

## BELMONT PARK PREPARED SCOPING REMARKS

BELMONT PARK PREPARED SCOPING HEARING REMARKS BY DENNIS McENERY  
State Of New York ESD Public Session March 22, 2018

The following are the prepared comments and questions by Dennis McEnergy, a member of Floral Park's Belmont Park Preservation and Improvement Task Force at the ESD public forum on Thursday March 22, 2018.

It is acknowledged and appreciated that the various elected representatives serving the hosting communities of Belmont Park have called upon the New York ESD to hold additional public forums in a bipartisan manner. While the two sessions in Elmont are appreciated, having a Scoping forum in the Village of Floral Park is critical and necessary given the significant adverse impact the massive multi-faceted megaproject.

By way of reminder and background, the Floral Park Belmont Task Force submitted the following questions to the ESD relating to the LIRR operations at Belmont Park in anticipation of its "listening meeting" on December 10, 2017:

42. Has the Developer/Owner/Tenant/other had any correspondence with the MTA, or anyone in NYS government speaking on behalf of the MTA, regarding possible infrastructure improvements to the LIRR for this development?
43. How does the Developer/Owner/Tenant/other plan to use the existing LIRR station at Belmont Park?
44. How does the Developer/Owner/Tenant/other plan to accommodate the population east of the proposal with mass transit via the LIRR?
45. What branch of the LIRR will service the proposal?
46. Will that additional service on that branch have any impact on the normal service of that branch?
47. Will the Belmont LIRR station be open with regular service for commuters?
48. If the Belmont LIRR station be open with regular service for commuters, where will they park?
49. Will there be a separate lot for commuter parking?
50. Will there be increased or new bus service to the Development?
51. Where will privately chartered buses park?
52. Will there be an "Uber" pickup/drop-off location? If so where will that be located?
53. Where will the employees park?

Unfortunately here are the only two Scoping Document statements in relation to the LIRR:

### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

This section will include a description of LIRR service to Belmont Park and the bus routes operated by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Bus Company, MTA New York City Transit and Nassau Inter-County Express (NICE) that also provide access to the Project Sites. Impacts due to additional project-generated transit travel, if any, will be determined in consultation with the corresponding transit agencies. **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. [SCOPING DOCUMENT PAGE 23 emphasis added]**

### TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

The construction transportation analysis assesses the potential for construction activities to result in significant adverse effects to traffic, **transit (i.e., LIRR and bus)**, pedestrian elements (i.e., sidewalks, corners, and crosswalks), and parking conditions. The first step of the transportation assessment will be to develop the volume of traffic during peak hours that would be generated during the peak quarter (i.e., three-month period) of construction activity. This would include both construction worker trips

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made by auto and the volume of delivery trucks to and from the construction sites. [SCOPING DOCUMENT PAGE 27 **emphasis added**]

**SCOPING SPIN:** “The LIRR is committed to developing a plan to expand LIRR service to Belmont Park Station for events year-round.”

**REAL FACTS:** The LIRR Belmont Park Station can only be reached via connection from points west: Jamaica, Atlantic Terminal, and Penn Station. Running direct service from Long Island to Belmont Park “would be like doing a three-point turn in the middle of a highway, but with a train.” Even the MTA chairman testified that “There’s no way going from where most Long Islanders would take [it] if they were taking the Long Island Rail Road as opposed to driving to go see the Islanders,” in responding to questions from State Senator Todd Kaminsky prior to the Scoping Document was released.

By way of background, when Belmont Park opened on May 4, 1905, about 19,000 passengers—nearly half of all attendees—took the railroad to the racetrack on opening day. The original station was located south of Hempstead Turnpike. The present terminal north of Hempstead Turnpike opened in 1957. The New York & Atlantic Railway serves the park twice a week, delivering box cars loaded with feed for the park’s thoroughbred horses.

Belmont Park, which opened in 1905, has been called by Sports Illustrated the Taj Mahal of American Racing and was envisioned by August Belmont, Jr., William Whitney and other horse owners to be enjoyed by future generations as much as Central Park, Prospect Park or Van Cortland Park. All other issues aside the State of New York needs to keep the PARK spaces of Belmont Park and not make it a PARKING space instead.

Belmont Park is and must primarily remain a major thoroughbred horse-racing facility that first opened in 1905 but was completely redeveloped in 1964-1968. Belmont was closed from 1963 to 1967 for a \$31 million rebuilding. The new Grandstand is one the largest in thoroughbred racing, with seating for 33,000 and a total on-track capacity of over 100,000. The Grandstand and clubhouse building extends 1,266 feet -- longer than the Empire State Building is high. Nothing should be any taller than that over 10 stories Grandstand.

Belmont Park’s opening day on May 4, 1905 also resulted in the first reported traffic jam on Long Island, when over 40,000 spectators descended upon Belmont Park and its surrounding community. Belmont Park has had its pauses over the years, as a 1908 statute outlawed betting at tracks, leading to a suspension of racing in the state in 1911-1912. After the tracks reopened, a fire in 1917 destroyed most of Belmont’s buildings. Racing switched from clockwise to counterclockwise in 1921. Bookmaking was authorized in 1933. The public address system and photo-finish camera came in 1936. Pari-mutuel betting laws took effect in 1940 which literally lead to Belmont Park’s “hay day” years.

When the spring 2009 meet began on April 29, 2009 the MTA halted service to Belmont Park due to insufficient funding in the MTA budget. The New York Racing association provided shuttle bus service from the Queens Village station to Belmont Park while the N6, Q2 and Q110 bus lines also offered alternative service.

The unusual, antiquated LIRR rail yard on the Queens/Nassau County line poses logistical challenges for the Long Island Rail Road, which usually carries just a few hundred people a day to Belmont Park. But for the Belmont Stakes, that number increases to about 10,000. And with the possibility of a Triple Crown winner, the number explodes to about 21,000 people, officials have said.

It is therefore important for the ESD representatives, whose own web site is at “ESD.NY.GOV” recognize that the State of New York is the actual and full landlord of the over 445 acres which make up the Belmont Park campus. As our public servants serving us in western Nassau County, they have an obligation and responsibility to embrace and take a proactive role in the operations and activities taking place at their Belmont Park property, especially in reviewing any responses to the State’s formal Request for Proposals [“RFP”].

The Floral Park Belmont Park Task Force has been an active participant in the ongoing dialogue for many years, and the Village of Floral Park has outlined its vision of Belmont Park clearly and consistently through its 10 point Statement of Principles which Floral Park Trustee Kevin Fitzgerald, the village liaison on the Task Force reaffirmed and highlighted several times. They were first described by Floral Park Trustee Jim Rhatigan, whose memory and passionate care for his Floral Park community we continue to honor. Those ten cornerstone

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concepts need to be acknowledged and embraced by the State of New York as guiding principles for the preservation and improvement of Belmont Park.

### QUESTION: WILL THE SELECTED APPLICANTS NOW PLEDGE TO SUPPORT AND ADOPT THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES WHICH FLORAL PARK HAS STATED SINCE 2007?

#### FLORAL PARK STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

- I. COMMUNITIES THAT PROVIDE SO MUCH DESERVE MUCH IN RETURN
- II. PRESERVE AND PROTECT RACING AND OUR COMMUNITIES ALIKE
- III. PLAN AND PROVIDE NEW STATE OF THE ART INFRASTRUCTURE
- IV. NEW AFTER SUNSET RACING FUNDS MADE HERE MUST STAY HERE FIRST
- V. PLAY BY THE SAME RULES AND 'PONY UP' A FAIR SHARE
- VI. SAFETY AND SECURITY IS A NECESSITY NOT A LUXURY
- VII. BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR TO YOUR NEIGHBORS
- VIII. BE AN ECONOMIC ENGINE FOR YOUR COMMUNITIES
- IX. BE A PART OF, INSTEAD OF APART FROM, YOUR NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES
- X. TRANSPARENT RESPONSIVE OVERSIGHT CREATES COMMUNITY TRUST

#### COMMUNITIES THAT PROVIDE SO MUCH DESERVE MUCH IN RETURN

- I. The neighboring hosting communities that shoulder the greatest burdens are to be guaranteed the greatest benefits.

### QUESTION: WHAT DIRECT FINANCIAL BENEFITS WILL BE PROVIDED BY THE SELECTED APPLICANT TO THE HOSTING COMMUNITIES OF THE VILLAGE OF FLORAL PARK, THE TOWN OF HEMPSTEAD AND THE COUNTY OF NASSAU?

#### PRESERVE AND PROTECT RACING AND OUR COMMUNITIES ALIKE

- II. The neighboring communities support the preservation and fostering of the world class premier thoroughbred racing facilities within their neighborhood. The communities encourage the protection and incorporation of all buildings and landscaped features of historic, architectural or cultural significance into the local communities visioning, economic or historic planning.

### QUESTION: HOW WILL THE SELECTED APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL BE HARMONIZED WITH THE WORLD CLASS THOROUGHBRED HORSE RACING FACILITIES LOCATED AT BELMONT PARK?

#### PLAN AND PROVIDE NEW STATE OF THE ART INFRASTRUCTURE

- III. In order to achieve that goal, there must be a plan in place for a state of the art infrastructure and facilities worthy of being called the nation's premier venues for thoroughbred racing and a source of community pride. Such modernization of the infrastructure must encompass and be projected into the surrounding neighborhoods in which such world class entertainment facilities are situated. This includes a complete updated inventory and evaluation for updating of roads, state of the art water, sewer, water recharge basins and electrical systems both within and surrounding these facilities. The creation of a municipal utility microgrid co-generation clean energy facility encompassing the four incorporated villages of Floral Park, South Floral Park, Bellerose and Stewart Manor, as well as the Elmont Economic Development Zone adjacent to Belmont Park.

### QUESTION: WILL THE SELECTED APPLICANT SUPPORT THE CREATION OF A MUNICIPAL CLEAN ENERGY FACILITY WITH CO-GENERATION THAT CAN BE UTILIZED FOR THE BELMONT CAMPUS AS WELL AS THE LOCAL HOSTING VILLAGES?

## **BELMONT PARK PREPARED SCOPING REMARKS**

From user friendly sidewalks and lighting to new estate fencing, the facilities must be able to compete with and be comparable to the support already provided or committed to other major entertainment facilities in the State of New York such as the newer Major League Baseball facilities at Yankee Stadium in the Bronx, the New York Mets' at Citi-Field and the professional tennis venues at Flushing Meadows Queens and the National Basketball Association venue in Brooklyn. A state of the art multi-media center that can be utilized to support NYRA's television operations, the hosting of nationally broadcasted racing events such as the Belmont Stakes and the Breeder's Cup that also could be made available and utilized by the local communities' Four Village Studios should also be created.

### **QUESTION: WILL THE SELECTED APPLICANT MAKE STATE OF THE ART MEDIA FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES INCLUDING THEIR 4 VILLAGE STUDIOS CABLE ACCESS PROGRAMMING?**

#### **NEW REVENUES INCLUDING AFTER SUNSET RACING MADE HERE MUST STAY HERE FIRST**

IV. The local hosting communities recognize that there will be some additional and unavoidable burdens placed on them as a result of the intensification of activities at Belmont Park. Since newly authorized after sunset racing will also now be permitted by the State of New York at Belmont Park, there must be an irrevocable commitment that the three political subdivisions which are hosting these expanded racing operations also receive a benefit and a new dedicated stream of revenue earmarked for their communities, prior to any additional funds being distributed outside of those neighboring communities. One way to ensure the three hosting political subdivision communities of Nassau County, the Town of Hempstead and the Village of Floral Park all get their fair share is to require that each receive at least 2.5 percent of the revenues of all racing or events taking place after sunset.

### **QUESTION: WILL THE SELECTED APPLICANT SUPPORT THE FUNDING A LOCAL COMMUNITY 7.5% HOSTING COMMUNITY REVENUE STREAM TO BE EQUALLY SHARED BY THE VILLAGE OF FLORAL PARK, THE TOWN OF HEMPSTEAD AND THE COUNTY OF NASSAU?**

#### **PLAY BY THE SAME RULES AND 'PONY UP' A FAIR SHARE**

V. These facilities are NOT an island, but are an integral part of the communities in which they are located. They should be subject to the SAME rules as their neighbors, including zoning, employment, housing codes, regulations and police oversight. The facilities should therefore contribute their FAIR SHARE for the services and infrastructure their neighboring communities make available to the facilities. This includes amounts for police, fire and sanitation services, either through actual property taxes or a similar amount even if a tax exempt status is present. An iron-clad Payment in Lieu of Taxes [PILOT] agreement guaranteeing such a revenue stream to surrounding local political subdivisions, including the central high school and elementary school districts, should be completed.

### **QUESTION: WILL THE SELECTED APPLICANT AGREE TO FOLLOW THE SAME RULES AS OTHER LOCAL BUSINESSES AND SUPPORT THE SURROUNDING LOCAL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS AS THEY CURRENTLY EXIST?**

#### **SAFETY AND SECURITY IS A NECESSITY NOT A LUXURY**

VI. The safety and security for the facilities and their neighboring communities must be maintained and increased. Safety includes the safe inflow and outflow of traffic to and from the facilities whether the sites are hosting an event or conducting ongoing operations. Security should include use of state of the art technology, including requiring proper identification of all individuals permitted in the non-public areas at the facilities. In addition, as these facilities have already been designated as staging areas should an emergency or natural disaster take place, there must be state of art readiness and facilities in place.

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**QUESTION: WILL THE SELECTED APPLICANT AGREE TO MINIMIZE THE PUBLIC SAFETY IMPACT ON THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES? WILL EACH OF THE APPLICANTS AGREE TO DESIGNATE ITS FACILITIES AS A PRIMARY EVACUATION LOCATION FOR DECLARED EMERGENCY SITUATIONS?**

### **BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR TO YOUR NEIGHBORS**

VII. The neighboring communities that have existed in peaceful co-existence with these facilities for decades should have their right to the quiet enjoyment of their neighborhoods respected and continued to be maintained. Those areas that are natural park like settings must continue to be maintained. There must be a comprehensive facilities management plan addressing both modernization and preservation plans and must include design guidelines, based upon generally acceptable community standards, to be used in the development of individual capital and maintenance projects. Any proposed material change in the nature or time of operations at the facilities must be fully disclosed and reviewed with the neighboring communities prior to such a change.

**QUESTION: WILL THE SELECTED APPLICANT PARTICIPATE IN A MASTER PLAN FOR THE ENTIRE 425 ACRE BELMONT CAMPUS AND AGREE THAT THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES WILL HAVE A MEANINGFUL ROLE IN SUCH PLANNING?**

### **BE AN ECONOMIC ENGINE FOR YOUR COMMUNITIES**

VIII. The facilities must continue to be an economic engine generating jobs and business for the communities in which each is located. It must be ensured that local residents and businesses are protected from any adverse economic impact as a result of activities at the facilities. Local residents should be given preference in hiring at the facilities, and local businesses be given preferred status, including as suppliers, vendors and service providers. Creating an overall business and service center should be considered, with the goal of generating additional economic opportunities for hosting communities.

**QUESTION: WILL THE SELECTED APPLICANT GIVE PREFERENCE TO LOCAL RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES FROM WITHIN THE FLORAL PARK ZIP CODE 11001 IN THE FULFILLING OF ANY JOB OR BUSINESS OPPURTUNITIES?**

### **BE A PART OF, INSTEAD OF APART FROM, YOUR NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES**

IX. The facilities should become an integral presence within the communities in which each is located. This includes the support of and the participation in active civic and volunteer life as a pillar of the neighboring communities in which each facility exists. This includes the support and participation in annual community events and the inclusion of the local communities in events taking place at each facility, including but not limited to, world renowned thoroughbred horse racing events taking place at the facilities. This also includes providing, at little or no cost, water recharge basins or spaces, available facilities and recreational areas to groups and organizations in the surrounding communities.

**QUESTION: WILL THE SELECTED APPLICANT AGREE TO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE CHARITY AND COMMUNITY LIFE OF THE HOSTING COMMUNITIES?**

### **TRANSPARENT RESPONSIVE OVERSIGHT CREATES COMMUNITY TRUST**

X. The neighboring communities must be involved and considered in any significant change of operations or activities at the facilities. The facilities must be subject to formal local oversight and review to consider all proposed additions, renovations or demolitions at the sites. There should be at least one or more locally involved neighbor of Belmont Park on the NYRA Board of Directors at all times. There should be the establishment of a corporate ethics compliance official and a local community liaison who will be available to

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the surrounding communities to ensure implementation of both the letter and spirit of this Statement of PRINCIPLES.

### **QUESTION: WILL THE SELECTED APPLICANT PROVIDE THE HOSTING COMMUNITIES AN ACTIVE ROLE IN ITS ORGANIZATION?**

It must be recognized that Belmont Park plays a critical role and place in western Nassau County, particularly with its long time neighbors in Floral Park. While 28 acres of the Belmont Park campus sit to the south of Hempstead Turnpike, the other over 400 acres are located on Floral Park's side of Hempstead Turnpike. Those 28 acres on the south side of Hempstead Turnpike are now used for 1820 secondary parking spots, mostly to merely store cars, which was the site where the State of New York's Empire State Development Corporation received the proposal to place a soccer stadium for the New York Cosmos. It is important for the State of New York to confirm how those 28 acres will potentially utilized in conjunction with the proposal for a hockey arena for the New York Islanders.

### **QUESTION: HOW DOES THE SELECTED APPLICANT'S HOTEL FACILITIES DIFFER FROM THE PREVIOUS VLT CASINO PROPOSALS WHICH ALSO HAD A HOTEL THAT APPEARED READILY ADAPTABLE TO LEGALIZED GAMBLING USES AND WHAT DIFFERENCES ARE THERE FORM PREVIOUS PROPOSALS THAT THE STATE REJECTED?**

A number of proposals and suggestions have been made since the State of New York obtained full ownership and control of Belmont Park in 2008 without dispute from its current tenant the New York Racing Association. As we are all well aware, a whole buffet line of half-baked ideas have been made over the years, from the defunct Cosmos Soccer Stadium to the abandoned Shinnecock Indian Nation and discredited Nassau OTB casinos and all sorts of housing, big box stores and strip mall plans and everything else that has ever been proposed to be dropped onto Belmont Park's campus.

This piece meal approach must stop once and for all. Floral Park has always supported the concept of a unified master plan so that Belmont Park does not become a chaotic hodgepodge due to poor planning. There needs to be a MASTER PLAN for Belmont Park.

### **QUESTION: WILL THE SELECTED APPLICANT PARTICIPATE IN A MASTER PLAN PROCESS AT BELMONT PARK?**

Floral Park also continues to believe that Belmont Park needs to remain the premier home of thoroughbred horse racing in the State of New York, and indeed the entire nation. For over 100 years Belmont Park and Floral Park have remained friendly and peaceful neighbors and that special relationship needs to be continued and indeed even strengthened by the State of New York.

### **QUESTION: DOES THE SELECTED APPLICANT AGREE THAT BELMONT PARK MUST REMAIN PRIMARILY THE HOME OF WORLD CLASS THOROUGHBRED HORSE RACING?**

There has, for example, been the recent significant change by the State of New York to allow after sunset racing at Belmont Park. Right now Belmont Park has 6 racing patrol and camera towers which are 40 feet high. The recent upgrade of Daytona Speedway for night time racing, for example, required the construction of hundreds of light towers to illuminate the track, and similar lighting structures, either on a temporary or permanent basis, will no doubt be required in Belmont Park's near future. Such night time activities will also dramatically change the current day time only impact Belmont Park has on its surrounding communities.

### **QUESTION: HOW DOES THE SELECTED APPLICANT PROPOSE AVOIDING OR MINIMIZING CONCURRENT EVENTS TAKING PLACE AT BELMONT PARK?**

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Just as the New York Racing Association and now even the Nassau County OTB derive a guaranteed revenue stream from the activities of Resorts World taking place at Aqueduct Racetrack, the hosting municipalities of Belmont Park need to be similarly acknowledged and compensated for the after sunset racing which the State of New York is now allowing at Belmont Park. It is urged that the new after sunset revenues created here at Belmont Park be first shared with the hosting municipalities of Nassau County, the Town of Hempstead and the Village of Floral Park at a rate of 2.5 percent each, which is similar in nature, but actually much less, than what NYRA itself receives from Resorts World at Aqueduct Racetrack. Since these are a new revenue stream, the hosting communities are simply receiving a guaranteed share of revenue created due to the increased burdens on these hosting communities. If any new lights or night time activities at Belmont Park go on, then the local communities should derive an actual and immediate benefit.

**QUESTION: WHAT IMMEDIATE AND GUARANTEED FINANCIAL BENEFITS WILL THE SELECTED APPLICANT PROVIDE THE HOSTING POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS OF THE VILLAGE OF FLORAL PARK, THE TOWN OF HEMPSTEAD AND THE COUNTY OF NASSAU?**

Since there are also serious discussions of changes at Belmont Park that will require significant upgrades of the infrastructure at Belmont Park, one basic requirement to support hundreds of lighting towers or even to support a National Hockey League team at Belmont Park is a cost effective and reliable source of renewable energy. The Clean Energy Facility that Floral Park continues to support in order to create a municipal utility that could create a microgrid that would generate an economic engine for the entire Belmont Park area, while providing a more economical and reliable source of energy through the use of a co-generation facility. This proposal was one of the five initially submitted to the State of New York during its previous round of REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS for Belmont Park, and with all of your help and support, can become closer to a reality rather than just left on the drawing board.

**QUESTION: WILL THE SELECTED APPLICANT SUPPORT THE CREATION OF MICROGRID MUNICIPAL UTILITY TO SUPPLY BOTH ELECTRICAL POWER AND HEATING AND COOLING AS PROPOSED BY THE FOUR VILLAGES OF FLORAL PARK, SOUTH FLORAL PARK, BELLEROSE AND STEWART MANOR?**

As Hurricane Sandy so dramatically demonstrated, Belmont Park, which is designated as an emergency evacuation center for our south shore Long Island neighbors, does not currently even have heat, air conditioning, a separate source of energy, or even acceptable sanitary sewage or water basins. Having a clean energy facility with a local microgrid will ensure that Belmont Park does not become New York's own Superdome disaster center. The infrastructure at Belmont Park needs to be fully updated and become state of the art first before anything else follows. Rather than being an untested or unproven concept, the Belmont Park Clean Energy co-generation facility will provide a microgrid modelled after the one at UC San Diego. The Four Village Clean Energy facility is a cornerstone project that will be a win-win for everyone involved.

Belmont Park was actually closed for such major renovations in 1963 and did not reopen for racing until May of 1968, so this renewal process every 50 or so years at Belmont Park is something that has been done and needs to be done once again. Floral Park and the other hosting communities have also heard about the various housing ideas at Belmont Park, but no one seems to acknowledge the fact that Belmont Park is home to over 2000 people already, but they continue to live in terrible living conditions.

It is an embarrassment that the State of New York allows working poor folks to have to rely upon Anna's House or local food pantries in order to survive at Belmont Park. While the State of New York and its tenant NYRA have received hundreds of millions of dollars from Resorts World at Aqueduct for capital improvements, a significant portion of such funds have been directed towards elaborate projects in Saratoga rather than at Belmont Park. Why the State of New York allows racing's summer home in Saratoga to be upgraded while its main home at Belmont Park continues to fall apart is just unconscionable. The time has come to focus upon the "Big Sandy" at Belmont Park and not just its two smaller siblings in Ozone Park or Saratoga.

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One way to do so is to FINALLY create a State authorized Community Advisory Board for Belmont Park with representatives from Floral Park, which is long overdue, and has become embarrassment to all of the panel members.

### **QUESTION: WILL THE SELECTED APPLICANT PARTICIPATE IN A COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD WHICH INCLUDES SIGNIFICANT REPRESENTATION FROM THE VILLAGE OF FLORAL PARK?**

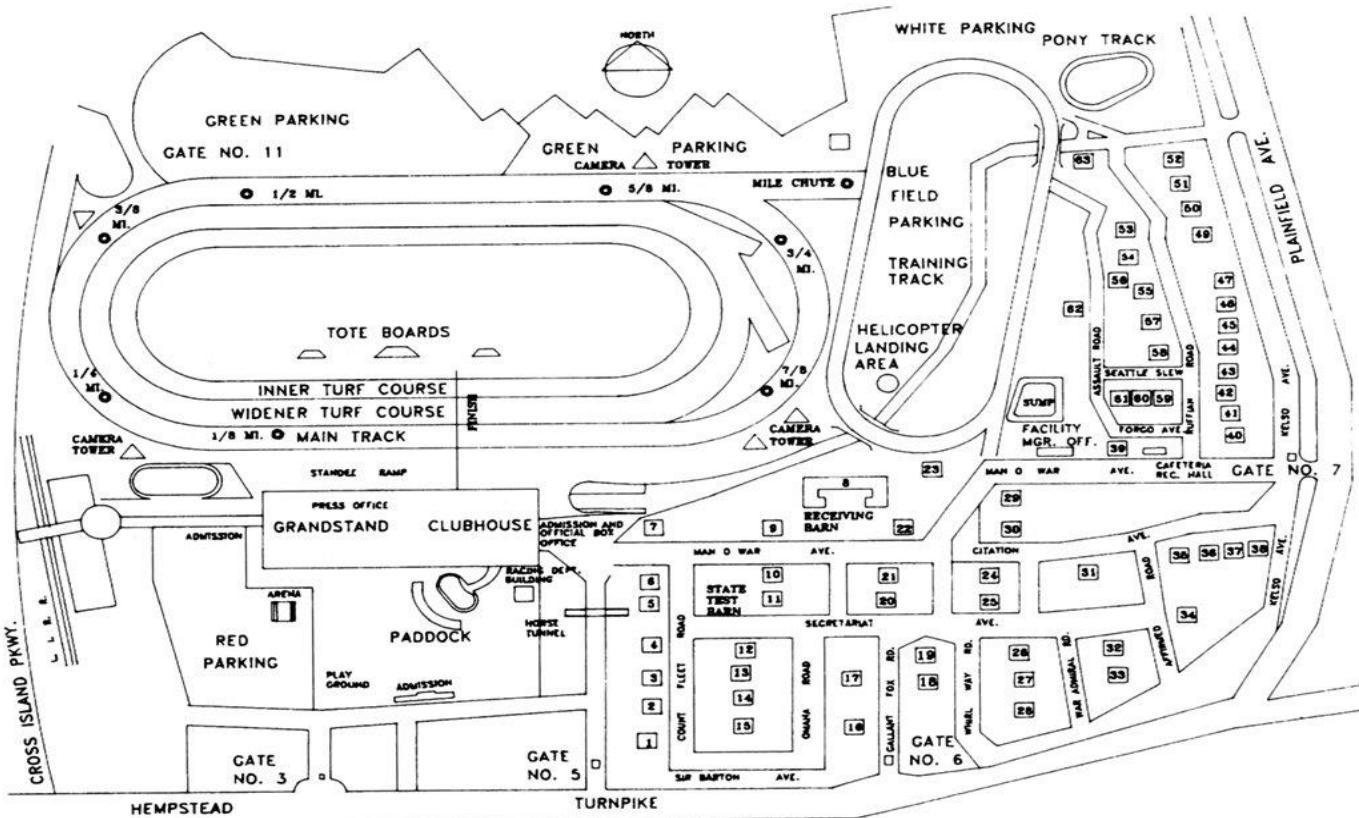
It is time for the State of New York to FIX WHAT IT HAS AT BELMONT PARK and to make Belmont Park grand again and truly the Taj Mahal of thoroughbred horse racing, as well as a state of the art sports entertainment destination.

The phrase "RFP" should stand not only for "Request for Proposals" but more importantly "REMEMBER FLORAL PARK"

Belmont Park and its property owner the State of New York needs to be a good neighbor for all of its neighbors, especially Floral Park.

Dennis J. McEnery  
Floral Park Belmont Park Preservation & Redevelopment Task Force Member

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It is obvious that Belmont Park is a significant operation with over 400 acres and that each proposal will have a significant impact on the future activities at Belmont Park. It appears that both proposals will be incorporating property that is currently utilized in conjunction with the PADDOCK and PLAYGROUND currently located at Belmont Park.

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As the above map demonstrates the operations of Belmont Park north of Hempstead Turnpike have a dramatic and obvious impact primarily upon the Village of Floral Park, which neighbors the vast majority of the Belmont Park campus.

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# State of New York Empire State Development Proposals

Belmont Park is currently zoned by the Town of Hempstead for residential use [B Residence zoning].

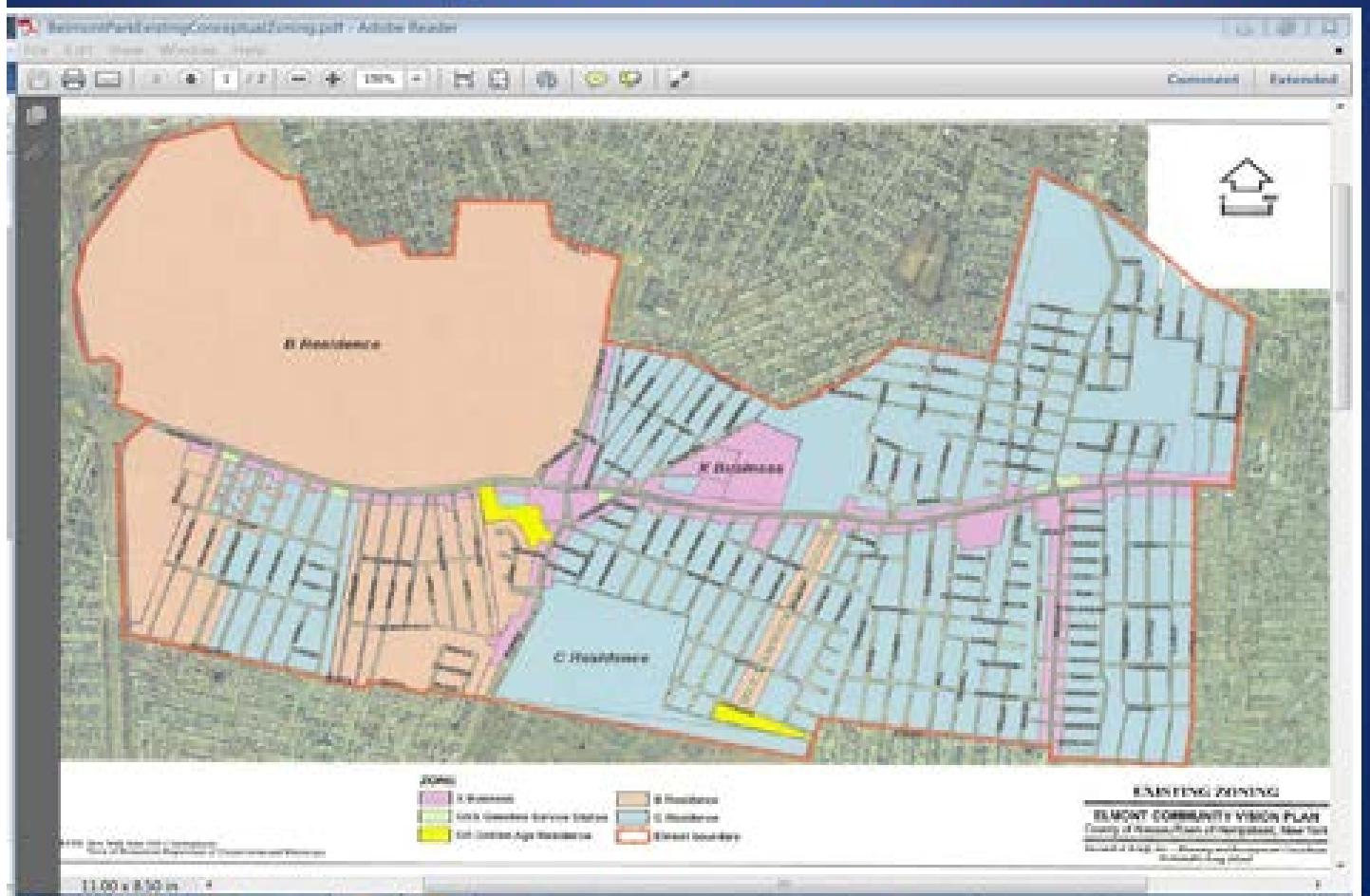
- Site A is an approximate 8-acre parcel bordered by Hempstead Turnpike to the south and the Cross Island Parkway to the west.
  - The site is adjacent to Belmont Park's Grandstand. Because of its close proximity to the LIRR platforms at Belmont Park, it is sometimes referred to as the "LIRR platform" parking lot parcel.
- Site B is an approximate 28-acre parcel bordered by Hempstead Turnpike to the north and the Cross Island Parkway to the west.
  - The "South Lot" site is across the street from Belmont Park's Grandstand. Because of its triangle shape, it is also sometimes referred to as the "pizza slice" parking lot parcel.

It is apparent that the selected applicant has decided that the 28 acres to the south of Hempstead Turnpike will NOT be the subject of any significant intensification of land use, while the property to the north of Hempstead Turnpike, the Floral Park side of the roadway, will be the subject of a megaproject change in land use.

Therefore, setting aside 7 acres of land on the south side of Hempstead Turnpike for public park land makes little sense, when it is the north side of Hempstead Turnpike which is most negatively impacted tact of property. Therefore it is imperative that public park land directly adjacent to the Floral Park community be set aside and is comparable in size and scope as what is being set aside on the south side of Hempstead Turnpike.

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Belmont Park is currently zoned by the Town of Hempstead for **B Residential** use

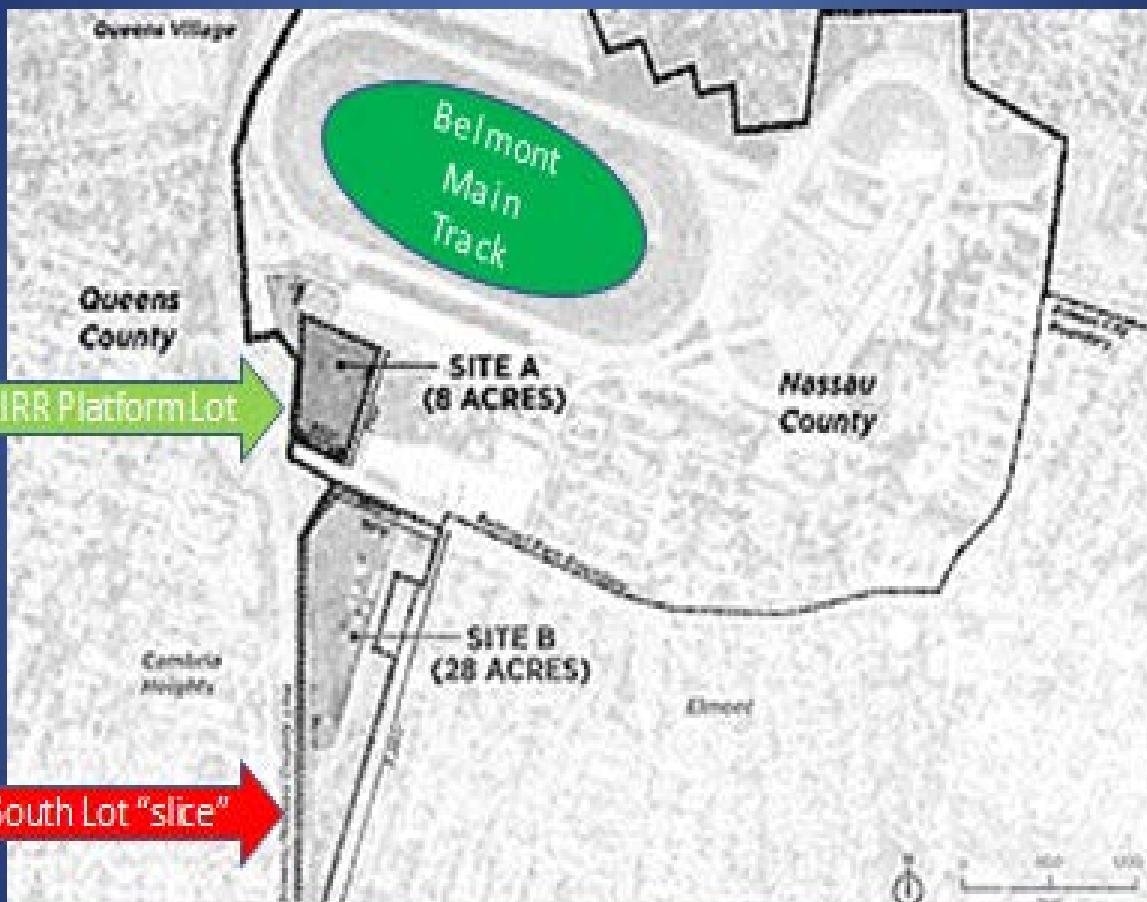


All other issues aside, the ESD and its applicant must endeavor to fully comply with the zoning and land use rules of the local jurisdictions, particularly the Village of Floral Park and the Town of Hempstead. While the State of New York can decide to override such local laws, it should only be done AFTER the local jurisdictions are given the opportunity for the project to be in full conformance with local land use provisions.

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A

### State of New York Empire State Development Request for Proposals Sites A & B



Sites A and B, the two parcels ESD identified for potential development, are located within the southernmost portion of Belmont Park's boundaries. Site A totals approximately eight acres while Site B, the larger of the two, totals approximately 28 acres.

It appears that the New York ESD is steering much of the burden of development on the north side of Hempstead Turnpike while giving most of the public benefits, including a multi-million dollar "community center" and over 7 acres of NEW parkland and recreational facilities to the south side of Hempstead Turnpike. Obviously there needs to be an equitable and fair distribution of such public accommodations on BOTH sides of Hempstead Turnpike in areas adjacent to residential and public school areas. If there is a community CENTER then at least it should be closer to the CENTER of the development area itself and not placed as FAR from Floral Park community as is physically possible.

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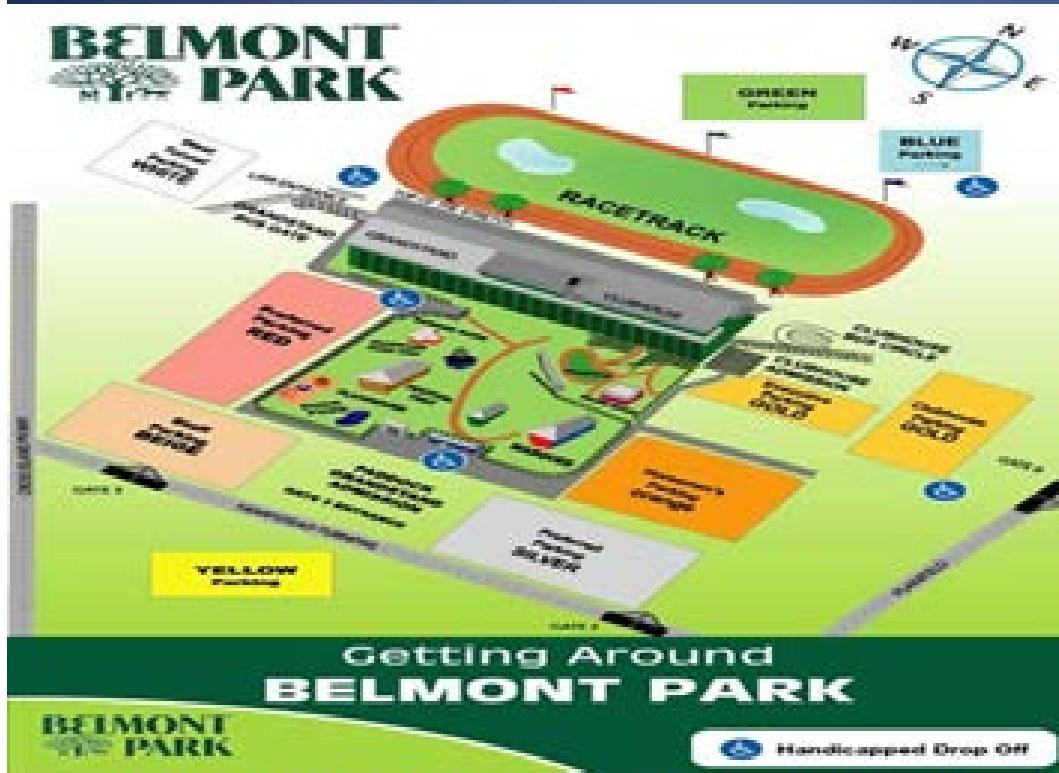


The Shinnecock Indian Nation had also promoted a casino complex at Belmont Park, disclosing that it wanted to build a hotel and casino-entertainment complex on the western end of the property, renovate a Long Island Rail Road station and create a park and soccer field on the property's 28 acre south lot. The currently remaining proposal, however, want to build their primary structures on "Site A" on the Floral Park side of Hempstead Turnpike near where the LIRR platforms are located.

The intensification of usage of property on the north side of Hempstead Turnpike rather than the spreading of the development impact onto both sides of Hempstead Turnpike is unfortunate. While the creation of an arena directly adjacent to the LIRR station is understandable, why a 25 story hotel with "convention space" or retail facilities rivalling size of the Miracle Mile in Manhasset or the original size of Roosevelt Field on Old Country Road in the space 8 acre parcel area is questionable.

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Belmont Park has 12,850 Parking Spaces Now  
but Belmont Park May Lose Over 6,000 Spaces



Traffic counts are already between 30,000 and 45,000 per day on Hempstead Turnpike while between 125,000 and 140,000 on the Cross Island Parkway  
The Cross Island Parkway does not allow commercial vehicles

The traffic counts analysis must acknowledge the CURRENT heavy usage of BOTH the Cross Island Parkway and especially the Hempstead Turnpike corridor. While the traffic count over a 24 hour may help "smooth out" that volume, the traffic impact on time sensitive events taking place during week day commuter time traffic must be emphasized by the ESD.

## BELMONT PARK PREPARED SCOPING REMARKS

### Belmont Park: 12,850 Parking Spaces



The creation of an 18,000 seat arena, along with a significant retail village, along with potentially new night time thoroughbred horse racing with increased attendance may stretch and overwhelm whatever parking spaces that already exist at Belmont Park. Placing over 6000 current parking spots at risk due to new development will likely fundamentally change the relatively quiet existence of residents and schools located in Floral Park, north of Hempstead Turnpike.

## BELMONT PARK PREPARED SCOPING REMARKS

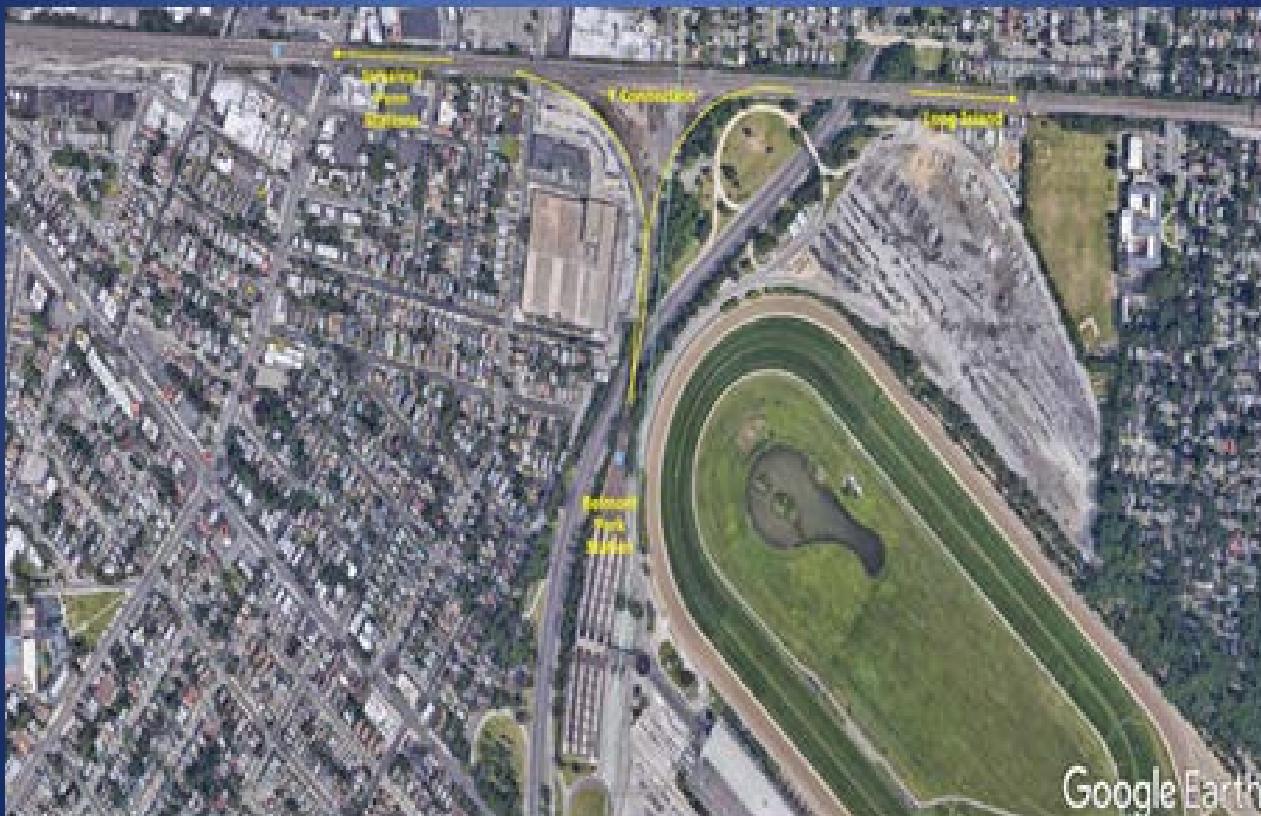
Belmont Park: 12,850 Parking Capacity  
[A]4170 [B]1020 [C]2340 [D]4520

PARKING FIELD	CAPACITY CARS
A	4170
B	1020
C	2340
D	4520
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,850</b>

The 28 acre “yellow lot” which is south of Hempstead Turnpike currently contains the largest number of available parking spaces at over 4500. While the 8 acre red lot has less than 2000 spots, they are among the closest and most desirable parking spots at Belmont Park.

## BELMONT PARK PREPARED SCOPING REMARKS

# HOW WILL THE LIRR ADDRESS NEW SERVICE INTO BELMONT PARK?



While the MTA LIRR has made a “promise” to support train service “during events” taking place at Belmont Park, in difficult financial times in the past, such service, as limited as it was to begin with, was eliminated. In addition, there is the logistical constraints on the LIRR system itself. While a new “scoot” service on Jamaica Station Track NINE is on the horizon, will that become a Belmont to Barclay scoot service option? With the looming MTA LIRR Third Track megaproject commencing literally at the same time the NY Arena team is attempting to open its doors in October 2021, however, what EXACTLY and with SPECIFICITY are the MTA LIRR proposed services that are guaranteed to be provided as part of the Scoping Document analysis. Any reduction in service to or from Floral Park and Bellerose MUST be agreed to be avoided and prohibited under any circumstances.

## BELMONT PARK PREPARED SCOPING REMARKS

### Getting LIRR to Isles Arena Could Require Bending Space-Time

Running direct service from Long Island to Belmont Park would be like doing a three-point turn in the middle of a highway, but with a train –NEW YORK VILLAGE VOICE  
by AARON GORDON January 30, 2018

- The Belmont Park spur, says David Clarke, the director of the Center for Transportation Research at University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is what's called a "Y" connection because of the track design:
- Currently, the tracks are set up only for use of the left-hand, western side of the Y, allowing trains to run to and from Jamaica. A series of switches allow trains on that side of the Y connection to get to whatever track they need. And since the trains can wait on the Belmont spur until the coast is clear and switches are enabled, service isn't disrupted.
- Recent satellite images show that the right side of the Y connection, the one that could provide easy access to the Hempstead line going towards Long Island, is not in service. (It appears to be used as rail car storage.) So at least one necessary upgrade requires getting that other half of the connection into working order.
- But even then, Belmont will have service in only one direction: from the city to Belmont, and from Belmont to Long Island. How can the LIRR provide service going to the arena from Long Island, as most Islanders fans will want, which doesn't require a transfer at Jamaica?

What is the MTA LIRR actual plan for Belmont Park service with specificity!

## BELMONT PARK PREPARED SCOPING REMARKS

**MTA chairman ‘concerned’ about obstacles of LIRR service to Islanders’ arena at Belmont Park**

**Joe Lhota says a study is underway regarding potential LIRR expansion for a new arena at Belmont.**

By Jim Baumbach

jim.baumbach@newsday.com

 @jimbaumbach

Updated January 25, 2018 9:15 PM

MTA chairman Joe Lhota said Thursday that he’s “concerned” about the complications involved with expanding Long Island Rail Road service to the Islanders’ new arena at Belmont Park and added that a study is underway.

Lhota, testifying before a state budget hearing in Albany, said two obstacles include the design of the current Belmont spur off the main line and the LIRR’s inability to add more trains during the evening rush hour, when most Islanders fans would be traveling to weeknight games.

“We’re at capacity on the main line during rush hour, and so we’re going to have to look at that and weigh that in,” Lhota said under questioning by state Sen. Todd Kaminsky (D-Long Beach). “I’m concerned about how that’s going to all fit in at any one particular point in time.”

Lhota added that the spur off the Hicksville line to Belmont currently allows for trains coming only from the west. “There’s no way going from where most Long Islanders would take [it] if they were taking the Long Island Rail Road as opposed to driving to go see the Islanders,” he said.

Lhota said he will not know the cost of potential upgrades at Belmont — where trains currently run only on race days — until the study is complete. He provided no timetable.

The LIRR had said only that it’s committed to expanding service at Belmont but had not provided any details.

Making the LIRR station at Belmont full-time was a key to the Islanders’ proposal to develop up to 43 acres of state-owned land at Belmont. Their winning proposal, as announced by Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo last month, calls for an 18,000-seat arena, 435,000 square feet of retail stores, restaurants and a movie theater, and a hotel with 200 to 250 rooms.

Cuomo’s office said last month that the LIRR “will develop a plan to modify service to accommodate New Yorkers for sporting and special events.” State officials said all parties remain committed to expanding service to accommodate the arena.

Islanders co-owner Jon Ledecky has been outspoken about the need for the Belmont LIRR station to become “a vital part of the community, not just when there is horse racing and not just when there is a concert or a game. All the time.”

Lhota, under questioning from Kaminsky, added at Thursday’s state hearing, “I do understand the desire on the part of the state and the owners of the Islanders and the community in and around Belmont about how important it is for them to have transit.”

## BELMONT PARK PREPARED SCOPING REMARKS

After the hearing, Kaminsky tweeted, “A full time LIRR station at Belmont w/ expanded service is key for Belmont community & to reduce Isles traffic.”

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### **Who'll Pay for LIRR Service to the New Islanders Arena?**

The NHL team says it's leaving Brooklyn for a new home by Belmont Park, but getting fans there could cost taxpayers big bucks

by Aaron Gordon

December 21, 2017

Good news for Islanders fans — a sentiment not often expressed this past decade or three — as the Great Barclays Center Hockey Experiment is over. On Wednesday, Governor Andrew Cuomo, NHL commissioner Gary Bettman, and lots of people wearing Islanders hats with the tags still on announced that the team, in partnership with Sterling Equities (run by Mets executives), Madison Square Garden, and the Oak View Group, won the rights to redevelop Belmont Park with an 18,000-capacity arena, retail space, a hotel, “innovation/incubator space,” and every other buzzword a 21st-century development entails.

It would be almost impossible for the Belmont arena to be a worse hockey experience than Barclays, which was not designed for hockey in the first place so that builder Bruce Ratner could save money during a financing crunch. It probably isn't a coincidence that two of the Belmont arena's features touted in Cuomo's press release are “ice management” and “quality spectator sight lines,” as Barclays has been plagued with seriously low-quality ice and has some of the most disorienting sight lines for any arena, hockey or otherwise.

The Islanders owners are promising that the \$1 billion project just outside of Queens will be privately financed, though questions remain about how much the developers will pay in rent on the state land and whether any tax breaks will be involved. The biggest question facing the project, though, is how people will actually get there.

Currently, the LIRR is Belmont's only rail connection. A one-stop spur off the Hempstead branch, the service only operates during Belmont meet dates and can only be reached via connection from points west: Jamaica, Atlantic Terminal, and Penn Station. So anyone coming to Belmont via Long Island — as one would expect most Islander fans would — has to go to Jamaica and switch to another train that will run express to Belmont. Not the least convenient experience in the world, but just enough to entice one to drive instead.

So what — everyone on Long Island has cars, right? After all, Nassau Coliseum was only connected to the LIRR via bus; almost everyone drove to Islanders games before the franchise moved to downtown Brooklyn two years ago.

But it's not clear where those thousands of cars are going to park, since the arena and “retail village” are to be built on an existing parking lot just behind the racetrack grandstand. It's possible everyone will be able to cram into the large remaining lot across Hempstead Turnpike — with around 4,000 to 6,000 parking spots, based on a very rough estimate using Google satellite images — but there is only one pedestrian tunnel connecting that main lot with the arena site. Even still, for sold-out events, it's not at all clear that one lot is big enough (nor would I want to be one of several thousand cars trying to leave after the final horn).

## BELMONT PARK PREPARED SCOPING REMARKS

Cuomo's press release does mention that "additional parking will be developed to accommodate the increased traffic volume, including dedicated retail, hotel, and arena parking located below the concourse level," but the official rendering doesn't show any such external lots. And as anyone who has ever attended an event at an arena knows, parking under the concourse is reserved for VIPs and is rarely, if ever, available to the general public.

As a result, there will have to be LIRR service of some kind for every event. But what that service will look like — and how much it will cost taxpayers — remains an open question. Despite the LIRR committing to "developing a plan to expand LIRR service to Belmont Park Station for events year-round," according to the press release, a spokesperson for the MTA, which runs the LIRR, said the agency doesn't have any accompanying cost estimates. Which is to say, the MTA has promised to provide a service for which it doesn't know the actual cost.

Since the LIRR will still only run to Belmont on event days, the ongoing tab will be directly related to how many events there are. This, of course, is the billion-dollar question for whether the arena project itself can be a profitable venture.

The arena's investors plan on holding 150 events a year at Belmont, at least 41 of which will be Islanders home games, which drew between 11,000 and 13,000 fans per game in the team's final years at Nassau. The other 100 or so events, though, will be filled by concerts and other standard arena fare.

Sports economist Victor Matheson of College of the Holy Cross says 100 non-hockey events a year is not an outlandish figure for an arena in a large metropolitan area without much competition. But the Belmont building will have to compete with the likes of Barclays, Madison Square Garden (whose owner is a co-investor in the Belmont project), and even Nassau Coliseum and the Prudential Center in Newark, as few concert acts are likely to perform at three or four different venues in the same metro area. For example, Matheson wonders, is Beyoncé really going to want to play at Barclays, Madison Square Garden, and Belmont?

Whatever it ends up costing to run LIRR trains, the public is likely to pick up the tab. There are almost no examples of private arena or stadium owners paying for public transportation and infrastructure improvements or services — most infamously, the Washington Nationals owner has repeatedly refused to pay for extended Metro service to get fans home after playoff games — even if it only serves their building. Matheson notes that though the state of Massachusetts refused to subsidize construction of the New England Patriots' Gillette Stadium in Foxboro, it agreed to fund about \$70 million in infrastructure improvements to help fans get to and from the stadium on game day — even though the new stadium was next door to the old one.

That being said, Matheson adds, even the most stalwart opponents to publicly funded sports stadiums — a group of which he considers himself a part — would concede that infrastructure is a core government function. Getting people where they need to go is what the government is supposed to do. But when "people" means "customers," and "where they need to go" is "a wealthy conglomerate's real estate development project," it's less clear the government is providing a needed civil service rather than subsidizing a private enterprise. After all, I don't think my block association would get very far demanding more 5 train service.

In better times, this would be an academic argument that could be cheerfully waved off as a rounding error. But when the transit authority is turning to its budget reserves to fund subway crisis repairs and spends 17 percent of its budget to pay down debt, it's worrisome to be handing three local sports ownership groups a blank check for full-time rail service to their door.

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## BELMONT PARK PREPARED SCOPING REMARKS

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### Getting LIRR to Isles Arena Could Require Bending Space-Time

**Running direct service from Long Island to Belmont Park would be like doing a three-point turn in the middle of a highway, but with a train**

by AARON GORDON

January 30, 2018 The MTA is finally acknowledging what anyone with Google Maps can see for themselves: The massive Belmont Park redevelopment project and future home of the New York Islanders cannot easily accommodate frequent train service from Long Island.

Last month, Governor Cuomo and a gaggle from the Long Island business and real estate community held a triumphant press conference proclaiming the pending return of the Islanders to Long Island after two-plus seasons in Brooklyn. Specifically, the announcement proclaimed that the bidding group that included the Islanders' owners had won the rights to develop land adjacent to Belmont Park, just east of the Queens-Nassau border, with an 18,000-seat arena, retail space, a movie theater, and a hotel.

At the time, Cuomo's office issued a press release stating that as part of the deal, the MTA had committed to "developing a plan to expand LIRR service to Belmont Park Station for events year-round," but offered nothing in the way of detail.

Currently, Belmont Park is served by a short one-stop spur off the LIRR's Hempstead branch that only sees trains on event days. And trains only run to and from Jamaica station, meaning riders coming from points east — such as anywhere in Long Island, where Islanders fans are most likely to come from — have to transfer at Jamaica before doubling back on a shuttle to Belmont.

This wasn't good enough for Islanders co-owner Jon Ledecky. Earlier this month, he spelled out that LIRR service should not merely be on event dates, but year-round and with regular service. He considers mass transit service to Belmont "a vital part of the community, not just when there is horse racing and not just when there is a concert or a game. All the time." Politicians agreed, with Rep. Todd Kaminsky tweeting, "A full time LIRR station at Belmont w/ expanded service is key for Belmont community & to reduce Isles traffic," while New York City Council representative Barry Grodenchik echoed his concerns: "Any expansion at #Belmontpark must be accompanied by a serious expansion of @LIRR service for residents on both sides of #Queens #Nassau border."

But, as I wrote for this website shortly after the project's unveiling, the MTA had no estimate of what that would cost. And now, it turns out that with the LIRR tracks configured as they are, full-time service to and from Long Island may not be possible at all.

The first hint of trouble came at last week's MTA hearing, when chair Joe Lhota said he was "concerned" about the LIRR service expansion for two reasons. First, the LIRR main line, which runs parallel to the Hempstead branch at this part of the network, is already at capacity during rush hour, when most Islanders games would be played. The second reason, though, is that the track design itself prevents Belmont Park from acting as a normal train station.

## BELMONT PARK PREPARED SCOPING REMARKS

The Belmont Park spur, says David Clarke, the director of the Center for Transportation Research at University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is what's called a "Y" connection because of the track design:

Currently, the tracks are set up only for use of the left-hand, western side of the Y, allowing trains to run to and from Jamaica. A series of switches allow trains on that side of the Y connection to get to whatever track they need. And since the trains can wait on the Belmont spur until the coast is clear and switches are enabled, service isn't disrupted.

Recent satellite images show that the right side of the Y connection, the one that could provide easy access to the Hempstead line going towards Long Island, is not in service. (It appears to be used as rail car storage.) So at least one necessary upgrade requires getting that other half of the connection into working order.

But even then, Belmont will have service in only one direction: from the city to Belmont, and from Belmont to Long Island. How can the LIRR provide service going to the arena from Long Island, as most Islanders fans will want, which doesn't require a transfer at Jamaica?

Currently, Clarke says, there are no switches east of Belmont that allow trains to navigate the tracks in such a way that allow them to get to Belmont. The only option using existing infrastructure would be, as Clarke put it, to "zigzag": overshoot the Y connection by a few hundred feet and then reverse across the switches to get to the Belmont spur. It would be like a three-point turn in the middle of a highway, but for a train. For this reason, Clarke added, "they probably wouldn't want to do that, especially if this is a really busy corridor."

The only solution, then, would be to build switches on the Long Island side of the Y connection. But this isn't as easy as it sounds. First of all, switches can't be installed just east of the Y connection because the tracks cross over the Cross Island Parkway there, and according to Clarke it's not good practice to build switches on bridges. And the farther east from the Y connection you put the switches, the dicier it gets, because it means more time the train is running westbound on eastbound tracks.

Moreover, there isn't very much space around these tracks for installing necessary infrastructure like control towers and power boxes to operate the switches. Plus, because the LIRR is a commuter rail line, the switches would have to be incorporated into the system's developing positive train control technology, which the LIRR is already way behind on installing.

Clarke estimated the cost for these switches is "not the kind of thing that's trivial as an investment." He estimated a price tag of several million dollars just to purchase the switches for crossing over from one track to the other.

Assuming the LIRR doesn't want to undertake this project, either due to the cost or the complexity of operating this service, there's still the option of running trains in one direction.

But another problem with that plan relates to the switch issue above. The eastbound tracks off the Y connection lead onto the Hempstead branch, a fairly minor line that splits off to the east; there's no easy way to get trains onto the tracks that lead to the main line serving the rest of Long Island. The only two stops before the split, Bellerose and Floral Park, are not serviced by main line trains. Bellerose cannot act as a transfer point because it doesn't even have a platform for the main line. Floral Park could, in theory, act as a transfer point, but it would need to be renovated to handle the crowds and the LIRR schedule would have to be adjusted. Absent that, there are two potential solutions to allow trains leaving Belmont to run on the main line to the rest of Long Island, and they're going to sound familiar: the zigzag maneuver or new switches.

## BELMONT PARK PREPARED SCOPING REMARKS

Even if the LIRR could enact any of these solutions, it's not clear they're much of an improvement over the current state of service at Belmont. Almost everyone would still have to transfer, and at a much less convenient location. At least Jamaica is already a major transfer hub where passengers can access the entire LIRR system, not to mention the J and E subway lines.

Certainly, Islanders fans anticipating one-seat train service (as they've had for the games at the Barclays Center) might be disappointed, but they'll have plenty of time to adjust. Over the next three years, the Islanders will play 60 home games at Nassau Coliseum, a refurbished version of the arena they abandoned to play at Barclays in the first place, which requires a bus or taxi to access from the nearest LIRR station. And while Belmont LIRR service is likely to be inconvenient, it's hard to imagine the Islanders' owners willing to make enough of a stink about it to jeopardize the entire project. The LIRR has more important priorities.

"Nothing's impossible," Clarke concluded about full-time LIRR service at Belmont. "If there's enough demand they can probably do it, but if they're just trying to do it for convenience of a few people riding to get to the stadium ... I would bet it's not the kind of thing they're going to be real enthusiastic about doing."