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My concern with the Third Track Project is the potential for an increase in freight train traffic traveling through the Village of Floral Park. In 2005, when I first heard about the proposed Third Track Project, the LIRR cited the reverse commute as the reason for the project. As the eastbound trains coming through the Floral Park station were practically empty, I didn't believe the reverse commute was the real reason for the project. I along with many other Floral Park residents thought the real reason for the project was freight.

The most recent push for the a Third Track Project promotes an increased capacity for passenger trains and a bypass lane, in the event a LIRR train breaks down or is involved in an incident, on the nine mile stretch of the Main Line that runs between Floral Park and Hicksville. Again, I along with many other Floral Park residents, think the real reason for the project is freight. Moreover, I am concerned that the driving force behind the project is not the LIRR concerned about their passengers but rather corporate interests seeking to increase rail freight traffic on Long Island.

At the May 2016 hearing on the Scoping Document for the Third Track Project, I expressed my concerns regarding the negative effect an increase in freight train traffic would have on the Village of Floral Park. I was disappointed to see that the DEIS chapter on freight operations does not say much more than the Scoping Document did on this issue. The DEIS reiterates that the NY&A Railway typically operates three roundtrips along the project corridor during the week and one round trip on the weekend. The DEIS further states that the LIRR **currently** restricts the operation of freight trains to non-peak periods and is committed to keeping this restriction in place.

The use of the word **currently** has me concerned, as it's subject to change. Last year, the Transfer Agreement between the MTA and the NY&A Railway for freight operations on the LIRR, was renewed for another ten years. This was done despite the NY&A Railway's safety record that included three derailments on the LIRR tracks within the past two years and a 2015 train crash in which an uncertified locomotive engineer fled the scene. In addition to my obvious concerns regarding safety, I also wonder whether there is language in the recently executed agreement limiting the NY&A Railway roundtrips on the Main Line to three a day during the week and one roundtrip on the weekend. As the MTA was a party to the

agreement, why not reference the terms of the agreement pertaining to track usage by the NY&A Railway for freight operations, in the body of the DEIS or at least in a footnote? I certainly hope this information will be included in the Final EIS.

In the Rail Freight Service/Operations section of the DEIS, it states in the 2020 and 2040 Build Conditions, that the LIRR is committed to using this peak period capacity increase only for the operation of its own passenger trains, and is equally committed in the future to not scheduling freight trains during peak periods. Although this would be reassuring to a commuter who travels through the Village of Floral Park on the Main Line, it does not reassure the residents of Floral Park who live along the Main Line, during **peak and off peak hours**. The children of Floral Park are being educated in grammar schools situated along the Main Line during peak and off peak hours. Residents, especially many of our seniors, seek a quiet place to read, during peak and off peak hours, at our library, which is located along the Main Line. Residents of all ages enjoy the Floral Park Swimming Pool and/or the fields of the Floral Park Recreation Center, which are both located adjacent to the Main Line tracks, during peak and off peak hours.

The 2020 and 2040 No Build Conditions section of the DEIS, states that the demand for freight service on Long Island is not expected to grow beyond current service of three round trip freight trains through the Project Corridor and that at current growth rates for freight, the existing three round trips could accommodate the modest increase in the carloads through 2020, as well as 2040. Incremental increases in demand for freight service in the future could be accommodated by adding freight cars to the existing trains.

The 2020 and 2040 Build Conditions section of the DEIS, states that since freight operations are not currently capacity constrained during non-peak hours and since the Main Line peak hour capacity increase will not be used for freight trains, the additional Main Line track proposed would not have any impact on freight traffic through the corridor. The use of the term, “not currently capacity constrained” has me concerned, as conditions can and do change.

In fact, the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, hereinafter referred to as NYMTC, a regional council of government that is the metropolitan planning organization for New York City, Long Island, and the Lower Hudson Valley, of which the MTA is a voting council member, discusses in its NYMTC Regional Freight Plan Update 2015-2040 Interim Plan, the forecast for an increase in freight traffic and the challenge of capacity constraints.

The NYMTC Region Rail Network for rail lines handling freight is typically described as consisting of two parts: east of the Hudson, which includes Long Island and west of the Hudson. Section 3.0 of the Regional Freight Plan states, where freight was once a major element of rail service in the region, the massive decline in rail freight demand and volumes over the years, and the shift to public ownership with a primary emphasis on passenger train operations, have resulted in the cessation of freight services on many parts of the network. However, even though some of these lines may be handling little or no freight at present, the **potential** exists for some key routes to handle freight service again, if it was expanded in the region.

In Section 3.9 of the Regional Freight Plan, the Main Line is described and it is noted that the volume of freight is expected to increase on the Main Line, as the Brookhaven Rail Terminal is built out with warehousing to accommodate a more diverse array of commodities.

In Section 4.1, the Regional Freight Plan states that a Commodity Flow analysis shows that rail freight in the NYMTC region, which includes Long Island, is expected to grow by 47% between 2007 and 2040, from 10.2 million tons to 15.1 million tons. The plan states that a variety of capacity constraints affect the ability of the NYMTC region rail network to absorb this potential growth in rail freight traffic. With all of the major freight access routes being primary passenger routes as well, expected growth in passenger train volumes make it more difficult to handle increased freight volumes. These constraints are particularly evident on the east of the Hudson River route, and the New Haven route, where freight operation are generally permitted only during night time hours. As the Main Line is east of the Hudson, and is primarily a passenger route, the NYMTC does appear to find that there are current capacity constraints on freight train traffic on the Main Line.

The recommendations set forth in Section 4.5 of the Regional Freight Plan, titled Potential Actions, state that as for capacity, as rail line owners develop capital plans for improvements to the physical plant, the capacity needs of current and potential freight and passenger operations at the corridor level should be specifically be taken into consideration through comprehensive corridor planning that includes the involvement of all rail service providers operating in the corridor. I believe the Third Track Project was developed to address the capacity needs of current and potential freight and passenger operations on the Main Line. I also believe the project is being pushed through for the benefit of rail freight but is

being sold as a passenger operation improvement, which the public would be more likely to embrace.

The Long Island Regional Economic Development Council, in its 2011 Strategic Economic Development Plan for the Long Island Region, lists **generate new freight opportunities** as a goal. The Development Plan states that Long Island needs to improve the physical infrastructure of the transportation system for freight related transport between shipping and receiving points. One of the strategies listed to increase freight access and options, was rail freight intermodal terminals to link the nation's rail freight system and relieve truck congestion. The same year that the Development Plan was submitted, the Brookhaven Rail (intermodal) Terminal opened for business on the Main Line and continues to grow and expand.

I am concerned that the capacity for freight train traffic on the Main Line will grow significantly after the Third Track is put into place, particularly, as major corporate players and associations are looking to expand the volume of freight transported on and off Long Island by rail car.

My personal concern about a potential in the increase in the number of freight trains traveling through the Village of Floral Park is with what's being transported on the freight cars and the cumulative effect of the noise, which the additional trains will bring.

When I spoke at the Scoping Document hearings, I expressed my concern about the cumulative effect of the noise caused by an increase in freight trains traveling through the Village of Floral Park. In our village, helicopters fly over the Main Line in their route out to the Hamptons. The helicopters are required to fly low, to accommodate the planes beginning their descent to Kennedy Airport and over to LaGuardia Airport. As a result, the helicopters are often flying only a few hundred feet over our houses. This is in addition to the airplane traffic noise from the planes heading to Kennedy and LaGuardia Airports.

I was disappointed that Chapter 12 of the DEIS, which addresses noise, makes no mention of the cumulative effect of the noise of the third track construction and the eventual day to day operations of the Main Line with a Third track, in addition to the noise that we already endure. I could not find one mention of airplanes or helicopters in the chapter of the DEIS on noise. If you were building a third track on a rail line located in the middle of a cornfield, the cumulative effect of the increase in noise would not be an issue, but the Main Line runs through the center

of Floral Park and other densely populated villages. Where we live, the planes, helicopters, and trains, form a perfect storm of transportation noise, the cumulative effect of which should not and cannot be ignored in the Final EIS.