

The background image is a photograph of a railroad crossing, featuring a 'RAILROAD CROSSING' sign and a '200' advance warning sign. In the foreground, there are large, black, circular crossing lights. In the background, a train is visible on the tracks, and a multi-story building is partially obscured by trees. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent green overlay.

# Long Island Rail Road Expansion Project Floral Park to Hicksville

## Final SEQRA Scoping Document

August 26, 2016

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## **FOREWORD**

This is the Final Scoping Document for the Long Island Rail Road Expansion Project, setting forth:

- A description of the Proposed Project, including Purpose and Need
- A preliminary identification of the Proposed Project's potential significant adverse impacts to be studied and assessed in the Project's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
- The methodology to be used and the data to be reviewed in assessing potential impacts in the DEIS
- Alternatives to be considered
- Potential mitigation measures to be considered
- A summary of prominent issues raised during the public scoping process

This is a new project. In total contrast to the now-dead previous proposal for a third track, the Project, proposed by Governor Andrew Cuomo in January 2016, eliminates the need for any residential property acquisitions and will include modifications to all seven grade crossings in the heavily traversed 9.8-mile corridor of the Main Line from Floral Park to Hicksville.

In accordance with Governor Cuomo's directive that LIRR engage in unprecedented public outreach, a total of six public meetings were held at four different locations to address the Draft Scoping Document and approximately 1,200 people attended those meetings.

The public comment period was open through June 13, 2016, and more than 750 individuals and entities submitted comments or questions.

In response to those comments on the Draft Scoping Document, the LIRR has incorporated and revised its Final Scoping Document, specifically adding:

- Additional information describing the Proposed Project, including a new table containing further information on the various components of the Proposed Project, a figure showing the locations of the grade crossings to be eliminated along with updated renderings of the proposed grade crossings; and illustrations of a typical installation of a retaining wall;
- Additional data setting out the framework for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and supporting the Purpose and Need for the Proposed Project, including Long Island population and employment and LIRR ridership projections;
- Additional figures setting out the details of the proposed environmental review, including details on the location of noise monitoring locations, land use and community resources in the Study Area, and traffic analysis locations;
- Clarifications and revisions to technical analysis sections, including:
  - confirmation that potential impacts to emergency response services will be assessed;



- confirmation that the DEIS will contain a description of chemicals that LIRR uses to maintain its right-of-way;
- the addition of a new intersection to be studied as part of the traffic analysis;
- a commitment to describing options for providing parking within the Project Corridor;
- confirmation that impacts related to particulate matter from trains will be assessed.
- Enhanced description of alternatives to the Proposed Project set forth in the Draft Scoping Document, and the identification of additional alternatives and design options;
- An updated summary of LIRR’s public outreach efforts; and
- A summary of comments received on the draft Scoping Document and responses (see Appendix B).

The DEIS will contain a full statement and description of the Proposed Project, its Purpose and Need, and a complete analysis of its potential significant adverse environmental impacts as outlined herein.

## **A. INTRODUCTION/PROJECT SUMMARY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s (MTA) Long Island Rail Road (MTA LIRR or LIRR) is proposing the Main Line Expansion Project from Floral Park to Hicksville (the “Proposed Project” or “LIRR Expansion Project”). The Proposed Project is a key element of Governor Andrew Cuomo’s transportation infrastructure initiatives and is a strategic component of a comprehensive plan to transform and expand New York’s vital regional transportation infrastructure and to enhance Long Island’s economy, environment, and future. The Proposed Project extends approximately 9.8 miles between the Floral Park and Hicksville stations, where five branches converge carrying 41 percent of LIRR’s daily ridership. The addition of a third track would increase track capacity through the corridor making it easier to run trains. This would improve service reliability and make transit more attractive, with the further goal of getting travelers out of cars, reducing traffic congestion, and reducing adverse environmental impacts.

This 9.8 mile stretch also includes seven street-level train crossings (“grade crossings”) where road traffic must stop each time a train passes. Eliminating these grade crossings through grade separation (e.g., underpasses) or potentially, in one or two cases, closure (with consideration of public input), is anticipated to substantially reduce noise, traffic congestion, delays, and air pollution, and greatly improve safety for residents, motorists, and pedestrians.

The LIRR Expansion Project represents a fresh approach to bringing the third track to fruition. Governor Cuomo has said that this project will set the standard for positive community engagement, with outreach being modeled on the successful efforts he ordered as part of the replacement for the Tappan Zee Bridge. While prior third track proposals required extensive property acquisitions to accommodate a widened right-of-way, by contrast, the Proposed Project would install a third track within the existing LIRR right-of-way. This approach to the construction of the third track within the existing LIRR right-of-way completely eliminates the need for any residential takings. Furthermore, grade crossing separation would be completed using an expedited design-build approach to shorten the construction period and avoid the need to build diversion roads, as had been contemplated in prior proposals. This new approach would

dramatically reduce the need for property acquisitions (with a goal of fewer than 10 full commercial property acquisitions and with the further goal of relocating affected businesses with State assistance in the same communities) and would seek to build community consensus around proposed grade separation options.

The Proposed Project includes the following major components: installation of a third track within the existing LIRR right-of-way; elimination of all seven grade crossings along the affected Main Line corridor; various station improvements and modifications; and other related railroad infrastructure improvements. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared for the Proposed Project in accordance with the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). MTA LIRR is the lead state agency for SEQRA. The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) is an involved agency for approval of the work associated with the elimination of the grade crossings. If approved, the project is expected to begin construction in 2017 with the goal of completing it by approximately 2020 or earlier depending upon private construction company responses to a competitive design-build contract procurement that will consider an expedited construction schedule as one criterion.

## BACKGROUND

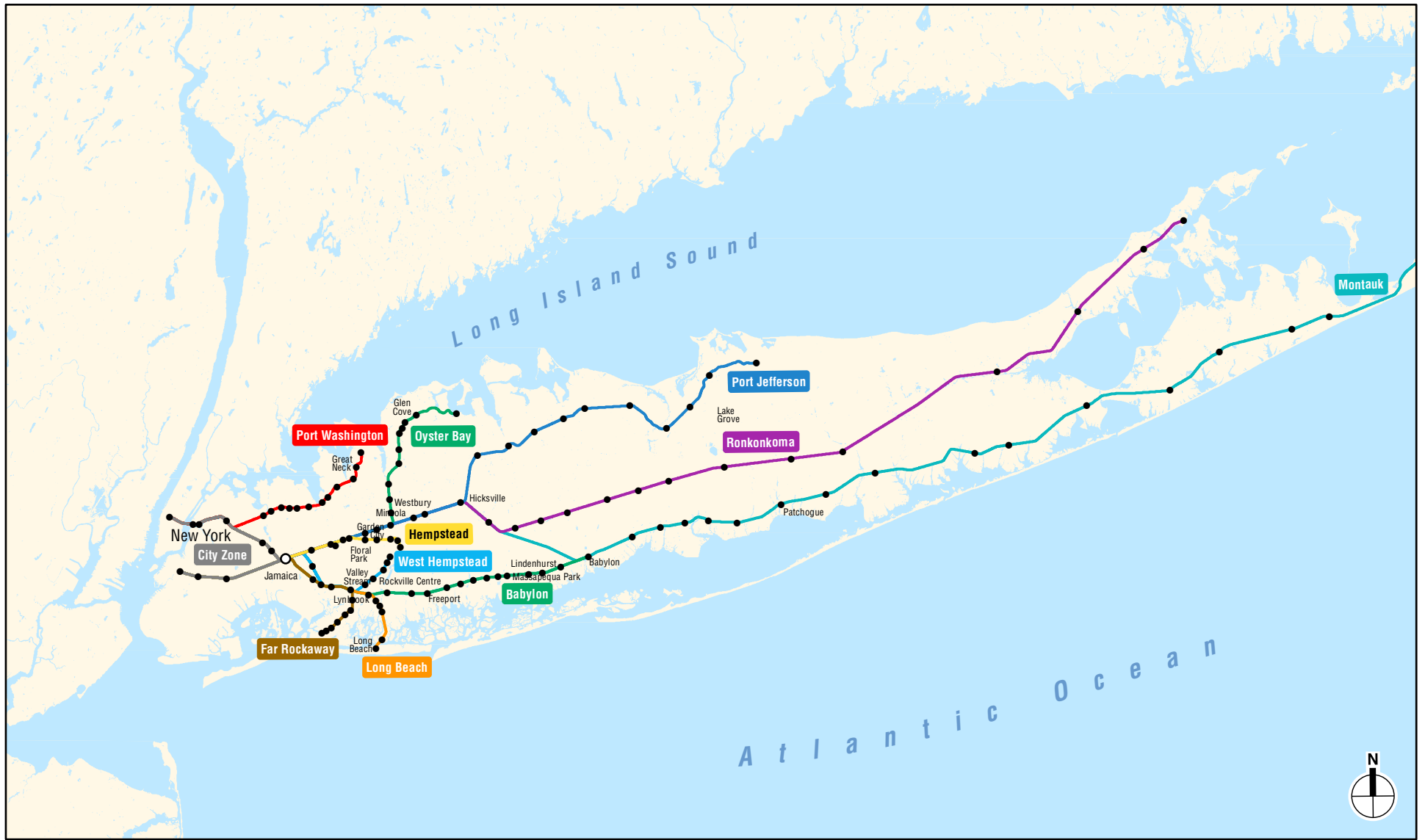
The MTA is North America's largest transportation network, serving a population of 15.2 million people in a 5,000-square-mile area that extends from New York City to Long Island, the southeastern portion of New York State, and Connecticut. The MTA is a public-benefit corporation with five operating agencies—MTA New York City Transit, MTA Metro-North Railroad, MTA Bus Company, MTA Bridges and Tunnels, and MTA LIRR. MTA LIRR was founded in 1834. It is the busiest commuter railroad in North America, currently carrying approximately 304,000 customers each weekday on approximately 750 daily trains. The MTA LIRR system comprises over 700 miles of track on eleven different branches (see **Figure 1**). It extends 120 miles from Montauk, Long Island to Pennsylvania Station in Manhattan. MTA LIRR serves 124 stations in Nassau, Suffolk, Queens, Brooklyn, and Manhattan, providing service to over 87 million customers each year.

The LIRR's Main Line serves as the central artery of the commuter rail system in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. At various points east of Jamaica, five LIRR branches split off from the Main Line—the Hempstead, Oyster Bay, Port Jefferson, Ronkonkoma, and Montauk Branches. The number of tracks along the Main Line corridor varies: it primarily has four tracks west of Floral Park, but narrows to two tracks east of Floral Park through to Hicksville. The Main Line is also used by the New York & Atlantic Railway for freight service.

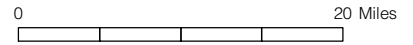
## PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

The Proposed Project addresses the heavily utilized two-track Main Line segment between Floral Park and Hicksville (see **Figure 2**). This busy portion of the Main Line services the Hempstead, Ronkonkoma, and Port Jefferson Branches; some Montauk Branch trains; and all Oyster Bay Branch trains. This approximately 9.8-mile segment services approximately 107,000 riders on an average weekday. This two track portion of the corridor is problematic for several reasons, including:

- Severe congestion during peak periods

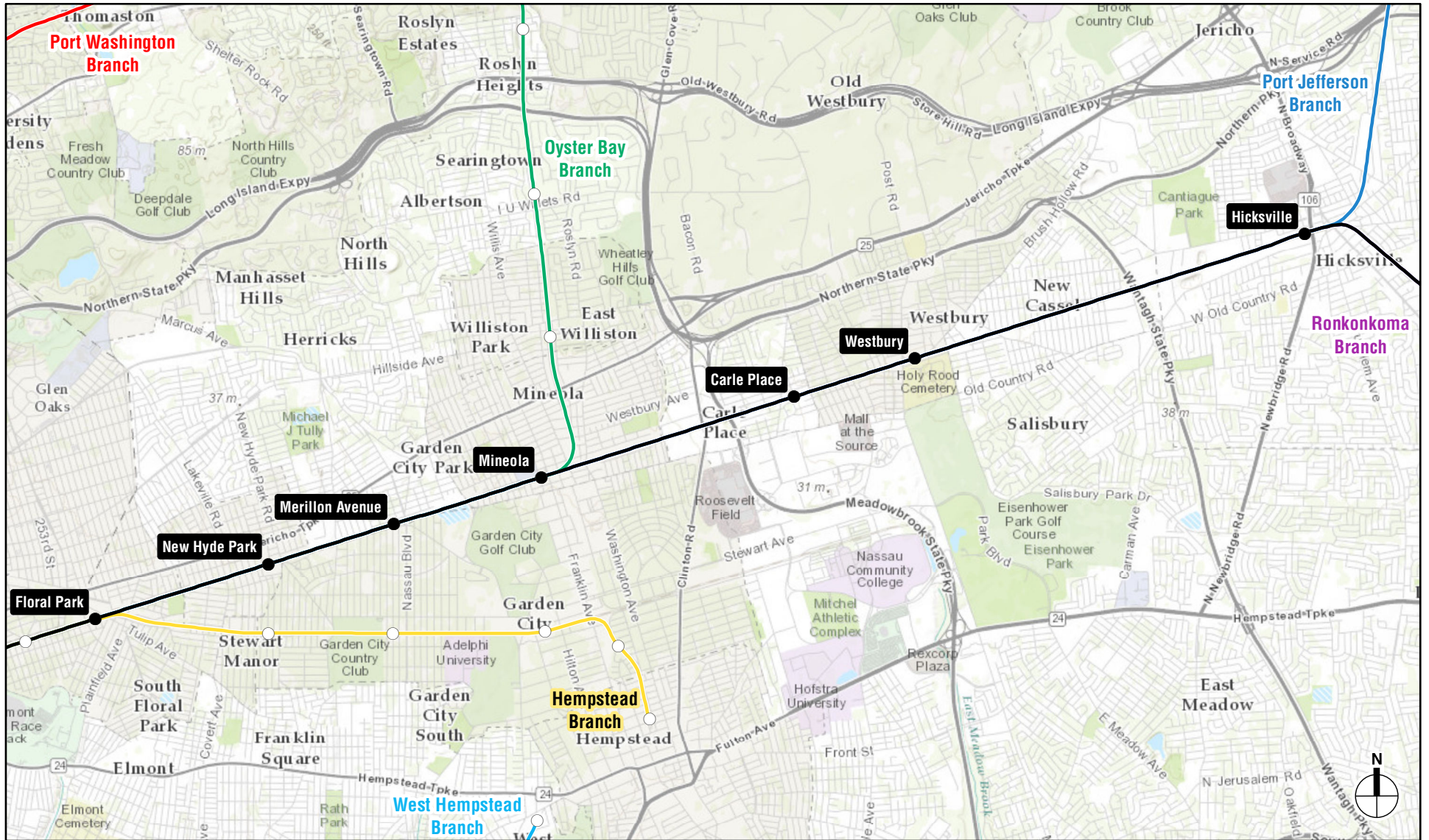


- Branch
- Station



**LIRR Expansion Project  
Floral Park to Hicksville**

Long Island Rail Road System  
**Figure 1**



— LIRR Main Line  
 ● LIRR Station

**LIRR Expansion Project  
 Floral Park to Hicksville**

**Project Area  
 Figure 2**



- Frequent delays with rippling effects to other branches due to bottlenecks caused by emergency repair, a disabled train or other disruptions that would not allow trains to bypass during peak periods
- Insufficient track capacity to operate both eastbound and westbound service during peak periods
- Safety concerns related to railroad traffic, roadway traffic, and pedestrians at grade crossings
- Traffic delays due to grade crossings

#### *CONGESTION AND DELAYS ALONG EXISTING LIRR MAIN LINE*

The existing LIRR Main Line segment between Floral Park and Hicksville comprises two tracks, and currently serves more than 220 trains on a typical weekday. Given the volume of train traffic along this Main Line segment, it frequently becomes congested during a normal rush hour. Moreover, in the event of a bottleneck caused by an emergency repair or disabled train, conditions can range from severely constrained to immobilized, creating significant delays. Also, due to the heavy train volumes and the two-track configuration, the LIRR has very few options to route service around a disabled train or track outage, compounding delays and affecting thousands of train riders. **Figure 3** illustrates the conditions that create the bottleneck on the Main Line.

As will be discussed in the DEIS, the LIRR is projecting a substantial increase in service to Manhattan without the Proposed Project by the year 2040. The East Side Access project includes a new LIRR terminal in Manhattan that allows a 60 percent increase in AM peak capacity, thereby enabling the system to increase the number of trains run during peak periods. Ridership projections show: regional ridership growth; an increased need for reverse peak and intra-island service opportunities; and planned future service growth to Manhattan terminals. Due to these improvements and background growth, LIRR has estimated that the number of peak period customer trips on the Main Line in the project corridor will increase by 6.9 percent westbound and 8.4 percent eastbound by 2020. From 2020 to 2023, LIRR has estimated an increase of 22.2 percent primarily as a result from the opening of the new East Side Access terminal in 2023. Ridership is projected to increase by 65.4 percent westbound and 76.2 percent eastbound by 2040 (ridership data and projections will be included in the DEIS).<sup>1</sup> Without the third track, the existing bottleneck coupled with the additional ridership and additional train service to Manhattan terminals, will result in increased congestion, delays, and resulting passenger crowding, as well as additional gate-down time at grade crossings in the future. Further, the inability of the system to run reverse direction trains (operating reverse from the peak direction) during the peak period (see below) would continue. The Proposed Project would alleviate these problems.

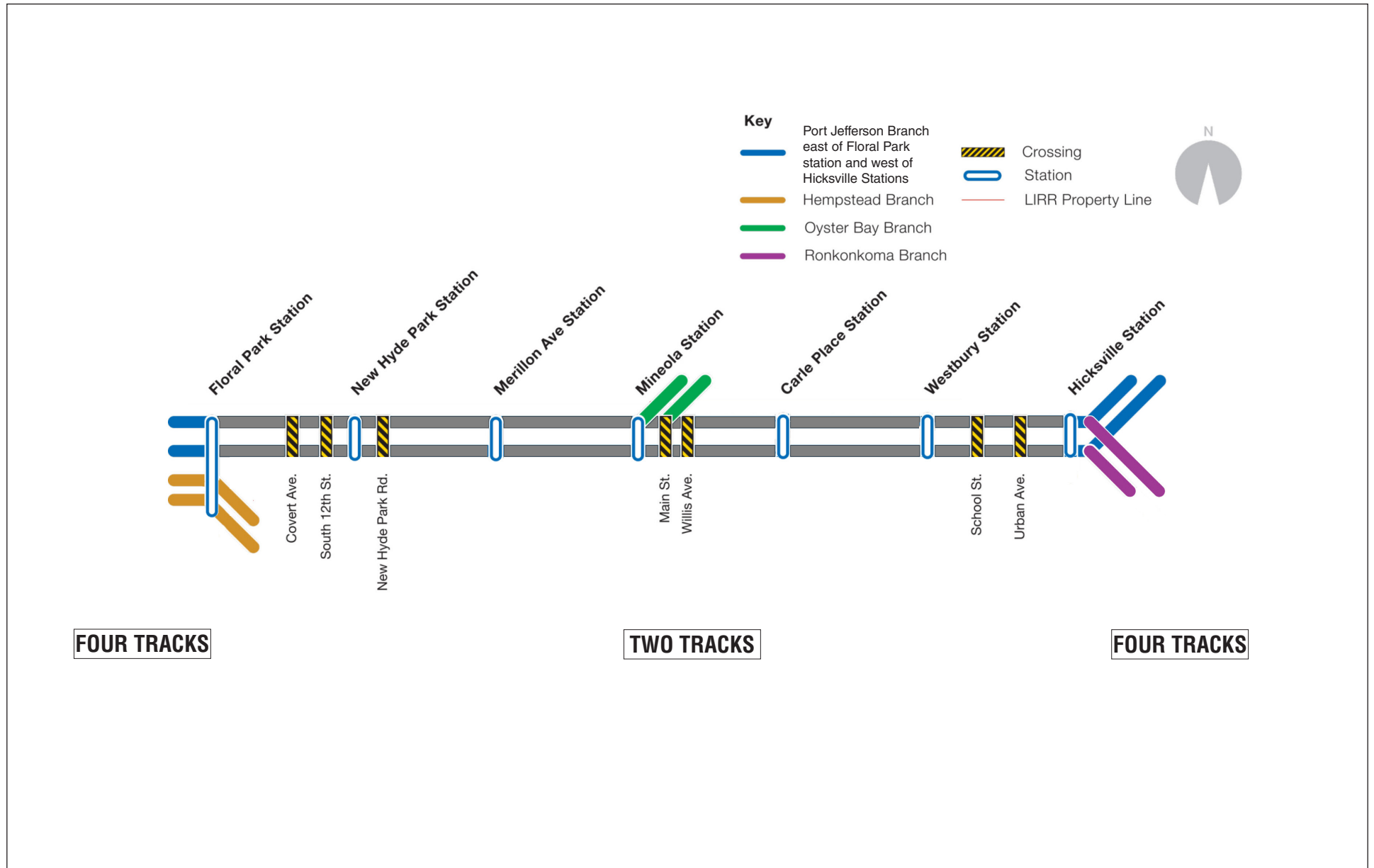
#### *INTRA-ISLAND, REVERSE PEAK, AND REVERSE DIRECTION SERVICE LIMITATIONS*

In addition to operational constraints, the two-track Main Line limits LIRR's ability to offer a broader range of services. The heavy demand for directional peak-period service (Manhattan-bound service in the morning rush hours and Long Island-bound service in the evening rush

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<sup>1</sup> According to the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), the population on Long Island (Nassau County and Suffolk County) is expected to grow from approximately 2,856,200 people in 2015 to 2,868,500 by 2020 and 3,195,800 by 2040, an ultimate population increase of nearly 12 percent. NYMTC's data supports LIRR's general projections of increased ridership.





hours) requires full use of both tracks and restricts other services such as intra-island service; and reverse direction travel. The use of both tracks in the peak direction and no reverse service during peak periods is referred to as “2 and 0 operation.” The result is no eastbound service for one and a half hours in the morning peak period and no westbound service for one hour in the evening peak period. Nassau County residents who want to travel by train east in the AM peak period to their jobs or schools to the east cannot do so. Suffolk County residents who want to travel by train west, including to New York City, in the PM peak period, likewise cannot do so. Because several large and many smaller employers are located on Long Island—which draw employees and visitors from the wider New York City metropolitan region—and because of increasing demand for service into New York City during evening hours, LIRR anticipates increasing demand for intra-island travel and reverse peak travel—consistent with NYMTC projections for employment in Nassau and Suffolk counties.<sup>2</sup> The current Main Line configuration cannot support intra-island travel and reverse peak travel during critical times of the day.

#### *GRADE CROSSINGS*

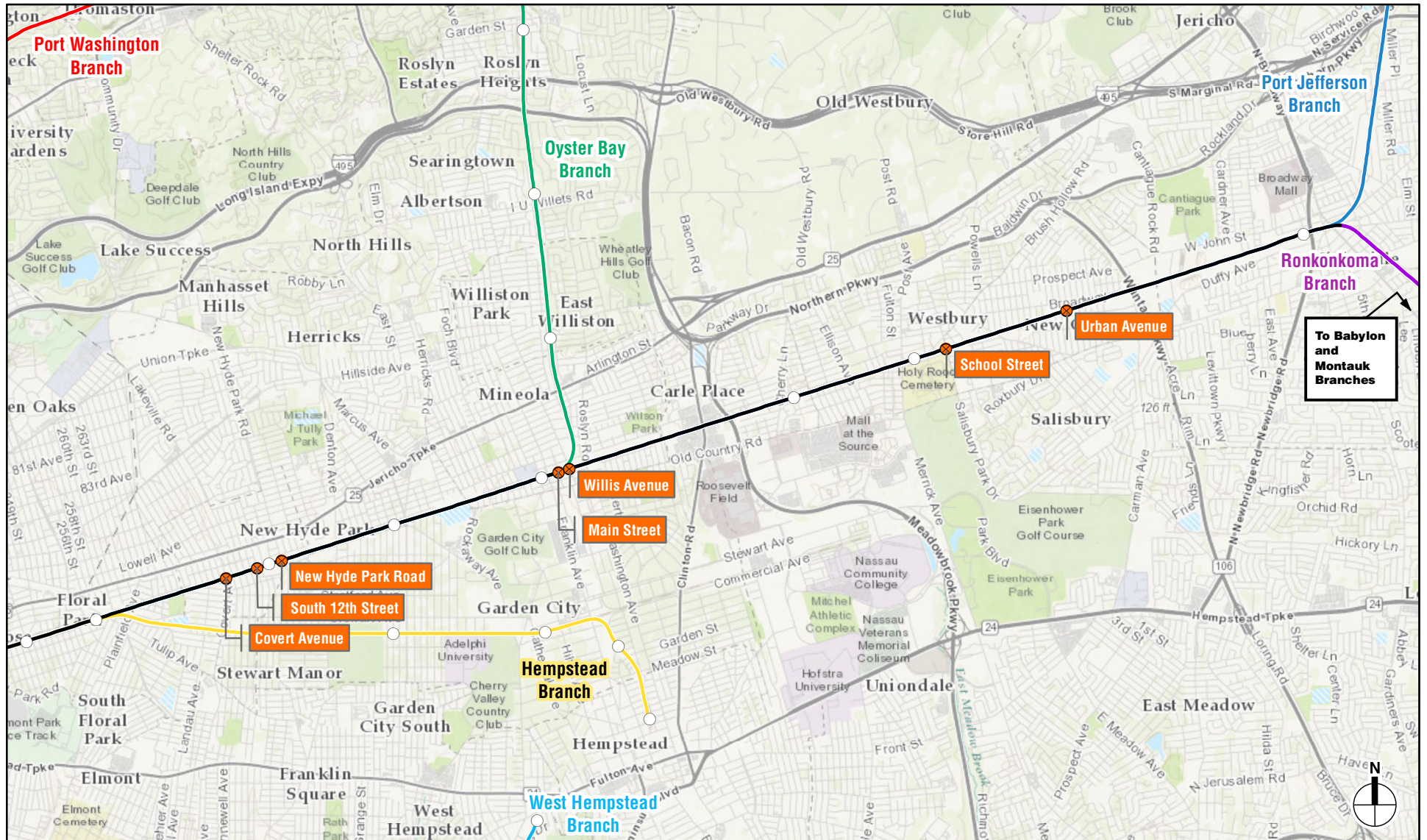
Along the LIRR Main Line segment between Floral Park and Hicksville are seven locations where the east-west rail line crosses the street bed of a north-south vehicular roadway (see **Figure 4**). These locations are as follows:

- New Hyde Park/Garden City
  - Covert Avenue
  - South 12th Street
  - New Hyde Park Road
- Mineola
  - Main Street
  - Willis Avenue
- Westbury/New Cassel
  - School Street
  - Urban Avenue

Grade crossings adversely impact traffic and train operations, neighborhood quality-of-life, as well as vehicle, pedestrian and bicyclist safety. Under normal conditions grade crossings add automobile traffic congestion due to gate-down time. When incidents occur at or near grade crossings that affect operation of gates and/or bells, grade crossings also can slow train travel because trains must approach the grade crossing at a reduced speed. In addition, train horns that must be blown at grade crossings, and bells that ring when gates are down create noise in the adjacent communities. They also increase risk to pedestrian, bicycle and automobile safety. Grade crossings also raise safety concerns related to response times for emergency vehicles that may need to cross the tracks.

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<sup>2</sup> According to NYMTC, the employment on Long Island (Nassau County and Suffolk County) is expected to increase from approximately 1,304,900 jobs in 2015 to 1,343,800 by 2020 and 1,440,400 by 2040, an ultimate increase of 135,500 jobs. NYMTC’s data support LIRR’s general projections of increased intra-island, reverse peak, and reverse direction service demand.



- X Grade Crossings
 — Hempstead
 — Port Washington
- Station
 — Oyster Bay
 — Ronkonkoma
- LIRR Main Line
 — Port Jefferson
 — West Hempstead

0 2 Miles

Accordingly, the desired option from a safety, quality-of-life, and traffic flow standpoint is to eliminate the grade crossings through grade-separating the two modes of transportation (e.g., building a roadway underpass) or potentially, in one or two cases with consideration of public input, closure of the grade crossing.

### *PROJECT PURPOSE*

The primary purpose of the LIRR Expansion Project is to improve rail service, reliability, and public safety along the LIRR Main Line segment between Floral Park and Hicksville by constructing a third track and by eliminating grade crossings. The goals and objectives of the Proposed Project are as follows:

- Reduce delays to commuters from Main Line congestion and rippling effects
  - Improve on-time performance on all branches
  - Add resiliency and accelerate recovery time from unplanned service disruptions
  - Reduce train delays due to roadway incidents or accidents near grade crossings
- Add operational flexibility eastbound and westbound
  - Improve mobility with additional intra-island service
  - Improve mobility with additional reverse peak service
  - Facilitate scheduled and unscheduled maintenance
- Provide additional track capacity to accommodate projected system-wide service growth
- Improve public safety and roadway conditions
  - Eliminate Main Line grade crossings
  - Enhance north-south vehicular and pedestrian connectivity in communities along the Main Line
  - Reduce traffic delays due to grade crossings
- Reduce noise and improve neighborhood quality-of-life
  - Reduce noise from train horns
  - Reduce noise from crossing-gate warning bells

### **PLANNING CONTEXT AND PROJECT HISTORY**

Separate from the Proposed Project, LIRR is moving forward with the following regional transportation projects and plans:

- East Side Access
- Double Track Project from Farmingdale to Ronkonkoma
- Jamaica Capacity Improvements Project, which streamlines the Jamaica track layout, while upgrading and modernizing the switch and signal system, (including installation of higher-speed switches)
- Expansion of the electric car storage yard in Ronkonkoma
- The addition of pocket tracks along the Port Washington and Babylon Branches
- Huntington/Port Jefferson Branch yard site selection, preliminary design and environmental review

- Hicksville North Siding
- Post Avenue Railroad Bridge

These present and future projects, independent of the third track, would not individually or collectively satisfy the Purpose and Need for the Proposed Project because they would not eliminate the bottleneck along the Main Line (See Figure 3), and thus would not reduce congestion and delays along the Main Line corridor and branches that feed into the Main Line corridor. Nor would these projects add operational flexibility within the 9.8 mile Project Corridor, particularly for bi-directional travel at peak times. The projects also do not optimize projected system-wide growth, and would not improve safety through grade crossing elimination within the 9.8-mile Project Corridor.

Beginning in 2005, a project similar in intent to the Proposed Project (known as the Main Line Corridor Improvements Project), but with a substantially greater number of property acquisitions, was considered. That project included the installation of a third track between Queens Village and Hicksville within a significantly widened right-of-way. That project also proposed grade-separation of up to five grade crossings, but required a large number of residential and commercial acquisitions and community disruption. That project is no longer being pursued because it entailed a substantial number of full commercial and residential property acquisitions, multiple partial property acquisitions to accommodate a widened right-of-way, and a lengthy construction schedule within downtown areas.

The Proposed Project is being advanced based on input received at numerous stakeholder meetings, with the intent of minimizing disruption to the local communities in the vicinity of the project limits. By remaining within the existing LIRR right-of-way, the Proposed Project would avoid residential property acquisitions and greatly reduce, in comparison to the 2005 initiative, the number of commercial acquisitions. Unlike the earlier proposal, it would eliminate all grade crossings, thereby enhancing vehicular and pedestrian traffic safety. Finally, the construction schedule of the Proposed Project, both for the overall Proposed Project and for construction work on individual grade crossings, has been reduced substantially. Overall, the Proposed Project presents a significantly enhanced approach to solving infrastructure deficiencies on the LIRR Main Line.

## **FREIGHT OPERATIONS**

LIRR does not operate freight trains. LIRR closed its freight division in 1996. At that time it turned over all remnants of its freight operations to a private operator (the New York and Atlantic Railway—NY&A), and entered into a contract with that company to permit it to operate freight trains over the LIRR track system in exchange for certain fee payments.

*Frequency:* Today the NY&A typically operates three round trip freight trains per weekday through the Main Line corridor (on weekends, NY&A typically operates only one round trip per day). That frequency has decreased from 2009 when the NY&A averaged 5 round trip freight trains per weekday. Going forward, no increase whatsoever in the number of freight trains per day is projected by LIRR. At current growth rates for freight, the existing three round trips could accommodate the modest increase in carloads through 2020 as well as through 2040. Even if the current growth rate were to double (which is not expected), the projected result would be the addition of one additional round trip freight train per weekday by 2040—for a total of four round trip freight trains per weekday.



*Economics:* Fees paid by the NY&A as the private freight operator to the MTA in 2015 amounted to approximately \$2.3 million of the MTA's total revenues of \$15.3 billion—constituting approximately one one-hundredth of one percent of the MTA's revenues.

*Relationship to Project:* By federal law, LIRR is required to permit freight operations on its system but is permitted to regulate the time of such operation. LIRR currently restricts the operation of freight trains to non-peak periods and is committed to keeping this restriction in place. The purpose of the Proposed Project is to increase the capacity on the Main Line at peak periods. LIRR is committed to using this peak period capacity increase only for the operation of its own passenger trains, and is thus equally committed in the future to not scheduling any freight trains whatsoever during peak periods. Since freight operations are not currently capacity-constrained during non-peak hours and since the Main Line peak hour capacity increase will not be used for freight trains, the additional third Main Line track proposed in the Proposed Project would not have any impact on freight traffic through the corridor.

*Operations:* Speed—Freight trains are subject to much lower speed limits than passenger trains. Freight trains may not exceed 45 mph, far lower than the 80 mph maximum applicable to passenger trains. These speed restrictions will not change as a result of the Proposed Project. Safety—All of NY&A's freight train operations are subject to strict federal safety regulations which cover both train operations and the nature and handling of cargo. These federal safety regulatory requirements—which are not under the control of either LIRR or NY&A—will not change as a result of the Proposed Project.

The background portion of the DEIS will include a discussion of existing and projected freight traffic along the Main Line, the federal law and regulations governing freight traffic, and the rationale for why the Proposed Project will not induce additional freight trains in the future analysis years.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

As previously stated, the LIRR Expansion Project from Floral Park to Hicksville extends approximately 9.8 miles from the Village of Floral Park to the Hamlet of Hicksville and entails the following major components: installation of additional track to complete a continuous third Main Line track; elimination of seven grade crossings; various station improvements and modifications, and other related railroad infrastructure improvements. More specifically, the Proposed Project would include the following elements:

- Installation of a third Main Line track from Floral Park Station to Hicksville
- Elimination of seven existing grade crossings within the project limits to provide grade-separated crossings or potentially, in one or two cases, full closures to vehicular traffic, with the nature of the modification to be based on NYSDOT design criteria, consideration of construction impacts and duration, traffic impacts, and input from the community
- Construction of retaining walls along portions of the corridor
- Modifications to passenger rail stations, platforms, and parking (e.g., modified and improved platforms, passenger shelters, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) enhancements, and parking modifications including new parking facilities at the New Hyde Park and Mineola stations)
- Construction of new pedestrian overpasses and ramps at select stations

- Modifications to railroad infrastructure including overpasses, signal systems, substations, culverts, interlockings, crossovers, sidings, track bed, power systems, communications and signals
- Utility relocations, including electric, signal, communications, gas, water, sewer, and storm sewer systems

For the purpose of more clearly delineating and describing the elements of the Proposed Project, the Project Corridor may be broken down into the following Sections. The description below is based upon a preliminary study intended to avoid permanent residential property acquisitions while providing service improvements and addressing the Proposed Project Purpose and Need.

The project elements are identified from west to east and do not reflect a potential order of construction.

#### *FLORAL PARK STATION TO NEW HYDE PARK STATION*

*(Village of Floral Park, Village of New Hyde Park)*

- Construct new Main Line third track
- Modify South Tyson Road Bridge to accommodate new Main Line third track
- Construct new universal crossover on Hempstead Branch to facilitate operational flexibility and service reliability
- Construct new Main Line third track bridge span over Plainfield Avenue
- Eliminate Covert Avenue Grade Crossing: Two lane Covert Avenue underpass
- Eliminate South 12th Street Grade Crossing: underpass or closed

#### *NEW HYDE PARK STATION TO MERILLON AVENUE STATION*

*(Village of New Hyde Park, Village of Garden City)*

- Improve New Hyde Park Station to accommodate new Main Line third track
- Eliminate New Hyde Park Road Grade Crossing: Four or five lane New Hyde Park Road underpass
- Modify Denton Avenue Bridge to accommodate new Main Line third track
- Construct new Main Line third track

#### *MERILLON AVENUE STATION TO MINEOLA STATION*

*(Village of Garden City, Village of Mineola)*

- Improve Merillon Avenue Station to accommodate new Main Line third track
- Modify Nassau Boulevard Bridge to accommodate new Main Line third track
- Construct new Main Line third track, replacing existing Herricks Road siding

#### *MINEOLA STATION TO CARLE PLACE STATION*

*(Village of Mineola Village, Carle Place)*

- Construct new Main Line third track
- Improve Mineola Station to accommodate new Main Line third track

- Modify Oyster Bay Branch Connection to Main Line.
- Eliminate Main Street Grade Crossing: underpass or close
- Eliminate Willis Avenue Grade Crossing: One- or two-lane Willis Avenue underpass
- Construct new Main Line third track alignment in existing Roslyn Road Bridge
- Modify Glen Cove Road Bridge to accommodate new Main Line third track
- Modify Meadowbrook State Parkway Bridge to accommodate new Main Line third track
- Modify Cherry Lane Bridge to accommodate new Main Line third track

#### *CARLE PLACE STATION TO WESTBURY STATION*

*(Carle Place, Village of Westbury)*

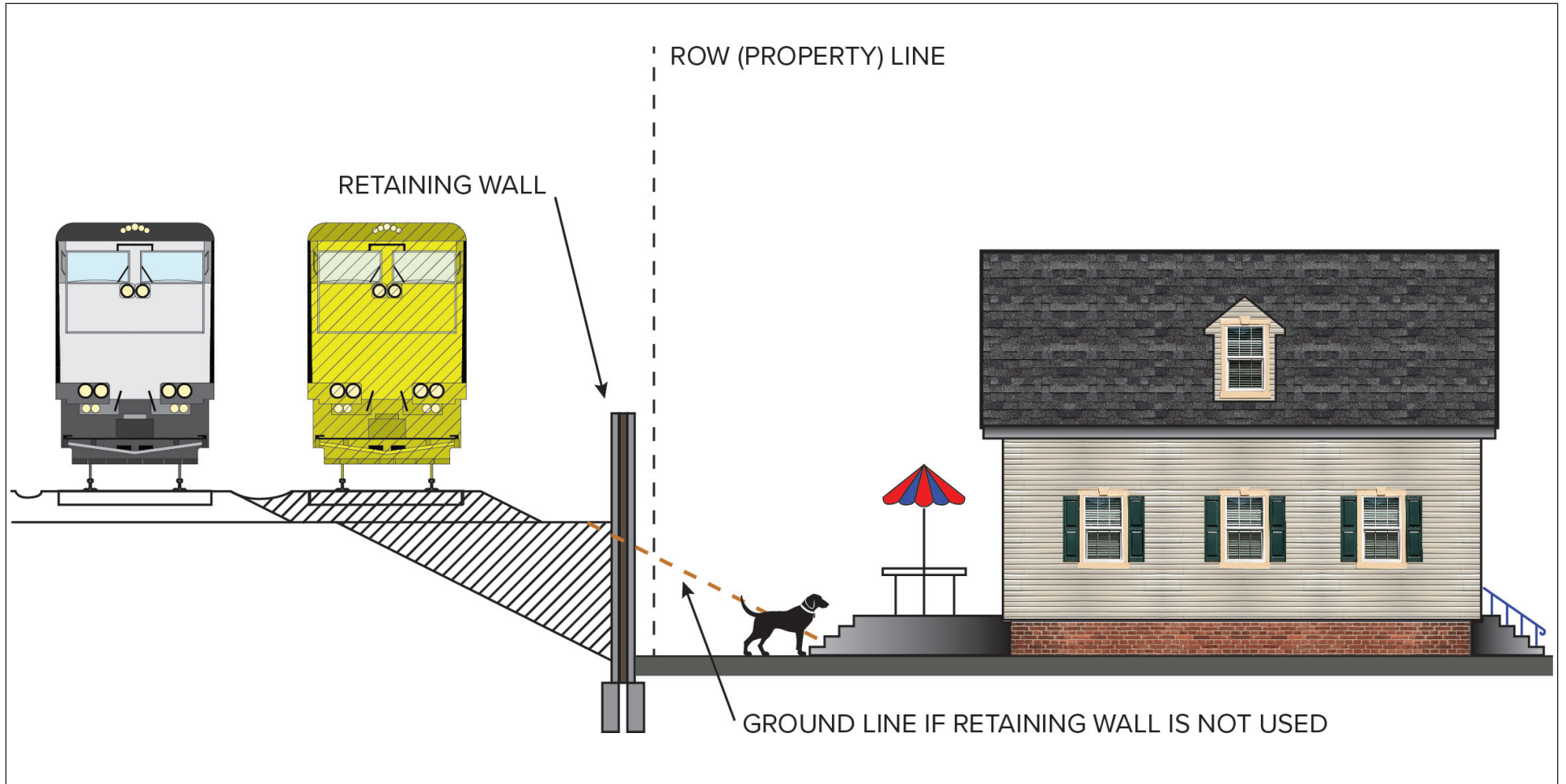
- Improve Carle Place Station to accommodate new Main Line third track
- Construct new Main Line third track (centered under newly rebuilt Ellison Avenue Bridge to avoid property impacts).
- Construct new Main Line track in Post Avenue Bridge (scheduled to be replaced as a separate project)

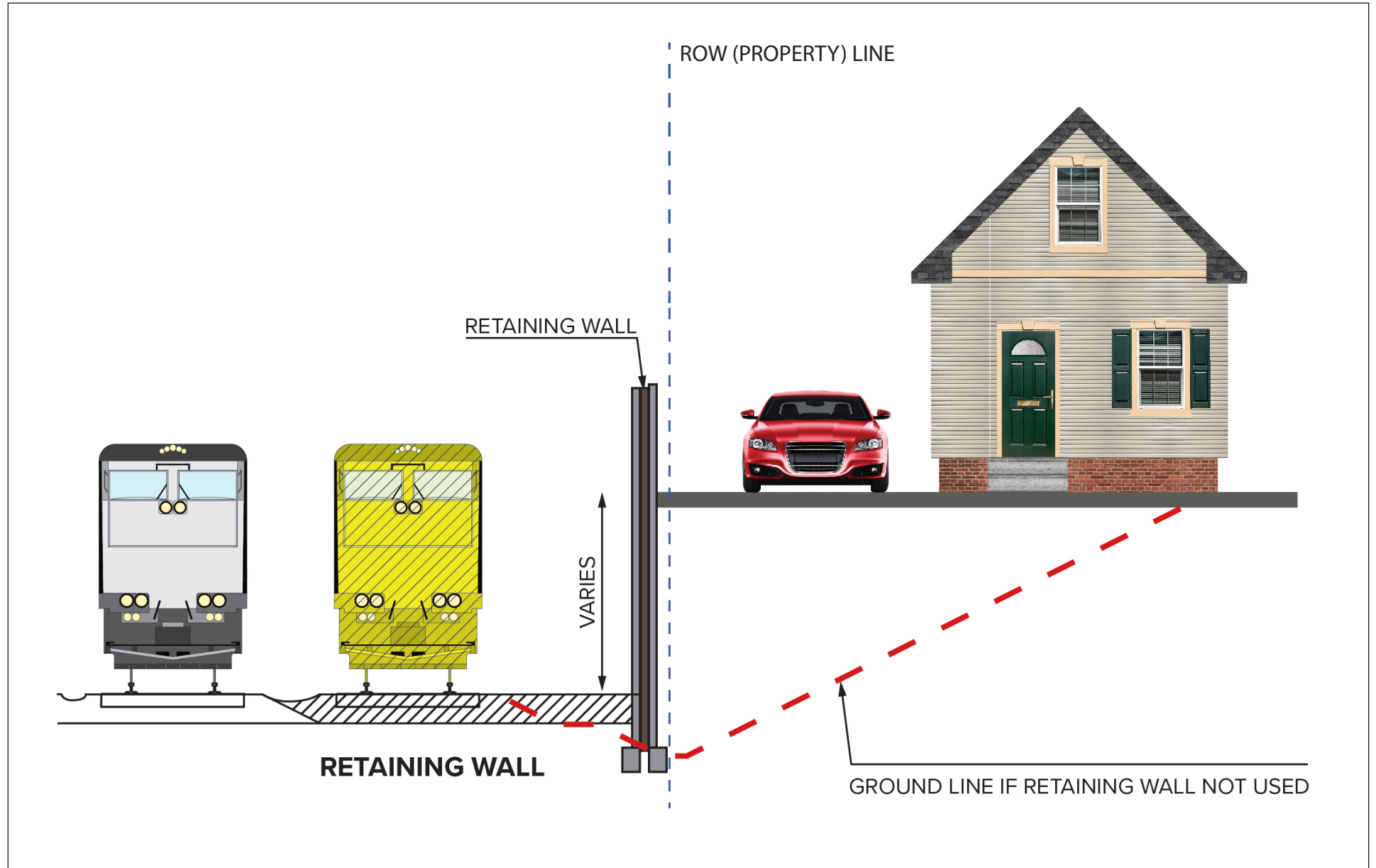
#### *WESTBURY STATION TO HICKSVILLE STATION*

*(Village of Westbury, Town of Oyster Bay)*

- Improve Westbury Station to accommodate new Main Line third track
- Construct new Main Line third track (centered under Grand Boulevard Bridge).
- Eliminate School Street Grade Crossing: Two lane School Street underpass
- Modify LIRR maintenance of way (MOW) siding to accommodate new Main Line third tracks and School Street grade separation
- Eliminate Urban Avenue Grade Crossing: Two lane Urban Avenue underpass
- Tie new Main Line third track into existing track just west of Wantagh State Parkway
- Tie new Main Line third track into existing “siding” track just west of Wantagh State Parkway
- Main Line third track follows configuration of current Hicksville Station Improvements and North Wall Siding Construction Project
- Modify track at east end of Hicksville Station on the viaduct to allow operational improvements to Port Jefferson, Ronkonkoma, and Montauk Branches

The installation of additional segments of track to complete a continuous third track through the Project Corridor would require the placement of additional structural soil (normally referred to as roadway or subgrade) and ballast within the right-of-way (ROW) at the locations on which the additional track would be placed so as to achieve an appropriately level surface. In order to place the amount of subgrade and ballast needed without causing spill-over onto properties outside of the ROW due to sloping, construction of retaining walls would be required (see **Figure 5** and **Figure 6** for renderings). Also, installation of the third track and retaining walls may require the clearing and grubbing of vegetation within the ROW.







There are utilities that may need to be relocated to accommodate the new Main Line third track. These include various railroad utility lines for power, signal and communications, as well as Long Island Power Authority (LIPA)/PSEG Long Island transmission and distribution lines.

The Proposed Project would support current service plans as well as longer term post-ESA Project service plans. The Proposed Project would accommodate significant improvements to intra-island and reverse peak service.

The Proposed Project would result in a consistent three-track segment capability of the LIRR Main Line, substantial additional operational flexibility, improved safety, and a more resilient and reliable commuter rail network. Construction of the entire Proposed Project would take approximately three to four years, depending on the precise schedule proposed by the design-build contractor; however, in any given location, construction activities would occur over a much shorter period. Construction of the Proposed Project would entail varying temporary disruptions to rail service, certain passenger rail stations, and local traffic operations. Expedited construction techniques for both the construction of the third track segments as well as the grade crossing eliminations would result in shorter construction periods of the Proposed Project. Expedited construction methods at grade crossings that include complete temporary road closure would target approximately six months for construction. Expedited construction measures at grade crossings that include only partial temporary road closure would target approximately nine months for construction at grade crossings. The Proposed Project would not result in greater train speeds; the current maximum authorized speed (MAS) of 80 miles per hour (mph) would be maintained.

#### *CROSSOVERS AND INTERLOCKINGS*

Crossovers allow trains to cross from one track to another, providing operational flexibility and allowing trains to change routes. A universal crossover is an arrangement of crossovers that allow trains to move in both directions, from one track to another or across all tracks where there are more than two. An interlocking is an arrangement of signal equipment and track that prevents conflicting movements through an arrangement of tracks such as junctions or crossovers.

The Proposed Project includes a fully universal crossover interlocking on the Hempstead Branch east of Floral Park Station to provide operational flexibility to ensure that no loss of service would occur on the Hempstead Branch when the Main Line third track is in service. The addition of the universal crossover interlocking east of Floral Park Station would eliminate the need for any single track operation on the Hempstead Branch due to the addition of the new Main Line third track.

There are three crossover interlockings on the Main Line between Floral Park and Hicksville that are being examined to accommodate the new Main Line third track. These interlockings are named, "Nassau 1," "Nassau 2," and "Nassau 3," and are currently located in Garden City Village, Mineola Village, and Carle Place.

Most changes to track and interlockings between the Wantagh State Parkway and Hicksville are already in the process of being modified under the Hicksville Station Improvements and North Siding Track Project; however, interlocking modifications east of Westbury Station and west of the Wantagh State Parkway may be considered. Also, interlocking modifications may be required where the new third track ties into the existing freight siding just west of the Wantagh State Parkway. All such work would take place within the right-of-way.

### *STATION IMPROVEMENTS AND MODIFICATIONS*

The Proposed Project would include various station improvements and modifications in order to accommodate the third track; enhance ADA accessibility; enhance pedestrian access; and improve platforms and passenger waiting areas. No major station modifications would be made at Floral Park or Hicksville stations as part of the Proposed Project. Hicksville Station Improvements, a separate project that already has secured capital program funding and for which construction will start shortly, includes platform reconstruction and new platform amenities (elevator and escalator replacement).

### *GRADE CROSSINGS*

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will consider a number of potential options for each grade crossing listed below based on design criteria; impacts on traffic; construction impacts and duration and other environmental considerations; and the satisfaction of the Project Purpose and Need. The selection of a particular option also will consider the input received from the public and elected officials for the municipalities where the grade crossing is located. Various other concepts (e.g., one-way and two-way overpass concepts) were considered and dismissed from further analysis, as explained in **Appendix A**.

Unlike the project considered in 2005, the LIRR Expansion Project does not require the substantial number of property acquisitions at the grade crossings or the disruption to local communities through extended construction periods. The LIRR Expansion Project avoids these concerns through re-designing the grade crossing separations in response to community input.

The modifications to the grade crossings would be designed to accommodate emergency vehicles, snow plows, and truck traffic. Sidewalks or pedestrian bridges are proposed to allow for pedestrian and first responder access. **Figure 7 through Figure 44** show existing aerial images for each location as well as the design options outlined below. **Appendix A** includes a description of other options considered at each grade crossing and the reasons why they were eliminated from further consideration.

#### Covert Avenue Crossing (see **Figure 7**)

##### *Covert Avenue—Two-Way Underpass with Sidewalk, LIRR Tracks Raised Several Feet*

The Covert Avenue crossing would be reconstructed to provide a two-lane grade-separated underpass with a sidewalk on the east side (see **Figures 8 through Figure 10**). It would require raising the LIRR tracks approximately five feet in order to keep Second Avenue and Third Avenue open to through-traffic and avoid the acquisition of residential property. This option would provide a one-way service road connecting Covert Avenue northbound traffic to Third Avenue and Covert Avenue southbound traffic to Second Avenue.

The existing access from Covert Avenue to the commercial building at the northeast corner of Covert and Second Avenues would be restricted, potentially requiring acquisition. Minor reconstruction to Second Avenue, Third Avenue, Wayne Avenue, and driveways would be necessary.

The following construction staging scenarios will be explored for this location:

Scenario 1: Full closure of Covert Avenue, and Second Avenue, and Third Avenue at Covert Avenue during construction.

Scenario 2: Maintenance of one-way northbound traffic on Covert Avenue during construction. Diversion of southbound Covert Avenue traffic to South 12th Street and New Hyde Park Road, which are less than ¼ mile and ½ mile east of Covert Avenue respectively. This option would have a longer construction duration.

South 12th Street Crossing (see **Figure 11**)

*South 12th Street—Option 1: Permanent Crossing Closure with Pedestrian Bridge*

This option would permanently close South 12th Street to vehicular traffic across the LIRR tracks and provide an ADA-compliant pedestrian bridge over the tracks with ramps landing along Second Avenue and Third Avenue (see **Figure 12** and **Figure 13**). The pedestrian bridge would connect to a proposed parking structure on the southwest corner of South 12th Street and span over Third Avenue and the LIRR tracks. The crossing vehicle traffic would divert to Covert Avenue and New Hyde Park Road, which are less than ¼-mile away on either side of the tracks and would be grade-separated.

*South 12th Street—Option 2: One-Way Underpass with Sidewalk*

This option would construct a one-way grade-separated southbound underpass with a sidewalk on the east side (see **Figure 14** and **Figure 15**). It would provide a one-way service road connecting northbound South 12th Street traffic to Third Avenue and southbound South 12th Street traffic to Second Avenue.

This option would result in the loss of approximately eight on-street parking spaces along South 12th Street and would re-route South 12th Street northbound traffic onto other roads in the area. The adjacent crossing streets are less than ¼-mile away on either side of the tracks.

New Hyde Park Road Crossing (see **Figure 16**)

*New Hyde Park Road—Option 1: Five-Lane Underpass with Kiss and Ride northwest of Tracks*

The New Hyde Park Road crossing would be reconstructed as a five-lane grade-separated underpass with sidewalks on the east and west sides of the underpass (see **Figure 17** and **Figure 18**). It would provide a dedicated left turn lane from southbound New Hyde Park Road to Clinch Avenue. Reconstruction at the corners of Clinch Avenue, Greenridge Avenue, Plaza Avenue, and Second Avenue would be necessary to improve safety. Improved pedestrian access from Garden City to the LIRR Station would be provided via a pedestrian crossing parallel to and south of the tracks.

This option would require the acquisition of the commercial building at the southwest corner of New Hyde Park Road and Plaza Avenue. The space created with this acquisition would be used to connect Second Avenue to Plaza Avenue, providing a dedicated left turn lane from northbound New Hyde Park Road to Plaza Avenue, providing space for a Kiss and Ride area, and allowing for a safe and convenient location to drop off and pick up railroad passengers; the remaining space would be used for parking, drainage and stormwater management practices.

*New Hyde Park Road—Option 2: Four-Lane Underpass with Kiss and Ride southwest of Tracks*

This option would entail the construction of a four-lane grade-separated underpass with sidewalks on the east and west sides of the underpass (see **Figure 19** and **Figure 20**). The left lane of the southbound New Hyde Park Road traffic would be shared with left turn onto

Clinch Avenue. Similarly, the left lane of the northbound New Hyde Park Road traffic would be shared with left turn onto Plaza Avenue. This option would involve construction of a Kiss and Ride area on the southwest side of New Hyde Park Road. This option would not require the acquisition of any buildings. Under this option, Second Avenue would not access (connect to) New Hyde Park Road.

Main Street Crossing (see **Figure 21**)

*Main Street—Option 1: Permanent Crossing Closure with Pedestrian Bridge*

This option would permanently close Main Street to vehicular traffic across the LIRR tracks and provide a pedestrian bridge over the LIRR tracks with elevators (see **Figure 22** and **Figure 23**). The pedestrian bridge would connect to a proposed parking structure on the LIRR property at the southwest corner of Main Street and span over the LIRR tracks. The crossing vehicle traffic would divert to Mineola Boulevard, Willis Avenue, and Roslyn Road, which are less than ¼-mile away on either side of the tracks. This option would provide a one-way westbound Front Street south of the tracks, connecting a one-way northbound Willis Avenue service road to Main Street.

*Main Street—Option 2: One-Way Underpass with Pedestrian Bridge*

This option would construct a one-way grade-separated northbound traffic underpass and provide a pedestrian bridge over the LIRR tracks with elevators (see **Figure 24** and **Figure 25**). The pedestrian bridge would connect to a proposed parking structure on the LIRR property at the southwest corner of Main Street and span over the LIRR tracks. This option would provide a one-way northbound service road connecting Third Street to eastbound Front Street south of the tracks and Front Street north of the tracks to northbound Main Street. On-street parking would be maintained in front of the east side businesses.

On the north side of the tracks, two four foot wide sidewalks would be constructed. This reduced width would allow for the construction of the underpass without the acquisition of the commercial building on the northwest side of the tracks.

Southbound crossing vehicle traffic would be diverted to Mineola Boulevard, Willis Avenue, and Roslyn Road, which are less than ¼ mile away on either side of the tracks.

Willis Avenue Crossing (see **Figure 26**)

*Willis Avenue—Option 1: Two-Way Underpass*

A two-way grade-separated underpass with a pedestrian bridge and elevators would be constructed. It would provide a one-way southbound service road either on the west side or east side of Willis Avenue connecting northern Willis Avenue traffic to Hinck Way eastbound and to businesses located between the LIRR Main Line and spur. This option would extend the underpass to the south to maintain traffic on Front Street westbound across Willis Avenue, and would create a parking garage between Main Street and Willis Avenue in place of the existing municipal lot. This option would provide a one-way northbound service road between Third Street and Front Street, connecting southern Willis Avenue traffic to Front Street westbound. A traffic signal would be required at the intersection of Willis Avenue and Third Street for crossing traffic.

The following access scenarios will be explored for this location:

Scenario 1A: The existing access from Willis Avenue to the commercial building at the southeast corner of Willis Avenue and Second Street would be restricted. This scenario also would require reconstructing Second Street and the parking area at the northwest corner of Second Street and Willis Avenue (see **Figures 27 through Figure 29**).

Scenario 1B: This scenario would preserve access from Willis Avenue to the commercial building at the southeast corner of Willis Avenue and Second Street with substantial driveway modification and accepting a lower traffic operational level of service at the Second Street intersection (see **Figure 30** and **Figure 31**).

*Willis Avenue—Option 2: One-Way Underpass*

This option would construct a one-way southbound grade-separated underpass with pedestrian bridge and elevators (see **Figure 32** and **Figure 33**). It would provide a one-way service road connecting northern Willis Avenue traffic to Hinck Way eastbound and to businesses located between the LIRR Main Line and spur. This option would extend the underpass to the south to maintain traffic on Front Street westbound across Willis Avenue, and would create a parking garage between Main Street and Willis Avenue in place of the existing municipal lot. This option would allow the commercial building at the southeast corner of Willis Avenue and Second Street to maintain access to Willis Avenue. This option would provide a one-way eastbound Front Street between Willis Avenue and Roslyn Road and a one-way southbound service road between eastbound Front Street and Third Street.

School Street Crossing (see **Figure 34**)

*School Street—Two-Way Underpass and Tracks Raised Several Feet*

The School Street crossing would be reconstructed as a two-way grade-separated underpass with a sidewalk on the east side. Railroad Avenue would be reconstructed to maintain access to School Street. Acquisition of a narrow strip of land would be required from the commercial property on the southeast corner of the intersection of School Street and the LIRR tracks to build a service road to maintain access to the business.

This would require raising the LIRR tracks approximately three feet in order to avoid the acquisition of a residential property to the southeast of School Street. It also would require the acquisition of the commercial property at the northeast quadrant due to the elimination of access to School Street.

The following property access options will be explored for this location:

Scenario 1A: This scenario would relocate the access of the commercial property on the northwest corner of the intersection of School Street and the LIRR tracks to Union Avenue and the commercial property on the northeast corner of the intersection of School Street and the LIRR tracks to Grant Street (see **Figure 35** and **Figure 36**).

Scenario 1B: This scenario would maintain access of both Jamaica Ash and the Law Office on School Street (see **Figure 37** through **Figure 39**).

Urban Avenue Crossing (see **Figure 40**)

*Urban Avenue—Two-Way Underpass with Tracks Raised Several Feet*

This option would construct a two-lane grade-separated underpass with a sidewalk on the west side. Railroad Avenue would bridge over the underpass and remain connected. It would require raising the LIRR tracks approximately three feet in order to avoid impacting

residential properties at the north side of Broadway and acquiring an additional property on the south end of Urban Avenue. The driveway of the residential property northeast of the tracks would need to be relocated to provide access to Railroad Avenue. The commercial property at the southwest quadrant (117 Urban Avenue) would be acquired due to the elimination of access to Urban Avenue.

The following access scenarios will be explored for this location:

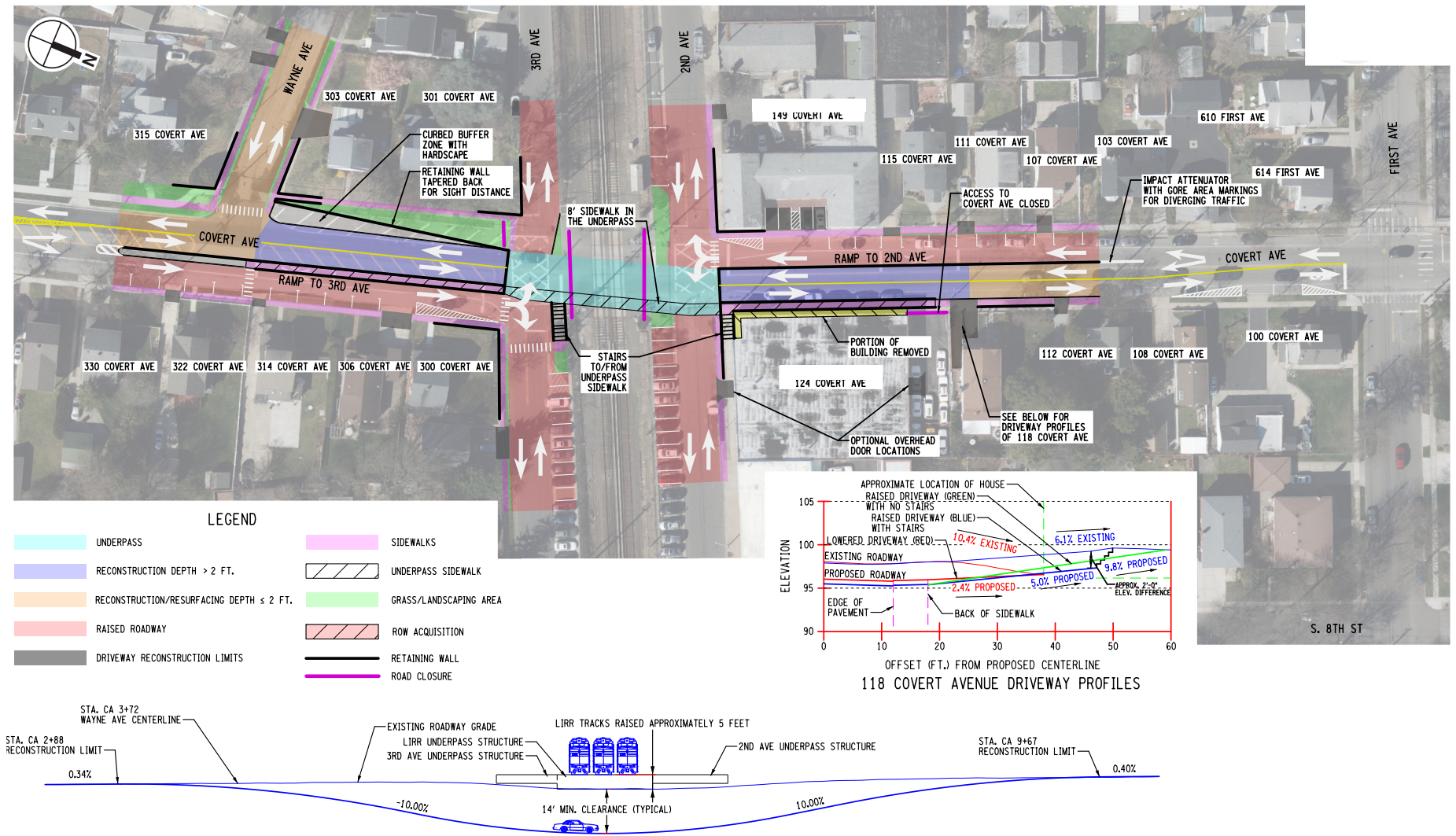
Scenario 1A: In order to maintain large truck access to the commercial property in the southeast quadrant (100 Urban Avenue), a small building on the south of the commercial property would have to either be removed or relocated. Access would be provided to the commercial property at the southwest quadrant (109 Urban Avenue) via a small driveway in front of the building (see **Figure 41** and **Figure 42**).

Scenario 1B: Large truck access to the commercial property in the southeast quadrant (100 Urban Avenue) would be provided by a new driveway entering off of Sylvester Street and exiting onto Kinkle Street. Small trucks and passenger vehicles would still have access off of Urban Avenue. Full access to the commercial property at the southwest quadrant (109 Urban Avenue) would be provided by a new driveway onto Rushmore Street (see **Figure 43** and **Figure 44**).













Rendering: Covert Avenue Grade Crossing  
Two-Way Underpass with Sidewalk, LIRR Tracks Raised Several Feet  
**Figure 9**





Source: New York State Department of Transportation

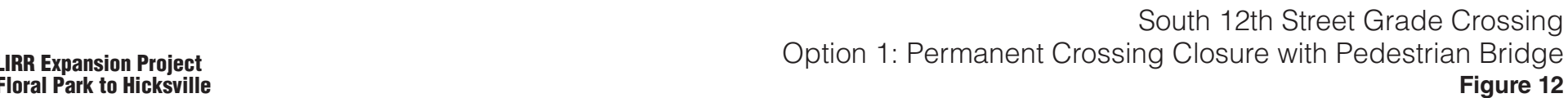
**LIRR Expansion Project  
Floral Park to Hicksville**

Rendering: Covert Avenue Grade Crossing  
Two-Way Underpass with Sidewalk, LIRR Tracks Raised Several Feet  
**Figure 10**





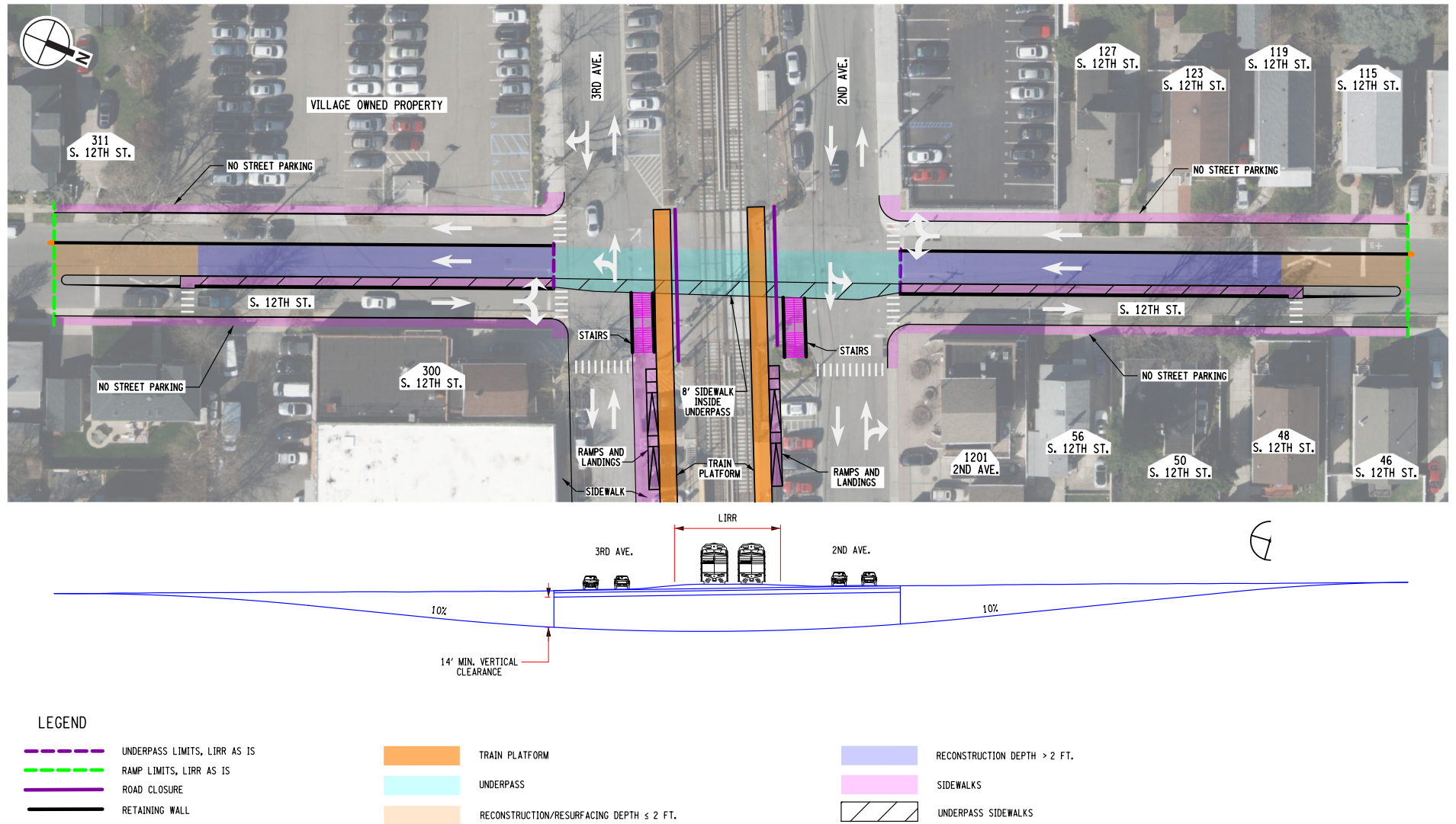








Source: New York State Department of Transportation



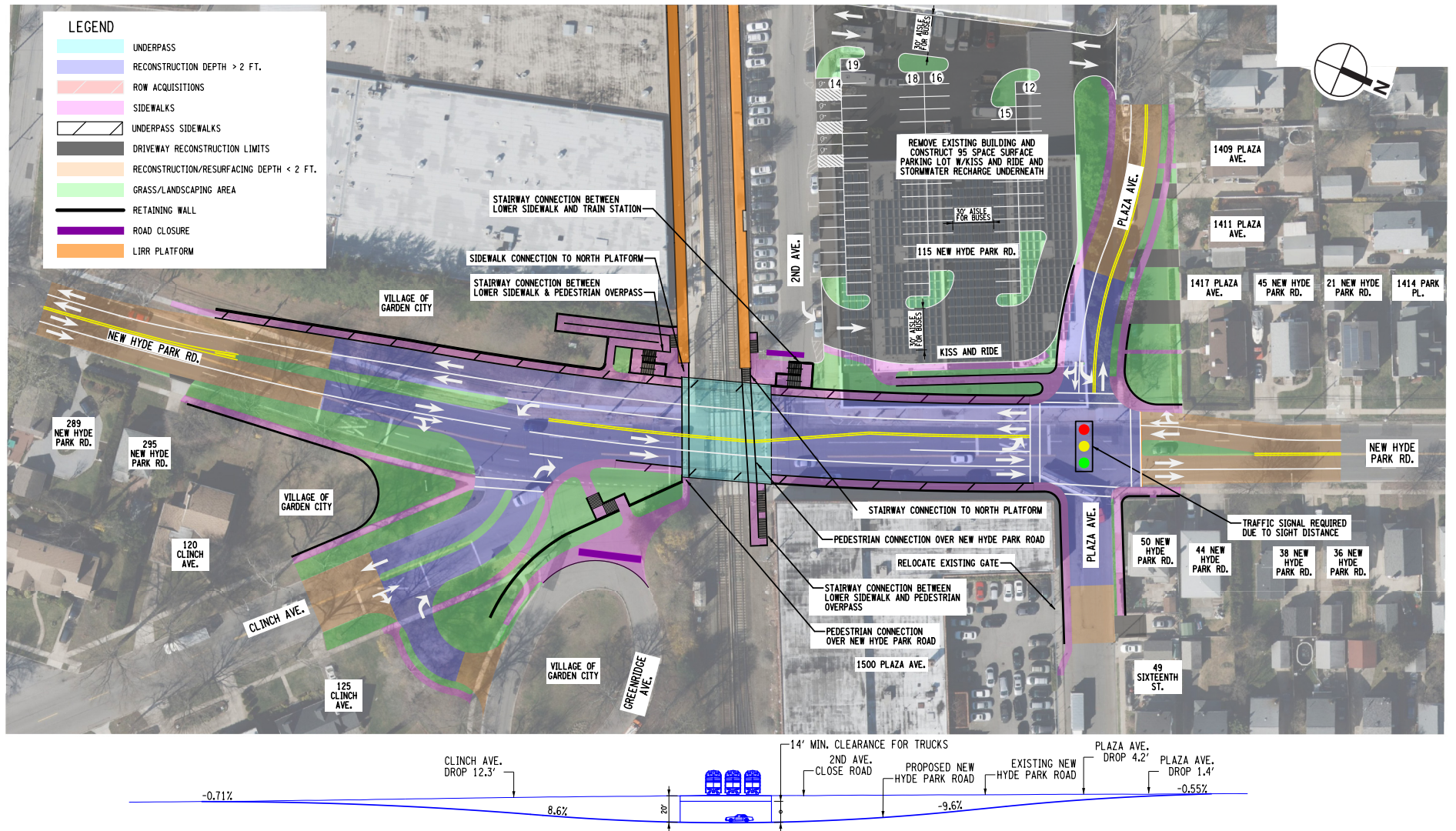












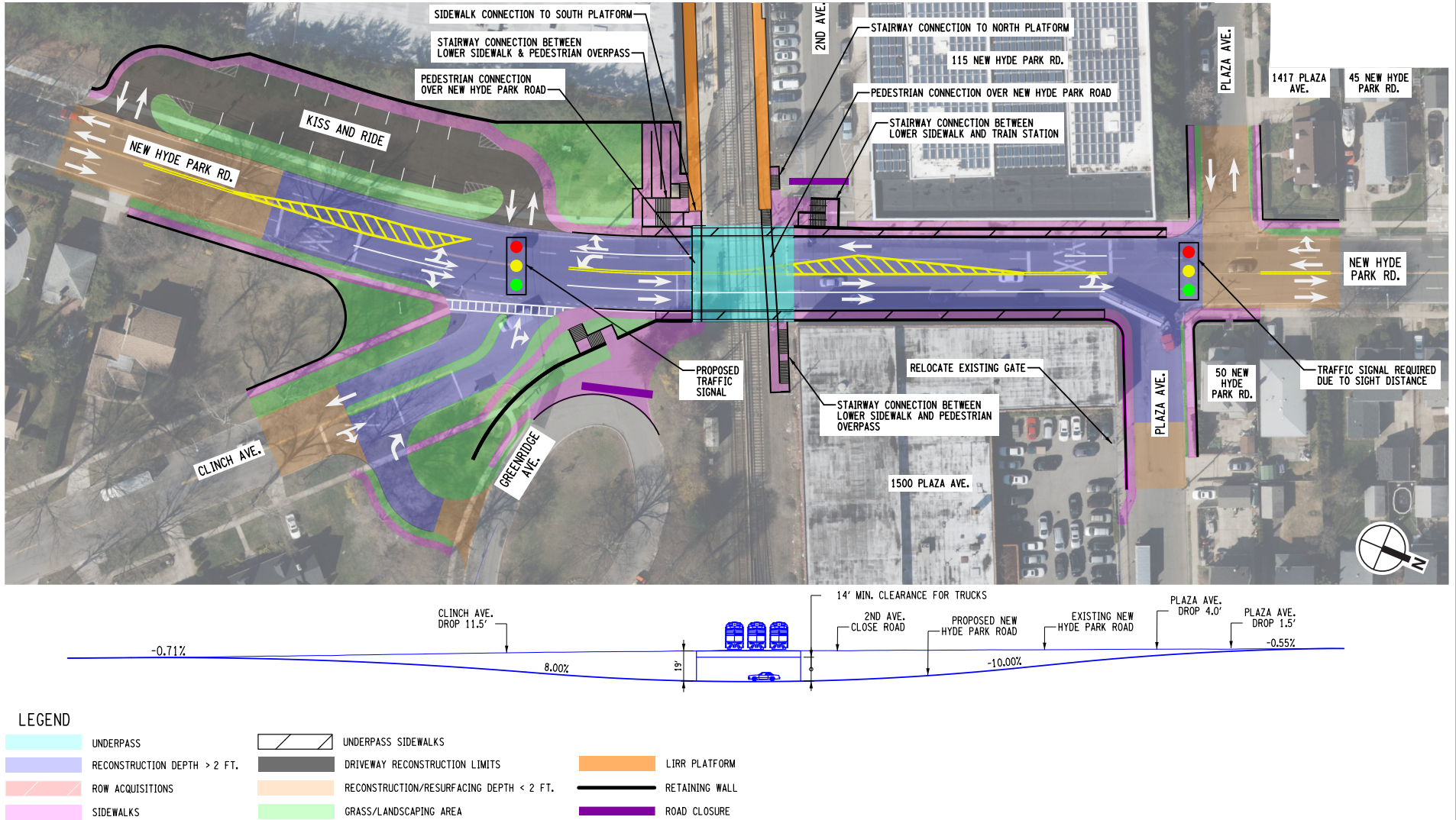
New Hyde Park Road Grade Crossing  
Option 1: Five-Lane Underpass with Kiss and Ride Northwest of Tracks  
**Figure 17**





Source: New York State Department of Transportation



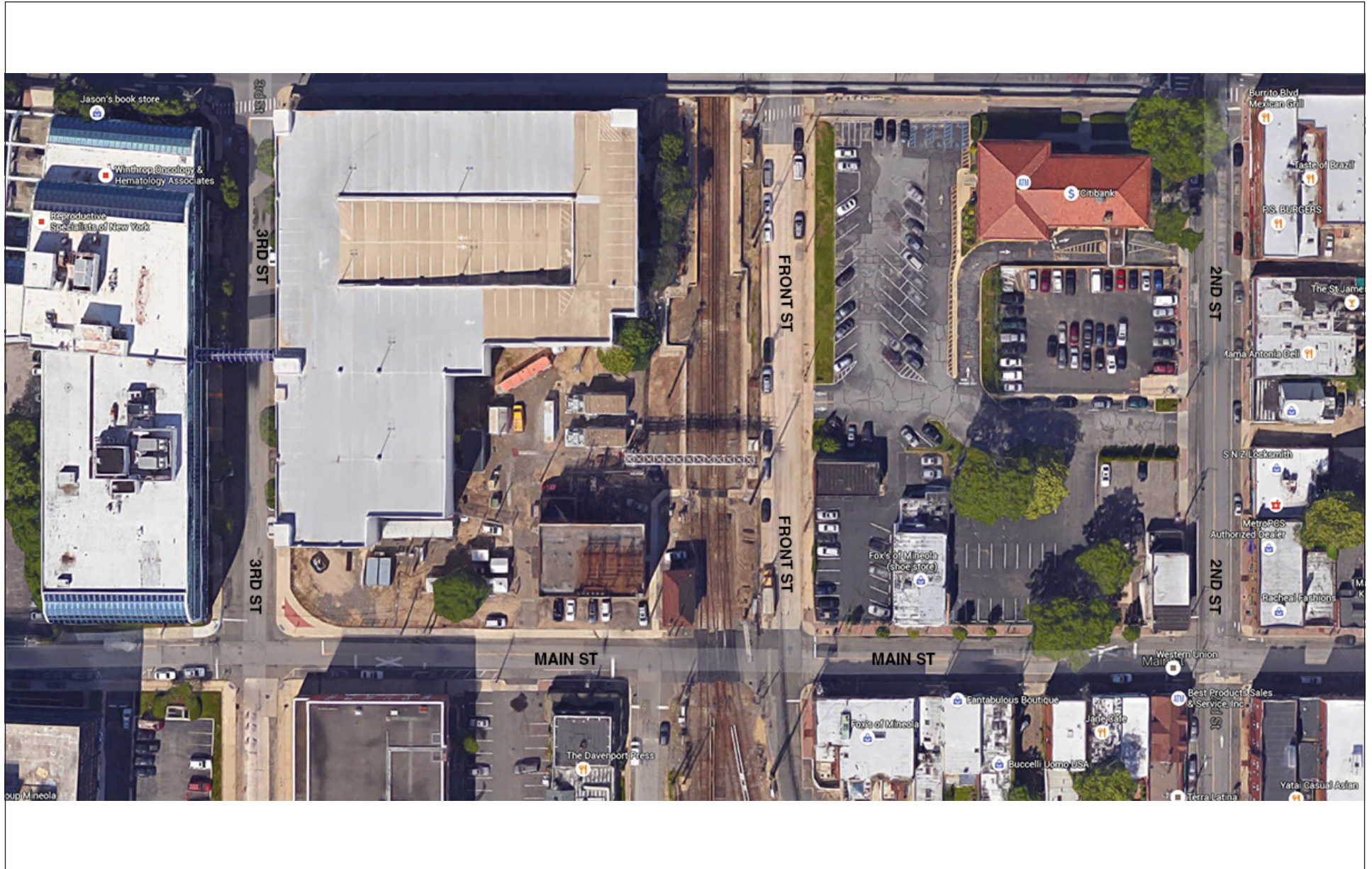




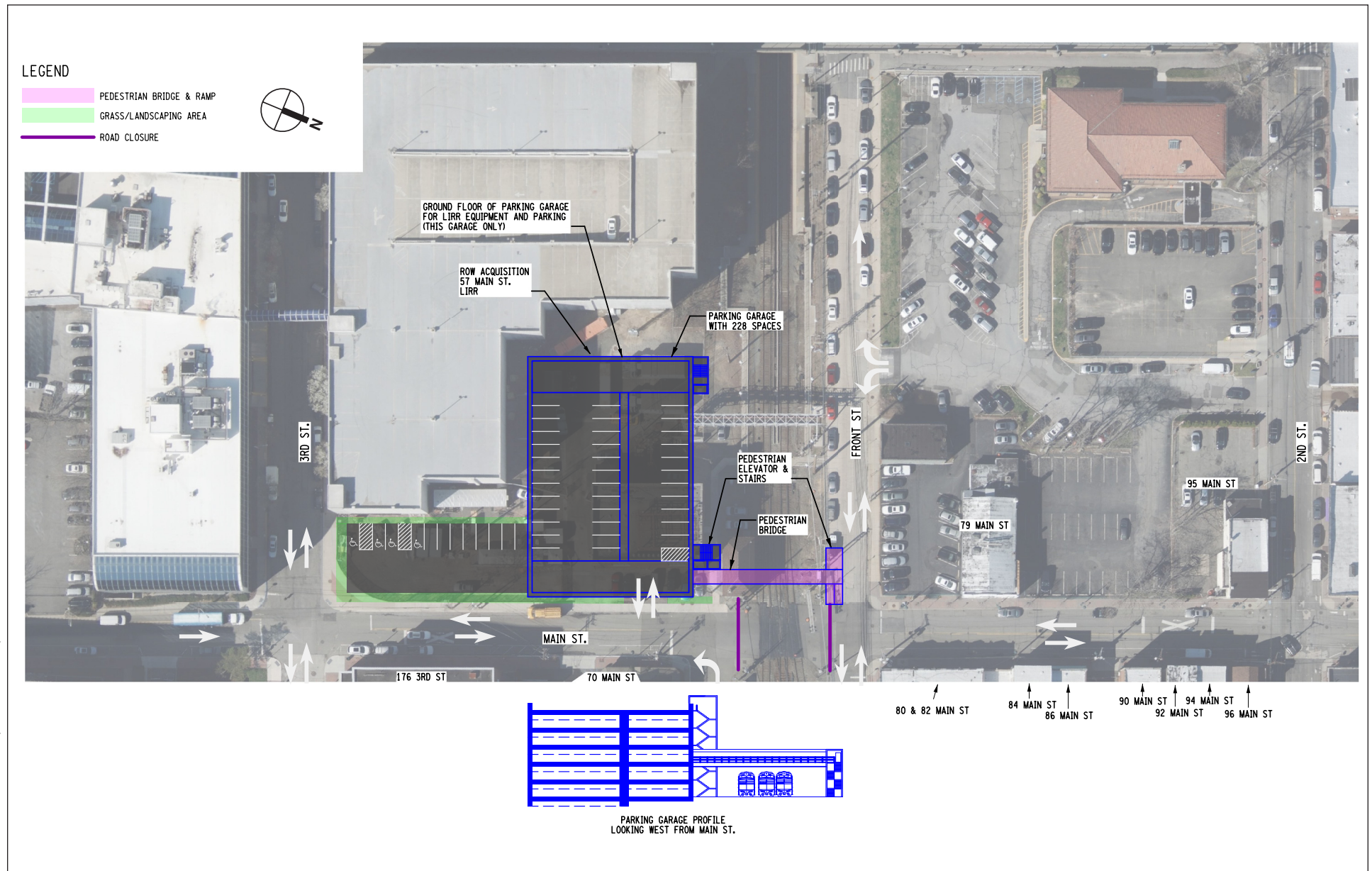


Source: New York State Department of Transportation







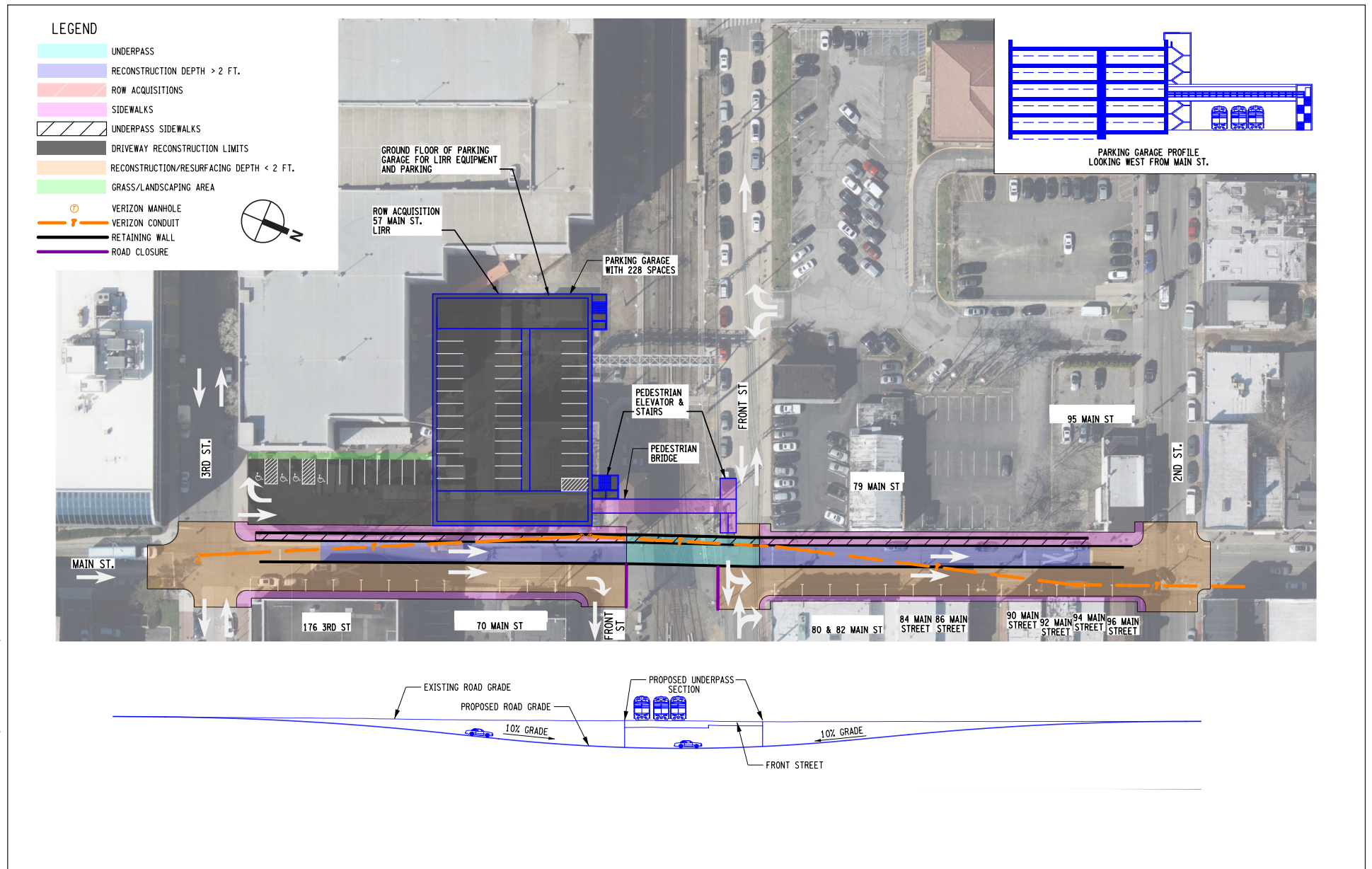






Source: New York State Department of Transportation







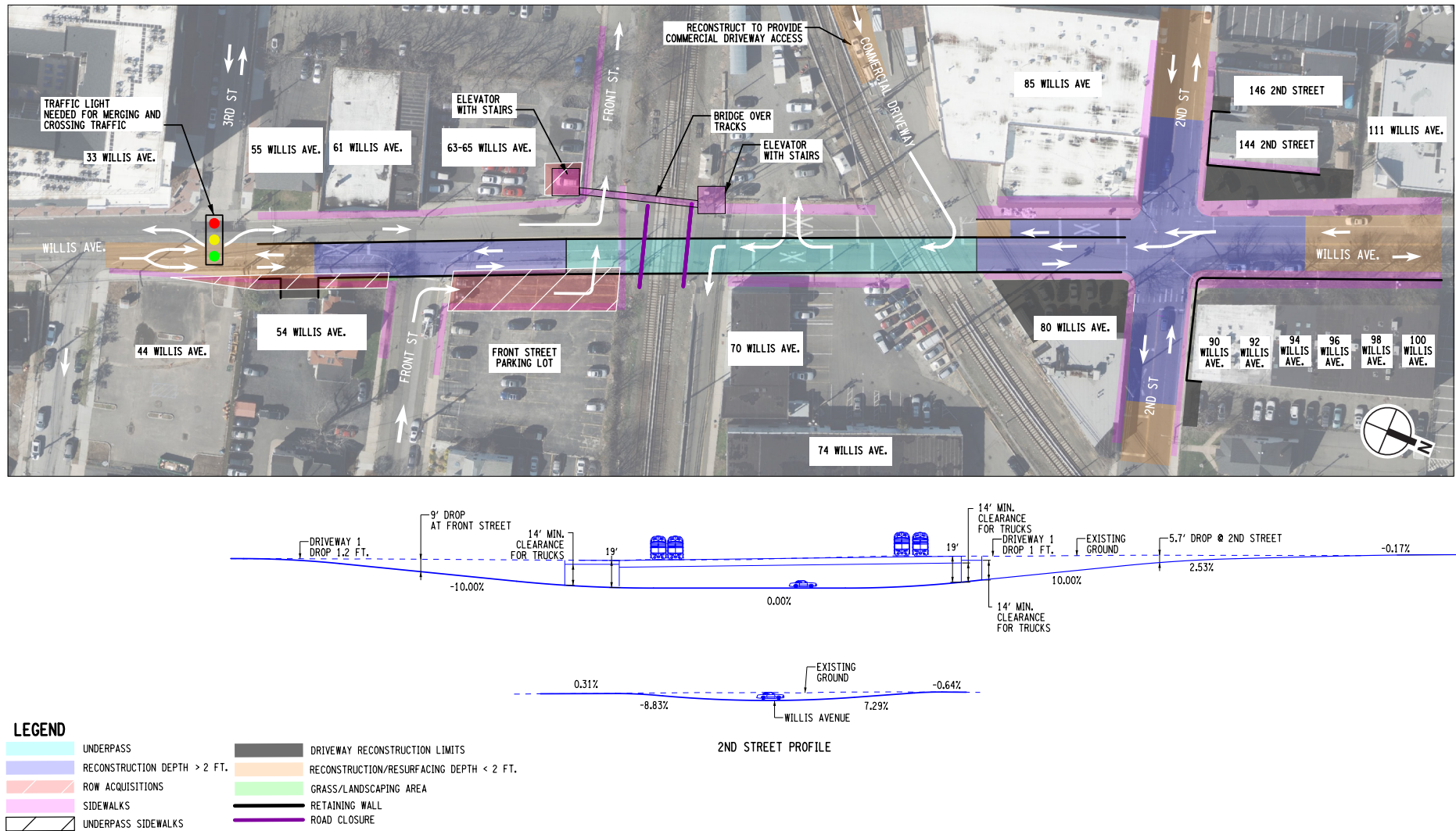


Source: New York State Department of Transportation









Source: New York State Department of Transportation





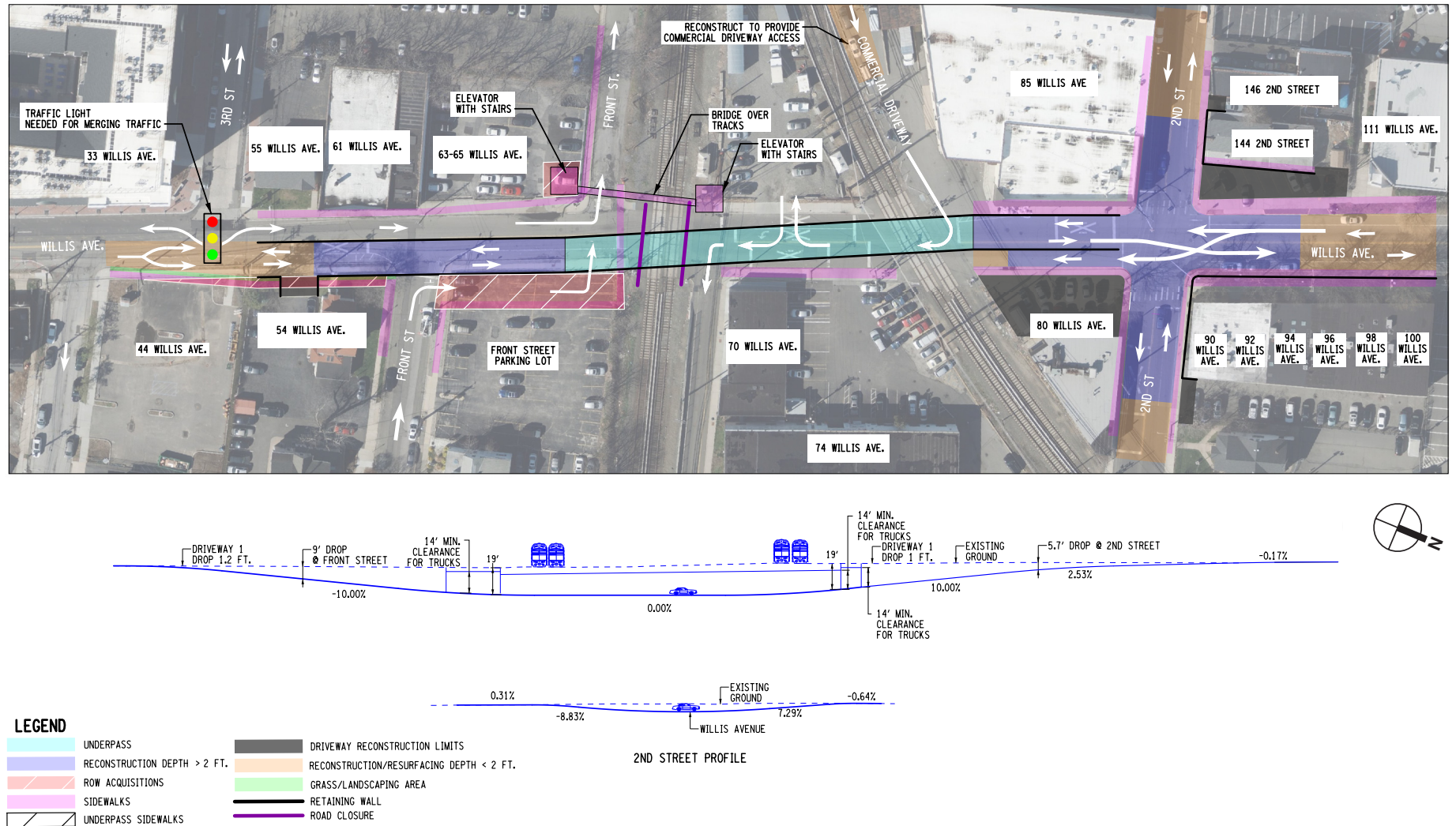
Source: New York State Department of Transportation





Source: New York State Department of Transportation



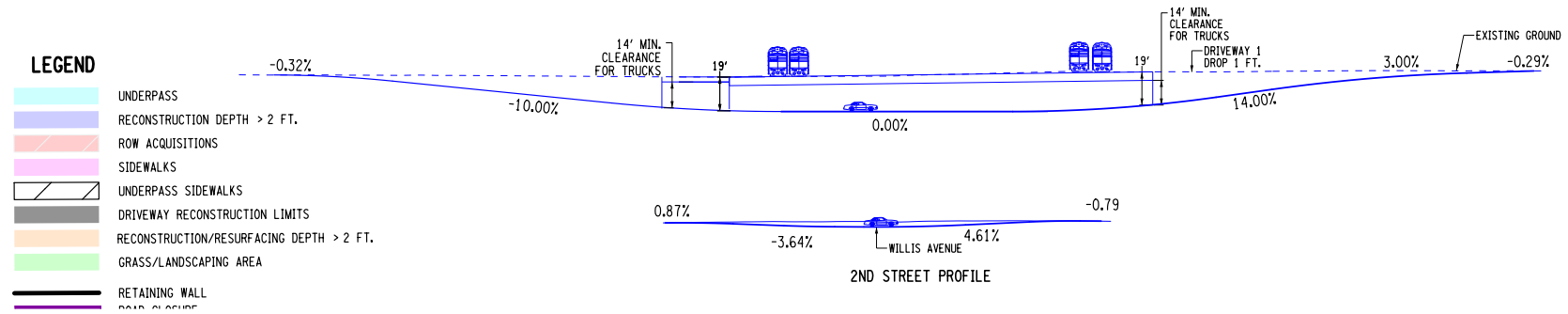
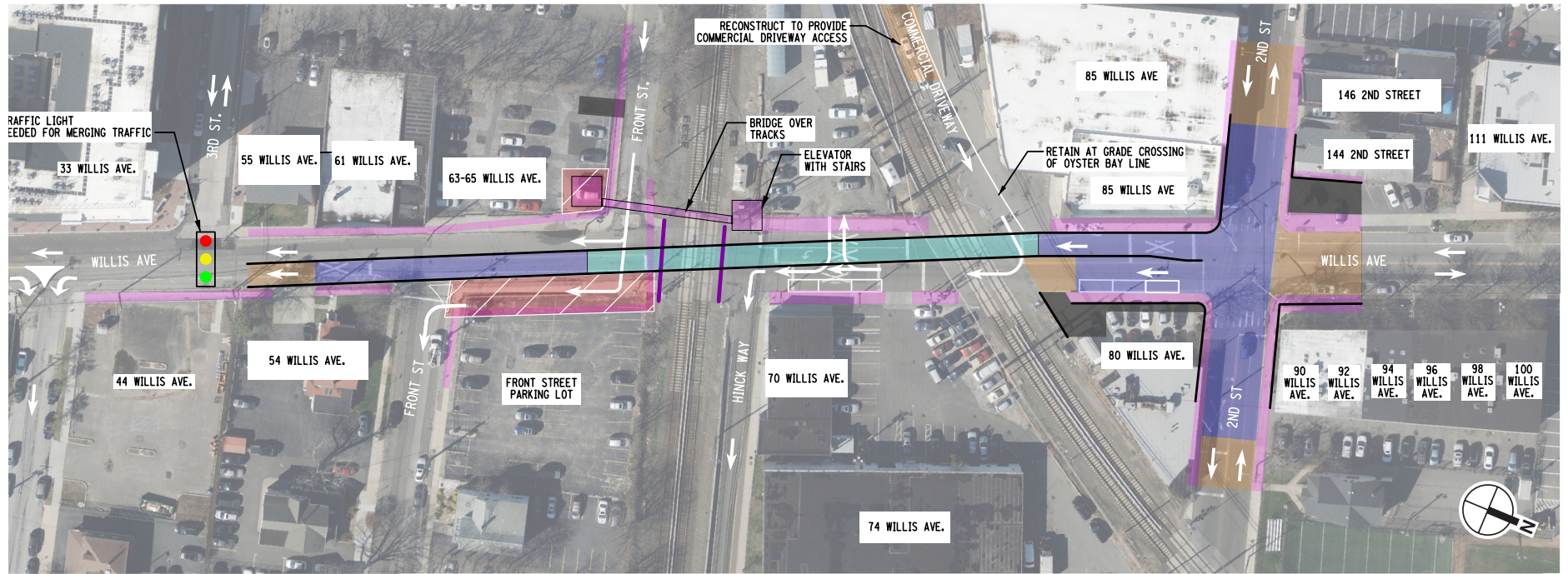


Source: New York State Department of Transportation













Source: New York State Department of Transportation









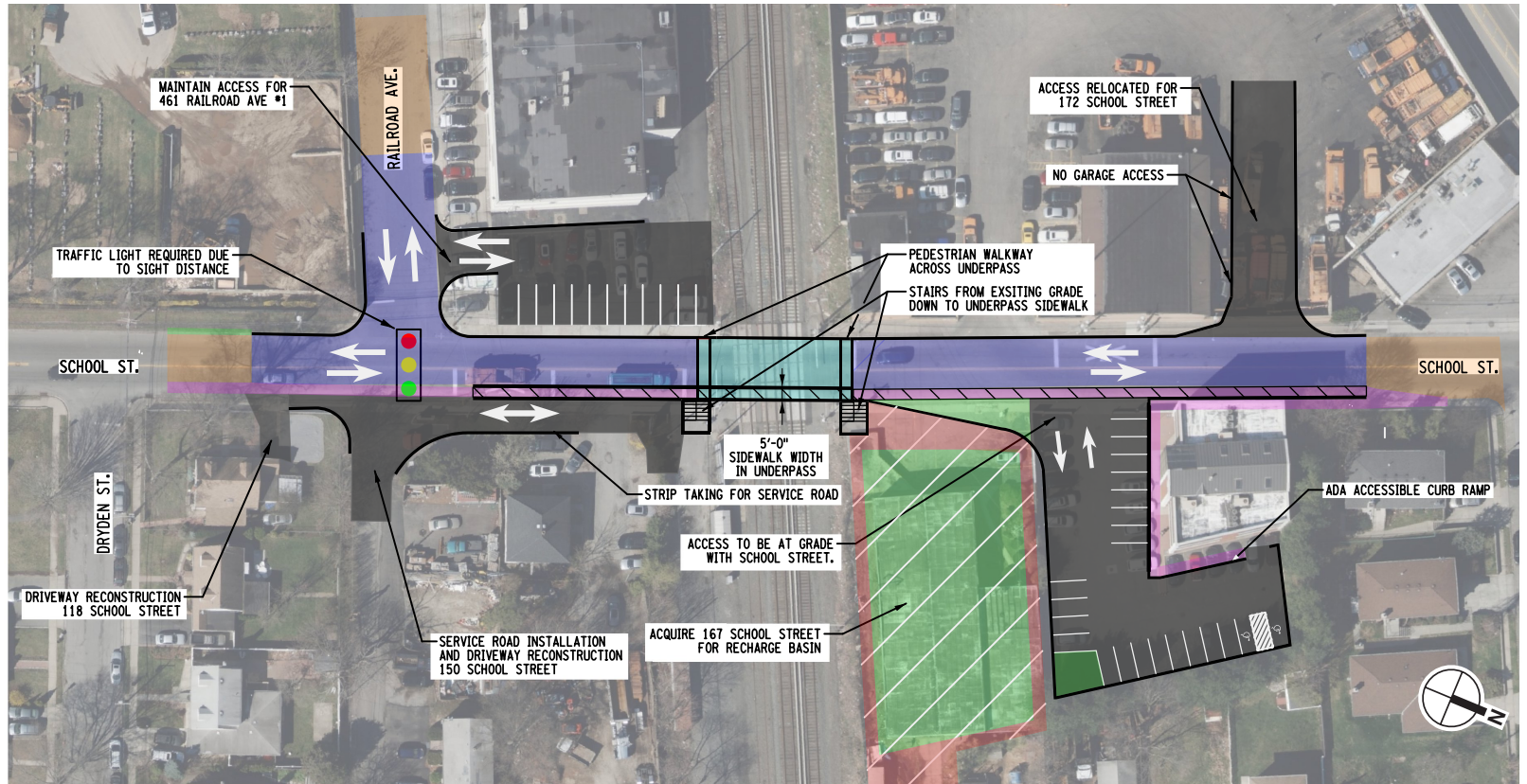
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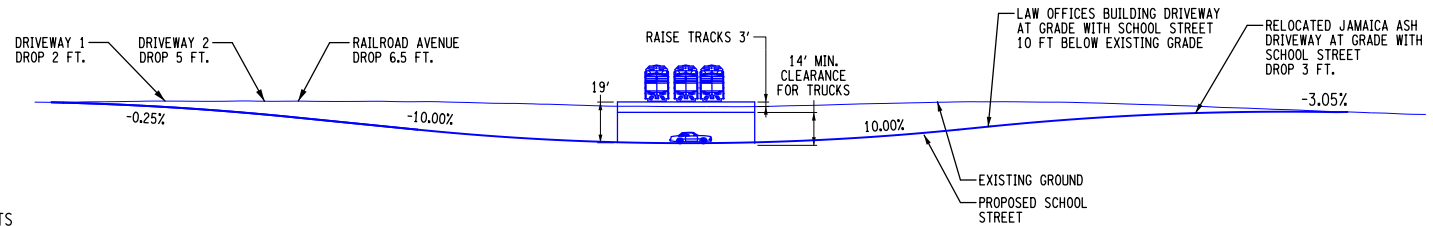
Rendering: School Street Grade Crossing  
 Scenario 1A: Two-Way Underpass and Tracks Raised Several Feet  
**Figure 36**





# LEGEND

- UNDERPASS
- RECONSTRUCTION DEPTH > 2 FT.
- ROW ACQUISITIONS
- SIDEWALKS
- UNDERPASS SIDEWALKS
- DRIVEWAY RECONSTRUCTION LIMITS
- RECONSTRUCTION/RESURFACING DEPTH < 2 FT.
- GRASS/LANDSCAPING AREA
- RETAINING WALL
- ROAD CLOSURE



School Street Grade Crossing  
 Scenario 1B: Two-Way Underpass and Tracks Raised Several Feet  
**Figure 37**





Rendering: School Street Grade Crossing  
Scenario 1B: Two-Way Underpass and Tracks Raised Several Feet  
**Figure 38**



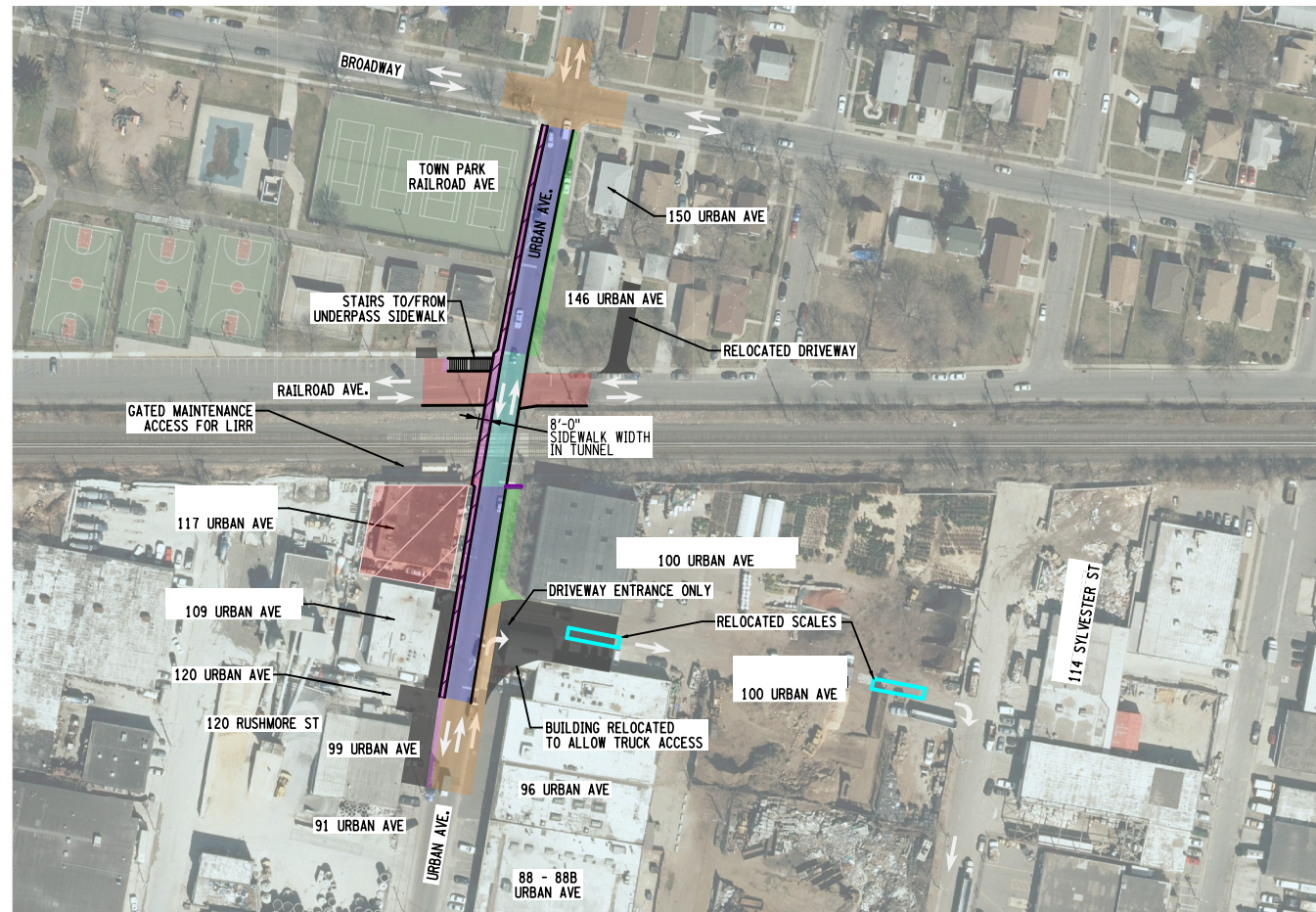


Source: New York State Department of Transportation

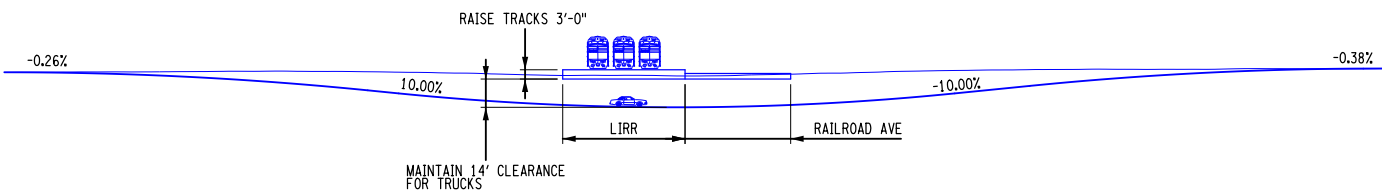






**LEGEND**

- TUNNEL
- RECONSTRUCTION DEPTH > 2 FT.
- ROW ACQUISITIONS
- SIDEWALKS
- UNDERPASS SIDEWALKS
- DRIVEWAY RECONSTRUCTION LIMITS
- RECONSTRUCTION/RESURFACING DEPTH ≤ 2 FT.
- GRASS/LANDSCAPING AREA
- RAISED ROADWAY
- RETAINING WALL
- ROAD CLOSURE







Rendering: Urban Avenue Grade Crossing  
Scenario 1A: Two-Way Underpass with Tracks Raised Several Feet  
**Figure 42**











## **B. REQUIRED ACTIONS**

- Potential property acquisition by MTA or NYSDOT, if necessary (with the goal of fewer than 10 full commercial property acquisitions)
- Empire State Development (ESD) to provide assistance to affected businesses to relocate within their communities where feasible
- NYSDOT approval of modifications to the roadway network
- NYSDOT approval of petition to alter grade crossings pursuant to §91 of the New York Railroad Law
- LIRR issuance of SEQRA Findings and final determination relating to the Proposed Project
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) General Permit for Construction Activity (GP-0-15-002)
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) consultation on parks and historic resources
- LIPA/PSEG-LI approval of overhead utility relocations
- Consultation with the following entities with regard to aspects of the work within each locality:
  - Nassau County
  - Town of North Hempstead
  - Town of Oyster Bay
  - Village of Floral Park
  - Village of New Hyde Park
  - Village of Garden City
  - Village of Mineola
  - Village of Westbury

## **C. REQUIRED ELEMENTS OF THE EIS**

Both the draft and the final EIS shall comprise the following components:

- A description of the Proposed Project and a definition of its Study Area;
- A Problem Statement and Purpose and Need;
- A discussion of alternatives to the Proposed Project;
- A statement of existing environmental conditions within the Study Area;
- An analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Project, including its short-term, long-term, indirect and cumulative impacts;
- A description of mitigation measures proposed to minimize or avoid any significant adverse environmental impacts of the Proposed Project;
- An identification of any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources that would be attributable to implementation of the Proposed Project; and
- An identification of any significant adverse environmental impacts that cannot be avoided if the Proposed Project is implemented.

## ORGANIZATION AND EXPECTED CONTENT OF THE DEIS

### *COVER SHEET AND GENERAL INFORMATION*

The Cover Sheet shall identify: the Proposed Project; its location; the name, address, and phone number of the Lead Agency; the name, address, and phone number of the Preparer of the EIS including a Contact Person; the document as a Draft Environmental Impact Statement; the Date of Acceptance of the DEIS by the Lead Agency; and the date of the Public Hearing and the closing of the Public Comment Period.

Additional information, to be provided following the Cover Sheet, shall include: the name(s) and address(es) of the LIRR contacts; and the name(s) and address(es) of all consultants involved in the Proposed Project and their respective roles.

The DEIS shall include a list of all Involved and Interested Agencies to which copies of the DEIS and supporting material will be distributed.

A Table of Contents followed by a List of Tables and List of Figures, as well as an Executive Summary, shall be provided.

### *PROJECT DESCRIPTION*

#### A. Project Identification

1. The introduction will identify the document as the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed LIRR Expansion Project and describe the location of the Proposed Project.

#### B. Project Description

1. Project Corridor/Study Area—Information collected and presented in the DEIS will relate principally to the Main Line “Project Corridor” (also referred to as the “Study Area.”) The Project Corridor comprises the railroad right-of-way, station areas, and grade crossings from Floral Park to Hicksville and an approximately ¼-mile buffer along the right-of-way and ½-mile area around the station areas and grade crossings. Certain analyses, such as those for indirect impacts and environmental justice, may require information from an expanded Study Area. Other analyses may require a narrower Study Area.
2. Project Description—The DEIS will include all information necessary to describe the LIRR Expansion Project and its component parts. Information to be provided will include a description of the proposed plan, including the third track alignment, station modifications, and grade separation measures as well as construction phasing. The Project Description will set forth the environmental setting of the Project Corridor sufficient to understand the potential impacts of the Proposed Project and the alternatives.

The DEIS will support the narrative description of the Proposed Project and the Project Corridor with graphic depictions (e.g. site plans and Geographic Information Systems “GIS” mapping of resources). To ensure a realistic understanding of the scope of the Proposed Project, the DEIS will include renderings representative of project elements to show what the improvements would look like from view corridors within communities along the Project Corridor.



3. Project Purpose and Need—The DEIS will describe the purpose and need of the LIRR Expansion Project as stated above.
  4. Analysis Framework—The DEIS will assess two future analysis years: 2020, when the Proposed Project is expected to be completed and operational; and, 2040, reflecting 20 years after estimated time of completion, thereby accounting for impacts of the Proposed Project over a longer period of time. For each subject area, the DEIS will evaluate a future baseline condition that accounts for any changes anticipated between existing conditions and the analysis years.
- C. Summary of All Approvals Required and Responsible Agencies
- This section will identify all of the approvals required by various State, County, and Local agencies.
- D. Definition of Specific Terms
- This section will provide definitions for acronyms or technical terms used in the EIS including definitions of what constitutes an adverse impact and what constitutes a significant adverse impact.

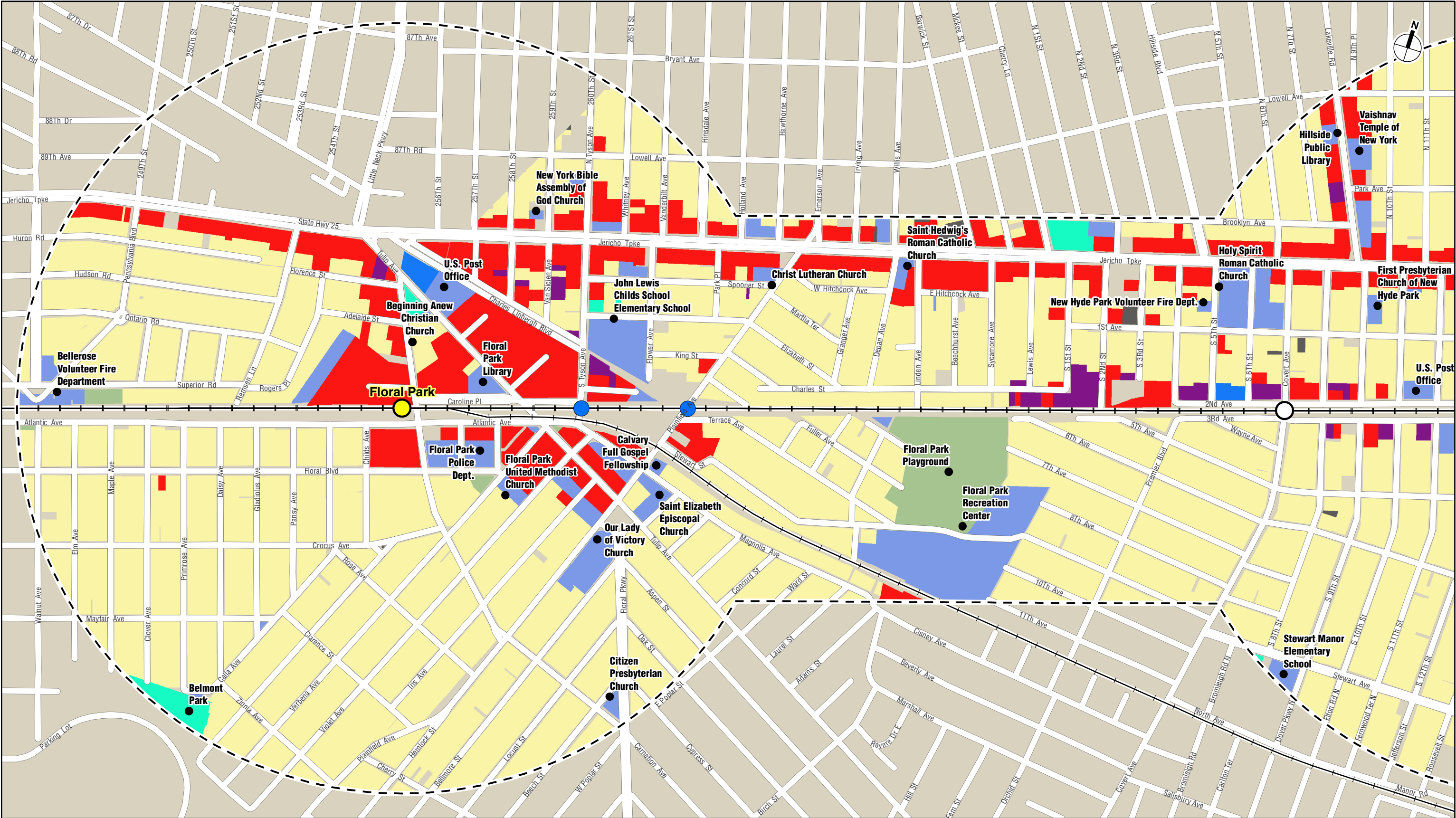
#### *LAND USE, COMMUNITY CHARACTER, AND PUBLIC POLICY*

##### A. Introduction

The goal of the Proposed Project is to be consistent with community plans and land use laws and regulations, even though the MTA LIRR, as a state agency, is not obligated to comply with local land use and zoning regulations or comprehensive plans. The DEIS will describe the existing character of the communities within the Project Corridor, and consider the potential beneficial and adverse impacts on that character as a result of the Proposed Project. Information to be analyzed and considered for this chapter will include: applicable land use and comprehensive plans, transportation plans, zoning codes, municipal ordinances, and an identification of other projects proposed throughout the Study Area.

##### B. Land Use, Community Character, and Public Policy

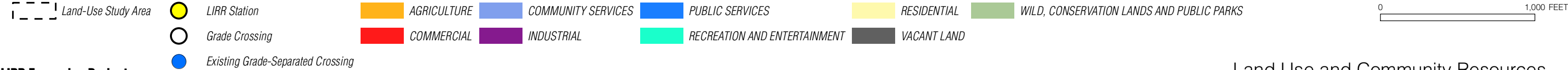
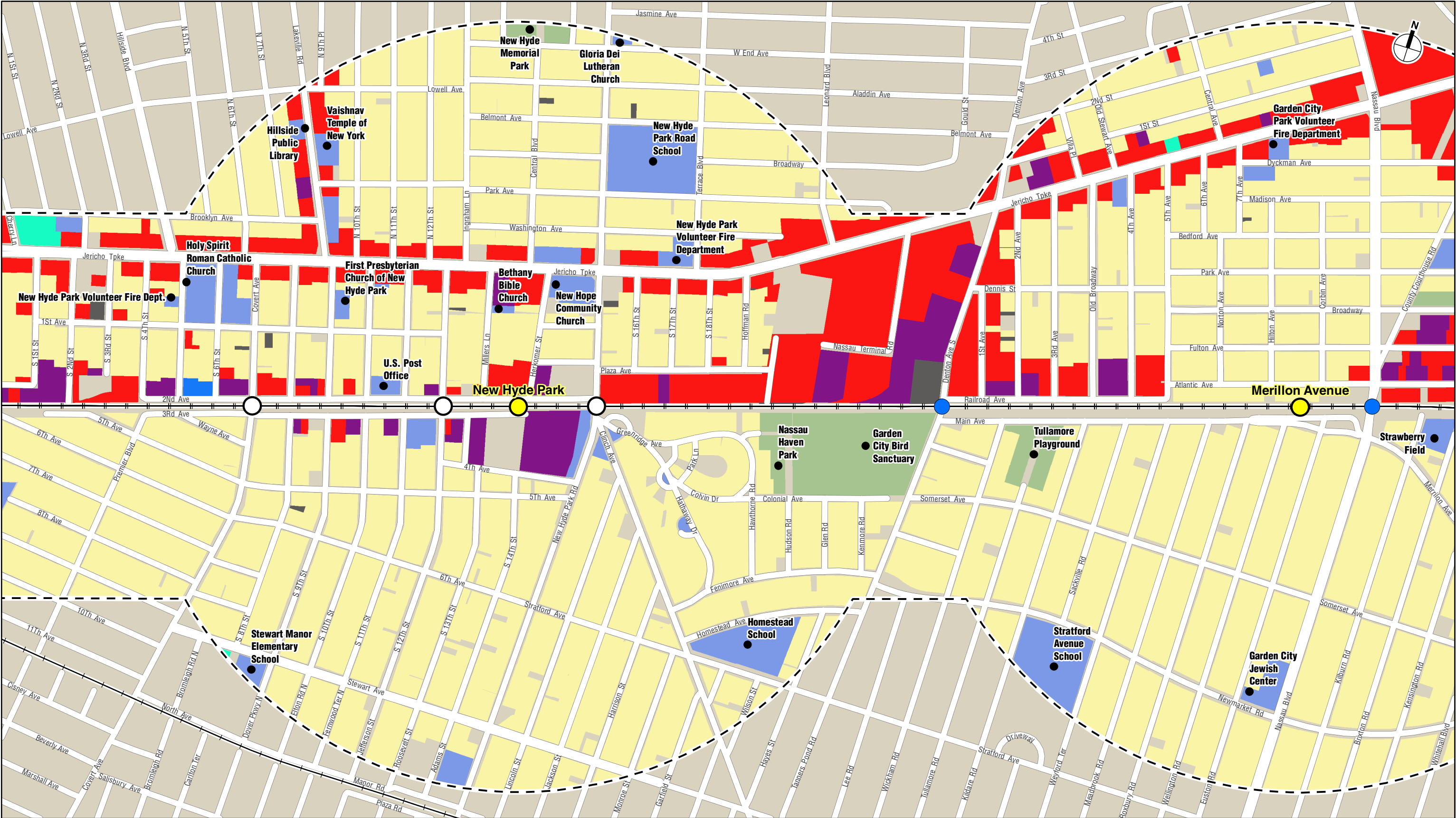
1. Existing Conditions—The DEIS will describe existing land uses and community character within the Project Corridor. The DEIS will include the location of, and community access to, police, fire, and emergency medical resources; hospitals; schools; parks and open spaces; and places of worship (see **Figures 45A through 45G**, Preliminary Land Use and Community Resources map). The DEIS also will summarize the relevant portions of applicable Comprehensive Plans and other land use and environmental regulations and policies. Specific plans or policy components addressing transportation or transit in general, or the LIRR in particular, will be highlighted. Further, the DEIS will describe the provision of emergency response services within the Study Area.
2. Potential Impacts of the Proposed Project—Based on an analysis of future baseline conditions, the DEIS will describe the compatibility of the Proposed Project with land uses and community character within the Study Area and assess potential impacts to land use patterns, specific community resources such as those depicted in **Figures 45A through 45G**, including emergency response services, or community character. The



LIRR Expansion Project  
Floral Park to Hicksville

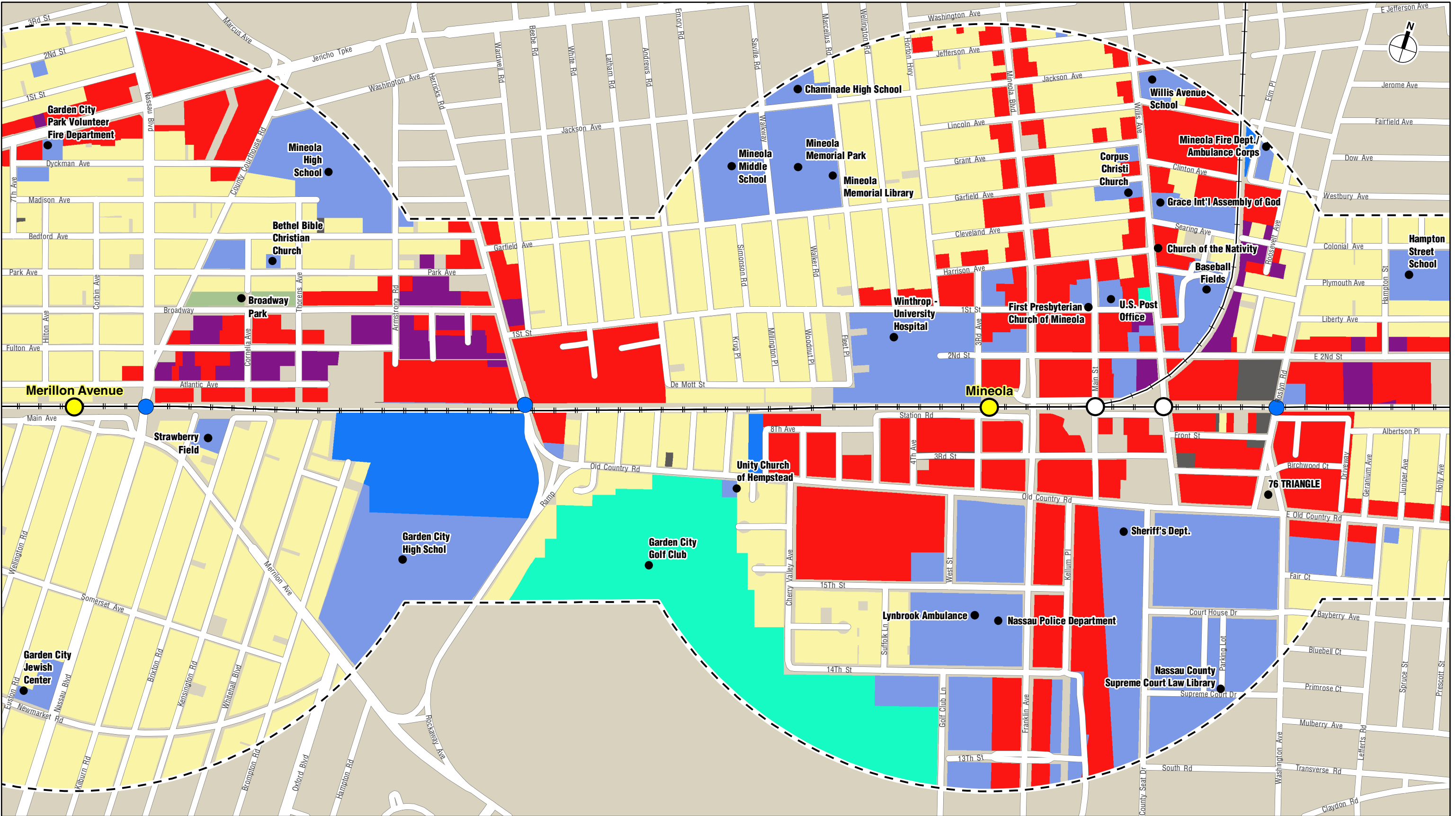
Land Use and Community Resources  
Figure 45A





LIRR Expansion Project  
Floral Park to Hicksville

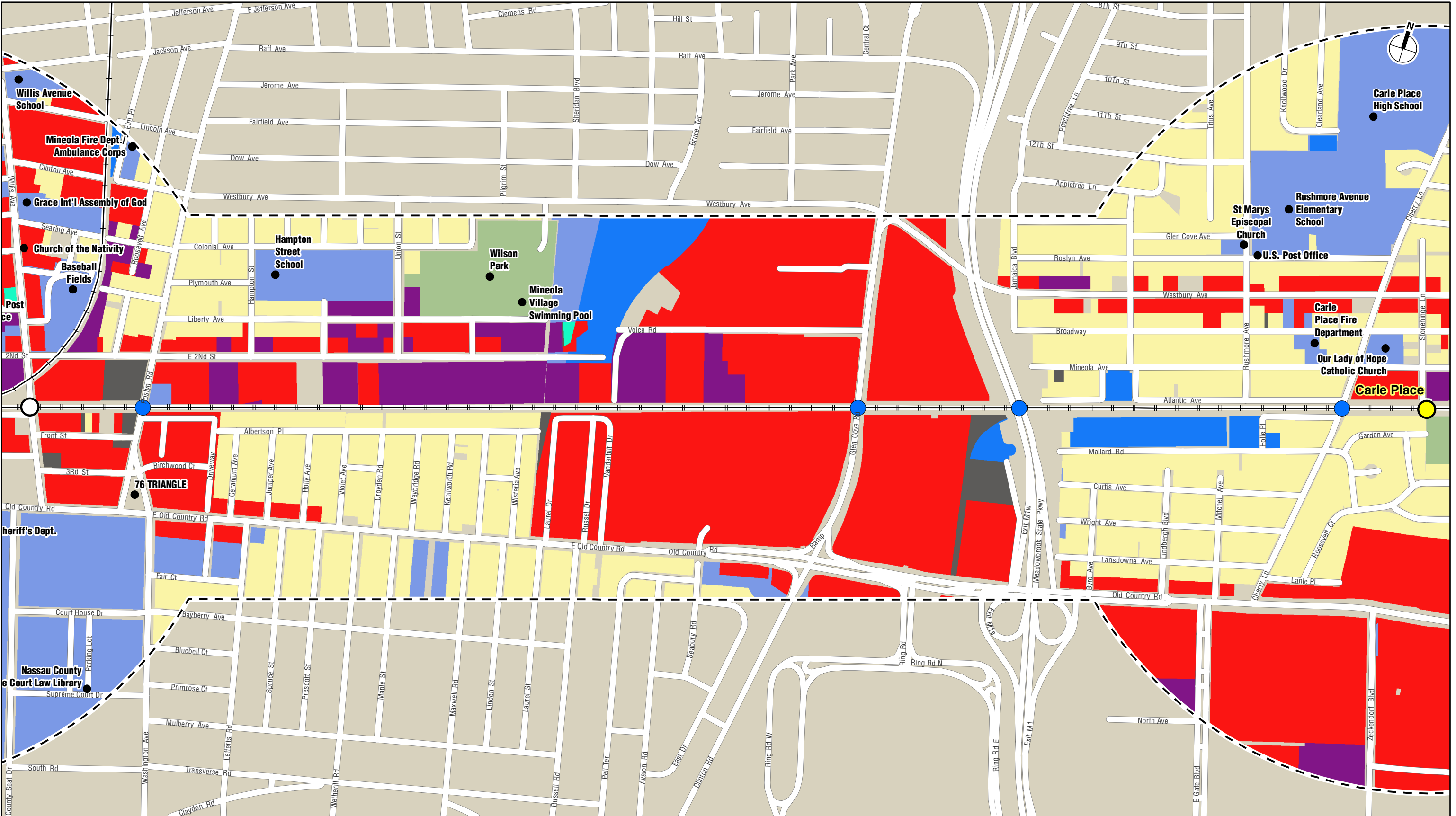
Land Use and Community Resources  
Figure 45B



**LIRR Expansion Project  
Floral Park to Hicksville**

Land Use and Community Resources  
**Figure 45C**





Land-Use Study Area

LIRR Station

Grade Crossing

Existing Grade-Separated Crossing

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

INDUSTRIAL

COMMUNITY SERVICES

PUBLIC SERVICES

RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

VACANT LAND

RESIDENTIAL

WILD, CONSERVATION LANDS AND PUBLIC PARKS

0

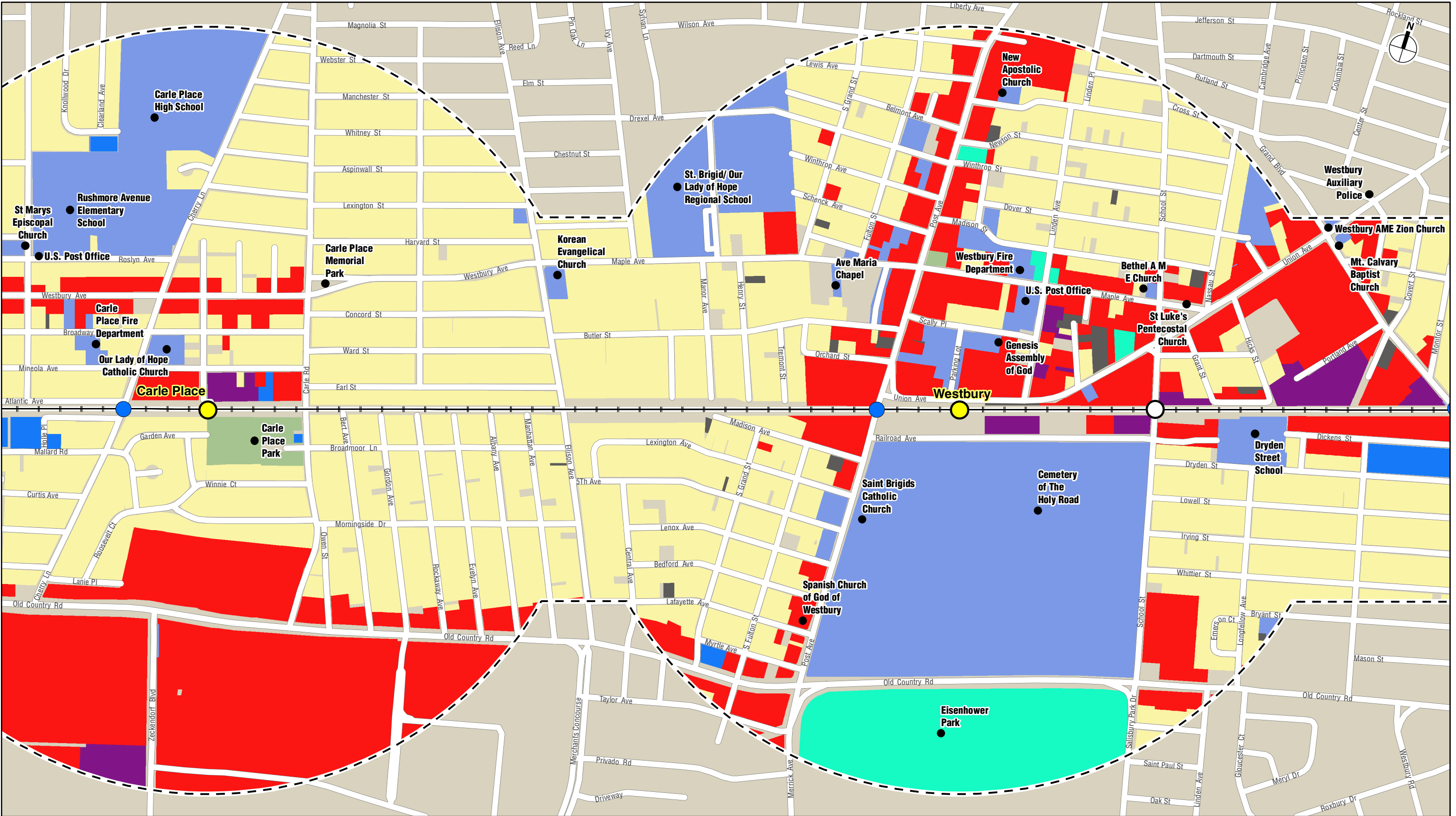
1,000 FEET

LIRR Expansion Project

Floral Park to Hicksville

Land Use and Community Resources

Figure 45D



**LIRR Expansion Project  
Floral Park to Hicksville**

Land-Use Study Area

● LIRR Station

○ Grade Crossing

● Existing Grade-Separated Crossing

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

INDUSTRIAL

COMMUNITY SERVICES

PUBLIC SERVICES

RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

VACANT LAND

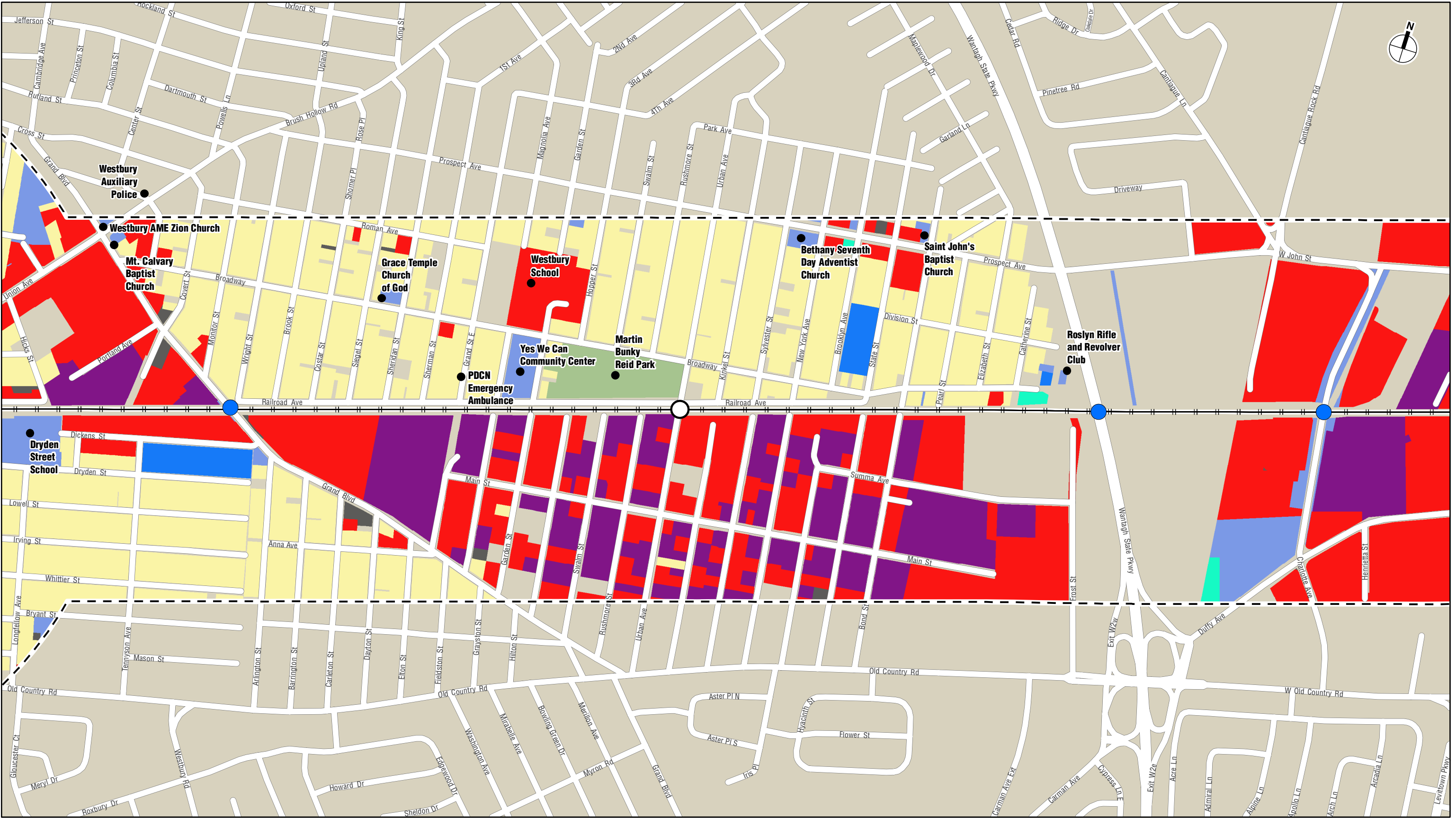
RESIDENTIAL

WILD, CONSERVATION LANDS AND PUBLIC PARKS

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Land Use and Community Resources  
**Figure 45E**





Land-Use Study Area

LIRR Station

Grade Crossing

Existing Grade-Separated Crossing

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

COMMUNITY SERVICES

INDUSTRIAL

PUBLIC SERVICES

RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

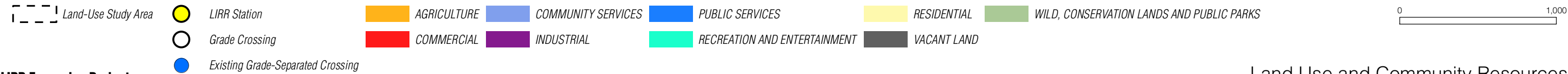
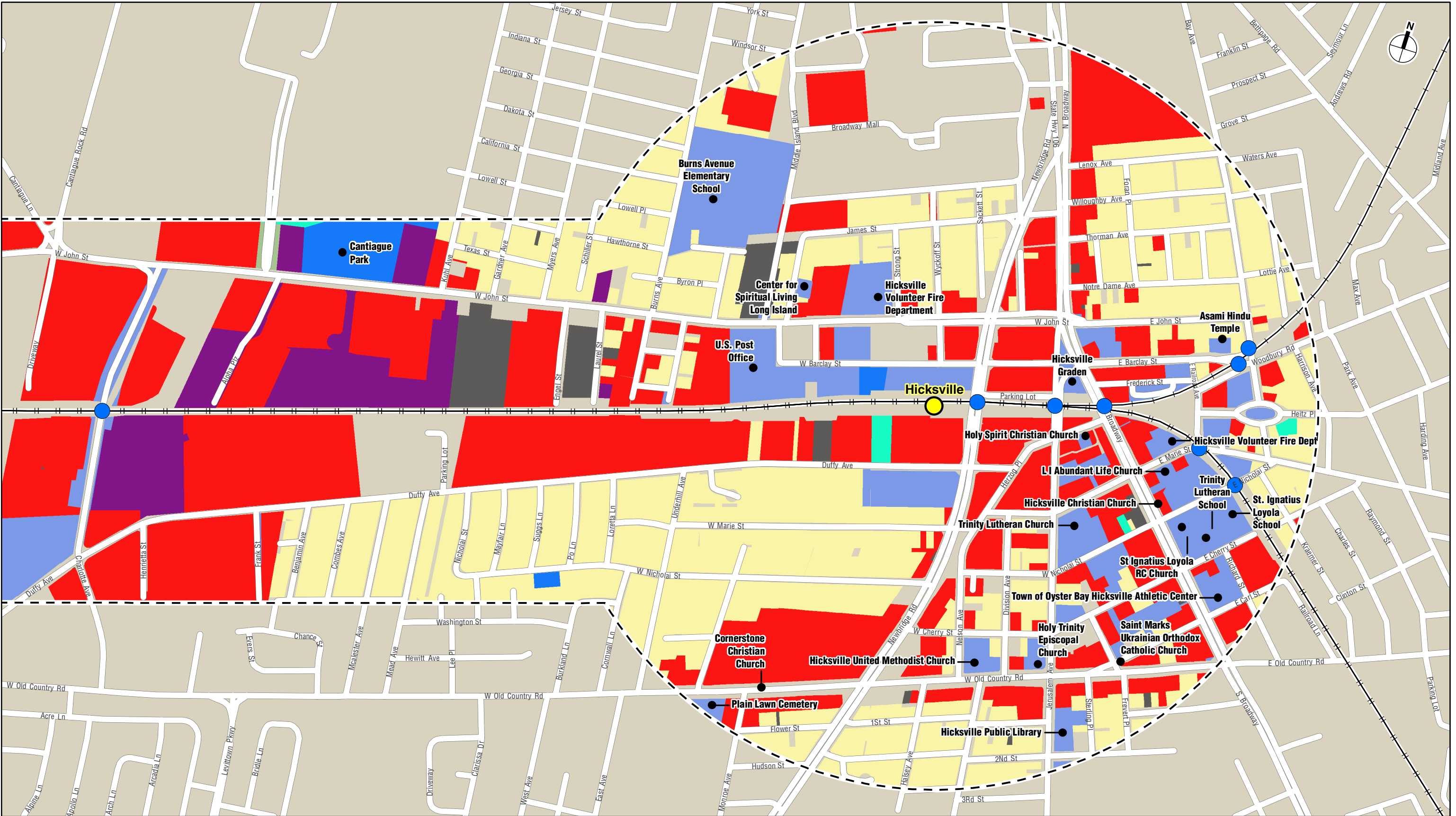
VACANT LAND

RESIDENTIAL

WILD, CONSERVATION LANDS AND PUBLIC PARKS

LIRR Expansion Project  
Floral Park to Hicksville

Land Use and Community Resources  
Figure 45F



**LIRR Expansion Project  
Floral Park to Hickville**

Land Use and Community Resources  
**Figure 45G**



DEIS will assess the compatibility of the Proposed Project with the State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act.

3. Mitigation Measures—If potential significant adverse impacts are identified, the DEIS will evaluate feasible and practical measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts.

## *SOCIOECONOMIC ANALYSIS*

### A. Introduction

The DEIS will include an assessment of potential socioeconomic impacts related to the LIRR Expansion Project. This assessment will consider economic conditions within the Study Area and how those conditions might be impacted as a result of the Proposed Project. The analysis will address commercial property displacements or relocations required, the tax implications of any such displacements or relocations, impacts to individual businesses, and impacts to the business climate in the Study Area in general. The DEIS will assess whether the removal of the grade crossings would affect roadway access to nearby properties and general mobility within parts of communities. The socioeconomic conditions assessment will consider whether any of the commercial property acquisitions and changes in roadway access could have direct or indirect adverse impacts on population, housing, and economic activities within the affected areas.

### B. Socioeconomics

1. Existing Conditions—The DEIS will describe existing socioeconomic conditions within the Study Area, describe the character of properties that comprise the Study Area, and identify business districts in that Study Area.
2. Potential Impacts of the Proposed Project—Based on an analysis of future baseline conditions, the DEIS will assess the Proposed Project's potential impacts to the Study Area in terms of socioeconomics. It is anticipated that most of the Proposed Project improvements would take place within the existing right-of-way established for the LIRR. However, some commercial property acquisition would be necessary to construct the Proposed Project. Most of the areas where this commercial property acquisition may be necessary would be in areas surrounding stations and where roadways, bridges, and underpasses cross the LIRR right-of-way.

The analysis will identify the commercial properties for which full acquisition would be required (currently estimated at fewer than 10), as well as commercial properties where partial acquisitions are necessary but where the goal will be to minimize the impacts on the affected businesses. The analysis will identify the ownership and characterize existing uses of those commercial properties. The analysis also will describe the compensation and relocation assistance that would be provided to displaced businesses by ESD and NYSDOT, with priority given to relocation within the same town or village where the displaced business currently operates. For the potential displacement of commercial uses, if any, the analysis will consider whether the Proposed Project would displace a business that is unusually important because its products or services are uniquely dependent on its location, or that serves a population uniquely dependent on its services in its present location. The analysis will estimate the potential loss of tax revenues in the jurisdictions where the properties are located (i.e., municipality, school district, and Nassau County) and whether the potential losses in tax revenues could adversely affect the ability of the jurisdiction(s) to provide municipal services.

The socioeconomic analysis will estimate the fiscal and economic benefits of the construction of the Proposed Project. The construction benefits analysis will be based on the IMPLAN (IMpact Analysis for PLANing) input-output modeling system. The following benefits that would occur during the overall construction period in Nassau County, and Suffolk County, and the State will be estimated:

- i. Direct employment (in full-time equivalents) created by the capital investment and indirect employment created by purchases of other goods and services during the construction period.
- ii. Wages and salaries generated by the direct and indirect employment.
- iii. Taxes generated during the construction period, including payroll taxes, corporate and business taxes, and miscellaneous taxes.
- iv. The total economic output, or the total demand for goods and services created by construction of the Proposed Project.

A qualitative description of potential socioeconomic benefits from operations will also be provided.

3. Mitigation Measures—If significant adverse socioeconomic impacts are identified, the DEIS will evaluate feasible and practical measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts.

## *ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE*

### *A. Introduction*

An environmental justice analysis is conducted to identify and address adverse and disproportionate impacts on minority and low-income communities. The proposed LIRR Expansion Project would extend across three municipalities in Nassau County with varying concentrations of minority and low-income communities. Based on NYSDEC thresholds, potential environmental justice communities in the Project Corridor will be evaluated. The environmental justice analysis will address and identify potential adverse and disproportionate impacts on these communities as well as other environmental justice communities within the Study Area. The analysis will consider all technical analysis areas included in the DEIS for a determination of impacts, recognizing that the impacts within minority or low-income populations may be different from impacts on the general population.

The analysis will be prepared using NYSDEC Commissioner Policy 29 (CP-29), Environmental Justice and Permitting as a guidance tool. The methodology set forth in CP-29 involves: (1) identifying potential adverse environmental impacts and the area to be affected (i.e., establishing a study area); (2) determining whether potential adverse environmental impacts are likely to affect a potential environmental justice area (i.e., whether low-income and/or minority populations are present in the study area); and (3) identifying whether potential adverse environmental impacts of the proposed action would disproportionately affect low-income and minority populations. As recommended by the CP-29 guidance, the environmental justice analysis will also: (4) identify the potential for cumulative environmental burdens in the Study Area; and (5) seek public participation from the affected community.



## B. Environmental Justice

1. Existing Conditions—Because the Proposed Project is linear, and falls within a densely developed portion of Nassau County, the environmental justice study area has been chosen to include the census block groups that either intersect the Project Corridor or have a majority of their geographic area within a ¼-mile from the Proposed Project.

For this analysis, data on race, ethnicity, and poverty status will be gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau's *American Community Survey (ACS) 2010–2014 5-Year Estimates*. For comparison purposes, data also will be compiled for the Study Area as a whole and Nassau County. Based on census data and CP-29 guidance, potential environmental justice areas are identified as follows:

*Minority Communities:* CP-29 guidance defines minorities to include American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asian and Pacific Islanders, African Americans or Black persons, and Hispanic persons. This environmental justice analysis also will consider minority populations to include persons who identified themselves as being either “some other race” or “two or more races.” According to CP-29 guidance, a “minority community” is present when 51.1 percent or more of the population is minority.

*Low-Income Communities:* The percent of individuals living below the poverty level in each census block group is used to identify low-income communities. CP-29 defines a low-income community to be any area where the low-income population (i.e., percent living below the poverty threshold) is equal to or greater than 23.59 percent of the total.

2. Potential Impacts of the Proposed Project—Based on an analysis of future baseline conditions, the DEIS will analyze potential impacts to environmental justice communities and determine if such impacts are disproportionate and adverse.
3. Mitigation Measures—If disproportionate and significant adverse impacts to environmental justice populations are identified, the DEIS will evaluate feasible and practical measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the impacts.

## VISUAL AND AESTHETIC RESOURCES

### A. Introduction

An analysis of potential impacts to visual and aesthetic resources will be conducted following the methodology of NYSDEC Program Policy, DEP-00-2, *Assessing and Mitigating Visual Impacts*. The DEIS will identify sensitive receptors as they are defined in DEP-00-2, including designated open spaces, historic resources, and natural or scenic areas. Potential visual impacts would follow DEP-00-2 guidance on evaluating visual impacts and aesthetic impacts as they are defined in DEP-00-2.

1. Existing Conditions—The DEIS will identify sensitive receptors within the Project Corridor and characterize views of the Main Line right-of-way, station areas, and grade crossings from identified sensitive receptors. The DEIS will also characterize prevalent land-forms, vegetative cover, and illuminated and non-illuminated areas along the Project Corridor.
2. Potential Impacts of the Proposed Project—Based on an analysis of future baseline conditions, the DEIS will assess potential visual and aesthetic changes of the Proposed Project from identified sensitive receptors within the Project Corridor, and whether any of these changes would be considered significant adverse impacts. The DEIS will

include representative renderings of proposed project elements, such as retaining walls, noise walls, relocated utility infrastructure, platform and station improvements and track alignment.

3. Mitigation Measures—If significant adverse impacts to visual and aesthetic resources are identified, the DEIS will evaluate feasible and practical measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts.

## *HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES*

### *A. Introduction*

The New York State Historic Preservation Act (NYSHPA) requires that historic and archaeological resources be afforded varying levels of protection depending upon the quality of the resources and the nature of any potential impact. An analysis of impacts to these resources, completed in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), would be undertaken as part of the DEIS. Potential impacts would be considered within the Proposed Project's Area of Potential Effect (APE), which would be developed through consultation with the SHPO.

### *B. Historic Resources*

1. Existing Conditions—Using information from the SHPO and from local government historians, the DEIS will identify and describe any historic resources that are included in or eligible for inclusion in the State or National Register of Historic Places (S/NR) that are within 100 feet of the railroad right-of-way or within 500 feet of any grade crossing or station; this APE is preliminary, and subject to approval by the SHPO. Any such resources would be described textually, shown photographically, and included in GIS mapping.
2. Potential Impacts of the Proposed Project—Based on an analysis of future baseline conditions, the DEIS will describe potential direct and indirect (contextual) impacts to identified historic resources resulting from implementation of the Proposed Project.
3. Mitigation Measures—If significant adverse impacts to historic resources are identified, measures to mitigate the impacts would be developed in consultation with appropriate agencies.

### *C. Archaeological Resources*

1. Existing Conditions—Using information from prior site studies as well as information contained on the OPRHP online research tool, the Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS), which allows the approved user to access known archaeological site locations, and sensitivity maps, an archaeological assessment of the APE will be prepared. Through completion of the assessment the DEIS will determine if the Study Area is likely to contain archaeological resources. If, preliminarily, it appears that such resources are likely to occur in the Study Area, an archaeological subsurface testing survey would be developed to test for the presence or absence of archaeological resources. Consultation with the OPRHP is an essential part of the compliance process under SEQRA, and would enable the DEIS to better identify any areas of archaeological significance within the Study Area that would merit further consideration and analysis.



2. Potential Impacts of the Proposed Project—Based on an analysis of future baseline conditions, the DEIS will assess potential impacts to archaeological resources, if any, resulting from implementation of the Proposed Project.
3. Mitigation Measures—If significant adverse impacts to archaeological resources are identified, measures to mitigate the impacts would be developed in consultation with appropriate agencies.

## *NATURAL RESOURCES*

### *A. Introduction*

The majority of the Project Corridor passes through heavily developed portions of Nassau County. Natural resources are limited throughout much of the Project Corridor, but some sections are vegetated and contain natural features, or are immediately adjacent to areas with sensitive natural resources (e.g., Garden City Bird Sanctuary). The natural resources that potentially may be impacted by implementation of the Proposed Project include various types of vegetative communities, wildlife and habitat, and special status species. The DEIS will contain an analysis of potential impacts to these resources.

### *B. Natural Resources*

1. Existing Conditions—The DEIS will characterize the existing condition of natural resources, including wetlands, floodplains, farmland soils, groundwater and sole source aquifers, aquatic resources, plants, wildlife, and threatened and endangered species in the Study Area on the basis of reconnaissance surveys as well as existing information that is available in published literature, government databases, and other sources (e.g., NYSDEC freshwater wetland maps, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps and IPaC System list of federally threatened and endangered species, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps, NYSDEC Breeding Bird Survey and Herp Atlas Project, New York Natural Heritage Program database of federally and state-listed species). Identified resources will be depicted textually and graphically.
2. Potential Impacts of the Proposed Project—Based on an analysis of future baseline conditions, the DEIS will assess potential impacts from the Proposed Project to natural resources where they occur within or in the vicinity of the Proposed Project's limits of disturbance along the Project Corridor. Direct and indirect impacts from both construction and operation of the Proposed Project will be assessed by considering the effects of stormwater runoff and changes in impervious surface coverage on the quality and recharge of the sole source aquifer, effects of vegetation clearing on plant and wildlife communities and threatened and endangered species, and the effects of noise disturbances to wildlife, including threatened and endangered species. Potential impacts to wetlands, floodplains, prime farmland soils, and aquatic resources also will be evaluated.
3. Mitigation Measures—If significant adverse impacts to natural resources are identified, the EIS will evaluate feasible and practical measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the impacts.

*CONTAMINATED MATERIALS**A. Introduction*

Considering the heavily developed character and mix of land uses in the Study Area, the existence of contaminated soils and groundwater will be evaluated in the DEIS. The DEIS will identify the methodology for addressing any such contaminated soils if known to exist in the Study Area or discovered during construction.

*B. Contaminated Materials*

1. Existing Conditions—A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) will be prepared to evaluate the potential for environmental impacts in the Study Area. The Phase I ESA will be prepared in general accordance with the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) 1527-13 guidelines. Using the information obtained from the Phase I ESA, including a records search of State and Federal databases, the DEIS will identify known locations of contamination and types of contaminants likely to be found where ground disturbance and new development would occur as part of the Proposed Project. The Phase I ESA would include evaluation of the LIRR ROW and provide a description of chemicals known or believed to be used for maintenance of the ROW. The DEIS will also discuss the laws and regulations governing any potential transport of hazardous materials by NY&A Railway along the Main Line corridor.
2. Potential Impacts of the Proposed Project—Based on an analysis of future baseline conditions, the DEIS will identify potential impacts of the Proposed Project with respect to hazardous and non-hazardous contaminated materials.
3. Mitigation Measures—If significant adverse impacts related to hazardous and non-hazardous contaminated materials are identified, the DEIS will include a preliminary evaluation of potential feasible and practical measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the impacts.

*INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES**A. Introduction*

The DEIS will identify existing water supply, sanitary wastewater, and storm water infrastructure, and the electricity and natural gas utilities serving the existing LIRR stations and within areas of potential construction activity. Information regarding the location, use and capacity of existing utilities will be obtained from the utility providers as required.

*B. Water/Wastewater*

1. Existing Conditions—The DEIS will describe existing water supply and sanitary sewer infrastructure serving the existing stations, where mapping is available.
2. Potential Impacts of the Proposed Project—Based on an analysis of future baseline conditions, the DEIS will identify any potential impacts to water and wastewater services.
3. Mitigation Measures—If significant adverse impacts in terms of water/wastewater are identified, the DEIS will evaluate feasible and practical measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts.



**C. Energy Usage (Electricity and Gas)**

1. Existing Conditions—The DEIS will describe existing electricity and gas service and infrastructure location and conditions within the Study Area.
2. Potential Impacts of the Proposed Project—Based on an analysis of future baseline conditions, the DEIS will quantify anticipated electricity and gas demand from the construction and operation of the Proposed Project and determine if the anticipated demand will exceed available network capacity.
3. Mitigation Measures—If significant adverse impacts in terms of energy usage are identified, the DEIS will evaluate feasible and practical measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts.

**D. Stormwater Management**

1. Existing Conditions—The DEIS will describe the existing drainage patterns at LIRR tracks, crossings, and station areas within the Project Corridor, and any stormwater collection and treatment systems currently serving these facilities.
2. Potential Impacts of the Proposed Project—The Proposed Project would require implementation of drainage systems to properly control stormwater flow. The DEIS will describe the elements of the drainage systems to be included to manage stormwater flows along the railroad right-of-way, at station areas, and at grade crossings.
3. Mitigation Measures—The DEIS will discuss possible methods for mitigating stormwater impacts that may result from the Proposed Project.

**TRANSPORTATION****A. Introduction**

The DEIS will address passenger rail operations in the corridor and will evaluate both positive and adverse impacts. The DEIS will consider whether the Proposed Project would create adverse impacts on vehicular traffic, parking, pedestrian connectivity, or traffic safety once it is built and operational by comparing conditions with the Proposed Project to conditions without the Proposed Project. This will be done for both Year 2020 and Year 2040 conditions. The assessment of Year 2040 conditions reflects the significant increase in train traffic that will occur in 2023, when the East Side Access Project is projected to be completed.

In addition, the DEIS will discuss how the Proposed Project would provide substantial transportation benefits to Long Island, including an assessment of potential beneficial impacts on rail service, vehicular traffic, pedestrian, parking, and traffic safety and emergency response. Should adverse impacts be identified, the DEIS will then further evaluate the ability of additional transportation system improvements to mitigate those impacts. This will include a wide range of traffic capacity improvements such as the installation of new traffic signals where needed, rechannelization and re-striping of intersections to increase capacity, signal phasing and timing modifications, modifications to parking regulations to provide additional capacity if needed, prohibiting turns at key intersections if needed, and other traffic engineering improvements. The DEIS will provide an overview of the regional transportation network in the Main Line corridor and an assessment of existing conditions, Future Without the Proposed Project conditions, and Future With the Proposed Project conditions.

**B. LIRR Service, Operations, and Ridership**

The DEIS will describe existing LIRR service along the Main Line corridor focusing on frequency of service for each of the stations from Floral Park through Hicksville, and describe how the frequency of train service would be expected to change under Future Without the Proposed Project and Future With the Proposed Project conditions. It will describe existing rail operations and capacity constraints in the corridor with two-track operation; identify anticipated service delays and potential measures to mitigate these delays under Future Without the Proposed Project as well as anticipated improvements and benefits in the Future with the Proposed Project; identify the number and duration of crossing gate activations at each of the seven grade crossing locations and the percentage of time that gates are in the “down position”; identify the existing ridership at each of the stations from Floral Park through Hicksville and projected ridership increases; and describe projected operational benefits to LIRR service and riders with the Proposed Project in place.

**C. Bus Service**

The DEIS will describe the bus routes serving each of the stations from Floral Park through Hicksville and bus routes that parallel the corridor and which provide alternative transit service to the LIRR and their frequencies of service.

**D. Vehicular Traffic**

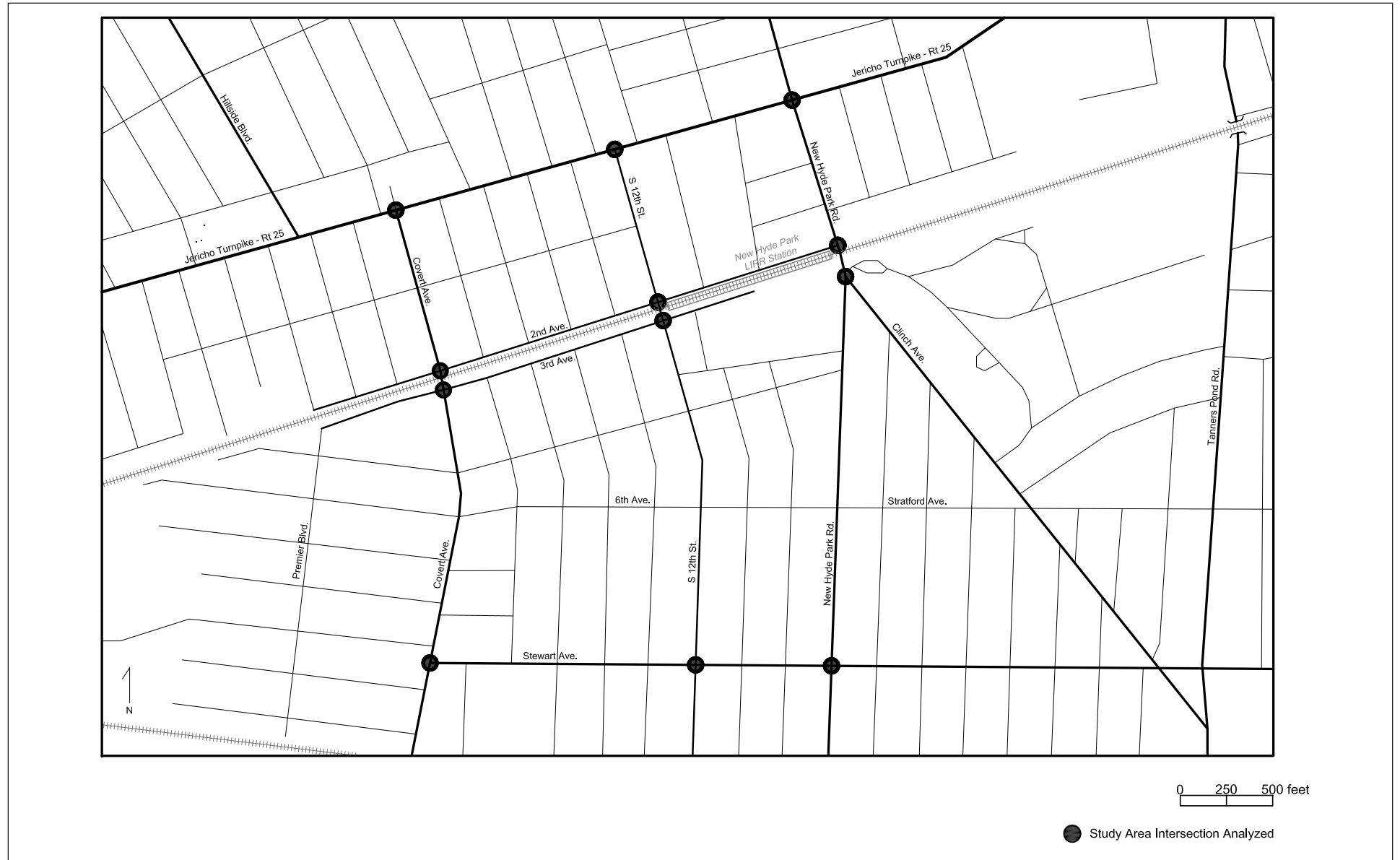
Traffic analyses will be conducted in the New Hyde Park, Mineola, and Westbury/New Cassel areas that may be affected by grade crossing eliminations, to evaluate potentially improved traffic flow as well as potential traffic diversions that would result from grade crossing eliminations being proposed as part of the Proposed Project, or increases in traffic generated by new station ridership should such increases be substantial, or both. For the New Hyde Park and Mineola station areas, these effects would be produced by both grade crossing eliminations and new station ridership under projected future conditions. For the Westbury/New Cassel area, these effects would be primarily produced by grade crossing eliminations, but could also include effects nearer to the station. Should projections indicate that other Main Line stations would have substantial ridership increases as a result of increased Main Line service, they will be addressed in the DEIS as well.

1. Existing Conditions—The DEIS will define traffic study areas, and specific traffic count and analysis locations at New Hyde Park, Mineola, and Westbury/New Cassel as listed below and as shown in **Figures 46 through 48**.

*New Hyde Park*

- New Hyde Park Road and Jericho Turnpike
- New Hyde Park Road and Second Avenue
- New Hyde Park Road and Clinch Avenue and Greenridge Avenue
- New Hyde Park Road and Stewart Avenue
- Covert Avenue and Jericho Turnpike
- Covert Avenue and Second Avenue
- Covert Avenue and Third Avenue
- Covert Avenue and Stewart Avenue
- South 12th Street and Jericho Turnpike
- South 12th Street and Second Avenue
- South 12th Street and Third Avenue











- South 12th Street and Stewart Avenue

Mineola

- Main Street and First Street
- Main Street and Second Street
- Main Street and Front Street/Station Plaza (north side of tracks)
- Main Street and Front Street (south side of tracks)
- Main Street and Third Street
- Main Street and Old Country Road
- Willis Avenue and First Street
- Willis Avenue and Second Street
- Willis Avenue and Front Street
- Willis Avenue and Third Street
- Willis Avenue and Old Country Road
- Mineola Boulevard and First Street
- Mineola Boulevard and Second Street
- Mineola Boulevard and Old Country Road
- Roslyn Road and Second Street
- Roslyn Road and Old Country Road

Westbury/New Cassel

- School Street and Maple Avenue
- School Street and Union Avenue
- School Street and Railroad Avenue
- School Street and Old Country Road
- Urban Avenue and Prospect Avenue
- Urban Avenue and Broadway
- Urban Avenue and Railroad Avenue
- Urban Avenue and Main Street
- Urban Avenue and Old Country Road
- Grand Boulevard and Old Country Road

Traffic counts and physical inventories will be collected at each of the above intersections during weekday morning, midday (for Mineola intersections only), and evening peak periods. Where recent traffic counts are available, they will be used. Where new traffic counts are needed they will include through and turning movement counts. In addition to traffic counts, queue lengths and delays will be recorded for each intersection affected by LIRR grade crossing operations.

The DEIS will identify the weekday morning and evening peak hours to be analyzed and present traffic volume maps for each of the three study areas. For the Mineola area, weekday midday analyses will also be conducted.

The DEIS will evaluate existing traffic conditions for each of the intersections being analyzed using appropriate and accepted industry software such as Synchro and provide summary tables showing existing volume-to-capacity (v/c) ratios, average vehicle delays, and levels of service for each intersection analyzed for each traffic movement or lane group and the overall intersection.

2. Potential Impacts of the Proposed Project—Based on an analysis of future baseline conditions, the DEIS will develop future traffic volumes with and without the Proposed



Project in place. Future traffic conditions Without the Proposed Project will include an annual background traffic growth rate of 0.5 percent per year, traffic generated by significant development projects and any roadway modifications within the traffic study areas, and, for Year 2040 conditions, additional traffic generated to and from the three LIRR stations with East Side Access in place. Future conditions Without the Proposed Project also will include increased crossing gate down times which would result in increased traffic queuing and delays with the gates in the “down” position for longer periods of time Without the Proposed Project.

Future conditions with the Proposed Project will analyze conditions with grade crossings eliminated at all seven locations, which would eliminate queuing and delays at those locations. It also will include changes in traffic patterns that would occur as a result of traffic diversions occurring as a result of grade crossing eliminations, additional station ridership (if any) projected by the LIRR, new parking facilities that would be built as part of the Proposed Project at New Hyde Park and Mineola, and potential reductions and/or additions in on-street or off-street parking created by the Proposed Project. It will evaluate conditions for the intersections being analyzed based on additional LIRR train operations, elimination of gate-down time with the Proposed Project, additional station-oriented traffic, and/or changed traffic patterns and on intersection geometric improvements needed to support grade crossing eliminations.

The DEIS will identify potential adverse traffic impacts based on criteria used on other major transportation projects such as the LIRR East Side Access Project, and identify where traffic benefits would occur based on improved traffic flow effectuated by grade crossing eliminations.

In addition, the DEIS will evaluate emergency vehicle response times at each of the three study areas under existing conditions, Future Without the Proposed Project condition, and the decrease in delay in the Future With the Proposed Project conditions with all seven grade crossings eliminated.

3. Mitigation Measures—Should significant adverse impacts be identified, measures to mitigate those impacts will be identified and evaluated. Such measures could include roadway or intersection re-striping to increase capacity, new traffic signals at currently unsignalized intersections, signal phasing and timing modifications, intersection channelization improvements, turn prohibitions, or other measures to increase intersection traffic capacity. The DEIS will identify the jurisdictions responsible for implementing such measures.

#### E. Parking

1. Existing Conditions—The DEIS will inventory the supply of existing parking within public parking lots and garages that serve LIRR commuters at affected stations, and inventory on-street parking locations that are also used by LIRR commuters and current posted parking regulations at those stations. This will include the location, capacity, and utilization of these parking facilities on weekdays.
2. Potential Impacts of the Proposed Project—The analysis of future conditions Without the Proposed Project will include projected future increases in parking demand resulting from growth in LIRR ridership. Based on that analysis of future baseline conditions, the DEIS will determine changes in parking supply and demand with the Proposed Project. This will include any station area or other on-street or off-street parking reductions

resulting from the Proposed Project and any grade crossing eliminations, and will also include additional new parking facilities that would be built as part of the Proposed Project at New Hyde Park and Mineola. The DEIS will describe options for providing additional parking within the Project Corridor including Hicksville. The DEIS will address net changes in parking supply at the three traffic study area stations, net changes in parking demand, and residential or commercial parking losses that may result from the Proposed Project, and identify potential parking shortfalls resulting from the Proposed Project. Should parking shortfalls be found to result from the Proposed Project, means of augmenting parking will be evaluated.

#### F. Pedestrian Connectivity

The DEIS will identify pedestrian access patterns at the New Hyde Park, Merillon Avenue Mineola, Carle Place, and Westbury station areas and at the seven existing grade crossing locations. This will consist of the volumes of pedestrians that cross from one side of the LIRR tracks to the other during the weekday morning and evening peak periods. Midday pedestrian access patterns and volumes will also be addressed for Mineola. It will determine the extent to which pedestrian crossing volumes would increase under the Future Without the Proposed Project condition. The DEIS will assess how pedestrian crossings would be improved under the Future With the Proposed Project condition, primarily due to grade crossing eliminations. The DEIS will provide descriptions as to how and where pedestrians would cross from one side of the LIRR tracks to the other and identify any connectivity issues. Safety considerations will be addressed under “Vehicular and Pedestrian Safety” below. Adverse impacts to pedestrian connectivity would be addressed through the development of suitable mitigation measures.

#### G. Vehicular and Pedestrian Safety

The DEIS will present crash history analyses at each of the seven grade crossings considered for elimination and at nearby intersections affected by grade crossing operations. Ten years of crash records will be evaluated at the seven grade crossings; three years of crash records will be evaluated at additional key roadway segments and intersections. The DEIS will then assess the potential reduction in crashes and improvement in safety that could occur with grade crossing eliminations with the Proposed Project and identify additional safety-related measures that have the potential to improve conditions and reduce the number of crashes at the key roadway segments and intersections in the three study areas.

### *AIR QUALITY*

#### A. Introduction

The DEIS will assess potential impacts to air quality associated with mobile sources (vehicles) and stationary sources related to the Proposed Project. Because the Proposed Project would not increase diesel locomotives for passenger or freight rail service no analysis of potential impacts from additional diesel locomotives is necessary.

The DEIS will describe existing ambient air quality in the Study Area based on data obtained from NYSDEC’s Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Network and the latest NYSDEC information regarding the status of the State Implementation Plan (SIP) and



attainment status. The DEIS will describe potential changes to air quality that are expected independent of the Proposed Project.

**B. Stationary Source Analysis**

The DEIS will qualitatively assess the potential for any significant adverse impacts from stationary sources, if applicable, including parking garages, related to motor vehicles.

**C. Mobile Source Carbon Monoxide (CO) Hot Spot Analysis**

The need for a CO microscale analysis will be determined using the procedures in the NYSDOT Environmental Manual (TEM). If needed, the CO microscale analysis will be conducted using the procedures in the TEM and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) models and guidance.

**D. The DEIS will consider the applicability of the USEPA's Clean Air Act transportation conformity regulations to the Proposed Project.**

**E. The DEIS will assess the Proposed Project's potential impacts related to particulate matter from trains.**

**F. Mitigation Measures—If significant adverse air quality impacts are identified, the DEIS will evaluate feasible and practical measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the impacts.**

**G. Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSATs) Analysis**

Potential impacts in terms of MSATs will be conducted by following the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) 2012 guidance developed for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process for highway projects and FHWA 2016 quantitative MSAT analysis guidance, if applicable to the Proposed Project, based on the annual average daily traffic (AADT) forecasts within the roadway network in the Study Area.

If a quantitative analysis is triggered, emissions for severe primary MSATs will be predicted using the Motor Vehicle Emission Simulator (MOVES) 2014a for existing and future conditions under both the Without the Proposed Project and With the Proposed Project options.

***NOISE AND VIBRATION***

**A. Introduction**

The DEIS will contain an assessment of the Proposed Project's potential beneficial and adverse impacts relating to noise and vibrations. Beneficial impacts relating to noise could result from grade crossing elimination because it would eliminate use of train horns and grade crossing warning bells while adverse noise and vibration impacts could result from increased train traffic in peak hours. A noise study will identify sensitive land uses (e.g., residences, open spaces, and places of worship - also referred to as "receptors") that could be affected by noise and vibration resulting from the Proposed Project.

**B. Noise and Vibration**

1. Existing Conditions—The DEIS will determine existing noise levels and noise characteristics within the Study Area by conducting field measurements of existing noise levels at sensitive receptor locations (e.g., adjoining residences). At residences and other Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Category 2 receptors, measurements will be

conducted during various times of the day to document the baseline 24-hour day-night noise levels ( $L_{dn}$ ). Similarly, peak-hour equivalent noise levels ( $L_{eq}$ ) would be measured at non-residential or institutional receptors (FTA Categories 1 and 3 receptors) such as laboratories, outdoor amphitheaters, schools, libraries, and places of worship (see **Figures 49A through 49D** for measurement locations). All measurements will be made using a Type II noise analyzer or better and will include A-weighted noise levels ( $L_{dn}$  or  $L_{eq}$ ) for comparison with applicable criteria. Where necessary, measurements will be supplemented by mathematical model results to determine an appropriate base of existing noise levels. The DEIS will determine existing vibration levels attributable to current uses within the Study Area based on default FTA guidelines or from the previous measurements conducted along the Project Corridor in 2008 (if available).

2. Potential Impacts of the Proposed Project—Based on an analysis of future baseline conditions, the DEIS will determine noise and vibration levels at each noise-sensitive receptor location within the applicable FTA screening distance. FTA *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment* guidelines and methodologies will be used. The predicted noise and vibration levels will be compared with the FTA's relative increase criteria to determine the potential for impacts. It should be noted that since proposed grade separations would create underpasses at existing grade crossings, vehicular noise would be expected to decrease, according to FHWA Procedure for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise (23 CFR 772). As a result of grade separation, train noise would also decrease, given that trains would no longer be required to sound their horns at these locations and warning signals would no longer sound.
3. Mitigation Measures—If significant adverse noise impacts are identified, the DEIS will identify, evaluate and recommend measures to reduce noise and vibration impacts to within acceptable levels if necessary.

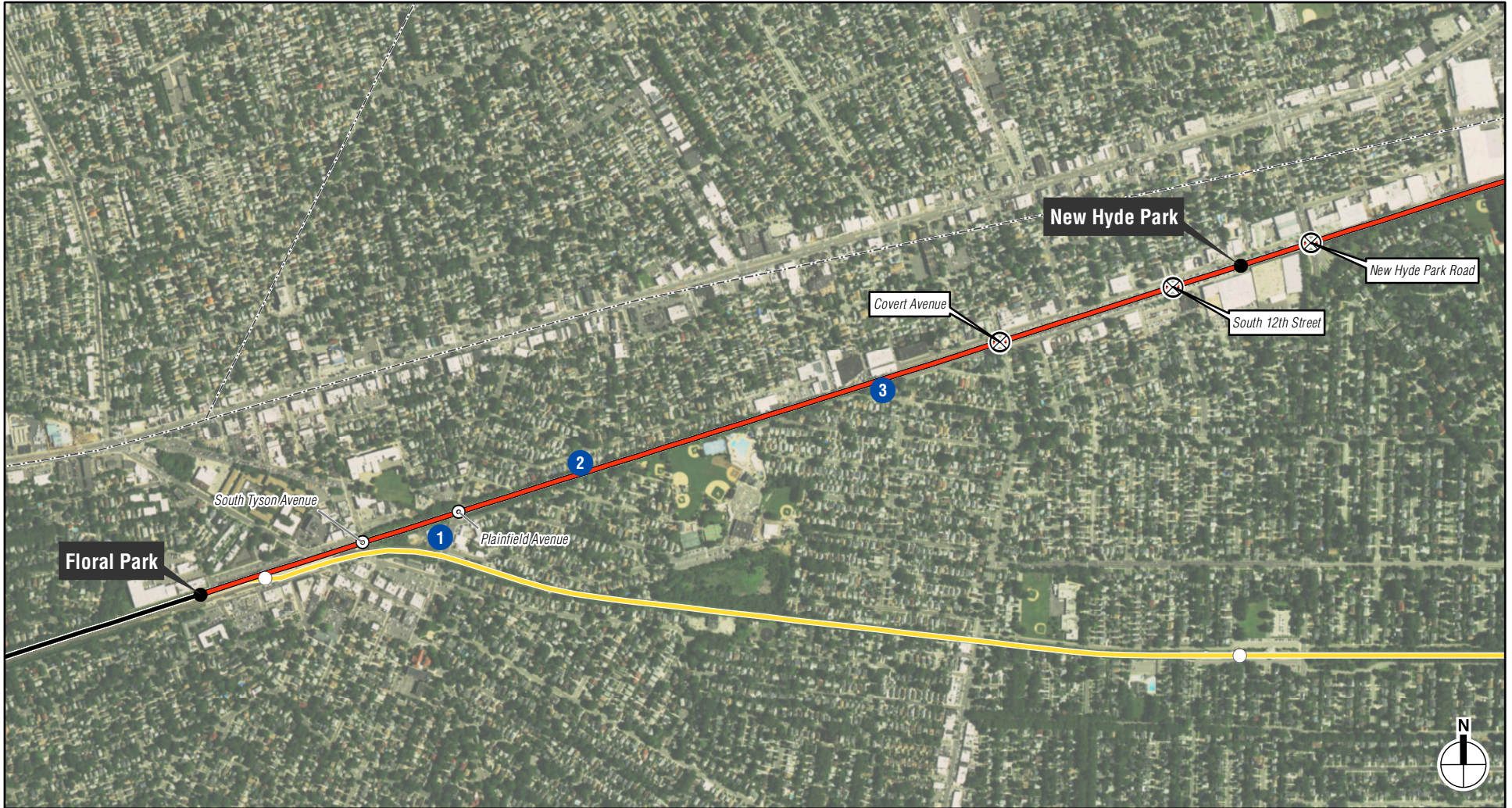
### CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

The Proposed Project would be designed to minimize construction impacts by expediting the construction schedule. Expedited construction techniques would result in shorter construction periods. Expedited construction methods at grade crossings that include complete temporary road closure would target approximately six months for construction. Expedited construction measures at grade crossings that include only partial temporary road closure would target approximately nine months for construction.

The construction assessment will describe the construction schedule and logistics for major project elements, discuss anticipated on-site activities, and provide estimates of the number of construction workers and truck deliveries. This assessment also will identify and describe potential construction staging, storage and parking areas, and potential construction easements (although the responsibility for identification of these areas and all related permitting ultimately resides with the selected contractor), safety and security measures to protect the public during construction, potential disruption to station access and existing LIRR service, and expected construction work hours.

The DEIS will describe potential construction-related impacts and measures to be taken to minimize impacts to potentially affected properties throughout the duration of construction. In particular, the DEIS will consider:





- Project Site
- Monitoring Location (Approximate Location)
- ⊗ Grade Crossings
- ⊙ Grade Separated Crossings (Bridges)
- LIRR Station
- LIRR Main Line
- LIRR Branches
- Hempstead Branch

0 2,000 FEET

**LIRR Expansion Project  
Floral Park to Hicksville**

Noise Monitoring Locations  
**Figure 49A**

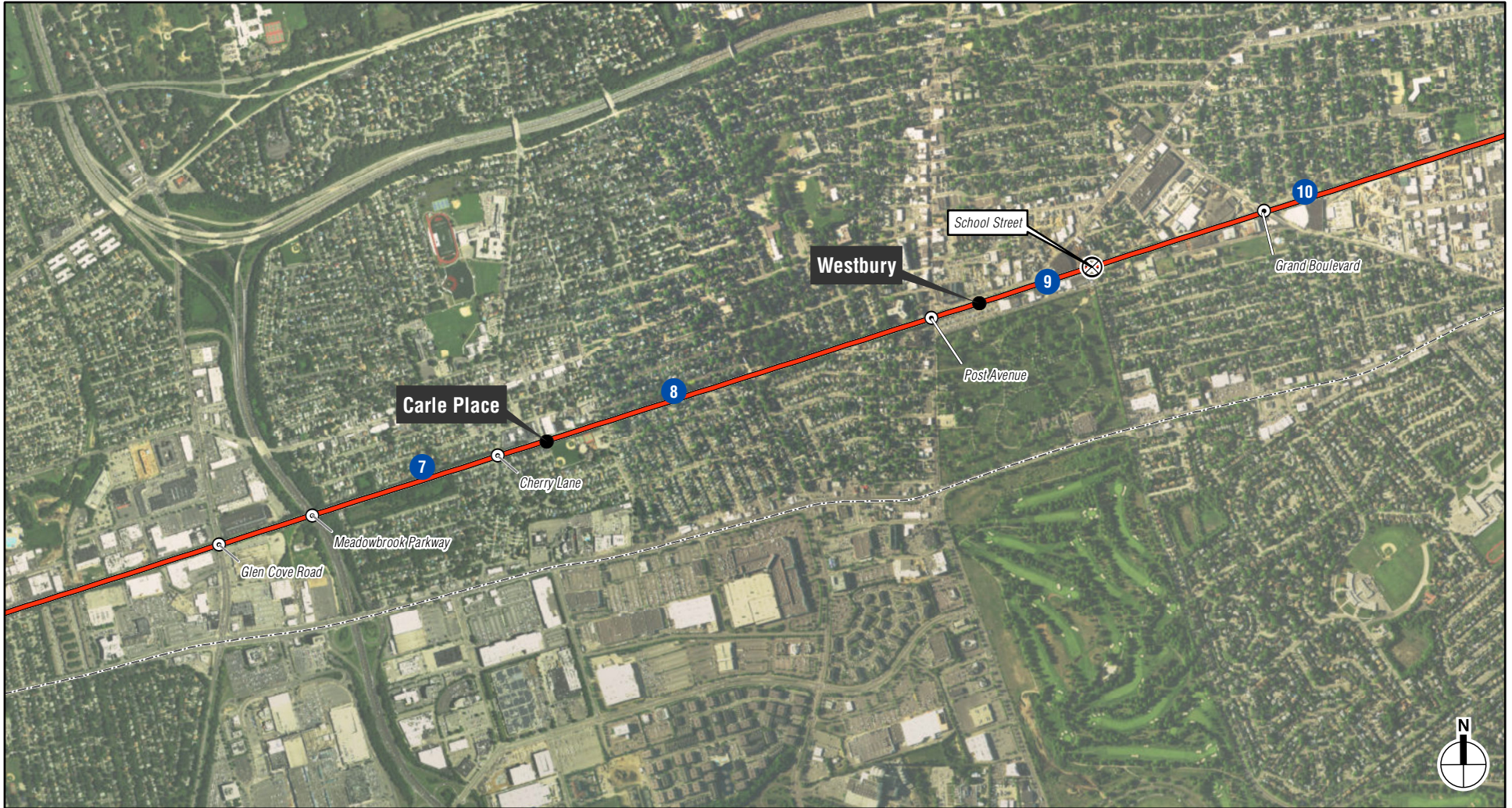




- Project Site
- Monitoring Location (Approximate Location)
- ⊗ Grade Crossings
- ⊙ Grade Separated Crossings (Bridges)
- LIRR Station
- LIRR Branches
- Oyster Bay Branch

0 2,000 FEET





- Project Site
- ⊗ Grade Crossings
- ⊙ Grade Separated Crossings (Bridges)
- LIRR Station
- Monitoring Location (Approximate Location)

**LIRR Expansion Project  
Floral Park to Hicksville**

Noise Monitoring Locations  
**Figure 49C**





- Project Site
- Monitoring Location (Approximate Location)
- ⊗ Grade Crossings
- ⊙ Grade Separated Crossings (Bridges)
- LIRR Station
- LIRR Branches
- Port Jefferson Branch
- Ronkonkoma Branch

0 2,000 FEET



- The construction schedule, timeline, and an estimate of activity on-site for each phase, and for any overlap between construction phases.
- The potential locations of illustrative staging areas for construction equipment and materials.
- Potential construction worker parking locations and operation.
- Potential construction equipment locations and operation, and impacts to the local street system, including street-cleaning necessitated by construction-related dirt and debris.
- Temporary impacts to the traffic network resulting from construction activity. This assessment will consider increases in vehicle trips from construction workers and equipment and potential impacts from truck traffic, as well as impacts from diversions caused by temporary full or partial temporary closures of grade crossings.
- Potential air quality impacts from mobile source emissions from construction equipment and worker and delivery vehicles and fugitive dust emissions, and potential mitigation measures that may be required by the Construction Management Protocol to be drafted in correlation with the construction contract.
- Potential noise impacts from each phase of construction activity.
- The potential need to temporarily relocate utility infrastructure.
- The quantity of construction waste expected to be generated, and the means for disposing of that waste.

This chapter will focus on technical areas where construction activities have the potential to result in significant adverse impacts, and where such impacts are identified mitigation measures will be identified and discussed. Technical areas to be assessed include:

#### *Land Use, Community Character, and Public Policy*

The DEIS will assess whether the Proposed Project would have the potential to impact the affected area's neighborhood character or emergency response service access during construction.

#### *Economic Conditions and Displacement*

Construction of the Proposed Project would require temporary closures of roadways and pedestrian routes. The DEIS will discuss planned efforts to minimize these impacts through shortened closures and stream-lined construction techniques, and will assess effects on local business operations as a result of construction activities in the corridor.

#### *Historic and Archaeological Resources*

Any S/NR listed or eligible resources within 100 feet of proposed construction zones will be identified. The potential for the Proposed Project to result in construction-related impacts to these resources will be analyzed. Elements of Construction Protection Plans, if required, to mitigate potential impacts to any potentially affected resource will be described.

#### *Open Space and Recreation Resources*

The DEIS will document the potential construction-related impacts (including potential air quality, construction noise, and other safety concerns) to public open space and recreation resources in the Study Area.

*Natural Resources*

The DEIS will assess direct and indirect impacts from construction of the Proposed Project by considering the effects of stormwater runoff and changes in impervious surface coverage on the quality and recharge of the sole source aquifer, effects of vegetation clearing on plant and wildlife communities and threatened and endangered species, and the effects of noise disturbances to wildlife, including any threatened and endangered species. Potential impacts to wetlands, floodplains, prime farmland soils, and aquatic resources will also be evaluated.

*Hazardous Materials*

The DEIS will assess the regulatory requirements and effects of the proposed construction activities on any potential hazardous and non-hazardous contaminated materials, including the temporary disturbance, storage, and removal of potentially hazardous soils and sediments. The DEIS will also describe the typical measures to be used during construction to avoid potential exposure to hazardous materials by construction workers and the general public.

*Infrastructure and Utilities*

Utility lines including electric, signal, communications, gas, water, sewer, and storm water systems may need to be relocated within portions of the Study Area. The DEIS will address the potential utility services disruptions and impacts from the relocation of utility lines.

*Transportation*

The DEIS will evaluate whether conditions during the Proposed Project's construction period would create adverse impacts on vehicular traffic, parking, pedestrian connectivity, and/or traffic safety. The DEIS will evaluate conditions during the peak construction impact condition at each of the grade crossings to be improved. The DEIS will identify the general construction activities that will occur and their approximate durations. For each location, the following will be presented in the DEIS:

1. Street or access closures that would occur as construction is underway. This may include temporary full or partial closure of grade crossings, railroad overpasses, use of parking areas for construction staging purposes, and use of traffic lanes for construction delivery vehicle activity.
2. Anticipated traffic diversions resulting from temporary full grade crossing closures or lane closures at the grade crossings when such diversions are anticipated during some construction periods.
3. Volume of construction worker trips and construction vehicle trips expected, their trip arrival and departure patterns, and the resulting increase in traffic volumes at a select set of intersections.
4. Potential impacts that construction period activities would have on intersection levels of service at key locations for the peak hours, identification of adverse traffic impacts, and traffic measures that would be needed to mitigate those impacts.
5. Number of on-street and/or off-street parking spaces, if any, that would be temporarily lost during construction.
6. Substantial changes to pedestrian connectivity, if any, during the construction period, such as the need to temporarily divert pedestrian crossings to other locations, and the nature of temporary pedestrian facilities that would be provided during construction. Potential improvements will be identified.



7. Changes to emergency service response routes during any construction period traffic diversions.

#### *Air Quality*

Potential air quality impacts from mobile source emissions from construction equipment and worker and delivery vehicles and fugitive dust emissions will be determined for representative locations based on the expected types and durations of construction, such as ballast track laying, station improvements, and grade-crossing improvements. The estimated project level annual PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> non-road construction equipment emissions will be compared to an annual threshold of 15 tons per year established by NYSDOT in the TEM to determine potential impact significance. All work will be considered in the context of the proposed construction schedule, and worst-case (peak) conditions on an annual basis will be identified and analyzed. Mitigation measures for potential adverse construction-related air quality impacts will be discussed as appropriate.

#### *Noise and Vibration*

Potential noise impacts from each phase of construction will be determined using the FTA general assessment based on equipment and activity levels likely to be used during construction. If exceedances of the Proposed Project impact criteria are predicted, potential feasible mitigation measures would be identified.

#### *CUMULATIVE AND SECONDARY IMPACTS*

Cumulative impacts are those that result from a project in conjunction with other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Secondary impacts are indirect impacts of a project that are removed in time and/or place from the project itself, e.g., additional development made possible by a project, or potential impacts to other branches of the LIRR. The DEIS will contain an assessment of the Proposed Project's cumulative and secondary impacts and benefits for all applicable resources.

Cumulative impacts are those that result from the incremental consequences of a project in conjunction with other reasonably foreseeable future actions. Secondary impacts, also referred to as indirect impacts, are those that are caused by a project and are removed in time and/or place from the project itself. For example, commuter rail projects that provide new service to a neighborhood may result in secondary impacts by inducing new growth in that neighborhood. The DEIS will contain an assessment of the Proposed Project's cumulative and secondary impacts and benefits for all applicable resources.

The cumulative impacts analysis will consider the potential impacts of the Proposed Project in concert with those of other projects. These projects will include planned LIRR projects (East Side Access, Double Track Project from Farmingdale to Ronkonkoma, etc.), other regional transportation projects, and land development projects.

Also, LIRR currently is undertaking improvements at Hicksville that include the complete rehabilitation of the station as well as the construction of the North Siding. Station upgrades include new platforms with glass-enclosed, heated waiting rooms; lighting; translucent canopy roof; stairways; escalators; plaza elevators; a video security system; audio and digital communications systems; and signage. The North Siding will connect Track 1 at Hicksville (the northern-most track) to an existing track siding situated about one-half mile west of the station platform. The siding will improve LIRR's ability to reroute trains in the event of maintenance, construction, or service disruptions. Both of these actions are unrelated to and have independent

utility from the Main Line Expansion Project. The DEIS will evaluate any potential cumulative impacts attributable to the Proposed Project in light of these projects in Hicksville.

#### *SAFETY AND SECURITY*

The DEIS will present safety and security aspects of the Proposed Project. Design criteria and railroad procedures intended to ensure passenger and public safety will be discussed. Safety benefits due to the elimination of grade crossings and the anticipated benefits to rail passengers, vehicular passengers, pedestrians, and cyclists will be analyzed in the Transportation section (described above) and cross-referenced in this chapter. Any additional enhancements to current safety and security measures (e.g., improved signage or lighting) will be presented. Safety and security risks to construction workers and to the public during the construction period will be disclosed in the Construction section (described above). The Proposed Project would not result in any increases in freight traffic.

#### *ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS*

The DEIS will qualitatively evaluate the potential for the Proposed Project to increase electric and magnetic fields (EMF) along the corridor. Recent scientific literature regarding EMF exposure will be reviewed and summarized.

#### *CLIMATE CHANGE/SUSTAINABILITY*

One of the goals of the Proposed Project is to improve commuter rail service on Long Island and thus reduce dependence on vehicular use. Achievement of that goal has the potential to decrease greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with transportation, compared to the Future Without the Proposed Project. The DEIS would also consider increases to GHG emissions from increased train service that would not otherwise occur. However, such increase would likely be offset by any shift of commuters from private vehicles to rail that would result in a reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and thus reduce GHG emissions. Some energy and ensuing GHG emissions would also be associated with construction vehicle engines and the extraction, production, and delivery of construction materials. All of these changes will be evaluated qualitatively in the DEIS, following the NYSDEC Program Policy, issued July 2009, *Assessing Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Environmental Impact Statements*.

The DEIS will also discuss state, local, and MTA policies with respect to sustainability and GHG emission reduction goals, and evaluate the Proposed Project's consistency with those policies and goals. Measures to minimize energy use and reduce GHG emissions during project construction and operation will be discussed.

In addition, the Proposed Project would constitute a major public investment in infrastructure with a useful life on a timescale at which the effects of climate change may become more substantial. Therefore, effects of climate change that could affect the Proposed Project into the future will be discussed in the DEIS, and the design and operational measures that will be included as part of the Proposed Project to make it resilient to projected future climate conditions will be discussed.

#### *ALTERNATIVES*

Part 617.9(5)(v) of SEQRA regulations requires that a DEIS describe and evaluate "the range of reasonable alternatives to the action that are feasible, considering the objectives and capabilities



of the project sponsor.” In addition to the Proposed Project, the following alternatives will be evaluated and compared in the EIS:

- No Action Alternative—assumes no improvements in the Project Corridor other than those planned by others, associated with other projects, or implemented as part of routine maintenance; serves as the baseline condition against which the potential benefits and impacts of the Proposed Project are evaluated. The following LIRR projects are identified as No Action projects:
  - East Side Access
  - Double Track Project from Farmingdale to Ronkonkoma
  - Jamaica Capacity Improvements Project
  - Expansion of the electric car storage yard in Ronkonkoma
  - The addition of pocket tracks along the Port Washington and Babylon Branches
  - Huntington/Port Jefferson Branch yard site selection, preliminary design and environmental review
  - Hicksville North Siding
  - Post Avenue Railroad Bridge
- Reconfigured Grade Crossings Alternative—up to two of the existing grade crossings would be closed while the remaining locations would be converted to grade-separated configurations. The provision of the third track operations and related station improvements would be the same as for the Proposed Project.
- Transportation System Management Alternative(s)—including a combination of operational and equipment modifications (e.g., bus rapid transit, extended platforms, double-decker trains, limited rail passing sidings) to achieve project goals and objectives in lieu of a continuous third Main Line track.
- Switch and Signal Upgrades Only Alternative—railroad switches and signals would be upgraded so as to improve rail operation efficiency. No third track would be installed, no station or platform improvements would be achieved, and no changes to the existing grade crossing configurations would be made.

Project planning will also consider other options to providing a third track, including elevated track sections. Such options would be addressed as an alternative in the DEIS if found to be practicable and , feasible.

The DEIS will also identify and discuss potential alternatives considered and dismissed during the project planning effort. These potential alternatives resulted in significant adverse impacts to residential properties that were deemed unreasonable and thus will not be examined in detail. However, each alternative identified below will be described and the reason it was rejected will be discussed. Such potential alternatives include:

- A track alignment concept developed as part of a prior study (the “2008 Main Line Corridor Improvement Project”) that requires the acquisition of residential properties
- A track alignment concept entailing a third new rail track entirely to the north of the existing Main Line and requiring acquisition of residential properties
- A track alignment concept entailing a third new rail track entirely to the south of the existing Main Line and requiring acquisition of residential properties

*IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES*

The DEIS will identify irreversible and irretrievable commitments of environmental resources that would be associated with the Proposed Project should it be implemented.

*UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS*

The DEIS will identify those adverse environmental impacts that cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated if the Proposed Project is implemented.

**D. PUBLIC OUTREACH**

To ensure a comprehensive and inclusive public outreach effort for the Proposed Project, the MTA LIRR has developed and implemented a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) to engage stakeholders (including a broad range of individuals and organizations, such as community groups, elected and appointed officials, and business and/or commercial entities) located within or having interests within the Project Corridor. The public outreach effort is informing stakeholders about the project alternatives, soliciting their feedback, and communicating the potential project benefits and impacts.

To effectively engage the various stakeholders throughout the Proposed Project, various communication tools are being employed, including the use of a website ([www.AModernLI.com](http://www.AModernLI.com)) and press releases to reach individual residents, employers, and employees living and/or working within the vicinity of the Project Corridor. In addition, the use of posters at train stations, seat drop brochures on LIRR seats, visual media content appropriate for social media display, newsletters, and project brochures will be produced and widely distributed throughout the Project Corridor.

The Project Team is maintaining a project office, or Project Information Center (PIC), in the Mineola Station adjacent to the south platform waiting room. The PIC was staffed Tuesday through Saturday during the scoping period for customers and residents to learn about the Proposed Project and provide scoping comments. The current PIC schedule is available on the Proposed Project website, [www.AModernLI.com](http://www.AModernLI.com). The PIC has displays, exhibits, and interactive elements. LIRR is coordinating additional outreach and events including tours, educational events, and community meetings.

Six public meetings were held at four different locations. On Tuesday, May 24, 2016, a daytime public meeting and an evening meeting were held at The Inn at New Hyde Park and a daytime meeting and an evening meeting were held at Hofstra University in the Town of Hempstead. On Wednesday, May 25, 2016, a daytime public meeting was held at the Yes We Can Community Center in Westbury and an evening meeting was held at Antun's by Minar in Hicksville. A total of approximately 1,200 individuals attended the meetings. At these meetings, graphic presentations regarding the Proposed Project were displayed and LIRR, NYSDOT, and consultant team staff were available to answer questions. Attendees were able to provide public verbal comments, private verbal comments, and written comments (through an on-line database and comment cards). The public comment period was open through June 13, 2016. During the public comment period more than 750 individuals or entities submitted comments or questions. LIRR has provided responses to these comments and questions (see **Appendix B**, "Summary of Public Scoping Comments"). LIRR will continue to conduct public outreach and afford the public an opportunity to provide input about the Proposed Project and the associated environmental analysis through the course of the SEQRA process.



## **E. SEQRA PROCESS**

SEQRA outlines a process for completing a DEIS, receiving public input, and preparing a Final EIS (FEIS). MTA LIRR, as SEQRA Lead Agency, will comply with the procedural requirements of SEQRA by:

- Issuing a Positive Declaration;
- Engaging in public scoping and agency consultation;
- Preparing a DEIS;
- Issuing a Notice of Completion and scheduling a Public Hearing;
- Distributing the DEIS in both print and electronic forms;
- Conducting a Public Hearing;
- Preparing a FEIS that responds to substantive comments;
- Issuing a Notice of Completion of the FEIS; and
- Issuing a Statement of Findings that summarizes the environmental analysis conducted for the Proposed Project and allowing the LIRR to make a decision.

**Appendix A**  
**Grade Crossing Options Considered but Discarded**



Municipality	Location	Build Option #	Description	LIRR Track Elevation	Reason for Elimination of Option
New Hyde Park	Covert Avenue	1	Two-way Underpass	Raise Tracks Several feet	This option is considered feasible and is discussed in the Scoping Document.
		2	Two-way Underpass	Maintain Existing	Acquisition of one residential property.
		3	One-way Underpass	Maintain Existing	Covert Avenue would carry southbound traffic only. Diverted northbound traffic would create long queues and poor levels of service at various intersections in the area.
		4	One-way Overpass	Maintain Existing	Visual impact from overpass structure to properties in close proximity. Covert Avenue would carry southbound traffic only. Diverted northbound traffic would create long queues and poor levels of service at various intersections in the area.
		5	Two-way Overpass	Maintain Existing	Acquisition of two residential properties. Visual impact from overpass structure to properties in close proximity.
		6	Permanent Crossing Closed	Maintain Existing	Permanently diverted traffic would create long queues and poor levels of service at various intersections in the area.
	South 12th Street	1	Permanent Crossing Closure with Pedestrian Bridge	Maintain Existing	This option is considered feasible and is discussed in the Scoping Document.
		2	One-way Underpass with Sidewalk	Maintain Existing	This option is considered feasible and is discussed in the Scoping Document.
		3	Two-way Underpass with Sidewalk	Maintain Existing	Residential property acquisitions required at 3 locations.
		4	Pedestrian Underpass Along S. 12th Street, LIRR Crossing Closed	Maintain Existing	Residential property acquisition required at 4 locations.
		5	Two-way Overpass with Sidewalk	Maintain Existing	Residential property acquisition required at 8 locations. Visual impact from overpass structure to properties in close proximity.
		6	One-way Overpass with Sidewalk	Maintain Existing	Visual impact from overpass structure to properties in close proximity.
	New Hyde Park Road	1	Five Lane Underpass with Kiss and Ride Northwest of Tracks	Maintain Existing	This option is considered feasible and is discussed in the Scoping Document.
		2	Four Lane Underpass with Kiss and Ride Southwest of Tracks	Maintain Existing	This option is considered feasible and is discussed in the Scoping Document.
		3	Two-way Underpass, 3 Lanes and 2 Lanes	Maintain Existing	This option does not have four lanes of through traffic which allow for improved level of service.
		4	Two-way Overpass, 4 Lanes	Maintain Existing	Visual impact from overpass structure to properties in close proximity . Requires the closure of Plaza Ave. and Clinch Ave. which has substantial impacts on traffic and loss of access.
		5	Two-way Overpass, 3 Lanes and 2 Lanes	Maintain Existing	Visual impact from overpass structure to properties in close proximity. Requires the closure of Plaza Ave. and Clinch Ave. This option does not have four lanes of through traffic which allow for improved level of service.
		6	Permanent Crossing Closed	Maintain Existing	Permanently diverted traffic would create long queues and poor levels of service at various intersections in the area.

Municipality	Location	Build Option #	Description	LIRR Track Elevation	Reason for Elimination of Option
Mineola	Main Street	1	Permanent Crossing Closure with Pedestrian Bridge	Maintain Existing	This option is considered feasible and is discussed in the Scoping Document.
		2	One-way Underpass with Pedestrian Bridge	Maintain Existing	This option is considered feasible and is discussed in the Scoping Document.
		3	Pedestrian Underpass	Maintain Existing	Loss of retail on-street parking along Main Street.
		4	Two-way Underpass	Maintain Existing	Loss of retail on-street parking along Main Street. Low traffic volumes indicate that 2 directional traffic does not need to be maintained.
		5	Two-way and One-way Overpass	Maintain Existing	Require the closure of 2nd Street and 3rd Street, and the existing access from Main Street to many commercial properties would be impacted. Visual impact from overpass structure to properties in close proximity
	Willis Avenue	1A	Two-way Underpass, north of the intersection shift to the east	Maintain Existing	This option is considered feasible and is discussed in the Scoping Document.
		1B	Two-way Underpass, north of the intersection shift to the west	Maintain Existing	This option is considered feasible and is discussed in the Scoping Document.
		2	One-way Underpass	Maintain Existing	This option is considered feasible and is discussed in the Scoping Document.
		3	One-way Extended Underpass	Maintain Existing	Extending underpass under 2nd Street, extends the underpass walls further north on Willis Ave. This will require the acquisition of 2 commercial properties.
		4	Two-way Overpass	Maintain Existing	Requires the acquisition of 6 commercial properties. Visual impact from overpass structure to properties in close proximity.
5		Permanent Crossing Closed	Maintain Existing	Permanently diverted traffic would create long queues and poor levels of service at various intersections in the area.	
Westbury	School Street	1A	Two-way Underpass*	Raise Tracks Several feet	This option is considered feasible and is discussed in the Scoping Document.
		1B	Two-way Underpass*	Raise Tracks Several feet	This option is considered feasible and is discussed in the Scoping Document.
		2	Two-way Underpass	Maintain Existing	Greater residential and commercial properties impact than option 1.
		3	One-way Underpass	Raise Tracks Several feet	Permanently diverted traffic would create long queues and poor levels of service at various intersections in the area.
		4	One-way Overpass	Maintain Existing	Visual impact from overpass structure to residential properties. Permanently diverted traffic would create long queues and poor levels of service at various intersections in the area.
		5	Two-way Overpass	Maintain Existing	One residential acquisition will be required. Requires the closure of Railroad Avenue and Dryden Street. Visual impact from overpass structure to properties in close proximity.
		6	Permanent Crossing Closed	Maintain Existing	Permanently diverted traffic would create long queues and poor levels of service at various intersections in the area.
	Urban Avenue	1A	Two-way Underpass*	Raise Tracks Several feet	This option is considered feasible and is discussed in the Scoping Document.
		1B	Two-way Underpass*	Raise Tracks Several feet	This option is considered feasible and is discussed in the Scoping Document.
		2	One-way Underpass	Maintain Existing	Permanently diverted traffic would create long queues and poor levels of service at various intersections in the area.
		3	One-way Overpass	Maintain Existing	Visual impact from overpass structure to residential properties. Permanently diverted traffic would create long queues and poor levels of service at various intersections in the area. Requires the closure of Broadway.
		4	Two-way Overpass	Maintain Existing	Visual impact from overpass structure to residential properties. Requires the closure of Broadway.
5		Permanent Crossing Closed	Maintain Existing	Permanently diverted traffic would create long queues and poor levels of service at various intersections in the area.	
<b>Notes:</b> The discarded options shown in this table were results of discussion with community leaders and could be considered as feasible alternatives based on further community input. *Scenarios 1A and 1B for School Street and Urban Avenue provide different options for maintaining access to adjacent commercial properties. Indicates Alternatives that were not eliminated and are discussed in the Scoping Document					





**A. INTRODUCTION**

This Appendix contains a summary of the substantive comments received during the public scoping hearings and through the various options for submitting written comments. Comments are grouped by major topic or subject area of analysis within the Scoping Document. It should be noted that the intent of a Scoping Document is to:

- Provide a brief description of the Proposed Project
- Identify potential significant environmental impacts of the Proposed Project, if known
- Set forth the methodology to be used in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to assess potential impacts
- List reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Project
- Discuss potential measures to mitigate impacts of the Proposed Project

The DEIS will contain more detailed information about the Proposed Project, including an analysis of the potential significant environmental impacts. Additional public input will be solicited following the release of the DEIS.

In addition to the comments summarized herein, a small number of comments were also received during the public scoping period relating to other transportation projects; LIRR fares and schedules; changes in service along the Port Jefferson, Montauk, and Ronkonkoma branches; truck traffic; pedestrian issues off the Main Line corridor; other grade crossings on LIRR branches east of Hicksville; and the location of MTA police offices. These comments were considered not to be directly relevant to the Proposed Project and no responses are provided; nor are any revisions to the Scoping Document made to address these comments.

**B. COMMENTS PERTAINING TO PURPOSE AND NEED****SAFETY AT GRADE CROSSINGS***COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters expressed a need to improve safety for vehicles (including trucks), pedestrians, and others at grade crossings. Some cited safety statistics, including: Long Island's high automobile fatality per capita; rail travel as a safer alternative to driving due to prevalence of drunk driving; and the status of the New Hyde Park Road and Covert Avenue road crossings as among the nation's most dangerous rail crossings. Others recalled specific accidents (Herricks Road) and called for action.

**Response:** As previously stated in the Draft Scoping Document and reiterated on page 6 of the Final Scoping Document, one of the goals of the Proposed Project is to



improve public safety and roadway conditions. The benefits of the Proposed Project, including safety at grade crossings, will be presented in detail in the DEIS.

## **PROJECT NEED**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters stated the project need has not been adequately demonstrated and the demand for more capacity and reverse commuting does not exist, along with a request for analysis to substantiate these underlying assumptions and to release studies demonstrating reverse commute demand. Other commenters stated that the State is artificially merging two separate projects (grade crossings and third track).

**Response:** The Draft EIS will include a detailed statement of the purpose and need for the Proposed Project along with data to document the need, including the need for additional trains to service bi-directional travel during peak periods. The component of the Proposed Project providing for construction of a third track is intended to increase capacity in order to improve passenger service reliability during the peak train travel hours. The DEIS will discuss the need for such improvements, especially when additional trains are added to the system after East Side Access is completed. As a corridor improvement initiative, the project seeks to correct several problems along the segment simultaneously. The elimination of grade crossings and the completion of a continuous third track are ideally implemented as an integrated project—thereby providing construction efficiencies, optimizing resources, minimizing community impact during construction, and meeting the goals to enhance capacity and improve safety.

## **ECONOMIC VITALITY & REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters cited problems facing Long Island due to underinvestment in mass transit, including loss of jobs, trouble recruiting talent for local businesses, millennials living in NYC and having difficulty reverse commuting, next generation leaving Long Island in part because of an arduous and unreliable commute. Some stated support for the project as it would bring jobs, develop and enhance communities, promote tourism, improve commerce, promote transit-oriented development and Smart Growth principles, and stay competitive with Westchester County, New Jersey, Connecticut, and other locations.

**Response:** As stated in the Draft Scoping Document and reiterated on page 6 of the Final Scoping Document, one of the goals of the Proposed Project is to improve service reliability and to provide operational flexibility eastbound and westbound, with objectives to add intra-Island service and reverse peak service. The Proposed Project is responding to a number of demographic and economic trends that indicate the greater mobility within Long Island and the need for mass transit options to serve that need. According to the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), the population of Long Island

is expected to grow from approximately 2,856,000 people in 2015 to 2,868,500 in 2020 and 3,195,800 in 2040, an ultimate increase of more than 300,000 people representing a 12% rise in population. NYMTC also projects that employment on Long Island will increase by approximately 135,500 jobs by 2040. These projections of population and job increases support LIRR's projections of increased ridership. In addition to accommodating an increased population and increased employment, and providing improvements in peak hour reliability and operational flexibility, the Proposed Project provides a viable rail option for non-peak hour, non-work-related trips to and from New York City. Currently, options for Nassau County residents who want to travel by train east in the AM peak period to their jobs or schools are severely limited. Similarly, Suffolk County residents who want to travel by train west, including to New York City, in the PM peak period, also have limited service. The benefits of the Proposed Project will be presented in the DEIS.

## **IMPROVING RAIL SERVICE & REDUCING DELAYS**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters expressed a desire to increase train reliability, reduce delays, ease congestion, and improve mobility, connectivity, and the quality of life on Long Island. Some stated that commuters deserve a seat on a less congested train and want easier access to MacArthur Airport and other locations. Others questioned the frequency of train delays and cited other problems (weather, switching problems, tunnel congestion) as the items requiring attention.

**Response:** As stated in the Draft Scoping Document and reiterated on page 6 of the Final Scoping Document, the project goals include: reduce delays to commuters from Main Line congestion and rippling effects; add operational flexibility eastbound and westbound; and provide additional track capacity to more reliably serve projected system-wide service growth. Those project goals will be discussed in detail in the DEIS. With regard to frequency of delays, on-time performance for branches served by the Main Line, such as the Huntington, Port Jefferson and Ronkonkoma branches, are typically lower than that of the LIRR system-wide. Data on on-time performance will be discussed in the DEIS. With regard to suggestions from commenters that other actions should be performed on the LIRR system to improve service, it should be noted that other projects are being undertaken and planned to address various system needs; based on all available data none of these projects individually or collectively satisfy the purpose and need of the Proposed Project. The DEIS will address this question in detail.

## **CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters stated that the proposed capacity improvements will only exacerbate problems at Jamaica and Penn Station and benefit Suffolk County at the expense of Nassau



County, whereas other commenters stated the project is needed to maximize benefits from East Side Access, and accommodate reverse commuting and intra-Island travel.

**Response:** The LIRR Expansion Project is a strategic component of system-wide infrastructure improvements that will lead to improved service reliability for riders in Nassau County and Suffolk County. Riders from throughout Nassau and Suffolk Counties as well as from Main Line communities between Floral Park and Hicksville will experience improved reliability through reductions in delay and the ability to make reverse peak trips.

LIRR is currently constructing the East Side Access (ESA) project to relieve capacity constraints at Penn Station by increasing capacity during the AM peak by 60% and routing additional trains to Grand Central Terminal. LIRR is also currently constructing the Jamaica Capacity Improvements (JCI) project to address operational constraints at Jamaica and support increased service attributable to ESA. This project, which currently is under construction, will reconfigure and upgrade infrastructure such as track, signals and switches in and around Jamaica Station. The JCI project will address service reliability and improve capacity limitations at the station and its adjacent interlockings.

## FREIGHT RAIL OPERATIONS

### COMMENT THEMES

Some commenters asked for more information about existing freight rail operations, including: freight rail schedule; current volume of freight rail traffic; agreements and regulations governing freight service on the Main Line; and how freight service is prioritized along the line (including during track or signal outages). Other commenters stated that the true purpose of the project is to expand freight capacity to service special interest businesses on Long Island's East End, and the planned intermodal facility known as LITRIM, the emergence of the Brookhaven Rail Terminal, and a desire to increase revenue from freight transport.

**Response:** LIRR does not operate freight trains. LIRR closed its freight division in 1996. At that time it turned over all remnants of its freight operations to a private operator (the New York and Atlantic Railway—NY&A), and entered into a contract with that company to permit it to operate freight trains over the LIRR track system in exchange for certain fee payments.

*Frequency:* Today the NY&A typically operates three round trip freight trains per weekday (on weekends, NY&A typically operates only one round trip per day). That frequency has decreased from 2009 when the NY&A averaged 5 round trip freight trains per weekday. Going forward, no increase whatsoever in the number of freight trains per day is projected by LIRR. At current growth rates for freight, the existing three round trips could accommodate the modest increase in carloads through 2020 as well as through 2040. Even if the current growth rate were to double (which is not expected), the projected result would be the addition of one additional round trip freight train per weekday by 2040—for a total of four round trip freight trains per weekday.

*Economics:* Fees paid by the NY&A as the private freight operator to the MTA in 2015 amounted to approximately \$2.3 million of the MTA's total revenues of \$15.3 billion—constituting approximately one one-hundredth of one percent of the MTA's revenues.

*Relationship to Project:* By federal law, LIRR is required to permit freight operations on its system, but is permitted to regulate the time of such operation. LIRR currently restricts the operation of freight trains to non-peak periods and is committed to keeping this restriction in place. The purpose of the Proposed Project is to increase the capacity on the Main Line at peak periods. LIRR is committed to using this peak period capacity increase only for the operation of its own passenger trains, and is thus equally committed in the future to not scheduling any freight trains whatsoever during peak periods. Since freight operations are not currently capacity-constrained during non-peak hours and since the Main Line peak hour capacity increase will not be used for freight trains, the additional third Main Line track proposed in the Proposed Project would not have any impact on freight traffic through the corridor.

*Operations: Speed*—Freight trains are subject to much lower speed limits than passenger trains. Freight trains may not exceed 45 mph, far lower than the 80 mph maximum applicable to passenger trains. These speed restrictions will not change as a result of the Proposed Project. *Safety*—All of NY&A's freight train operations are subject to strict federal safety regulations which cover both train operations and the nature and handling of cargo. These federal safety regulatory requirements—which are not under the control of either LIRR or NY&A—will not change as a result of the Proposed Project.

The background portion of the DEIS will include a discussion of existing and projected freight traffic along the Main Line, the federal law and regulations governing freight traffic, and further set forth the rationale for why the Proposed Project will not induce additional freight trains in the future analysis years.

## **C. COMMENTS PERTAINING TO PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **THIRD TRACK ALIGNMENT & ADDITIONAL PROJECT DETAILS**

#### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters expressed disappointment at the lack of details about the third track alignment and requested more information on its exact location. Some expressed frustration at the request to provide comments in the absence of more specific information (e.g., horizontal alignment, vertical alignment, renderings from street level).

Some commenters requested more information about all project details, including drainage. Others asked about integration with other projects, such as the planned Post Avenue project, to minimize neighborhood disruption.

**Response:** The DEIS will include a detailed description and graphic depiction of the Proposed Project elements. However, the Final Scoping Document has been revised to include additional details about the proposed track and bridge modifications, station improvements, grade-crossings, and parking modifications.

## **RAILROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters requested that the Scoping Document be revised to show the existing LIRR right-of-way lines, encroachments beyond the right-of-way, and exactly which properties (commercial, residential, other) will be acquired. Some commenters asked for clarification if “no residential acquisitions” includes driveways, garages, backyards, etc. and whether LIRR will exercise use of easements on properties currently used by others. Some commenters stated the study area is too vague in the absence of a right-of-way map.

**Response:** In response to the many comments requesting more details about the existing property boundaries and railroad right-of-way, the surveyed right-of-way superimposed on aerial maps will be included in the DEIS and will be made available for public review as part of the DEIS process. A full analysis of and detailed description of the alignment will be presented in the DEIS and the impact analysis contained in the DEIS will be based on the alignment presented therein.

## **RETAINING WALLS**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters asked for detail about where retaining walls be placed, how many will be constructed, on which side of the tracks, and how high.

**Response:** Details of the location and size of retaining walls will be presented in the DEIS. The DEIS will analyze potential impacts to community character and visual resources from the retaining walls. The Final Scoping Document has been revised to include an illustration of how retaining walls may be employed with regard to the project.

## **PROJECT LIMITS / PRIOR MAIN LINE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters asked why this particular 9.8-mile segment was selected, why a prior Main Line Improvements project extended to Queens Village, and why the segment between Floral Park and Queens Village was no longer necessary. Others asked for a clear explanation of the differences between the cancelled 2005 “Main Line Corridor Improvements Project” and this proposed project. Some stated there is the potential for segmentation if improvements at additional segments are needed to achieve the stated goals. Some commenters asked that the project limits be extended to include Queens Village and Bellerose Terrace. Others asked if the



reduction in property acquisition would result an attempt to “squeeze facilities,” resulting in operational, environmental, and other impacts.

**Response:** The Proposed Project is completely different from the project previously considered. The previous project, which included extensive residential and commercial property acquisition, proposed adding a fifth track in the 1.7-mile section between Floral Park and Queens Village (which currently comprises four tracks). Due to the extensive community impacts and residential property acquisitions, the old project was discarded. The new project plan eliminates any residential acquisitions. By building a crossover on the Hempstead Branch the project can be shortened and the four tracks between Queens Village and Floral Park can accommodate future capacity for both Main Line and Hempstead Branch service.

## PROJECT DELIVERY, COST, & SCHEDULE

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters stated that the estimated project cost and schedule are unrealistic, that the public cannot believe any cost estimate or schedule developed by the MTA and LIRR, given past history and major cost overruns and project delays. Others asked about the project funding source (and associated tax increases), questioned why the project was not listed in the 2015-2019 MTA Capital Program, and why MTA Capital Construction is leading the project instead of LIRR. Some asked about interstate transportation of freight and if neighboring states and/or the federal government should therefore contribute funds.

**Response:** This project is being led by LIRR, not MTACC, and will be funded entirely from State funds. A construction schedule will be provided in the DEIS. The state intends to use the Design-Build contracting process which will foster innovative methods for timely construction of the project and will include penalties for delays and incentives for early completion.

## RAIL OPERATIONS

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters asked for: more details about the changes in operations; potential new timetables; whether the project will negatively affect service on the Hempstead Branch, Oyster Bay Branch, Port Jefferson Branch; whether train speed will increase; if more service will be provided in all affected communities (e.g., Merillon Avenue); and whether commuters at various Main Line stations can board on the third track. Others asked for ridership data along the 9.8-mile Main Line segment. Some commenters requested more morning trains to eastern Long Island (including Brentwood, Ronkonkoma, Kings Park, Babylon).

**Response:** As stated in the Draft Scoping Document and reiterated on page 4 of the Final Scoping Document, the increased operational flexibility provided by the third track would improve overall service reliability and would improve service between Floral Park and Hicksville. As discussed on page 27 of the Final Scoping Document, the DEIS will include a discussion of a likely service plan

showing numbers of trains operating along the Main Line, with and without the Proposed Project. One of the goals of the Proposed Project is to more reliably accommodate the increase in train traffic that would occur, regardless of the Proposed Project, when the East Side Access Project is completed. There are no proposed modifications to the maximum allowable speed (MAS) within the Main Line corridor, which will remain 80 miles per hour. Additional trains operating on the Main Line would not diminish service on the Hempstead Branch. Center platforms would not be constructed, but interlockings located to the east and west of Mineola would allow additional trains using the center track to access station platforms.

## DESIGN SUGGESTIONS

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters proposed additional components to be added to the project, including: development of a park or soccer field at the proposed green space near Urban Avenue; high-quality streetscape treatments, wayfinding signage, etc.; avoidance of “dead zones” and unsightly single-use parking garages.

**Response:** MTA-LIRR will continue to coordinate with the affected communities regarding potential opportunities to include additional community enhancements in conjunction with the Proposed Project.

## RAIL STATIONS

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters had questions and requests about rail stations, including: a description of changes to all affected rail stations; whether any changes will occur at various stations including elevators, pedestrian underpass, and parking; and adding platform canopies. Other commenters encouraged the use of lower maintenance or “maintenance free” materials at stations, to improve appearances, improved station lighting, and incorporation of station plazas. Some commenters expressed support for the modernization of stations, longer platforms, pedestrian underpasses (including at Merillon), heated/cooled waiting areas, station houses, beautification measures, etc. Some commenters asked if the Carle Place Station would be relocated.

**Response:** The DEIS will identify proposed station improvements by location, including new platforms, stairways and elevators, pedestrian overpasses, and platform shelters. The Proposed Project does not include the relocation of the Carle Place station. Public comment will be sought on all these issues as part of the DEIS review process.

## STATION PARKING AREAS

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters requested more parking in specific locations (e.g., Hicksville) and/or stated support for the project only if it includes more parking in Hicksville. Others stated opposition to tiered parking structures, or proposed speed bumps for traffic control.

**Response:** As stated in the Draft Scoping Document and reiterated in the Final Scoping Document (see pages 29-30), the Draft EIS will analyze the Proposed Project's impact on parking (including parking in Hicksville).

## GRADE CROSSINGS DESIGN DETAILS

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters had questions about the existing railroad bridges (e.g., roadway underpasses) that are not proposed to be separated or closed, but will still require work due to the new third track. Other commenters stated that pedestrian bridges and cyclist access should be integral to the designs (e.g., including sidewalks on both sides of the road). Some commenters requested the grade crossings be designed to provide adequate clearances for commercial and emergency vehicles and appropriate sight lines, and encouraged the analysis to consider the combination of grade crossing options (as opposed to studying each grade crossing in isolation). Other commenters stated that the current designs for grade separations are too steep and should be redesigned. Some commenters recommended installation of double gates or special European safety gates in lieu of changing the grade crossings.

**Response:** The Final Scoping Document has been revised to identify locations where existing railroad bridges must be modified to accommodate the third track. The Final Scoping Document also includes drawings identifying proposed pedestrian access to station platforms near grade crossings. Concurrent with the public scoping, NYSDOT met with affected stakeholders and has made revisions to proposed grade crossings to accommodate community interests. These modifications are described in the Final Scoping Document at pages 12-16. While the NYSDOT Highway Design Manual identifies a maximum 9% grade for conditions similar to the proposed grade crossings, NYSDOT allows for exceptions to this standard where existing conditions warrant non-standard design. A slightly steeper than standard grade (10% for all alternatives except one) was used to minimize property impacts and to maintain access to intersecting roads. It is not uncommon to have 10% and even steeper grades on NY State roads. NYSDOT will continue to coordinate with Main Line communities to identify preferred design solutions for the grade crossings and the potential impacts from both modification of existing railroad bridges and the construction and operation of the grade separated or closed grade crossings will be fully analyzed in the DEIS.



**COVERT AVENUE GRADE CROSSING***COMMENT THEMES*

Regarding Covert Avenue, some commenters expressed a preference for Scenario 2--maintenance of one-way northbound traffic during construction. Others opposed the underpass entirely, due to flooding, speeding, visibility, and safety concerns. Some commenters supported proposed grade separation (two-way underpass with sidewalk).

**Response:** NYSDOT will continue to coordinate with Main Line communities to identify preferred design solutions for the grade crossings. Preferred design options will be fully analyzed in the DEIS and public comment will be sought on all issues related to these options.

**SOUTH 12TH STREET GRADE CROSSING***COMMENT THEMES*

Via petition, some commenters expressed preference for South 12th Street Option 1 (permanent crossing closure with pedestrian bridge) and opposition to Option 2 (one-way underpass with sidewalk). Impacts to front yards and loss of parking in front of residences were stated to be objectionable. One petitioner objected to the proposed tiered parking structure and included an alternate underpass design (if the street cannot be permanently closed). The alternate underpass design would close 3rd Avenue and avoid property acquisitions, and entail a different ADA access route.

**Response:** NYSDOT will continue to coordinate with Main Line communities to identify preferred design solutions for the grade crossings. Preferred design options will be fully analyzed in the DEIS.

**MAIN STREET GRADE CROSSING***COMMENT THEMES*

Regarding Main Street, some commenters asked for the Main Street elimination to be implemented in conjunction with other features (such as vehicular and pedestrian access to Front Street), and stated opposition to an underpass in this location.

**Response:** NYSDOT will continue to coordinate with Main Line communities to identify preferred design solutions for the grade crossings. Preferred design options will be fully analyzed in the DEIS. Should Option 1 be selected (permanent closure of the grade crossing with a pedestrian bridge), full access from Main Street to Front Street would be preserved. Should Option 2 be selected (one-way underpass), Main Street would become one-way northbound from Third Street to Second Street; but access from Front Street to Main Street would still be provided. Access to businesses will be evaluated in the Draft EIS.

**WILLIS AVENUE GRADE CROSSING***COMMENT THEMES*

Regarding Willis Avenue, some commenters stated that a depressed roadway is undesirable.

**Response:** NYSDOT will continue to coordinate with Main Line communities to identify preferred design solutions for the grade crossings. Preferred design options will be fully analyzed in the DEIS.

**NEW HYDE PARK ROAD GRADE CROSSING***COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters expressed a preference for Option 1: five-lane underpass with kiss-and-ride northeast of tracks, and a request that the New Hyde Park Road grade separation be implemented first.

**Response:** NYSDOT will continue to coordinate with Main Line communities to identify preferred design solutions for the grade crossings and the preferred designs will be fully analyzed in the DEIS.

**SCHOOL STREET GRADE CROSSING***COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters suggested a new option for the School Street Grade Crossing, combining Scenarios 1A and 1B. The option would entail: a two-lane underpass, with north- and south-bound lanes; a protected pedestrian walkway (preferably a pedestrian overpass with adequate handicapped access), no closure of Railroad Avenue or, taking of Jamaica Ash or Arrow Produce properties; maintenance of the Jamaica Ash entrance on the School Street side of the property, approximately 140 feet north of existing entrance; adequate height clearance for Westbury Fire Department vehicles and other emergency vehicles and the normal heavy commercial truck traffic in the vicinity. Some commenters requested the work on School Street not occur simultaneously with Urban Avenue or Post Avenue; others expressed concern about Scenario 1A rerouting commercial traffic and adversely affecting Union Avenue and School Street.

Some commenters expressed support for an enhanced two-way School Street underpass option (including driveway reconstructions, parking lot reconfigurations, ADA compliant sidewalks, and more) and disapproval of a closed or one-way School Street.

**Response:** NYSDOT will continue to coordinate with Main Line communities to identify preferred design solutions for the grade crossings and the preferred designs will be fully analyzed in the DEIS.

**URBAN AVENUE GRADE CROSSING***COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters expressed support for a two-way grade separated Urban Avenue underpass, and enumerated proposed enhancements (ADA compliant sidewalks, stormwater recharge basins, relocated driveways, and more), and disapproval of closure or one-way Urban Avenue options.

**Response:** NYSDOT has modified one of the proposed grade crossing configuration options at this location (see Figures **41-44** of the Final Scoping Document). NYSDOT will continue to coordinate with Main Line communities to identify preferred design solutions for the grade crossings. The preferred designs will be fully analyzed in the DEIS.

**D. COMMENTS PERTAINING TO ALTERNATIVES****UPGRADE SWITCHES & SIGNAL SYSTEMS ONLY ALTERNATIVE***COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters stated the archaic switches and signal systems are the problem and the cause of existing delays, and requested that the proposed project be cancelled in favor of upgrading these systems without a third track.

**Response:** Separate from the Proposed Project, LIRR continues to make improvements to Main Line infrastructure through an on-going program of maintenance and system upgrades. LIRR believes that such improvements address separate distinct operational issues separate and independent of the Main Line expansion. However, in response to the substantial number of public requests to study whether upgraded switches and signals would negate the need for a third track, the Final Scoping Document has been revised to indicate an “Upgrade Switches and Signal Systems Only” Alternative (p. 35) will be analyzed in the Draft EIS and public comment will be sought on this alternative.

**IMPLEMENT OTHER LIRR CAPITAL PROJECTS ONLY***COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters proposed that a set of other regional transportation projects (without a new third track) be analyzed in the EIS as a separate alternative.

**Response:** Most of the identified projects are already under construction or will be completed within the timeframe of the Proposed Project. Thus, these projects are considered part of the background condition for the environmental analysis of the Proposed Project. While there would be system-wide benefits from their implementation, these projects are being undertaken to address specific needs. These projects would not individually or collectively satisfy the purpose and need for the Proposed Project insofar as they would not substantially reduce



congestion and delays, add operational flexibility, or accommodate projected system-wide service growth. Accordingly, these other transportation projects cannot be reasonably considered to be an alternative to the Proposed Project and will not be considered as such in the DEIS.

## **GRADE CROSSINGS ONLY ALTERNATIVE**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters requested that the project be changed to eliminate the third track but maintain the proposed changes to the grade crossings.

**Response:** The DEIS will consider reasonable and feasible alternatives that satisfy the Purpose and Need of the project. A Grade Crossings Only Alternative would not achieve several project goals including reducing delays and congestion, adding operational flexibility and permitting intra-island travel during peak travel periods. Therefore, redefining the project description as a grade crossing only alternative will not be separately analyzed in the DEIS as it does not represent a reasonable alternative to the Project.

## **OTHER CAPACITY ENHANCEMENTS / TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVE**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters recommended the use of double-decker trains or longer station platforms to accommodate more cars in lieu of the proposed project.

**Response:** The Scoping Document includes consideration of a “Transportation Systems Management” Alternative (p. 35) that would evaluate the efficacy of implementing a combination of operational and equipment modifications, including longer trains and double-decker trains, to achieve project goals and objectives in lieu of a continuous third Main Line track. However, it should be noted that none of these modifications would address the elimination of the bottleneck that is a significant cause of the reliability concern that is sought to be addressed by the Proposed Project.

## **OTHER SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVES**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters suggested adding a fourth track along the main line, potentially by shutting down the Hempstead Branch and running trains underground to Hicksville via a new tunnel. Others suggested a dedicated truck lane, freight rail line, or express rail service within the confines of the Long Island Expressway.

**Response:** The Draft EIS will consider reasonable alternatives that meet the project purpose and need and that are within LIRR’s ability to implement. The Long Island Expressway is not within the LIRR right-of-way and would not provide

sufficient rail connectivity for LIRR customers within Main Line communities. While a four-track Main Line is desirable from a rail operations perspective, constructing a tunnel would be inordinately complicated and disruptive, and would require lengthy tunnel approaches as well as sizeable ventilation shafts that would likely have significant adverse impacts to land use and community character. Such an alternative would require substantial property takings, extensive community disruption, and conflict with the goals and objectives of the Proposed Project and thus is not considered a reasonable alternative to the Proposed Project that should be studied in the DEIS.

## **NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters stated the No Action Alternative in the EIS should include other LIRR capital projects only.

**Response:** As described in the responses above, the No Action Alternative will include those planned projects anticipated to be completed by each of the analysis years: 2020 and 2040.

## **ELEVATED NEW HYDE PARK SEGMENT ALTERNATIVE**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters expressed a preference for an elevated Main Line in New Hyde Park.

**Response:** The Final Scoping Document contemplates consideration of reasonable alternative approaches for construction of the Main Line expansion. LIRR, in consultation with the local communities and municipalities, will continue to evaluate whether an elevated rail segment in New Hyde Park is a reasonable alternative that should be further studied and discussed in the Draft EIS (p. 35).

## **E. COMMENTS PERTAINING TO STUDY AREA**

### **COMMUNITY FACILITIES & RECREATIONAL RESOURCES**

#### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters emphasized the existence and importance of many community resources, including: multiple fire stations, a roller hockey league, Floral Park's Recreation Center, Garden City's Nassau Haven Park and Tullamore Playground, Garden City Bird Sanctuary, Yes We Can Community Center, Winthrop Hospital, and a church on South 12th Street.

**Response:** A preliminary map of sensitive land uses and community resources has been included in the Final Scoping Document (see Figure 45A-G). The Draft EIS will contain information on the presence of existing community facilities and recreational resources, such as those listed above, and will analyze the potential

significant adverse impacts to those facilities and resources and consider a wide range of mitigation measures as required.

## **LIRR RIGHT-OF-WAY MAINTENANCE**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters stated that LIRR has historically been a bad neighbor who does not properly maintain its property or manage weeds and overgrown vegetation, and requested formal maintenance arrangements moving forward.

**Response:** LIRR seeks to act as a good neighbor within the communities it serves. Regular maintenance of the right-of-way is part of LIRR's on-going responsibilities and it will review its operations within the project area as part of the development of the overall Project plan.

## **SCHOOLS**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters referenced existing schools in close proximity to the rail line, including: two elementary schools in Floral Park (one of which is the John Lewis Childs School that uses LIRR's Creedmore Spur for parking and play); a Garden City primary school located near Clinch and Homestead Avenues; and other pre-K facilities.

**Response:** A preliminary map of sensitive land uses and community resources, including schools, has been included in the Final Scoping Document (see Figure 45A-G). The Draft EIS will contain information on the presence of sensitive land uses and community facilities and resources, such as schools, and will analyze the potential significant adverse impacts to those facilities and resources.

## **DEMOGRAPHICS**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters noted unique characteristics of the demographics of the communities within the study area that should be considered in the evaluation of potential impacts.

**Response:** As set forth in the Draft Scoping Document and reiterated on pages 21-22 of the Final Scoping Document, the Draft EIS will include an analysis of demographics within the project study area to identify and address adverse and disproportionate impacts on minority and low-income communities. The Draft EIS will also address potential community character impacts as they relate to access to schools and emergency service response both during construction and when certain grade crossings might be permanently closed.



## IMPACTS TO LOCAL BUSINESSES DURING CONSTRUCTION

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters identified the Tulip Avenue business district and other businesses in close proximity to the existing rail line and expressed concern about potential impacts to these businesses during construction.

**Response:** As described in the Draft Scoping Document and reiterated on page 20 and 33 of the Final Scoping Document, the Draft EIS will include an analysis of potential impacts to local businesses and business districts within the Study Area during construction.

## VISUAL

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters stated the visual section of the Scoping Document is generic and needs to include a study area better tailored for the project.

**Response:** The Study Area for visual resources was tailored to the specific landscape of the affected communities (taking into account topography, intervening buildings, vegetation, etc.) and the nature of the Proposed Project. Specific land uses that are considered sensitive to potential visual impacts have been identified and shown in Figure 45A-G of the Final Scoping Document and will be analyzed in the Draft EIS.

## CONTAMINATED MATERIALS

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters stated concerns about legacy contamination from mercury, arsenic, and Agent Orange. Other comments regarding contaminated materials included a request to test local children for lead poisoning, and references to the remedial action workplan for the Floral Park Substation.

**Response:** As described in the Draft Scoping Document and reiterated on page 25 of the Final Scoping Document a detailed contaminated materials analysis will be conducted for areas that may experience ground disturbance or construction due to the Proposed Project. The analysis will include a detailed report on the use history of the potentially impacted properties and properties located nearby, as well as an analysis of the potential for such properties to have been contaminated by heavy metals, herbicides and other contaminants, thus requiring follow up environmental testing. The Draft EIS will identify what specific measures, if any, would be required to comply with all applicable rules and regulations relating to recognized environmental conditions identified in the ESAs. Prior remediation efforts along the right-of-way will be described in the DEIS.

**DRAINAGE & FLOODING***COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters referenced existing drainage problems at grade crossings (e.g., Herricks Road, Urban Avenue), asked for specific stormwater resources to be identified in the Scoping Document, and stated that standing water can lead to the Zika virus.

**Response:** As indicated on pages 25-26 and 34 of the Final Scoping Document, the Draft EIS will describe existing stormwater drainage systems serving the railroad right-of-way, station areas, and existing grade crossings. The Draft EIS will also describe how the stormwater drainage systems would be modified to handle any additional stormwater runoff from the Proposed Project.

**NOISE & VIBRATION***COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters stated that neighborhood noise levels are already uncomfortably loud, and that many homes, fences, antiques, etc. have been damaged due to vibrations from trains.

**Response:** As stated in the Draft Scoping Document and reiterated on pages 31-32 and 35 of the Final Scoping Document, the Draft EIS will include an analysis of potential significant adverse noise and vibration impacts caused by the Proposed Project. The grade crossing eliminations will lead to a reduction in noise in these areas from the elimination of train warning horns and signal bells. The DEIS will assess both noise reductions and increases as a result of the proposed project. A map of noise monitoring locations is provided in the Final Scoping Document as Figure 49A-D. Noise monitoring locations are used to obtain existing condition noise data at various locations along the Main Line corridor. These representative locations and the data collected there will be used to calculate future noise levels throughout the Main Line corridor.

**F. COMMENTS PERTAINING TO POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS****COMMUNITY CHARACTER***COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters expressed: a desire to maintain existing community character and quality-of-life; concerns about community separation and isolation; concerns about graffiti, visual impacts, and privacy; and opposition to tiered parking structures in suburban areas.

**Response:** As stated in the Draft Scoping Document and reiterated on pages 19-20 and 33 of the Final Scoping Document, an assessment of existing community character and potential significant adverse impacts from the Proposed Project will be included in the Draft EIS.

**RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, PARKS, & NATURAL RESOURCES***COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters said the project must analyze impacts to parks and recreational facilities. Others asked how the project will protect the Garden City Bird Sanctuary and to what extent the project will destroy trees and vegetation and displace birds and turtles adjacent to the right-of-way.

**Response:** As stated in the Draft Scoping Document and reiterated on pages 19-20 and 33 of the Final Scoping Document, the Draft EIS will include an assessment of potential significant adverse impacts from construction and operation of the Proposed Project on existing parks and open spaces. The Draft EIS will also include an assessment of potential significant adverse impacts to existing vegetation and habitat.

**JOB CREATION & SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS***COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters stated the project will bring permanent new jobs to Long Island and encourage major employers to stay and recruit locally. Some commenters stated the report being circulated by supporters is deficient and stated a need to quantitatively assess socioeconomic benefits of operations, including a localized analysis (in lieu of the proposed county-level IMPLAN analysis). Others requested analysis of impacts to property values (including actual and constructive takings), an analysis of any loss of assessed valuations and compensation, and corresponding losses to taxing authorities (and attendant tax rate increases).

**Response:** As stated in the Draft Scoping Document and reiterated on pages 20-21 of the Final Scoping Document, the DEIS will include a Socioeconomic Analysis addressing commercial property acquisition, impacts to local businesses, fiscal impacts and economic benefits from construction of the project, including the quantification of construction and permanent jobs that would be created by the Proposed Project and whether the Proposed Project is likely to generate jobs within the communities served by the Main Line. As part of the socioeconomic analysis, the DEIS will also consider the potential socioeconomic impact of providing employees an alternate means to reach existing and potential new employers in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. It should be noted that evaluation of purely economic impacts, including changes in property values allegedly caused by the Proposed Project, are beyond the scope of SEQRA.

**LOCAL BUSINESSES***COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters stated the project will destroy small business on Tulip Avenue and elsewhere, and requested more information about business relocations. Others asked specifically about impacts to businesses due to the closure of Covert Avenue.



**Response:** As stated in the Draft Scoping Document and reiterated on page 20 of the Final Scoping Document, the Draft EIS will identify where partial or full commercial property acquisitions will be required and the impacts that will result from such acquisitions. The DEIS also will include an analysis of construction-period impacts to businesses, including impacts due to traffic diversions.

The Proposed Project will not result in relocation of businesses on Tulip Avenue. While the railroad bridge over Tulip Avenue is being modified to accommodate the third track, limited lane closures on Tulip Avenue may be required. However, a Maintenance and Protection of Traffic (Work Zone Traffic Control Plan) will be implemented to ensure continued vehicular access along Tulip Avenue. As discussed on page 18 of the Final Scoping Document, Empire State Development (ESD) and NYSDOT will coordinate with the business owners to assist with business relocation where necessary.

As shown in Figures 8-10 of the Final Scoping Document, the Covert Avenue grade crossing has been designed to avoid commercial property acquisitions. Access to the business on the northeast corner of Second Avenue and Covert Avenue will be retained.

## **HISTORIC & VISUAL RESOURCES**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters stated the historic methodology is too generic and needs to consider visual effects on historic resources; that pedestrian bridges will create new, unsightly visual resources; and that cement retaining walls will change the suburban landscape. Some commenters requested the following: visual buffers; new fixtures be in context with surroundings; renderings of grade crossings to remain (with third track added).

**Response:** The Study Area for visual resources was tailored to the specific landscape of the affected communities (taking into account topography, intervening buildings, vegetation, etc.). The Final Scoping Document (page 23) has been revised to clarify that visual (contextual) effects on historic resources will be considered. Should the historic resources evaluation identify a resource that warrants an expanded Study Area to account for indirect visual effects, such changes will be described in the Draft EIS. Similarly, if the project is modified to include elements that are taller or more visually obtrusive than currently envisioned, the Study Area would be adjusted accordingly.

The Draft EIS also will characterize potential visual impacts from proposed retaining walls and noise walls. These project elements would be evaluated for visual congruity with the surrounding community, even where designated sensitive visual resources are not present.

## CONTAMINATED MATERIALS

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters expressed concern about digging in hazardous materials and community exposure to mercury, arsenic, and herbicides (e.g., Agent Orange); as well as new chemical spraying to control rodents and vegetation and resulting short-term and long-term effects to the health and safety of residents. Some commenters stated that the Phase I should identify suspected contaminants (along with known contaminants) and that the Scoping Document should establish criteria for deciding when Phase II ESAs will be performed.

**Response:** Pages 25 and 34 of the Final Scoping Document presents the methodology for assessing the presence or suspected presence of contaminated and hazardous materials, along with the potential impacts from the Proposed Project and any necessary avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures (such as control of airborne dust and preparation of Health and Safety Plans). As also stated on page 25, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) will be prepared and the results presented in the Draft EIS. The Phase I ESA will include conditions specific to the railroad right-of-way.

## DRAINAGE & FLOODING

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters requested improved drainage at underpasses, analysis of drainage at proposed grade-separated crossings. Some asked whether the high water table may require management system, whether pumping and controls will be required, if additional property will be needed for this infrastructure, and if backup power is needed in the event of power outage. Others asked if the underpasses could be less sloped (less than 8% grade) to avoid slippery/icy roadways.

**Response:** Pages 25-26 and 34 of the Final Scoping Document describe the analysis to be performed for infrastructure and utilities, which includes stormwater management and assessment of potential significant adverse stormwater impacts. The DEIS will describe the existing drainage patterns at LIRR tracks, crossings, and station areas within the Project Corridor, and will describe proposed drainage system elements to be implemented as part of the Proposed Project to manage stormwater runoff. Generally, the water table is deep within the Main Line corridor due to well-drained soils. The DEIS will indicate water table conditions based on geotechnical investigations.

## TRAFFIC & NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters asked for the methodologies to be used to identify and mitigate traffic impacts. Some commenters requested additional analyses, including: at least 9 additional intersections in Floral Park; bicyclist routes and needs; whether closure at South 12th Street would result in diversions, wear and tear on overburdened roads, and more accidents; impacts on Robbins Lane in Jericho; impacts to roadway congestion; detailed analysis of the Hicksville

Station area (vehicular, bus, pedestrian, parking); detailed study of Westbury roadways (Ellison Avenue, Post Avenue, Union Avenue, Railroad Avenue, Maple Avenue, and School Street). Others asked for specific improvements at Hicksville Station, including a bus terminal and multi-story parking garage, preparation of maintenance and protection of traffic plans, and open dialogue with school districts and their transportation departments.

**Response:** The Final Scoping Document has been revised to clarify the methodologies to be used in completing the assessment of potential transportation impacts from both construction and operation of the Proposed Project. Detailed traffic analyses will be performed using SYNCHRO software at the intersections identified in the Final Scoping Document.

The intersection of School Street and Maple Avenue (which is just north of the intersection of School Street and Union Avenue), has been added to the Final Scoping Document and will be analyzed in the DEIS. The additional intersections or corridors suggested by the Village of Westbury were not considered for inclusion in the analysis as traffic conditions along each of the roadways (Ellison Avenue, Post Avenue, Maple Avenue, and Union Avenue) would not change significantly during either construction or operation of the Proposed Project. Study Area intersections were identified in consultation with NYSDOT. With respect to the Post Avenue corridor, during operations, there would be no diversions of traffic to Post Avenue, so no analysis is required. During construction, diversions of traffic to Post Avenue would be possible, and the Old Country Road/Post Avenue and Union Avenue/Post Avenue intersections will be analyzed in the DEIS.

The analysis of transportation conditions will include evaluation of bicycle and pedestrian access to stations. The analysis will also include evaluation of accident patterns and the potential benefits of the Proposed Project through grade crossing modifications. LIRR will continue to conduct outreach with emergency service providers and school districts within the Main Line communities to ensure that their concerns are identified and considered during and following construction of the Proposed Project.

## **PARKING**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters asked for an analysis of increased parking requirements due to increased ridership on LIRR due to the proposed project, along with a plan for mitigating increased parking demand. Some commenters stated that commuter parking lots at Hicksville and Syosset are overcrowded. Others explained that the MTA's Creedmoor Spur is currently used for parking. Some commenters offered to explore long-term leases to LIRR to increase resident-only and general parking capacity. Others encouraged a robust analysis of drop-off/pick-up and other non-parking vehicles.

**Response:** As stated on pages 29-30 and 34 of the Final Scoping Document, the Draft EIS will include an assessment of potential impacts to station-area parking at New



Hyde Park, Mineola, Westbury, and Hicksville resulting from the Proposed Project. The Syosset station is outside of the project limits. LIRR is aware that LIRR-owned property on the Creedmoor Spur is currently used for parking by the adjacent school and that information will be reflected in the DEIS.

## **SAFETY & EMERGENCY SERVICES**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters expressed safety concerns, including: the potential for freight trains carrying hazardous materials to derail; the need for a safety study at Carle Place; the need for a quantitative analysis of whether grade closures will adversely affect emergency response times; traffic diversions in Floral Park resulting in more accidents requiring police attention; and whether congestion will reduce police and fire response times in host communities and neighboring communities. Others encouraged coordination with local emergency providers.

**Response:** The Final Scoping Document has been revised to state (pages 19 and 34) that the Draft EIS will include an assessment of potential impacts to emergency service response times both during and following construction of the Proposed Project. The Draft EIS also will assess whether the Proposed Project would impact accident rates within the Study Area.

## **FREIGHT RAIL**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters expressed concern about freight trains carrying contaminated materials and garbage through their backyards, about radioactive waste that will be transported from Brookhaven, and about additional freight trains resulting in unwanted diesel emissions, noise, and vibration. Comments included requests for slower freight train travel speed; high retaining walls to improve noise and privacy; full containment of freight cargo to prevent spillage; shifting freight rail away from residents; and an analysis for the potential of future increase in freight traffic.

**Response:** See the response to the comment related to Freight Rail Operations on page B-5.

## **AIR QUALITY**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters stated that the project will reduce air pollution from roadway vehicles and improve air quality. Some commenters stated that the project will result in additional freight trains and worsen air quality; others asked about increase in airborne steel dust.

**Response:** The Final Scoping Document has been revised to include an assessment of potential air quality impacts from diesel locomotives and other particulate matter.

**NOISE & VIBRATION***COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters asked for the inclusion of noise walls, others requested noise walls on both sides of the Main Line (including photos of example noise walls). Some commenters expressed concern about the project increasing train horn noise and vibration; others asked about the removal of “natural screening” in specific locations.

**Response:** As described in the Draft Scoping Analysis and reiterated on pages 31-32 of the Final Scoping Document the DEIS will include a detailed noise and vibration analysis. The need for noise walls and/or other mitigation measures will be determined based on this analysis and the results will be presented in the DEIS.

**SECONDARY AND CUMULATIVE EFFECTS***COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters expressed questions and confusion about the NEC Future Project studying rail expansion in the same location. Others emphasized the importance of a cumulative analysis of all environmental impacts (including those from the separate Hicksville Station improvement project), and asked MTA to identify the communities that will comprise the project study area for the cumulative analysis. Some commenters asked about secondary impacts to communities along the Port Jefferson Branch (Syosset and Woodbury) and Ronkonkoma Branch (Bethpage and Farmingdale), including impacts to parking, traffic congestion, pedestrian safety etc. due to increased rail service. Analysis of secondary impacts to remaining grade crossings east of the Proposed Project was also requested (i.e. effects from additional gate-down time due to increased train volumes), along with consideration of whether the Proposed Project would shift the two-track bottleneck to the east.

**Response:** The cumulative impacts analysis will consider the potential impacts of the Proposed Project in concert with those of other projects to be implemented by MTA or other transportation agencies. These projects will include planned LIRR projects (East Side Access, Double Track Project from Farmingdale to Ronkonkoma, etc.), other regional transportation projects, and land development projects.

The Final Scoping Document has been revised (see page 35) to account for the fact that LIRR currently is undertaking improvements at Hicksville that include the complete rehabilitation of the station as well as the construction of the North Siding. Station upgrades include new platforms with glass-enclosed, heated waiting rooms, lighting, translucent canopy roof, stairways, escalators, plaza elevators, a video security system, audio and digital communications systems and signage. The North Siding will connect Track 1 at Hicksville (the northernmost track) to an existing track siding situated about one-half mile west of the station platform. The siding will improve LIRR’s ability to reroute trains in the event of maintenance, construction, or service disruptions. Both of these actions are unrelated to and have independent utility from the LIRR Expansion Project.

The DEIS will evaluate any potential cumulative impacts attributable to the Proposed Project in light of these projects in Hicksville.

The Draft EIS for the LIRR Expansion project will evaluate potential effects of the Proposed Project on stations east of Hicksville through either additional parking demand or traffic generated by increased eastbound morning trains.

## **G. COMMENTS PERTAINING TO THE CONSTRUCTION PERIOD**

### **GENERAL CONSTRUCTION ISSUES**

#### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters stated the need to analyze the worst-case scenario, rather than an expedited design-build process. Additional construction-related comments included: requests to avoid nighttime construction; questions about the direction of construction (e.g., west to east); the need for construction lighting; the potential for curious children to access construction sites; requests to identify specific staging areas and equipment locations; the need to prevent rodent infestation; community requests for a phone number to contact during construction. Some commenters requested specific construction hours (e.g., Monday–Friday from 7am to 6pm), asked for a more specific and reliable construction duration (as opposed to a wide range such as 3 to 10 years), and requested a comparison of impacts between an expedited construction schedule and a longer construction schedule.

**Response:** The Draft Scoping Document states and the Final Scoping Document (p. 30) reiterates that the Draft EIS will contain a detailed description of the construction process. The construction analysis will include likely means-and-methods for implementing specific project elements, but will also evaluate impacts generally to evaluate potential worst-case conditions. The construction schedule that would form the basis of the construction impact assessment will be a realistic and achievable schedule and thus form a reasonable basis upon which significant adverse construction impacts are to be assessed.

### **JOB CREATION**

#### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters stated the project will result in temporary construction jobs for unions.

**Response:** The Final Scoping Document (page 19) states that the Draft EIS will include a quantification of construction-period jobs likely to be generated by the Proposed Project.

### **BUSINESS IMPACTS**

#### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters requested that the EIS consider potential impacts of local businesses from a combination of construction and severe weather event. Others suggested specific mitigation



measures to help businesses stay viable during the construction period, such as targeted marketing campaigns, training programs, and small business grants.

**Response:** As stated in the Draft Scoping Document and reiterated on pages 20-21 and 33 of the Final Scoping Document, the Draft EIS consideration of significant adverse construction impacts will include an evaluation of the temporary closures of roadways and pedestrian routes in conjunction with potential effects on local business operations from such closures and other impacts of construction. LIRR will coordinate with local communities and businesses to develop initiatives that will minimize inconvenience to customers during the construction period.

## **CONTAMINATED MATERIALS & GROUNDWATER**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters expressed concern about: the high water table creating problems during construction; community exposure to hazardous materials, mercury, arsenic, and Agent Orange; the need for hazardous and flammable materials on-site; and complying with OSHA.

**Response:** As previously stated in the Draft Scoping Document and as indicated at page 32 of the Final Scoping Document, the Draft EIS will include an assessment of potential construction-period impacts on hazardous and non-hazardous contaminated materials, including the temporary disturbance, storage, and removal of potentially hazardous soils and sediments. Generally, the water table is deep within the Main Line corridor due to well-drained soils. The DEIS will indicate water table conditions based on geotechnical investigations. The Draft EIS will evaluate whether groundwater levels are typically high or low within the project area and what measures would need to be taken during construction to manage dewatering (if necessary) of excavations and to manage any potential contaminated groundwater. The Draft EIS will also describe the typical measures to be used during construction to avoid potential exposure to hazardous materials by construction workers and the general public.

## **UTILITIES & DRAINAGE**

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters expressed concerns about stormwater drainage and utility disruptions during construction, in some cases questioning work on sewer and water lines adjacent to residential properties.

**Response:** As explained on page 34 of the Final Scoping Document, the Draft EIS will identify any potential disruptions to utilities and infrastructure during the construction of the Proposed Project, as well as measures that will be implemented to avoid or minimize such service disruptions.

**CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION***COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters expressed concern regarding: traffic detours; loss of parking; heavy equipment; safe routes to school; construction worker parking; maintaining access to Mineola Intermodal Center; traffic diversions to the Plainfield Avenue corridor; construction adjacent to residential areas interfering with ingress/egress.

**Response:** As indicated in the Draft Scoping Document and on page 34 of the Final Scoping document, the Draft EIS will include detailed analyses of construction-period traffic, including from diversions associated with construction of the grade crossings and temporary lane closures associated with railroad bridges over local streets. Construction impacts on parking and pedestrian access will also be evaluated.

**EMERGENCY SERVICES***COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters asked about emergency vehicle access during construction, the presence of flammable materials, protection of gas lines, maintaining hospital routes, adequate water supply for fire-fighting, and some requested the EIS analyze emergency response during construction. Others requested LIRR fund new fire stations and additional paramedics on the south side of the railroad to ensure adequate community protection during the construction period.

**Response:** The Final Scoping Document has been revised at page 33 to note that the Draft EIS will include an analysis of potential impacts to emergency service response time during the construction period – especially during periods of time when grade crossings are closed for construction. While flammable materials may be used or stored at construction sites, they will not be used or stored in sufficiently large volumes as to constitute a potential public safety hazard. During the actual construction, LIRR and NYSDOT will coordinate with local emergency service providers to ensure that they are aware of any unique conditions and that there are suitable response plans in place to respond to an emergency.

**CONSTRUCTION AIR QUALITY, NOISE, VIBRATION***COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters stated that the project's construction will lead to increased noise; vibration; worsened air quality; and damage to structures, building foundations, oil tanks, driveways.

**Response:** Page 35 of the Final Scoping Document presents the methodology for assessing potential air quality, noise, and vibration impacts during the construction period. The results of this analysis will be presented in detail in the DEIS. Where necessary appropriate mitigation measures will be assessed.

## PROJECT EXAMPLES

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters stated that the Roslyn Road grade crossing elimination and Ellison Avenue bridge projects are good examples of successful LIRR projects. Some commenters stated they were bad projects due to delays and cost overruns.

**Response:** The DEIS will look at past projects to identify both positive lessons learned and problems that can be addressed or mitigated.

## H. COMMENTS PERTAINING TO THE EIS PROCESS

### SCOPING COMMENT PERIOD & RELEASE OF COMMENTS

#### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters stated the project is being rushed, the Scoping comment period is inadequate, and that at least 90 days are needed for comments. Some commenters requested that all public comments be made available for review; others stated that comments from the prior 2005 NEPA review should become part of the public record for this proposal.

**Response:** There is no mandated minimum comment period for receiving comments on a draft scoping document. The comment period for the Draft Scoping Document was 36 days, which represents a reasonable time period for receipt of comments. The availability of the Draft Scoping Document was widely publicized through NYSDEC's Environmental Notice Bulletin, newspapers, websites, flyers, door-to-door visits to businesses and residential properties along the right-of-way, and outreach to elected officials. In addition, printed copies were made available for review at the Project's Information Center at the Mineola station. A total of six Scoping meetings were held at various locations and at various times (see page 38 of the Final Scoping Document for details). Regarding prior iterations of similar LIRR Main Line improvement projects, the comments from any prior Scoping Documents do not pertain to this specific Proposed Project, and are therefore will not be incorporated herein.

### INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION PROVIDED

#### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters stated the document should be reissued with more specific information, including specifics about the third track alignment and impacts to existing stations. Some commenters criticized the lack of transparency; others stated that SEQRA requires Scoping Documents to include more specificity regarding mitigation, and requested a copy of an EAF form and Positive Declaration. Some commenters complimented the level of transparency.

**Response:** As stated in response to several comments above, the Final Scoping Document includes additional detail regarding the Proposed Project, which will be considered in preparation of the Draft EIS.



## USE OF SEQRA

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters encouraged LIRR to use SEQRA to identify community concerns. Some commenters encouraged MTA to utilize the exemption from SEQRA review.

**Response:** While it is true that MTA is exempt from SEQRA analysis for certain transportation infrastructure projects, LIRR has willingly entered into a SEQRA analysis as part of the Governor's desire to undertake an unprecedented public outreach campaign.

## PUBLIC OUTREACH

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters expressed appreciation for the many meetings held to date, and commended outreach to New Cassel businesses. Some commenters offered the following criticisms: not enough Scoping Meetings; not enough daytime meetings; evening meetings should start at 7:30pm; not enough evening meetings; a public meeting started an hour late; lack of consultation with Floral Park Schools. Some commenters requested that LIRR involve the Town of Hempstead.

**Response:** LIRR has conducted an unprecedented public outreach campaign in advance of the release of the Draft Scoping Document and subsequent to its release. Numerous meetings with Main Line communities and stakeholder groups have been held to elicit input on the Proposed Project. Additionally, LIRR and MTA met separately with various elected officials, community groups, property owner associations, and stakeholder groups. LIRR has also opened a Project Information Center at the Mineola station to provide project information. The six public scoping meetings held were held at different times of day to accommodate different needs of residents and businesses. All meetings began in a timely fashion; in fact, some began earlier than scheduled and ended later than scheduled to accommodate early and late arrivals. The need to involve additional municipalities and other key stakeholder groups will evolve as the project proceeds.

## FEDERAL OVERSIGHT

### *COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters asked for FTA and/or USEPA oversight, and stated that MTA should not serve as project sponsor and lead agency. Others asked about the use of a NEPA Categorical Exclusion.

**Response:** The Proposed Project is not seeking federal funding or federal approvals at this time; therefore, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) does not apply and review by federal agencies would not be appropriate. SEQRA contemplates and authorizes preparation of an EIS by a governmental sponsor of an infrastructure project such as this one.

**SEGMENTATION AND RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PROJECTS***COMMENT THEMES*

Some commenters asked whether a separate project is needed between Floral Park and Queens Village. Some commenters stated that other regional transportation projects need to be evaluated in the EIS, and that the Scoping Document does not discuss FRA's NEC Future Tier I EIS.

**Response:** With the Proposed Project there is no need to add an additional track between Floral Park and Queens Village.

As stated in on Page 35 of the Final Scoping Document, other transportation projects will be considered as part of the cumulative impacts analysis in the DEIS.

With regard to segmentation, while other transportation projects are occurring and will occur in the general vicinity now and in the future, and these projects are and will be under the auspices of the same agency—MTA-LIRR—the Proposed Project is not segmented because:

- It has its own purpose, apart from any other project
- It has its own timeframe, independent of any other project
- It has a discrete geographic location, independent of other projects
- It is not expected to result in cumulatively significant adverse impacts when assessed along with other rail projects
- It is not a component of an identifiable overall plan
- It is not functionally dependent on any other project
- It has independent utility from any other project
- It does not commit LIRR to approve any other project \*