Floral Park Fire Department

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John Florio Sr.
Chief of Department

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May 24, 2016

To: MTA/LIRR

From: Chief John Florio

Re: Floral Park Fire Department Safety Concerns Regarding the Third Track

Floral Park Fire Department is sworn to protect and serve the resident of Floral Park. We also provide 24/7 mutual aid between our neighboring departments and ours. We achieve this goal through the dedicated hard work of volunteer residents who respond 24 hours a day seven days a week from all directions in town. This track project has been put out there with no detailed plans or specifics as to how the construction will go or what effect it will have. We are extremely concerned about the impact this project will have on our ability to respond to the fire house and get out in a reasonable efficient time to do our job. This project will affect the heart of the village around the Floral Park station and lines east from there and will affect our ability to respond through main arteries in this village to reach areas we cover. This great village has a large percentage of elderly and seasoned citizens who need our ambulance ready to go maned quickly in an emergency and able to respond and reach its destination in a very efficient manner. That coupled with the need to respond to the hospital in a matter of minutes for certain emergencies could be seriously inhibited on any given day depending on what the secret construction plan entails. Our ability to respond can be further inhibited by the traffic jams and rerouted traffic flow during the construction. No plan has been set forth to determine what this could possibly do to our response other than create road blocks and problems and inhibit our ability to effectively respond to emergencies.

For years we have heard how the railroad station was at ground level many years ago. Our outlying firehouses came to be years ago because our apparatus responding to the north side from the main fire house were held up at railroad crossings leading to a house burning down. With a proposed plan to add a track crossing Plainfield Avenue and adding to the railroad station off Tulip Avenue, it raises serious concern about the closures this project will create and how our ability to effectively and efficiently perform our duty and protect our great village

As for the construction itself, what materials and equipment will be brought into the village? Will there be hazardous and or flammable materials in the village during this project? Will there be a storage site in town at the beginning area of the track exposing us to long term hazards that are just a spark away? We saw firsthand in NYC on the evening of May 16th were gas fell on a generator at a construction site under the elevated train on Broadway up town and caused a huge fire which created a ripple effect in transportation for days and days. What are the plans for construction storage and staging areas?

This construction will require heavy equipment, drilling and disruption of the ground. Has there been any assessment of the infrastructure and the expected disruption? What will the effect be on existing gas and water lines and possible leaks and problems this may cause? Where will this equipment operate? Will roads be closed as a result? All these issues effect our ability to respond in a timely effective manner.

There are major plans to upgrade railroad crossings at Covert Avenue and New Hyde Park Road. These roads are main access roads to Stewart Avenue and Jericho Turnpike, our main routes to Winthrop and LIJ Hospitals. What are the plans for closures of the routes and are they going to be done independent of each other? How do they propose to handle over flow traffic from one closure that bounces down to the next intersection?

As you can see, there are many unanswered questions and serious concerns, only some of which are mentioned here, that will have an impact on the protection and well-being of the residents of Floral Park, our neighboring villages, and our brother and sisters protecting them around us. This project is not in our best interest.