New York.

In February 2006, Metro-North and WCDOT attended the North Castle Open Space Committee meeting to discuss the EIS for the proposed project.

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Additional group meetings and presentations will be held at major EIS milestones and as requested. The websites cited above may be checked for upcoming events. Metro-North and WCDOT are available to meet with interested groups as requested.

6.0 NEPA REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

NEPA contains the following procedural requirements, which Metro-North and WCDOT will incorporate into the EIS schedule and process:

Commencement of the DEIS will begin when the FTA publishes the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS in the Federal Register. The NOI (published on May 24, 2005) identifies the time and location of public scoping meeting. Metro-North and WCDOT also published notices of the scoping meeting in local newspapers.

Once the alternatives and environmental analyses have been completed, the DEIS will be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). EPA will publish a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register and Metro-North and WCDOT will also publish notices in local papers. A public hearing(s) will be held when the DEIS is released to the public.

The DEIS will be available to the public for review and comment for a minimum of 45 days and 15 days prior to the public hearing. The DEIS will be circulated to all parties interested or having jurisdiction by law over the proposed action.

At the conclusion of the DEIS circulation period, FTA and the project sponsors will review the comments and refine the document as necessary. FTA and the sponsors will prepare a Final EIS.

The EIS process will conclude at such time that the FTA issues a Record of Decision or "ROD". The ROD describes the basis for FTA's decision and identifies all mitigation commitments necessary for implementation of the Proposed Action.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC SCOPING PROCESS

The following summarizes comments received during the public scoping process. Comments are grouped according to section of the Scoping Information Document. The commenters name and the method by which the comment was received are indicated in parenthesis following the comment. ("T" refers to the transcript of the public scoping meeting and the page of the transcript where the comment can be found. "L" refers to a letter received during the comment period all of which have been numbered in the order of their receipt).

1.0 – Scoping Process

North Broadway Citizens Association never received notification about the project and therefore would like another scoping meeting to be held. (T 50, Fried). How long will the environmental process take? (T 59, Sutton). The City of White Plains should be identified as an involved agency since City approvals will be necessary. (L 6, Johnson).

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1.4.2 – Planning Study

The City of White Plains requests that a copy of the traffic study be provided for evaluation and comment. (L 6, Johnson).

2.0 – Project Description

There is concern about elimination of all dedicated Town of North Castle resident parking. (T 26, Lombardi; T 42, Sosa). If residents choose to migrate to the new parking structure after it is built and Fisher Lane (Town of North Castle resident) parking lot is closed due to attrition, the Town of North Castle would like to work out an agreement to reserve parking for North Castle residents in the new parking structure. (L 3, Town of North Castle Board Members and Lombardi). The DEIS should include an overview of long term planning for the entire Harlem Division to provide a broader context. The description should be expanded to include the project alternatives at Cemetery Road and the Bronx River Parkway as recommended by the City. A larger secondary study area, delineated by the limits of the traffic and drainage studies, should be identified. (L 6, Johnson).

3.0 – Proposed Action and Alternatives

Supports the proposed station renovation especially in light of the fact that it does not conform to current disability access standards. (T 41, Sosa; L 1, Kazak; L 3, Lombardi).

3.0.A – Parking Garage Concept

There is concern about a five-story building. (T 25, Lombardi). There is concern about the potential high cost of a parking structure. (T 49, Beil; T 56, Little). What is the footprint and location of the parking structure? (T 60, Sutton).

3.0.B – Site Access Alternatives

There is concern about changes to Glenn Street. (T 32, Conroy; T 53, Fried). There is concern about the expansion of Cemetery Road – it is already at capacity. Fisher Lane access should be improved. (T 36, Conroy). Opening Fisher Lane to westbound traffic would result in additional congestion on local roads. (L 6, Johnson). Improved access from the Bronx River Parkway corridor should be analyzed as an alternative. (L 1, Kazak). An alternative should include a two-way ramp, 24-foot wide with the ability for closure during the peak traffic period at the North Broadway/Cemetery Road intersection. Analysis of the underpass alternatives should include sufficient design information to demonstrate vertical road clearance between flood level elevation and railroad bridge structures. (L 6, Johnson). There is concern about the I-287 ramp. (T 60, Sutton).

4.1.1 – Land Use, Zoning, Public Policy, Community Character, and Social Conditions

Improvements need to be in harmony with the character of the surrounding neighborhoods. (L 3, Lombardi; L 6, Johnson).

4.1.3 – Historic and Archaeological Resources

There is concern about adverse impacts to Miller House and Miller Hill Park historic sites. (L 1, Kazak; L 3, Lombardi). The DEIS should identify the White Plains Rural Cemetery Office as a listed building on the National and State registers. (L 6, Johnson).

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4.1.4 – Safety and Security

There are concerns over safety and security issues associated with operation of a parking structure. (T 57, Little).

4.2.1 – Parking Demand

Metro-North Rail Commuter Council is pleased with plans to expand parking capacity at the North White Plains Station. (T 29, Blair, L 4, Blair). Projections for growth in parking should not be absorbed by White Plains since the growth is coming from other areas. (T 36, Conroy; T 56, Little). There is support for the use of jitneys. (T 31, Blair; T 39, Conroy; T 42, Sosa; T 45, Beil; L 4, Blair). Encourage the rerouting of the bike path outside of the parking lot area and installation of a secure bicycle area. (T 59, Sutton). Parking shortages are in part due to inadequate Bee-Line bus service. Shuttle loop G only carries passengers in one direction. Route 6 bus does not work for train commuters because of infrequent service. (L 5, Durkin).

4.2.2 – Traffic and Transportation

There is concern about increase of traffic on Ferris Avenue. (T 35, Conroy; T 47, Beil). There is concern about possible changes to Fisher Lane. (T 53, Fried). There is concern about the increase in traffic from a five-story parking garage. (T 43, Sosa; T 48, Beil; T 55, Little). There is concern that a five story garage near the North Castle border would result in a 116 percent increase in traffic. (L 1, Kazak). There is concern that traffic studies done on roads east of the railroad station are flawed because there is no access to the commuter lot from there. If there is access from the east congestion will increase. Instead, two ramps should be built from the Bronx River parkway to the garage. (L 2, Birns). The traffic analysis should examine how site generated peak traffic volumes correspond to local peak traffic hours. Modeling for future traffic should allow for more trips than projected ridership to address frequent peak period occurrences (ie. summer weekend traffic on I-287). Possible improvements to Fisher Lane should be examined. Project plans should include NYSDOT plans for repaving I-287 and bridge widening in the North Broadway area. The traffic study should incorporate bus arrival and departure from the White Plains Bus Company in the peak hour analysis. (L 6, Johnson).

4.3.1 – Air Quality

There is concern about air quality if the number of cars in the area is increased, especially since the increase would be due to people coming from other towns. (T 51, Fried). There is concern about additional traffic on local roads, traffic patterns and air quality. (L 3, Lombardi).

4.3.5 – Wetlands and Ecologically Sensitive Areas

The DEIS should address hydrology and drainage for the project area and surrounding environs including flow capability study of the stream channel and improvements related to a 100 year storm event. (L 6, Johnson).

4.3.6 – Parkland

Would like to know if the parkland reclamation area is the North Castle parking area. (T 59, Sutton).

5.0 – Public Involvement

There is a suggestion that the North Castle open space committee be included in the development of the environmental study. (T 43, Sosa; L 1, Kazak). There is interest in setting up

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a meeting between study representatives and the North Broadway Citizens Association. (T 51, Fried). Metro-North is invited to meet with Miller Hill Homeowners Association. (T 43, Sosa).

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