

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Metro-North Commuter Railroad Company (“Metro-North” or the “Project Sponsor”) is proposing the construction of a new, expanded parking garage at 50 Haarlem Avenue (formerly referred to as 525 North Broadway) in White Plains, Westchester County, New York. The Project Sponsor is seeking a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant from the Federal Transit Administration for the design and construction of the proposed garage (the “Proposed Action”).

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to accommodate the projected future demand for parking at the North White Plains railroad station, allowing Metro-North to better serve its existing customers and to accommodate future railroad customers. The provision of adequate parking at this location would encourage the use of mass transit at a station that has frequent service.

## **1.2 PROJECT LOCATION**

The Proposed Action is located on the site of the existing customer parking garage at 50 Haarlem Avenue between Glenn and Bond Streets in the City of White Plains. It would be sited to the east and across Haarlem Avenue from the existing North White Plains station (see **Figure 1-1**).

### **1.2.1 EXISTING STATION**

The North White Plains railroad station is located along Metro-North’s Harlem Line on Haarlem Avenue west of New York State Route 22 (Route 22) and east of the Bronx River Parkway, about ¼ mile north of Interstate 287 (I-287), in the northern section of the City of White Plains, Westchester County, New York (see **Figure 1-2**). The station is located near the municipal boundaries of the City of White Plains and the Towns of North Castle and Greenburgh. To the west of the railroad station is the Bronx River Parkway Reservation (BRPR), which contains the Bronx River Parkway (a four-lane, two-way limited access parkway), a bicycle/pedestrian path known as the Bronx River Pathway, and the Bronx River.

### **1.2.2 EXISTING PARKING**

Existing parking at the Metro-North North White Plains station is located both west and east of the tracks (see **Figure 1-2**). As shown in **Table 1-1**, a total of about 1,355 spaces are located in the four facilities, which are further described below.

#### *1.2.2.1 LOT 1*

Lot 1 comprises the largest parking area at the station with a capacity of 892 spaces (about 692 monthly permit spaces and 200 daily permit spaces). Located west of the North White Plains station, Lot 1 consists of a northern section owned by Westchester County and a southern section owned by Metro-North. The two sections are connected by a 550-foot-long driveway. Lot 1 is only accessible from Fisher Lane, and a security booth is provided to check monthly permits and administer daily permits. Both sections of Lot 1 are operated by Westchester County.

**Table 1-1**  
**North White Plains Railroad Station Parking Summary**

<b>Lot</b>	<b>Owner/</b>	<b>Operator</b>	<b>Capacity</b>
Lot 1	Metro-North and Westchester County	Westchester County	892
Lot 2	Metro-North and City of White Plains	City of White Plains	254
Lot 3	Westchester County	Town of North Castle	100
Lot 4	Metro-North	Metro-North	109
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,355</b>

*1.2.2.2 LOT 2*

Lot 2 is located east of the North White Plains station and comprises both on-street and off-street parking owned by Metro-North and the City of White Plains. The lot is located between the Metro-North tracks and Haarlem Avenue. Daily parking is provided on both sides of Haarlem Avenue, as well as on the south side of Bond Street. Permit parking is provided on the west side of Haarlem Avenue adjacent to the railroad tracks and in the off-street lot. Lot 2 has a total of 254 spaces, including both permit and metered spaces.

*1.2.2.3 LOT 3*

Lot 3, which is the smallest parking area with a capacity for approximately 100 vehicles, is neither paved nor striped and is located on the west side of the railroad tracks. This parking facility is owned by Westchester County, and parking permits are distributed only to residents of the Town of North Castle under a license agreement.

*1.2.2.4 LOT 4*

Lot 4 is located on the project site at 50 Haarlem Avenue and consists of the two-level parking garage that occupies a portion of the project site. The garage provides for 109 spaces—95 monthly permit spaces and 14 daily spaces. The facility is owned by Metro-North and managed by LAZ Parking.

*1.2.2.5 SHORT-TERM AND ON-STREET PARKING*

Short-term parking spaces also exist on the adjacent streets west of Route 22 (metered along Fisher Lane, Haarlem Avenue, and Glenn Street; short-term parking limits along Holland Avenue) to serve local businesses. However, a two-hour parking limit prevents their use by customers who require time to complete a round trip commute to Manhattan and a standard workday, or non-business travel. Similar parking limits are also in effect along the streets in the residential neighborhood east of Route 22.

**1.2.3 EXISTING ACCESS**

The primary mode of access to the North White Plains railroad station is the automobile. About 83 percent of respondents to a customer satisfaction survey conducted by Metro-North indicate

they drive alone to the station.<sup>1</sup> Secondary modes of travel to the station include walking, carpools and vanpools, drop-off and pick-up, and bicycling and para-transit services.

The North White Plains station is located amidst a series of one-way roads, but is served by nearby regional roadways—Route 22, the Bronx River Parkway, and I-287. All vehicles using Lots 1 and 3 must enter via the Bronx River Parkway-Fisher Lane intersection. Fisher Lane is a two-way local road with one lane in each direction except under the Metro-North tracks which is a single-lane one way eastbound lane. Vehicles accessing Lots 2 and 4 generally use Route 22.

Customers can access the station platforms either by the station overpass which connects Lot 1 on the west side of the station to Harlem Avenue on the east side of the station, or via the underpass which connects the west side of the station to Harlem Avenue just south of Glenn Street on the east side of the station. The pedestrian overpass has, stairs, and an elevator (from the east side of the station only). The underpass has stairs only.

### **1.3 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT**

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to accommodate the future long-term ridership growth and demand for parking at the North White Plains railroad station, thereby allowing Metro-North to better serve its existing customers and to attract new ones. Provision of adequate parking at this location would encourage the use of mass transit at a station that has frequent service and at a station which does not have residency restrictions for parking.

#### **1.3.1 OVERVIEW**

Metro-North is the second largest commuter railroad in the United States, providing approximately 250,000 customer trips each weekday and some 73 million trips per year. A public benefit corporation of the State of New York created as an operating subsidiary of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), Metro-North was founded in 1983 when MTA assumed control of Conrail commuter operations in the states of New York and Connecticut.

With 384 route miles and 775 miles of track, Metro-North serves 120 stations located in seven counties in New York State—Dutchess, Putnam, Westchester, Bronx, New York (Manhattan), Rockland, and Orange—and two counties in the state of Connecticut—New Haven and Fairfield. The total population in these counties is 4,797,320. About 28,250 customers use the Harlem Line each day to access employment centers such as White Plains and Manhattan.

The North White Plains railroad station is attractive to Metro-North customers. It is located immediately south of the North White Plains yard and, therefore, it is the initial stop for local service to Westchester County, the Bronx, and Manhattan. It is also a stop for many trains that originate from Southeast and Wassaic, and these trains provide express service to Manhattan south of White Plains station. Since it is served by both local and express trains, there is frequent service at the North White Plains station. The station offers 22 weekday morning peak (5 to 9 AM) and 52 off-peak inbound trains to Grand Central Terminal (GCT). Travel time to GCT can be as short as 34 minutes via express service. Local service is available from the North White Plains station to northern Westchester County, as well as to both lower Westchester County and the Bronx. Furthermore, the station is proximate to three major roadways: Route 22, the Bronx River Parkway, and I-287.

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<sup>1</sup> Survey data from Metro-North's 2004 customer satisfaction survey, used to develop parking demand estimates.

## **MTA Metro-North Railroad North White Plains Parking Garage**

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Also contributing to the station's popularity is its provision of parking for the general public, which is not restricted by residency requirements. Neither Metro-North nor Westchester County operate the parking at stations between North White Plains and Golden's Bridge station (about 20 miles north of North White Plains).

The lots at these stations are primarily under the control of the local municipalities, where parking is operated for the benefit of their residents. As a result, the North White Plains station captures customers who reside in communities in Westchester County that are not directly served by Metro-North.

### **1.3.2 NEED FOR ADDITIONAL PARKING**

As detailed in **Appendix A**, parking spaces have become a premium at the North White Plains station. In 2005, there was a shortfall of about 310 spaces, and until recently there was a waiting list for monthly permit spaces at the station. The situation is expected to worsen, with projected future demand for about 670 additional spaces by 2015 and about 1,190 additional spaces by 2025 at the North White Plains station. Similar to what occurs now, the future demand (garage users) is expected to result from existing and future customers that either do not have a railroad station in their municipality or do not have unrestricted parking at the railroad station closest to their homes. Therefore, there is a need for solutions to address this future demand. As further detailed in **Appendix A**, 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 by themselves accommodate current or future estimated parking demand. There would still be a need for the proposed parking garage to meet the existing and a portion of its future demands for parking at the North White Plains railroad station, to allow Metro-North to better serve existing customers, and to attract new customers.

## **1.4 PROJECT GOALS**

Based upon the project's purpose and need, and on the experiences described above, the Project Sponsor established the following project goals for a new or expanded customer parking facility on the east side of the North White Plains station:

- Improve access to Metro-North's North White Plains station by providing additional parking on the east side of the station for current and future Metro-North customers;
- Use property owned by Metro-North to make best use of existing resources/infrastructure;
- Reduce vehicular congestion on roads in Westchester County by improving access to rail service for Westchester residents; and
- Limit impacts to local roads surrounding the station and community character.

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