

LIRR Third Track Public Hearing Statement
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Good morning. My name is Dr. Lynn Pombonyo. I am here as a resident and Trustee of the Village of Floral Park. My comments will address Chapter 3/*Socioeconomic Conditions* and Chapter 13/*Construction* in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and the profound impact of the proposed construction plan on the Village of Floral Park.

The Incorporated Village of Floral Park is a densely populated community, in fact, one of the highest in Nassau County. Our business districts feature small, often family-owned stores and restaurants, many of which are near the LIRR mainline and Hempstead branch tracks on South Tyson, Plainfield, and Tulip avenues. The two LIRR bridges which span South Tyson and Plainfield avenues are scheduled for modifications and/or reconstruction during the third track construction period. Although South Tyson, Plainfield and nearby Tulip Avenue are all main thoroughfares in Floral Park, they all have only one lane of traffic moving in each direction with parallel parking at the curbs. Those three roads transport thousands of vehicles on a daily basis and traffic is already congested. Parking lots are few in Floral Park and, as a result, vehicles must parallel park along South Tyson, Plainfield and Tulip to access the businesses, second floor offices and apartments, as well as a 700-pupil elementary school located on South Tyson Avenue one block north of the aforementioned South Tyson bridge.

DEIS Chapter 3: *Socioeconomic Conditions* page 3-17 states, “The Proposed Project would not result in any impact to the Tulip Avenue business district in Floral Park” and further, on page 3-22, “the Proposed Project would not result in any significant adverse socioeconomic impacts and therefore mitigation is not necessary.”

When you consider the DEIS statements in Chapters 3 and 13 together, you see the inconsistencies and research findings that do not reflect the socioeconomic impacts resulting from the construction period which may be “temporary” in duration, but will likely be long-term with respect to impacts. Many problematic aspects of the construction remain to be addressed in the final environmental impact statement. For example:

1. The definition of the word “temporary.” Repeatedly stated throughout the DEIS are the words “temporary lane and/or road closures” which will occur sporadically throughout the construction process. In the DEIS and subsequent communications from the LIRR, “temporary” is a term that refers to both weekends and periods lasting one year or more. The severity of adverse socioeconomic impacts could vary greatly and, thus, “temporary” must be defined more precisely for every phase of the construction process in the final EIS.
2. Lane and/or road closures on South Tyson, Plainfield and Tulip avenues, no matter how “temporary,” will limit access to the businesses, offices and residences there. Not only will it be difficult or impossible to reach destinations on those three main thoroughfares, once you get there, the on-street parking will be reduced by half with a lane closure or eliminated completely with a road closure. The longer the duration, the more frequent the lane and/or road closures over an extended construction period, and the more that our Floral Park police officers will be called upon to manage construction related traffic jams and direct traffic, the more adverse the socioeconomic impact will be on the Village of Floral Park.

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3. DEIS pages 13-9 and 13-10 enumerate the equipment that will be used during the various phases of construction. Included are trailers, augers for drilling, cranes, compactors, pavement cutters, backhoes, pile auger rigs, excavators, loaders, dump trucks, pile drivers, track laying equipment, and others. Floral Park understands that all of this equipment will not be used simultaneously and that it may, at times, be transported to and from the Village by rail. Temporary lane and/or road closures to accommodate this construction equipment will reduce and/or eliminate access to businesses, offices and residences when vehicles cannot reach those destinations and/or park there. To say that the addition of this large equipment on our two-lane main thoroughfares will have no socioeconomic impact is shortsighted and misleading.

In closing, DEIS page 3-21 describes the economic and fiscal benefits of the third track project based on the IMPLAN (Impact Analysis for PLANing) input-output modeling system. The DEIS contains numerous references to the positive socioeconomic impact that the third track will have. The DEIS is incomplete in the use of such an analysis of the local economies of villages and communities, such as Floral Park, where the construction impact will be the most significant and potentially damaging. This serious shortcoming of the DEIS must be addressed in the final Environment Impact Statement.