

Good (Afternoon /Evening)

My name is Archie Cheng and I am a Trustee of the Village of Floral Park

On Page 23 of the Scoping Document it is stated in part that

“This section will include a description of LIRR service to Belmont Park”

**“The LIRR is committed to developing a plan to expand LIRR service to Belmont Park station for events year-round; the extent and utilization of this service expansion will be confirmed with MTA/LIRR.”**

The making of a full time train station at Belmont Park was key to the Islanders proposal to develop Belmont Park.

On the day that Gov. Cuomo announced the project, his office issued a press release that said the MTA had committed to “developing a plan to expand LIRR service to Belmont Park for events year-round.”

The Islanders co-owner, Jon Ledecky, had opined that LIRR service should not just be on event days. He, Senator Kaminsky and NY City Council Representative, Grodenick have been reported to be of the opinion that mass transit service should be all the time, not only for events at the arena. It should be for the residents on

both sides of the Nassau Queens border, which would provide full time train service to the Elmont/Franklin Square and Southeast Queens communities.

In January, during questioning by Sen. Kaminsky, MTA Chairman, Joseph Lhota used the word “concerned” about the possibility of providing LIRR service to Belmont. He stated “We’re at capacity on the main line during rush hour, and so we’re going to look at that and weigh that in. I’m concerned about how that’s going to fit in at any one particular point in time.”

The Village of Floral Park had been told during the SEQRA process for the Third Track proposal that the Third Track was desperately needed to provide service because the LIRR could not add any trains and in particular during rush hours, to its overburdened system. As most of the events at the arena would start at the latter part of rush hour, how could the LIRR provide service.? They don’t have the track space, they don’t have platform space at Penn Station for additional departures or arrivals and they don’t have the train cars.

Mr. Lhota was also concerned about the design of the Belmont spur off the main line. The only access to the Belmont spur is the one eastbound track to Hempstead. During the Belmont Stakes day, all service on the eastbound Hempstead branch is affected because the LIRR stores trains on that eastbound track to go into Belmont Park to take passengers to Jamaica. At the present time, a train from the east would

have to either go to Jamaica so passengers could transfer back to Belmont or the train would have to basically make a three point turn somewhere around Queens Village and then travel southeast to Belmont. The latter would entail crossing several switches (not yet installed) stopping the train and then going in the opposite direction once the train was on the Belmont track. It has been estimated that that maneuver would take between 5-10 minutes. Five to ten minutes that the LIRR's schedule does not have, especially during rush hour.

The MTA's 2014-2019 Five Year Capital Plan which has already been amended for the 3<sup>rd</sup> track project does not contain funds for any design or engineering at the Belmont Park LIRR station let alone construction for improvement. I am certain that the MTA has been diligently working on its next Five Year Plan which already contains desperately needed infrastructure improvement funding. My question then is; what will be taken out of already proposed projects to fund the study and engineering of making Belmont station full time and, if feasible, construction of the improvements. Who will fund this improvement which should be privately financed?

While it is true that, according to the Scoping Document, a detailed analysis of platforms, stairways or walkway may not be needed, a real plan of making Belmont Station a full time reality with, full design, engineering and funding included in the MTA Five Year Capital Plan would have to be in place.

While the MTA is about to start a study or may have already started, that is a major difference than **“The LIRR is committed to developing a plan to expand LIRR service to Belmont Park station for events year-round”**.

To date the MTA/LIRR has not committed anything and the MTA Chairman is concerned about its feasibility. No one knows the length of time necessary to complete this study. I implore the ESD as it develops the DEIS to further evaluate the real possibility of making Belmont Park LIRR station a reality, its cost and who would pay for it, and also the length of time it would take for the transformation. I also ask that ESD also further evaluate the tremendous impact of traffic on neighboring communities if the additional service can't be done within a reasonable time, if at all.