

NORTH WHITE PLAINS STATION ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR IMPROVED ACCESS May 2009

This Update Describes the status of the MTA Metro-North Railroad (Metro-North) and Westchester County efforts to examine alternatives for improving access to Metro-North's North White Plains station. After extensive analysis of potential benefits, impacts and costs associated with the construction of a multi-level parking structure on the west side of the tracks and associated access improvements, a decision was made to refocus the study efforts to the construction of a smaller parking facility on the east side of the tracks on property owned by Metro-North.

In 2003, MTA Metro-North Railroad and Westchester County, in partnership with the Federal Transit Administration, commenced preparation of a Planning Study and Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and other applicable regulations to analyze alternatives for improved station access and increased parking at MTA Metro-North Railroad's North White Plains Station. Under NEPA, FTA is the federal lead agency and both Metro-North and Westchester County are the co-sponsors.

The Purpose of the Proposed Project is to improve access to the North White Plains Station to support current and future customers.

The Study Area includes land bounded by the western edge of the Bronx River Parkway Reservation (BRPR) to the west, by Virginia Road to the north, by North Broadway (NYS Route 22) to the east and by Interstate 287 (I-287) to the south. This area consists of Haarlem Avenue, the land currently occupied by station parking areas, the station itself and immediately adjacent facilities. In addition, as appropriate, conditions will be evaluated in specific locations to measure potential benefits/impacts.

Efforts to Date: The Planning Study was initiated in 2003. The Planning Study report, issued in 2005, found that the most effective way to improve access to the station and meet future parking demand is to construct a multi-level parking structure on Metro-North or Westchester County property. This report is available on the Metro-North and Westchester County websites.

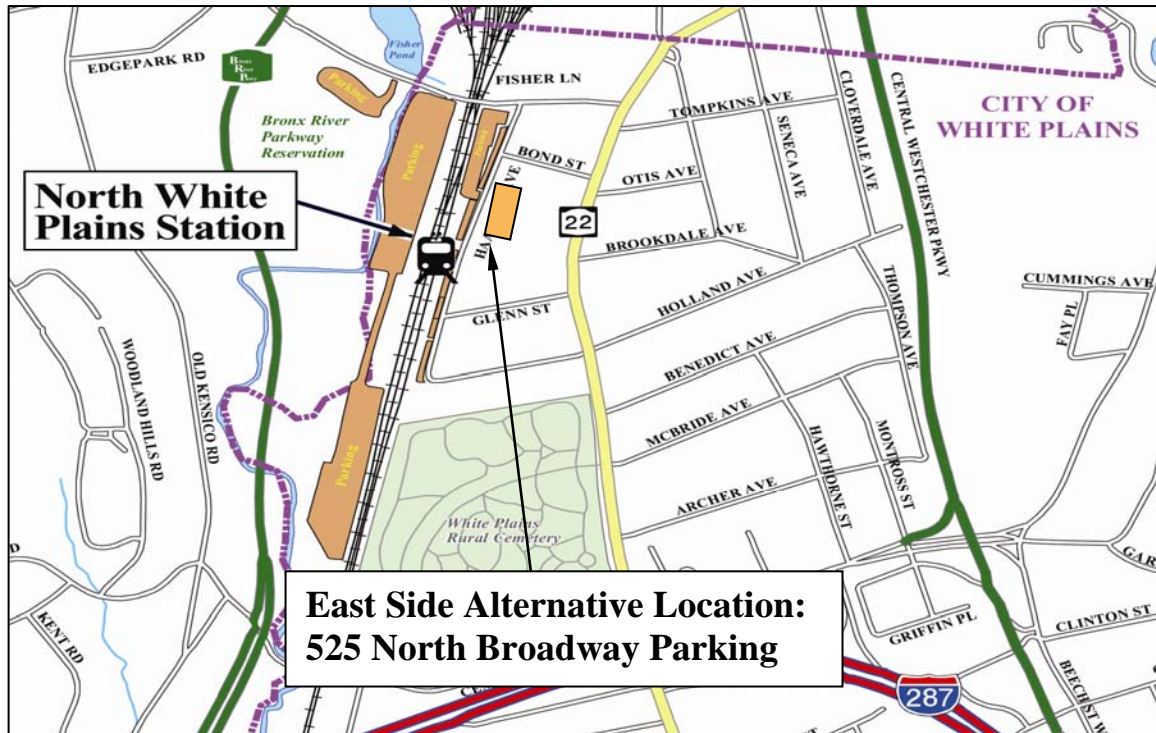
Following the issuance of the Planning Study report, Metro-North and Westchester County initiated the environmental review process for a multi-level parking structure and station access. Through further analysis and public scoping held in 2005, four "build" alternatives, all on the west side of the tracks on property owned by Metro-North, were deemed physically feasible for providing improved parking and access for customers using the North White Plains station. These alternatives were subjected to an extensive evaluation of potential environmental benefits and impacts. A "no build" alternative which provided for minor planned and funded improvements was also analyzed.

All four "build" alternatives called for the construction of a five-level (ground floor plus four supported decks), approximately 1,300 space parking garage on the site of the existing surface lot on the southwest side of the station. The alternatives differed solely in the infrastructure improvements required to provide access to these new spaces. The costs to construct the garage and alternative infrastructure improvements were high (approximately \$56 M - \$92 M) and beyond available funding. In most cases, the costs were driven by the expense of constructing new or expanded roadways either under or over the Metro-North right of way to provide access to the garage from the east side of the tracks. A status report regarding the west side efforts is on the study website.

Metro-North and Westchester County are refocusing their efforts on an alternative located on a site on the east side of the North White Plains station. The proposed project would involve replacing a 109-space customer parking garage which exists on the northwest portion of the Metro-North-owned property at 525 North Broadway and which fronts Haarlem Avenue. It is anticipated that the proposed new garage, which would be substantially smaller than the one considered for the west side of the station could be constructed at this site within the available funding.

Preliminary traffic analyses indicate the existing access roads could be capable of handling traffic generated by a garage of up to 600 spaces (which includes the replacement of the 109 spaces that are currently used for customer parking) on the east side of the station with no or minor traffic improvements. Furthermore, the potential for environmental impacts to parkland, wetlands or historic resources is removed. Therefore, Metro-North and Westchester County will prepare an Environmental Assessment in accordance with NEPA, which will focus its evaluation on potential traffic and community impacts.

Proposed Site:



The refined goals for the project include:

- 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
- Limit impacts to local roads surrounding the station and community character

The work of the refocused effort will involve:

- Extensive and detailed traffic analysis to determine the amount of traffic generated by a new parking facility that the local streets can carry without requiring substantial traffic improvements and with minimal impact to the local community
- Development of concept plans for a multi-level parking garage
- Environmental analyses, including those related to community impacts
- Preparation of an Environmental Assessment pursuant to NEPA
- Reaching out to the local community and other stakeholders

Schedule: It is anticipated that this effort will be completed and the Environmental Assessment produced in late 2009.

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For Study Information and Updates Please Visit the Following:

The MTA: <http://www.mta.info/mta/planning/nwp/>
Westchester County: <http://www.westchestergov.com/transportation>
Toll Free Study Number: (888) 836-8301