

Outline of Presentation by Frank Gunther, Belmont Task Force Member at Village Board/Belmont Task Force Information Session, Jan 3, 2019

Belmont Development: Notes for Jan 3, 2019 Village presentation

Transportation Chapter 11 and Mitigation Chapter 17

"Identifies the potential significant adverse impacts of the Proposed Project on specific components of the local street and highway networks, utilization of public transportation services..., the adequacy of parking to be provided...and vehicular and pedestrian intersections to be analyzed" (page 11-1)

TRANSPORTATION

STREET NETWORK

Addresses 38 traffic artery intersections located within a ¼ or ½ mile radius from project site (*Village had pushed for a larger radius*).

- In Floral Park: only along Plainfield Ave (6) and Jericho Tpke. (2). (page 11-11&12)
- "In each of the traffic peak hours, there are individual traffic movements at specific intersections that currently operate at unacceptable level of service..." (page 11-21)
- Cross Island Pkwy (part of 37 highway segments)

TRAVEL DEMAND

"Driving by auto is expected to be the primary travel mode for arena patrons, with 83 and 88 percent of arena patrons arriving by auto for weekday and Saturday hockey games respectively." *LIRR marginal at best.* (page 11-4)

TRIP GENERATION

- The DEIS identifies five potential peak periods for analysis: Weekday AM, Weekday pre event, Saturday mid-day, Saturday pre-event and Saturday post event. However, the DEIS does not study weekday evening 5:00 – 6:00 PM commuter peak hour which is necessary for this type of study (*a gap in the study that should address the projected 25% of arena patrons arriving prior to 7:00 PM*).
- The DEIS projects only 3% to 5% of the total site traffic will utilize local roadways in spite of the fact that the CIP is projected to be significantly over capacity. The local analysis must address trips that will divert off the CIP and use local streets due to the unmitigated congestion on the CIP. *Need a travel demand model to identify credible diversion percentages and routes.*
- The DEIS identifies sections of the CIP that are above capacity with the proposed development. Pages 11-77 and 11-80 indicate that 2,834 vehicles are unserved during evening peak (*coincidental with the missing portion of the traffic study of local streets*) which is approx. 67% of total new trips and 2,595 vehicles during Saturday PM peak (59% of total new trips). The DEIS states "unserved vehicles would be processed outside the peak hour and would result in additional congestion on the CIP. The DEIS does not propose improvements to the CIP to mitigate additional congestion, nor does it consider the traffic associated with the site will divert to local roadways to avoid CIP congestion. *This is a major deficiency in the analysis provided.*
- In spite of what would seem to be voluminous appendices, there is a lack of substantiating data for the Traffic Count studies referenced in the DEIS: copies of traffic counts conducted (incl. dates and times and capacity analysis). *In other words there is insufficient information to validate the conclusions.*

SITE ACCESS AND EGRESS

(page 11-55 to 58)

- “Vehicular access...via 2 entrances on Hempstead Tpke. (Gates 5 and 14) and 3 interchanges on the Cross Island Parkway (Exits 26A, 26 B/C and 26D).
- The entrances to Belmont Park at Plainfield Avenue (Gate 8) and Mayfair Avenue (Gate 9) are not proposed to be used for vehicular or pedestrian access to the Proposed Project.
- A two lane, one-way perimeter road would be provided around the North Lot, providing access for autos, shuttle buses, and rider share vehicles. .. ***(Note buses and parking along Plainfield Ave opposite FPM).***
- Access to the East Lot (*at the Training Track alongside Plainfield Avenue*) for autos and shuttle buses would be provided by Gate 5 Road which includes an underpass under the training track...

TRAFFIC VOLUMES

(page 11-21)

- “...certain routes in the vicinity of the traffic study area may be susceptible to traffic diversions by drivers using mobile navigation apps with real-time traffic data to avoid congestion, or by other motorists with a high degree of familiarity with the local street network.” ***(Acknowledges but does not quantify traffic thru our local streets).***
(page 11-71)
- “The Proposed Project would result in increased traffic volumes and delays at intersection movements in the local street network ... and could possibly slow down emergency vehicle response times. However, with the proposed mitigation measures described in Chapter 17, Mitigation, project-generated traffic volumes are not expected to significantly affect emergency vehicle response times”. ***(How can we be sure?)***

PARKING

(page 11-2)

- A total of 8,252 parking spaces proposed, including racetrack spaces, compared to 9,919 existing spaces (Table 11-38) - a net loss of 1,667 spaces.
- The DEIS identifies that only 2,030 spaces are required for races. (i.e. only 20% of the existing property supply)
- Maximum Parking demand projected for the proposed development at 7,541 spaces of which 6,312 would be located at the north and east lots.
- There is a discrepancy between the numbers used in the parking calculations and trip calculations.
- The North, South and East Lots would be paved and restriped to maximize the number of spaces that can be accommodated.
- Parking spaces for coach buses would be provided within the East Lot.
- During times when the North and East Lots are used, shuttle bus service would be provided between these parking lots and the Project Sites.
- During the Saturday midday peak travel hour, the new parking beneath the retail village would not be able to accommodate all of its projected demand. Therefore, a portion of the auto trips for the retail village were assigned to the East Lot. ***(This tells us that the retail component requires parking at the North and East lots).***

POTENTIAL FOR PARKING IN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

(page 11-91 & 92)

- “... there is a possibility that some arena attendees may attempt to park for free in the surrounding neighborhoods, such as the West End of Floral Park. The Mayfair Ave Gate (Gate 9) would be enhanced or staffed with a security guard close to the pedestrian entrance during arena events and prevent arena patrons from parking in the West End of Floral Park and walking in the North Lot to catch a shuttle bus to the arena. Should parking in residential neighborhoods occur, potential mitigation measures that could be addressed are discussed in Chapter 17.”
- The TMP suggests NYAP would coordinate with local stakeholders, including local municipalities. Potential mitigation measures including strict enforcement of existing parking regulations by ticketing and/or towing or by implementing new parking regulations... ***(Kicking the solution down the road)***

LIRR

- No LIRR direct route for those coming from the east: change at Jamaica and return ***(LIRR will not be used by fans coming from the east –who could de-train at FP or Bellerose stations and then travel thru our community to Belmont)***

- “On days with scheduled events at the proposed arena... 2 round trip trains between Jamaica Station and Belmont Park Station with eastbound trains arriving at Belmont prior to the start of the event and westbound trains departing from Belmont following the conclusion of the event.”

MITIGATION

(Chapter 17)

Introduction

- Many of the CIP highway segments operate at congested or near-congested conditions in at least one direction during peak periods under existing conditions.
- Even with the proposed series of transportation demand management measures in place, it is expected that there would still be some highway segments where the TMP would not be sufficient to fully mitigate significant adverse traffic impacts. However... the TMP would, if necessary, be refined during the proposed project’s operations as real time information becomes available.
- Potential for Traffic Diversions:
 - “certain routes in the vicinity of the traffic study area may be susceptible to traffic diversions by drivers using mobile navigation apps with real time data to avoid congestion, or by other motorists with a high degree of familiarity with the local street network.” ***(Acknowledgement that Floral Park will have problems; but does not provide a solution until it is realized after the fact.)***

Mitigation

- The DEIS identifies locations in which mitigation is proposed:
 - Almost all of this mitigation is minor timing changes to existing traffic signals.
 - It calls for the implementation of standard traffic engineering improvements (e.g. signals, traffic enforcement agents before or after events, turn prohibitions, geometric improvements to intersections (e.g. re-striping, new lane designations, etc).
 - This mitigation is based on the assumption identified above that only 3% to 5% of the vehicles will access the site from the local street network. ***This is inaccurate. The mitigation plan will need to be revised once an appropriate amount of traffic is assigned to the local street network, including identifying where physical improvements are required.***

Transportation Management Plan

- The DEIS also discusses a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) as a way to mitigate potential impacts.
 - Transportation demand measures (e.g. carpooling and incentives to use mass transit)
 - Operational strategies (e.g. management of parking facility utilization and communication of event day transportation conditions). The goal is to reduce volume of project-generated traffic and redistributing traffic away from peak arrival and departure hours.
 - ***Who has control over the TMP? How would it be enforced?***
- A TMP cannot be used as an excuse to avoid proposing concrete measures to mitigate significant and severe adverse traffic impacts. For example, the DEIS states that the TMP advise “background traffic...to avoid using the Cross Island Parkway near Belmont Park” (page 17-4). This is not a mitigation measure; it’s a promise to provide post-construction operations advice that, if heeded, would dump thousands of vehicles onto local roads, in complete contradictions to what is assumed in the DEIS. ***The DEIS’s vague discussion of a TMP does not provide any substantive mitigation to address this diverted traffic; it actually ensures that local roads will be inundated with excessive traffic.***
- ***The TMP also identifies a traffic monitoring program which would be conducted after the project is constructed and occupied to identify potential impacts and address them accordingly. While continued monitoring of traffic conditions around the proposed project is beneficial, deferring identification of mitigation improvements until after the***

construction of the project is contrary to the purpose of the EIS process. Physical improvements can take years to progress through design, property acquisition, and construction, during which time the impacts go unmitigated. Impacts associated with the proposed development must be identified prior to the construction of the project and mitigation measures implemented prior to opening of the project.