

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

Project: North White Plains Parking Garage Project
Applicant: Metropolitan Transportation Authority Metro-North Railroad
Project Location: City of White Plains, Westchester County, New York

INTRODUCTION

Metro-North Commuter Railroad Company (Metro-North), a public benefit corporation of the State of New York created as an operating subsidiary of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is proposing the construction of a new, expanded parking garage at 50 Haarlem Avenue (formerly referred to as 525 North Broadway)¹ in the City of White Plains, Westchester County, New York. The MTA Metro-North and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) issued an Environmental Assessment, dated January 2011, for the North White Plains Parking Garage (herein referred to as the EA), prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 USC 4321 et seq.) and the Federal Transit Administration implementing regulations (23 CFR 771). The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) finds, in accordance with 23 CFR 771.121, that the construction and the operation of the proposed North White Plains Parking Garage (herein referred to as the Project), as described in the EA, will result in no significant impact on the environment. A public comment period was held between January 20, 2011 to February 19, 2011. MTA Metro-North also convened a public meeting on February 8, 2011. Twenty-one (21) written comment letters were received, and during the public meeting, seven (7) speakers provided oral comments. Those comments have been addressed herein². The EA also included an evaluation of the potential effects of the Project on cultural resources in accordance with Section 106 of the National Preservation Act (36 CFR 800). FTA concluded, and the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred, that the Project would have no adverse effects on cultural resources. There is no use of a Section 4(f) resource; therefore, a Section 4(f) evaluation pursuant to 23 C.F.R. 774 was not prepared. The Project evaluated in the EA is the subject of this FONSI.

PROPOSED PROJECT

Purpose and Need

The purpose and need of the Project 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 does not have residency restrictions for parking.

¹ A comment on the EA was received that noted that the parcel identified as 50 Haarlem Avenue is not the location of the existing garage, rather it's the surface lot located south of the Hertz facility. 50 Haarlem Avenue is the publicly recognized location of the existing garage to be replaced due to the signage at its entrance. Therefore, Metro-North will continue to use 50 Haarlem Avenue as the proposed garage location, although the actual address is 525 North Broadway.

² Two written comment letters were received after the close of the comment period. These comment letters are included in the total of 20 written letters received.

A parking demand analysis prepared for the EA details that parking spaces have become a premium at the North White Plains station. In 2005, there was a shortfall of about 310 spaces, and there is currently 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 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 home. Implementation of parking demand strategies (i.e., jitney services, feeder buses, etc.) were explored but could not, by themselves, accommodate current and future estimated parking demand. Therefore, there is a need for solutions to address this future demand.

Project Description

The Project consists of construction of an approximately 500-space, five-story (ground level plus four supported levels) parking garage on a 0.854-acre property owned by Metro-North located at 50 Haarlem Avenue. This site is currently occupied by a 49,932 square-foot, three-story, 109-space concrete parking structure, a 5,095 square-foot utility building and associated chimney, a surface parking lot containing emergency generators, and a Nextel antenna and associated utility shed. All structures other than the Nextel antenna and associated utility shed are owned by Metro-North. The utility building, surface parking lot, and emergency generators serve the adjacent Metro-North owned office building at 525 North Broadway.

The elements of the Project are as follows:

- Demolition of the existing 109-space garage and the utility building and associated chimney;
- Construction of a new 186,000 square-foot, ground plus four supported level parking structure that contains the following:
 - Approximately 500 parking spaces for Metro-North customers;
 - Bicycle storage (in response to public comments, 20 bicycle parking spaces (combination of lockers and racks), instead of the 5-10 spaces as originally planned);
 - 3-5 scooter parking spaces;
 - Administrative and storage space for the garage's operation;
 - Possibly the shell, for potential build out (by others), of a 1,000 square-foot ground level retail space; and
 - A utility room
- Relocation of boilers, and emergency power generators from the existing utility building and surface lot on the project site to the new utility room within the proposed parking garage;
- Relocation of the Nextel antennae and its associated equipment shed; and
- Conversion of Haarlem Avenue from one-way northbound to a two-way street between the proposed garage's driveways and Bond Street.

As part of the Project, off-site improvements have been incorporated to mitigate potential traffic impacts. These include:

- Installation of a new traffic signal with pedestrian crossing controls and crosswalks at the intersection of Route 22 and Bond Street/Otis Avenue;
- Installation of a new traffic signal controller and retiming of the traffic signal at Route 22, Reservoir Road, and the Central Westchester Parkway; and
- Retiming of the traffic signal at Route 22/Broadway and Sir John's Plaza.

Agency Coordination and Public Opportunity to Comment

Local agencies and interested parties have been consulted as part of the environmental review process and preparation of technical studies. Several meetings were held between Metro-North and representatives of Westchester County, the City of White Plains, and the Town of North Castle. Metro-North has also consulted with local, state, and federal resource agencies in preparation of the environmental analysis, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (acting as the New York SHPO); the New York State Department of Transportation; the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; the Westchester County Department of Public Works; and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

Public outreach for the proposed Project on its current site was initiated in May 2009, when Metro-North sent a status report to community groups and local repositories and posted the study status report on the MTA web site. Metro-North and Westchester County offered to meet with all interested parties. In response to a request for a meeting, on May 27, 2009 Metro-North met with the North Broadway Citizen's Association regarding the Project.

The publication of the EA was noticed in *Journal News*, *Northern Westchester Express*, *El Diario*, and *Amsterdam News* on January 20, 2011. Information regarding EA availability also appeared on MTA's, Westchester County's the City of White Plains and the Town of North Castle's websites and was the subject of letters sent to elected officials, repositories, agencies and interested parties. The notice established a 30-day public review period for the EA.

A public information meeting hearing was held on February 8, 2011 during the 30-day public review period, The EA and conceptual plans for the Project were presented at the meeting, which was held at the Westchester County Center located at 198 Central Avenue (at the Bronx River Parkway) in White Plains, New York. The meeting started with an Open House session including a number of informational boards. Study representatives were on-hand to informally answer questions. Metro-North made a formal presentation at the meeting and there was an opportunity for attendees to make oral comments or to ask questions. A court reporter was present to record the questions and comments. Comments on the EA document were also accepted in writing at the public meeting.

Public Comments on the EA

The public had the opportunity to comment during the 30-day public review period which began on January 20, 2011 and concluded on February 19, 2011. Although two comment letters were received after the close of the comment period, those comment letters were accepted. Comments were made during the public information meeting and in writing. Comments generally included concerns regarding purpose and need for the Project, social conditions, infrastructure, utilities and energy, transportation (including traffic, transit, bicycles, and pedestrians), air quality, construction impacts. General comments on the proposal were also received. The majority of comments concerned impacts to traffic and bicycle storage.

One agency - the US Fish and Wildlife Service - sent a letter on February 7, 2011 providing a "no effect" and/or no impact determination.

All public comments have been summarized and addressed in Attachment "A", *Summary of Comments and Responses on the MTA Metro-North Railroad North White Plains Garage Environmental Assessment January, 2011*.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF IMPACT AREAS AND MITIGATIONS

The EA assessed the following subjects to determine whether or not the Project would have potential impacts on the built and natural environment: Land Use and Social Conditions; Parkland and Open Space (including any Section 4f resources); Infrastructure, Utilities and Energy; Geology, Soils and Topography, Natural Resources; Safety and Security; Cultural

Resources (including any Section 106 historic resources); Visual and Aesthetic Conditions; Transportation; Noise and Vibration; Contaminated Materials; Construction Impacts; Environmental Justice; Irreversible and Irrecoverable Commitment of Resources; and Cumulative Impacts. Potential impacts were identified in the following four (4) categories:

Land Use and Social Conditions; Transportation; Contaminated Materials; and Construction Impacts. Where a potential impact was identified, Metro-North will implement the mitigation measures identified in the EA and this FONSI to alleviate the effects of the Project. The FTA will require that Metro-North periodically submit written reports on their progress in implementing these commitments. As documented in the EA, with the mitigation measures in place, the Project will not result in any significant impacts in any of the environmental categories analyzed.

A brief summary of the potential impacts and mitigation measures to be implemented for the Project in the four (4) areas where there were potential impacts are as follows:

Land Use and Social Conditions

Displacement and Relocation

Potential Impact:

There are no residential uses on the Project site. The Project site includes a Nextel antenna and its associated equipment shed on a parcel owned by Metro-North. Construction of the Project will require relocation of the Nextel Antenna and its associated equipment shed.

Mitigation:

Relocation of the antenna in consultation with Nextel.

With this mitigation measure in place, there will be no significant impact with regard to displacement and relocation.

Transportation

Traffic

Potential Impact:

Project generated traffic would have potential impacts on the following approaches at three (3) intersections, all of which can be mitigated:

- Route 22-Fisher Lane/Tompkins Avenue: Fisher Lane eastbound approach in the AM street peak hour, eastbound left turn movement in the AM site peak hour, and eastbound left turn movement and approach in the PM site peak hour (all Level of Service (LOS) E)
- Route 22-Reservoir Road-Central Westchester Parkway: Route 22 southbound shared through, right turn movement in the AM street peak hour (LOS F); Route 22 northbound approach in the PM street peak (LOS F) and site peak (LOS E) hours.
- Route 22/Broadway-Sir John's Plaza: Route 22 southbound approach in the AM site peak hour (LOS F)

Mitigation:

- Route 22-Fisher Lane/Tompkins Avenue: Install traffic signal at the Route 22-Bond Street/Otis Avenue intersection to permit left turns onto northbound Route 22. Install pedestrian crosswalks at Route 22-Bond Street/Otis Avenue to improve pedestrian

circulation in the vicinity of the North White Plains station. (This mitigation will return the intersection to its No Build LOS).

- o Route 22-Reservoir Road-Central Westchester Parkway: Install a modern signal controller and re-time traffic signal at this intersection. (This mitigation will return the intersection to its No Build LOS)
- o Route 22/Broadway-Sir John's Plaza: Re-time traffic signal at this intersection. (This mitigation will return the intersection to its No Build LOS).

With these mitigation measures in place, there will be no significant traffic impact.

Contaminated Materials

Potential Impact:

Asbestos containing material (ACM) and lead based paint (LBP) were identified in structures that will be demolished.

Mitigation:

Removal and remediation of ACM and LBP prior to construction under protocols that comply with all applicable environmental and occupational regulations and Metro-North LBP and ACM specifications. Areas with suspect ACM and/or LBP not previously tested would be sampled. Construction health and safety plans will be developed by Metro-North prior to the start of construction

Therefore, there will be no significant impact with regard to contaminated materials.

Construction Impacts

Construction impacts are temporary in nature. Final design and specific construction methods have not yet been determined, but based on preliminary assumptions, potential construction period impacts were identified for water quality, parking, air quality, and noise. Commitments, which are common to other construction projects, have been identified for the Project. Metro-North will coordinate with the City of White Plains to implement these commitments in Metro-North's contract specifications.

a) Water Quality

Potential Impact:

Temporary stormwater runoff during construction on the project site.

Mitigation:

Best Management Practices will be used during construction to control runoff and pollutants from entering the stormwater management system. Specifically, erosion and sediment control measures consistent with the New York Standards and Specifications for Erosion and Sediment Control will be in place during construction.

b) Parking

Potential Impact:

Temporary loss of 109 parking spaces in existing garage on the Project site.

Mitigation:

The construction duration is anticipated to be approximately two years. The existing parking garage will be closed through the duration of construction since it will be demolished as a first step in clearing the site. Metro-North will contact customers who currently hold permits for the existing parking garage using techniques such as online (email) notification and windshield

notices. Metro-North will also provide signage and other informational material to direct customers to available parking areas during construction. Metro-North has experienced a reduction in ridership resulting from the current economic climate, and it is anticipated that some excess capacity will be available at the North White Plains and/or White Plains Stations during the construction period. Displaced customers could use any available spaces at the Westchester County operated North White Plains and White Plains station lots where there is some available capacity despite current waiting lists to purchase parking permits at the Metro-North garage at North White Plains. This capacity is recent and a temporary effect related to current economic conditions, which have been responsible for short-term reductions in Metro-North ridership. Metro-North will monitor parking conditions at both stations prior to and during construction. If a shortfall is anticipated, Metro-North will work with Westchester County to implement other methods to expand parking spaces during construction such as valet parking and shuttles to other lots if required.

c) Air Quality

Potential Impact:

Potential for temporary release of dust.

Mitigation:

Metro-North's construction specifications will require that the contractor minimize areas of exposed soils by careful planning of grading operations and minimizing the time span that soil is disturbed. Mist exposed soils with water as necessary, and use drainage diversion methods, such as silt fences, to minimize soil erosion.

d) Noise

Potential Impact:

Temporary construction noise could result from equipment, on-site vehicles and delivery vehicles traveling to and from the Project site. Noise levels could vary depending on phase of construction and task being undertaken. The noisiest equipment that may be used would be pile drivers, which may generate between 98 and 101 dBA at receptors 50 feet from the Project site.

Mitigation:

Metro-North's construction specifications will require that the contractor limit work to weekday daytime hours (7 AM to 4 PM), require contractors to comply with applicable local, state and federal noise emission standards, and use only equipment with appropriate noise controls. Coordination with the City of White Plains will be maintained, and the City will be advised when the greatest noise generating construction activities are scheduled to occur. Notices will be posted at and near the Project site with information regarding the Project and how the public can contact the MTA Metro-North with regard to any noise concerns.

During construction, with these mitigation measures in place, there will be no significant construction impact.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Consistent with Executive Order 12898 of February 11, 1994, and following guidance and methodologies recommended in the federal Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) *Environmental Justice Guidance under the National Environmental Policy Act* (December 1997), the U.S. Department of Transportation's *Final Order on Environmental Justice* (April 1997), an Environmental Justice assessment was conducted for the Project study area. One individual Census block group in the study area has a higher percentage of minority residents than the City of White Plains, and two individual Census block groups in the study area have a higher proportion of low-income residents. However, the assessment found that the minority

representation within the overall study area is below the CEQ's 50 percent threshold as well as the total minority population of the City of White Plains. The overall study area also has a lower percentage of low-income residents than the City of White Plains. Therefore, although individual block groups are considered environmental justice communities, the study area as a whole is not considered an environmental justice community. Nonetheless, the Project would not result in any disproportionate adverse impacts on environmental justice communities.

SECONDARY AND CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

The Project area is fully developed with residential, office, and retail uses, and the Project would not be anticipated to increase development in the surrounding area. Any potential impacts associated with the Project are expected to be localized. In addition, there are no other proposed development projects in the vicinity of the Project that would result in secondary or cumulative impacts.

The analysis presented in this EA incorporates planned traffic improvements in the area by the New York State Department of Transportation and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection. The impact analysis accounts for the cumulative effect of these improvements with vehicle trips generated by the Project, and concludes that there would be no significant impacts.

Therefore, overall, no significant adverse cumulative impacts are expected as a result of the Project.

MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM

As identified in the "Summary Analysis of Impact Areas and Mitigations" section above, the Project will incorporate all feasible measures to minimize harm during construction and in the long-term when the Project is operational.

Below is a summary of the permits that will be needed before and during construction of the Project.

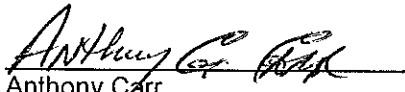
PERMITS/APPROVALS REQUIRED

Project Element	Agency	Permit
Parking Garage Construction	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation	If necessary: SPDES -- Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (water quality)
Installation of Traffic Signal at Route 22-Bond Street/Otis Avenue	City of White Plains	Traffic Commission / Common Council
On-Street Parking Removal on Harlem Avenue	City of White Plains	Traffic Commission / Common Council
Convert Harlem Avenue to two-way for approx. 200 feet from Bond Street to Garage Entrance	City of White Plains	Traffic Commission / Common Council
Installation of new controller at Route 22-Reservoir Road-	NYSDOT	Design and Construction Approval

Central Westchester Parkway		
Signal Re-timings -Route 22-Reservoir Road- Central Westchester Parkway -Route 22/Broadway-Sir John's Plaza	NYSDOT	Coordination with NYSDOT

FTA NEPA FINDING

FTA has reviewed the EA for the MTA Metro-North Railroad North White Plains Parking Garage dated January 2011 and finds pursuant to 23 CFR 771.121 that the Project will have no significant impact on the environment. The EA has adequately addressed the environmental issues and impacts of the proposed Project as well as appropriate mitigation measures. The FTA is issuing this Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) conditioned upon MTA Metro-North Railroad complying with mitigation measures described in this FONSI and the EA.



Anthony Carr
Deputy Regional Administrator, Region 02
Federal Transit Administration

6/30/11
Date