

December 2, 2016

THIRD TRACK UPDATE

On November 28th, the MTA and the Governor's office took its next step with respect to the Third Track Project and released its Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The DEIS is over 1,000 pages and the Appendices that accompany it are an additional 1,500 pages. The LIRR has scheduled public hearings on the DEIS and announced that the comment period will close January 31, 2017. It is important to note that this project has grown from a \$1 billion-dollar project to a \$2 billion project in just ten months. A link to this document and information about the hearings can be found at the Village's website: www.fpvillage.org .

A week before the DEIS was released, representatives from the Governor's office made the rounds to representatives of the Mainline Village governments to give a verbal preview, of sorts, to the DEIS. I, along with Third Track Task Force Chairman Trustee Archie Cheng and Village Administrator Gerry Bambrick met with the Governor's representatives. We again questioned whether the DEIS will address the critical issue of providing a justification for this \$2 billion project that will disrupt the lives of the mainline communities for years. We also questioned whether the DEIS will provide sufficient information to assess the impact on our community and to gauge whether the LIRR's optimistic timeline for completing construction has any basis in reality.

However, and perhaps most importantly at this stage of the process, we once again expressed our concern, as we did when we first met with the Governor's representatives last January, regarding ADA access to the station platforms at the LIRR-Floral Park Station. This concern is not new. The Village's concern has been enunciated to the LIRR by this board and each board with whom I have served.

How could the LIRR continue to ignore this glaring deficiency and neglect the LIRR's most vulnerable population access to the trains?

In early January of 2016, Governor Cuomo asked that we meet with his representatives and keep an open mind in regards to this proposed project. Out of respect for the Governor and his office, we undertook these meetings in good faith. We made it clear that although we would approach this with an open mind, we had very deep skepticism of their proposals, due in no small part to the LIRR's past record. At our first meeting, attended by Trustee Fitzgerald, myself, Village Administrator Gerry Bambrick and the Governor's highest ranking Long Island staff, we asked that the Floral Park Station be renovated and that handicap access be addressed immediately - - not as our price for accepting the Third Track, but because it should have been done already. The LIRR President and each of the Governor's representatives responded that all work would begin at the eastern edge of the platform and no renovations to the station are included in this Third Track Project. During my and Trustee Cheng's subsequent meetings with the LIRR officials and the Governor's staff we continuously advocated to remedy this necessary and fundamental need to provide handicap access to the Floral Park Station. Further, the LIRR's moral obligation to

provide handicapped accessibility to its entire ridership was addressed and contained in Trustee Lynn Pombonyo's Scoping Hearing comments and is available along with all the Board's Scoping Hearing statements on our website.

Now, ten months later, it is simply unconscionable that the LIRR can find an additional \$1 billion to fund this Third Track project, a project for which they struggle to provide a plausible justification, when they continue to claim an apparent financial inability to provide handicap access at the Floral Park station.

We would hate to think, and do not believe, that LIRR would tie the prospect of making the Floral Park Station handicap accessible, to Floral Park's acquiescence to the Third Track Project. The Third Track project should stand or fall on its own merits. Conversely, there can be no dispute as to the moral and legal imperative that New York State and the LIRR must make the Floral Park Train Station handicap accessible.

It has been and continues to be the Village of Floral Park's position that the Floral Park Station should be made handicap accessible regardless of whether the Third Track Project proceeds or not. We ask the Governor to direct the LIRR to finally address this problem and make the Floral Park Station handicap accessible before the Third Track Project takes another step forward.