

Foreword

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 the City of White Plains, Westchester County, New York. Metro-North is seeking a federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant for the design and construction of the proposed garage (the “Proposed Action”). The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is the federal lead agency for the Proposed Action. The Westchester County Department of Transportation (WCDOT) and the City of White Plains are interested agencies.

Planning efforts for analyzing parking facility locations at North White Plains station were initiated in 2003. Also analyzed were alternative means of providing improved access to Metro-North service including: increasing parking at the Westchester County Center (White Plains Station); additional parking at other Harlem Line stations north of North White Plains; and demand management strategies, such as carpool, jitney and shuttle bus services.

Based on initial analysis of a broad range of alternatives, Metro-North and Westchester County decided in 2005 to focus their activities on the development of a new 1,300-space multi-story customer parking facility in the publicly owned surface lots on the west side of the station and a set of access alternatives. While this site was available, adding a significant number of vehicles onto the roadway network to access the larger parking lot on the west side of the tracks had the potential to result in a decline in traffic conditions. As a result, Metro-North evaluated alternatives to access the west side of the tracks from the east, including a vehicular overpass and tunnel. Combined with the construction of a 1,300 space garage, these alternatives would potentially create significant environmental impacts. Metro-North and Westchester County determined, in consultation with FTA, that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) should be prepared. A scoping document was prepared and a Notice of Intent to issue an EIS was published in the federal register in mid-2005. This environmental review was initiated following the implementing regulations of the federal National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 771) and under the lead of FTA.

After performing detailed planning and environmental analyses of the west side parking alternatives Metro-North and Westchester County determined in early 2008 that the construction of a parking facility on the west side of the North White Plains station and the necessary access roads, although constructible, was not financially viable. The detailed work that was performed on the West Side alternative is available from Metro-North on request.

Subsequent to the elimination of the west side parking alternatives, a site on the east side of the station became available as a potential alternative for a smaller garage that could be built within the available funding. This option was made possible by Metro-North’s purchase of the parking garage at 50 Haarlem Avenue and associated buildings at 525 North Broadway in January 2008. The 525 North Broadway office building was purchased to consolidate Metro-North personnel into a centralized location, provide an alternative to the high rents Metro-North was paying for space in Manhattan, and to avoid construction of new employee office facilities. Metro-North

MTA Metro-North Railroad North White Plains Parking Garage

decided to evaluate the potential for building a smaller garage on this site that would be accessible via the current roadway configuration. In support of this decision, FTA concurred with Metro-North's purchase of the parking garage property as an independent action in a memorandum dated November 5, 2008. Metro-North and Westchester County published a status report in May 2009 informing the public about the refocused effort.

This document, the Environmental Assessment for the North White Plains Parking Garage (EA), analyzes the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action to construct an approximately 500 space parking garage at the North White Plains Station to be used by Metro-North customers. This document has been prepared pursuant to NEPA, as amended, in accordance with Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR part 1500) and FTA's Environmental Impact and Related Procedures (23 CFR Part 771). Based on the analyses conducted and included in this EA, it is anticipated that the Proposed Action would not have any individual or cumulative significant adverse impacts on the environment. *