

Attachment A  
Summary of Comments and Responses



## Attachment A: Summary of Comments and Responses

### A. INTRODUCTION

This document summarizes and responds to comments on the May 2021 Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Metro-North Railroad (Metro-North) Penn Station Access (PSA) Project (Proposed Project) Environmental Assessment (EA) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation. The MTA and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have prepared the EA and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969; the FTA, Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), and Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Environmental Impact and Related Procedures (23 C.F.R. Part 771); 6 NYCRR Part 617 State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) requirements; the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA (40 C.F.R. 1500); Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966; Section 4(f) of the U.S. DOT Act of 1966; Executive Order 12898 - Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, and other applicable federal rules and regulations. MTA is the Proposed Project sponsor. FTA is the lead federal agency. FRA is a NEPA Cooperating Agency.

Public review began with publication and distribution of the EA and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation on May 18, 2021. The public comment period was open from May 18, 2021 through July 3, 2021. At the start of the public comment period, MTA posted the EA and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation on the project website at <https://pennstationaccess.info/>. MTA posted multi-lingual (English, Spanish, Mandarin, Bengali, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian) notices to the project website. The notices informed that the EA and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation was available for review and provided information on how to view the document, comment, and attend the virtual public meeting at which comments could be made.

Flash drives of the entire EA and paper copies of the Executive Summary (English or Spanish) were available at no charge upon request. Hard copies of the EA (with appendices on flash drive) were available for purchase by emailing [PSAOutreach@mtacd.org](mailto:PSAOutreach@mtacd.org). In addition, MTA placed full paper copies of the EA and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation in the following local repositories, where they were available for public inspection by appointment:

- Bronx Jewish Community Council, 2157 Holland Ave, Bronx, NY 10467
- Morris Park Community Association, 1824 Bronxdale Ave, Bronx, NY 10462

MTA emailed the aforementioned multi-lingual notices to elected officials, Community Boards, interested organizations, stakeholders, and members of the public on the project notification list. MTA also emailed letters to Agency partners, informing of the EA and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation availability, virtual public meeting, and public comment process. In addition, the multi-lingual notices were distributed to 15 locations within the surrounding neighborhoods of the proposed stations, including community centers, cultural centers, colleges, libraries, supermarkets, housing complexes, and Community Boards. These notices were mailed, emailed, or hand delivered between May 20, 2021 and June 2, 2021, depending on the location's preference for receiving notices.

Advertisements providing information on the EA and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation, the viewing repositories, the comment period, and the public meeting appeared in local newspapers during the public comment period.



Legal advertisements were run in the following local newspapers, including English language newspapers and a Spanish language newspaper (with Spanish language advertisement):

- amNY Metro (daily English language paper), May 24, 2021
- El Diario (daily Spanish language paper), May 25, 2021
- Bronx Times (weekly English language paper), May 28, 2021

A display advertisement was also run in amNY (daily English language paper) on June 10, 2021.

MTA issued a press release, which announced the availability of the EA and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation and the virtual public meeting, on May 19, 2021. The notices and announcement of the virtual public meeting were also posted to the MTA Public Hearings Website (<https://new.mta.info/transparency/>) on May 26, 2021. MTA posted weekly on MTA and/or Metro-North Facebook and Twitter accounts announcing the Proposed Project and encouraging public comment.

MTA held a briefing to the PSA Bronx & Westchester Community Council on June 10, 2021 announcing the availability of the EA and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation and the date of the virtual public meeting. The PSA Bronx & Westchester Community Council was launched in September 2019 and was created to educate the public and key stakeholders on the PSA project. The Community Council is co-chaired by Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and Westchester County Executive George Latimer. The Bronx & Westchester Community Council includes elected officials, Community Boards, Community Based Organizations, and other key stakeholders. The meeting was attended by approximately 20 key stakeholders.

MTA held a virtual public meeting to provide information on the Proposed Project and hear oral comments on the MTA Metro-North PSA EA and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation at 6 P.M. on June 15, 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on public gatherings, the public meeting was conducted as a virtual meeting utilizing Zoom Webinar. Spanish translations, CART Captioning, and American Sign Language services were available at the public meeting. The virtual public meeting was attended by approximately 125 members of the public. During the public meeting, MTA provided a presentation on the PSA project and the findings of the EA and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation. At the conclusion of the presentation, a total of 23 speakers provided formal oral comments. In addition, six written comments in the Q&A function of the Zoom Webinar were accepted as formal written comments.

Following the public meeting, MTA representatives attended the Bronx Borough Board Meeting on Thursday, June 24, 2021 and provided an update on the project, reiterated the EA and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation is available for review, and explained how to comment.

This document contains a summary of the substantive comments received during the public review period established for the EA and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation. Approximately 160 comments were received during the agency and public comment period. These comments were received through a variety of methods, including: written comment letters submitted by mail; oral testimony submitted at the public meeting; comments submitted by email; comments submitted by phone; and comments submitted through the project website. All substantive comments received by July 3, 2021 (and comments received shortly after the close of the comment period) have been reviewed and summarized in this document. Comments are not listed individually; rather, they are grouped by major topic or by the EA analysis subject matter. The full text of each comment can be found in Attachment B.



B. ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO COMMENTED ON THE EA AND DRAFT SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION

Elected Officials or their Representatives

1. Honorable Mario Mattera, New York State Senate, 2<sup>nd</sup> District, oral testimony read by Tim Ragazzo at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Mattera-79*): Comment 88
2. Honorable Shelley Mayer, New York State Senate, 37<sup>th</sup> District, oral testimony read by Michael Press at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Mayer-80*): Comment 1, Comment 9, Comment 40, Comment 66, Comment 75, Comment 89
3. Honorable Brian Barnwell, New York State Assembly, 30<sup>th</sup> District, email dated June 28, 2021 (*Barnwell-152*): Comment 13, Comment 79
4. Honorable Jeffrey Dinowitz, New York State Assembly, 81<sup>st</sup> District, oral testimony at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Dinowitz-81*): Comment 1, Comment 75, Comment 85
5. Honorable Nathalia Fernandez, New York State Assembly, 80<sup>th</sup> District, oral testimony read by Maria Parubi at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Fernandez-96*): Comment 1, Comment 4, Comment 21, Comment 47, Comment 75, Comment 91
6. Honorable Steven Otis, New York State Assembly, 91<sup>st</sup> District, letter dated June 22, 2021 (*Otis-119*): Comment 1, Comment 4, Comment 40, Comment 75, Comment 88
7. Honorable Amy Paulin, New York State Assembly, 88<sup>th</sup> District, oral testimony read by Catherine Draper at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Paulin-77*): Comment 1, Comment 9, Comment 21, Comment 40, Comment 75, Comment 88
8. County Executive George Latimer, Westchester County, oral testimony read by Joan McDonald at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Latimer-86*): Comment 1, Comment 4, Comment 40, Comment 88
9. Westchester County Board of Legislators, Chairman Benjamin Boykin II, 5<sup>th</sup> District; Vice Chair Alfreda A. Williams, 8<sup>th</sup> District; Majority Leader MaryJane Shimsky, 12<sup>th</sup> District; Majority Whip Christopher A. Johnson, 16<sup>th</sup> District; Minority Leader Margaret A. Cunzio, 3<sup>rd</sup> District; Honorable Colin D. Smith, 1<sup>st</sup> District; Hon. Kitley S. Cotvill, 2<sup>nd</sup> District; Hon. Vedat Gashi, 4<sup>th</sup> District; Hon. Nancy E. Barr, 6<sup>th</sup> District; Hon. Catherine F. Parker, 7<sup>th</sup> District; Hon. Catherine Borgia, 9<sup>th</sup> District; Hon. Damon R. Maher, 10<sup>th</sup> District; Hon. Terry Clements, 11<sup>th</sup> District; Hon. Tyrae Woodson-Samuels, 13<sup>th</sup> District; Hon. David Tubiolo, 14<sup>th</sup> District; Hon. Ruth Walker, 15<sup>th</sup> District; Jose I. Alvarado, 17<sup>th</sup> District joint letter dated May 26, 2021 (*Boykin-49*): Comment 1, Comment 4, Comment 9, Comment 40, Comment 75
10. Mayor Noam Bramson, City of New Rochelle, letter dated June 28, 2021 (*Bramson-130*): Comment 1, Comment 4, Comment 75, Comment 89

Public Agencies and Governmental Organizations

11. Amtrak, Jason Abrams, Public Relations Manager, email dated July 2, 2021 (*Abrams-143*): Comment 1, Comment 4, Comment 20, Comment 47, Comment 75
12. Bronx Community Board 9, Aliza McMyers, Board Member, online form submission dated June 24, 2021 (*McMyers-121*): Comment 97
13. City of New Rochelle, Kevin Kain, Director, Planning & Sustainability, email dated June 24, 2021 (*Kain-120*): Comment 97



14. Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), Joseph Giuliotti, Commissioner, oral testimony at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Giuliotti-78*): Comment 1, Comment 2, Comment 40, Comment 88
15. New York City Department of Parks & Recreation (NYCDPR), David Cuff, Director, Environmental Review, Planning and Development, letter dated July 2, 2021 (*Cuff-144*): Comment 39, Comment 45, Comment 51, Comment 52, Comment 53, Comment 54, Comment 55, Comment 57, Comment 58, Comment 59, Comment 60, Comment 61, Comment 62, Comment 73, Comment 83
16. New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT), Shuzuan Li, City Planner, Division of Transportation Planning & Management, email dated June 4, 2021 (*Li-53*): Comment 72
17. New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP), Ian Benjamin, Staff, Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), online form submission dated June 11, 2021 (*Benjamin-64*): Comment 63
18. United States Department of the Interior (DOI), Andrew L. Raddant, Regional Environmental Officer, letter dated July 9, 2021 (*Raddant-153*): Comment 64, Comment 65
19. United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Mark Austin, Team Leader, Environmental Review, letter dated July 1, 2021 (*Austin-139*): Comment 41, Comment 47, Comment 75, Comment 76, Comment 82, Comment 95

#### Non-Governmental Organizations and Businesses

20. Boulevard Gardens, Arthur Breedy, Vice President, Board of Directors, oral testimony at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 and online form submissions dated June 15, June 16, and June 21, 2021 (*Breedy-74, Breedy-84, Breedy-107, Breedy-115, Breedy-154*): Comment 3, Comment 50, Comment 56, Comment 79, Comment 85, Comment 87, Comment 90, Comment 97, Comment 98
21. Boulevard Gardens, petitions with approximately 345 resident signatures emailed by Muriel Dampsey on July 1 and July 2, 2021 (*Dampsey-140*): Comment 3, Comment 38, Comment 44, Comment 46, Comment 79, Comment 85
22. Bronx Chamber of Commerce, Joseph Kelleher, Chairman, oral testimony at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Kelleher-87*): Comment 1, Comment 4, Comment 29, Comment 40, Comment 88
23. Building 13 Association Inc., Leslie Peterson, President, online form submission dated May 24, 2021 and comment submitted via online form and email dated July 3, 2021 (*Peterson-9, Peterson-147*): Comment 6, Comment 35, Comment 80, Comment 97
24. Business Council of Westchester, Dr. Marsha Gordon, President/CEO, letter dated June 11, 2021 emailed by Ivette Molina on June 14, 2021 (*Gordon-65*): Comment 1, Comment 4, Comment 9, Comment 21, Comment 40, Comment 47
25. Business Council of Westchester, John Ravitz, Executive Vice President/ CEO, oral testimony at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Ravitz-88*): Comment 1, Comment 4, Comment 9, Comment 21, Comment 40, Comment 47
26. Empire State Passengers Association, Steve Strauss, Executive Director, email dated June 17, 2021 and letter dated June 30, 2021 (*Strauss-109, Strauss-134*): Comment 1, Comment 2, Comment 9, Comment 11, Comment 18, Comment 70, Comment 75, Comment 77, Comment 96
27. Montefiore Health System, Rick Chandler, Senior Vice President, Strategic Development, oral testimony at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Chandler-95*): Comment 1, Comment 4, Comment 29, Comment 40



28. Morris Park Business Improvement District, Camelia Tepelus, Executive Director, oral testimony at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Tepelus-91*): Comment 1, Comment 4, Comment 25, Comment 29, Comment 40, Comment 91
29. NYC Health + Hospitals, John Doyle, Associate Director, email dated June 15, 2021 (*Doyle-70*): Comment 97
30. Parikh Worldwide Media, LLC & ITV Gold, Sonia Lalwani, Senior Manager, Sales & Marketing, email dated June 10, 2021 (*Lalwani-60*): Comment 97
31. Parkchester Preservation Management LLC, Ricky Pizarro, Chief Executive Officer, emails dated June 15 and June 17, 2021 (*Pizarro-69*, *Pizarro-110*): Comment 1, Comment 27, Comment 47
32. Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee, Lisa Daglian, Executive Director, oral testimony at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Daglian-89*): Comment 1, Comment 4, Comment 6, Comment 7, Comment 9, Comment 21, Comment 40, Comment 47, Comment 84
33. Regional Plan Association RPA, Brian Fritsch, Manager, Advocacy & Campaigns, oral testimony at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Fritsch-94*): Comment 1, Comment 4, Comment 7, Comment 9, Comment 40, Comment 47, Comment 75, Comment 98
34. Rosenberg & Estis, P.C., Norman Flitt, Member, letter dated June 30, 2021 (*Flitt-133*): Comment 43
35. SI Engineering, P.C., Andrew Schueller, Vice President, email dated June 18, 2021 (*Schueller-111*): Comment 97
36. Stamford Connecticut Partnership, Jon Winkel, CEO, oral testimony at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Winkel-99*): Comment 1, Comment 4, Comment 40
37. Tri-State Transportation Campaign, Felicia Park-Rogers, Director, Regional Infrastructure Projects, oral testimony at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 and email dated June 15, 2021 (*Park-Rogers-73*, *Park-Rogers-97*): Comment 1, Comment 2, Comment 40, Comment 47, Comment 84
38. Waterbury LaSalle Community & Homeowners Association, Andrew Chirico, Vice President, online form submission dated June 03, 2021 (*Chirico-51*): Comment 23

#### Interested Individuals

39. Adam Ferstendig, oral testimony at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Ferstendig-85*): Comment 3, Comment 79, Comment 85
40. Adrian I Untermeyer, Esq., online form submission and email dated May 20, 2021 (*Untermeyer-2*): Comment 1, Comment 48, Comment 49
41. A. G., online form submission dated July 3, 2021 (*G.-148*): Comment 79
42. Alexander Wood, oral testimony at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 and online form submission dated June 16, 2021 (*Wood-92*, *Wood-106*): Comment 1, Comment 17, Comment 75, Comment 84, Comment 85, Comment 93, Comment 94, Comment 98
43. Allan Dguerra, Allan DGuerra IT Solutions, Project Manager, online form submission dated May 29, 2021 (*DGuerra-24*): Comment 1, Comment 6
44. Amier Metwaly, Best Buy, IT Technician, online form submission dated June 9, 2021 (*Metwaly-59*): Comment 84
45. Andrew Nathanson, Bisnow Media, Operations & Production Director, online form submission dated May 30, 2021 (*Nathanson-29*): Comment 97
46. Andrew Nigro, online form submission dated July 12, 2021 (*Nigro-155*): Comment 97
47. Andrew Tse, online form submission dated June 23, 2021 (*Tse-118*): Comment 1





48. Andy Pollack, oral testimony at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Pollack-83*): Comment 1, Comment 4
49. Ann Altman, online form submission dated June 29, 2021 (*Altman-132*): Comment 1
50. Anne Fitzpatrick, comment submitted via Q&A function at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 and email dated June 30, 2021 (*Fitzpatrick-104, Fitzpatrick-135*): Comment 44, Comment 46, Comment 79, Comment 85
51. Arthur Galloway, Earthquake Protection Systems, online form submission dated May 24, 2021 (*Galloway-7*): Comment 97
52. Brenden Woods, online form submission dated May 31, 2021 (*Woods-35*): Comment 97
53. Candace Gartland, online form submission dated June 9, 2021 (*Gartland-54*): Comment 1
54. Carl Perrera, online form submission dated June 11, 2021 (*Perrera-63*): Comment 84
55. Christine Aucoin, online form submission dated June 1, 2021 (*Aucoin-42*): Comment 1, Comment 6, Comment 29
56. Chuck Nin, online form submission dated June 1, 2021 (*Nin-41*): Comment 84
57. Conrad Booker, online form submission dated May 29, 2021 (*Booker-21*): Comment 7
58. Dana Waddell, online form submission dated June 1, 2021 and email dated July 1, 2021 (*Waddell-39, Waddell-147*): Comment 6, Comment 30, Comment 35
59. Dan Hunt, email dated July 3, 2021 (*Hunt-150*): Comment 1, Comment 46, Comment 79
60. David Gong, online form submission dated July 15, 2021 (*Gong-156*): Comment 85
61. David Hernandez, MTA, Bus Operator, online form submission dated June 2, 2021 (*Hernandez-45*): Comment 98
62. David Schulman, online form submission dated June 14, 2021 (*Schulman-66*): Comment 14
63. Diane Schwartz, email dated June 15, 2021 (*Schwartz-76*): Comment 97
64. Edward Musarskiy, online form submission dated June 9, 2021 (*Musarskiy-56*): Comment 85
65. Ellen Frint, online form submission dated June 3, 2021 (*Frint-50*): Comment 1, Comment 29
66. Eugene Travers, Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP, online form submission dated May 31, 2021 (*Travers-34*): Comment 97
67. Francisco Hui, oral testimony at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Hui-98*): Comment 3, Comment 44, Comment 79, Comment 85
68. Frank A. Jones, online form submission dated May 20, 2021 (*Jones-3*): Comment 10, Comment 11, Comment 12, Comment 16
69. George Davenel, online form submission dated May 30, 2021 (*Davenel-30*): Comment 1, Comment 9, Comment 29, Comment 40, Comment 41, Comment 75
70. Greg Atria, oral testimony at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Atria-93*): Comment 98
71. Harris Daley, Riverbay Corporation, Shareholder, online form submission dated June 26, 2021 (*Daley-122*): Comment 32, Comment 33, Comment 67
72. Hattie Overman, email dated June 30, 2021 (*Overman-138*): Comment 92
73. Hector Felix, online form submission dated June 23, 2021 (*Felix-117*): Comment 84
74. Intesar Alam, online form submission dated May 28, 2021 (*Alam-20*): Comment 84
75. James Izurieta, online form submission dated May 29, 2021 (*Izurieta-27*): Comment 98
76. Jarod Hutcheson, comment submitted via Q&A function at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Hutcheson-100*): Comment 19
77. Jason Yao, New York City MEP, Mechanical Engineer, online form submission dated June 9, 2021 (*Yao-55*): Comment 84
78. Jay Carryl, email dated June 14, 2021 (*Carryl-67*): Comment 84



79. Jean Joseph, online form submission dated June 9, 2021 (*Joseph-58*): Comment 1, Comment 4, Comment 6, Comment 40
80. Jim Fitzpatrick, email dated July 2, 2021 (*Fitzpatrick-146*): Comment 25, Comment 46, Comment 79, Comment 90
81. Jimmy Panagiotou, online form submission dated May 29, 2021 (*Panagiotou-22*): Comment 84
82. Joe DeRaffele, online form submission dated June 3, 2021 (*DeRaffele-52*): Comment 97
83. John Borrelli Jr., Fordham University, email dated May 19, 2021 (*Borrelli-1*): Comment 97
84. John Connolly, IBEW Local 3, Journeyman Electrician, online form submission dated May 29, 2021 (*Connolly-28*): Comment 1, Comment 47
85. John Dunn, email dated June 20, 2021 (*Dunn-112*): Comment 81
86. John Levai, online form submission dated May 23, 2021 (*Levai-8*): Comment 1, Comment 10, Comment 31, Comment 84
87. Jonathan King, online form submission dated June 10, 2021 (*King-61*): Comment 85
88. Joseph Mancini, online form submission dated June 15, 2021 (*Mancini-68*): Comment 84, Comment 85
89. Joseph Unidentified, comment submitted via Q&A function at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Unidentified-102*): Comment 42
90. Joseph Vella, online form submission dated June 29, 2021 (*Vella-129*): Comment 3, Comment 44, Comment 79, Comment 84
91. Justin Marchesi, online form submission dated June 28, 2021 (*Marchesi-126*): Comment 3, Comment 38, Comment 44, Comment 46, Comment 79
92. Kai Harada, online form submission dated May 27, 2021 (*Harada-12*): Comment 6, Comment 84
93. Kari Bentley-Quinn, online form submission dated June 28, 2021 (*Bentley-Quinn-124*): Comment 3, Comment 44, Comment 79
94. Kenyi Ogando, online form submission dated May 30, 2021 (*Ogando-33*): Comment 24
95. Kinlok Poon, Atlas Air, online form submission dated June 1, 2021 (*Poon-40*): Comment 23
96. Kyron Liu, online form submissions dated June 15, 2021 (*Liu-71*, *Liu-72*): Comment 1, Comment 7, Comment 84
97. Lana Friedman, Brookfield Properties, Property Assistant, email dated May 27, 2021 (*Friedman-11*): Comment 6
98. Linda Allen, email dated May 21, 2021 (*Allen-6*): Comment 74, Comment 98
99. Lisa Barelli, email dated June 29, 2021 (*Barelli-131*): Comment 44, Comment 79, Comment 90
100. Lori Coffaro, online form submission dated May 27, 2021 (*Coffaro-13*): Comment 98
101. Lorraine Rodriguez, email dated June 30, 2021 (*Rodriguez-136*): Comment 44, Comment 79, Comment 90
102. Martina Molloy, email dated July 4, 2021 (*Molloy-151*): Comment 38, Comment 44, Comment 79, Comment 90
103. Marty Gaon, Apogee Lighting, Vice President, online form submission dated June 2, 2021 (*Gaon-46*): Comment 97
104. Mary Pearson, email dated June 29, 2021 (*Pearson-127*): Comment 30, Comment 35, Comment 67
105. Matt Kamper, oral testimony at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Kamper-82*): Comment 1, Comment 2, Comment 6, Comment 47
106. Michael Amabile, online form submission dated June 21, 2021 (*Amabile-114*): Comment 24, Comment 85





107. Michael Oleaga, online form submission dated May 28, 2021 (*Oleaga-18*): Comment 1, Comment 6, Comment 9, Comment 40, Comment 66
108. Michael Quinn, email dated June 28, 2021 (*Quinn-123*): Comment 44, Comment 79
109. Michelle Helfrich, New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), NYC Ferry Watchfloor Operator, online form submission dated June 9, 2021 (*Helfrich-57*): Comment 1
110. Mike Sullivan, online form submission dated May 30, 2021 (*Sullivan-32*): Comment 8
111. Natalie Re, online form submission dated May 29, 2021 (*Re-26*): Comment 1, Comment 7
112. Nelson Beltran, online form submission dated June 28, 2021 (*Beltran-125*): Comment 1, Comment 13, Comment 28, Comment 34
113. Nelson Sweeting, Section 5 Association, email dated July 2, 2021 (*Sweeting-145*): Comment 32
114. Nicholas Acabeo, online form submission dated May 20, 2021 (*Acabeo-5*): Comment 7, Comment 13, Comment 22, Comment 26, Comment 28, Comment 36, Comment 71
115. Nick Dattilo, comment submitted via Q&A function at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Dattilo-101*): Comment 56, Comment 97, Comment 98
116. Nitesh Goyal, online form submission dated June 10, 2021 (*Goyal-62*): Comment 4, Comment 6, Comment 40
117. Oliver Chessler, online form submission dated June 29, 2021 (*Chessler-128*): Comment 78
118. Otto Vondrak, Railfan & Railroad Magazine, Managing Editor, online form submission dated June 23, 2021 (*Vondrak-116*): Comment 1, Comment 2, Comment 85
119. Patter Son, online form submission dated June 1, 2021 (*Son-38*): Comment 1, Comment 13, Comment 98
120. Peter Duncan, online form submission dated May 28, 2021 (*Duncan-17*): Comment 7, Comment 13, Comment 84
121. Peter Greenberg, online form submission dated May 30, 2021 (*Greenberg-31*): Comment 7
122. Phillip Roncoroni, online form submission dated May 29, 2021 (*Roncoroni-23*): Comment 1, Comment 7, Comment 47, Comment 98
123. Ramiro Vidal, online form submission dated May 28, 2021 (*Vidal-19*): Comment 1, Comment 84
124. Rebecca Hyams, Borough of Manhattan Community College, Assistant Professor, online form submission dated May 28, 2021 (*Hyams-15*): Comment 1, Comment 13, Comment 68
125. Rick Landau, phone comment dated May 28, 2021 (*Landau-14*): Comment 97
126. Robert Mendelson, online form submission dated June 1, 2021 (*Mendelson-43*): Comment 1, Comment 75, Comment 86
127. Robert Rogucki, CTECS, Student, online form submission dated May 28, 2021 (*Rogucki-16*): Comment 13, Comment 15
128. Robert Walker, Garg Consulting Services, Inc., Senior Traction Power Engineer, online form submission dated May 24, 2021 (*Walker-10*): Comment 97
129. Ron Aryel, M.D. M.B.A., letter dated June 17, 2021 (*Aryel-108*): Comment 1, Comment 21, Comment 24, Comment 31, Comment 37, Comment 40, Comment 47, Comment 66, Comment 69, Comment 75
130. Sandra Elie, email dated June 30, 2021 (*Elie-137*): Comment 38, Comment 79, Comment 84
131. Sarah Abel, email dated July 3, 2021 (*Abel-149*): Comment 35
132. Scott Whipple, online form submission dated June 2, 2021 (*Whipple-44*): Comment 8
133. Stephanie McGregor, email dated July 1, 2021 (*McGregor-142*): Comment 30, Comment 35
134. Stephen Conklin, Ultra DNT, IT Data Analyst, online form submission dated May 20, 2021 (*Conklin-4*): Comment 84



135. Steve Boatti, online form submission dated June 2, 2021 (*Boatti-47*): Comment 32
136. Tina Ruggiero, online form submission dated June 2, 2021 (*Ruggiero-48*): Comment 1, Comment 6, Comment 47, Comment 88
137. Unidentified, comment submitted via Q&A function at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Unidentified-103*): Comment 5
138. Unidentified, comment submitted via Q&A function at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Unidentified-105*): Comment 44
139. Vincent Macchia, online form submission dated June 21, 2021 (*Macchia-113*): Comment 1
140. Vincent Perrelli, online form submission dated May 29, 2021 (*Perrelli-25*): Comment 1
141. William Meehan, online form submission dated July 15, 2021 (*Meehan-157*): Comment 11, Comment 13, Comment 17, Comment 23, Comment 71
142. William Natal, E-J Electric Installation Co., IT & Facilities Manager, email dated June 1, 2021 (*Natal-37*): Comment 97
143. Wilson Ribadeneira, phone comment dated June 1, 2021 (*Ribadeneira-36*): Comment 97
144. Yevgeny Sorokin, email dated June 15, 2021 (*Sorokin-75*): Comment 44, Comment 79
145. Yuki Endo, oral testimony at virtual public meeting on June 15, 2021 (*Endo-90*): Comment 7, Comment 9, Comment 84



## C. COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

## Comments Pertaining to Purpose and Need

*Expanding Passenger Rail Service*

Comment 1: Many commenters expressed support for expanding Metro-North service to the East Bronx, reducing commuting times from the East Bronx, Westchester, and Connecticut to Midtown Manhattan, and allowing for reverse-commuting opportunities. Some commenters stated that the East Bronx has long been underserved by public transit, citing examples of how providing additional travel options to residents of Hunts Point, Parkchester, Morris Park, Co-op City and the surrounding neighborhoods will lead to noticeable improvements to their personal, professional, and financial lives. A few commenters described the benefits of connecting Metro-North service to regional travel options at Penn Station (PSNY) and easing passenger congestion at Grand Central Terminal (GCT), particularly following the completion of the East Side Access project (ESA project) (*Untermeyer-2, Levai-8, Hyams-15, Oleaga-18, Vidal-19, Roncoroni-23, Dguerra-24, Perrelli-25, Re-26, Connolly-28, Davenel-30, Son-38, Aucoin-42, Mendelson-43, Ruggiero-48, Boykin-49, Frait-50, Gartland-54, Helfrich-57, Joseph-58, Gordon-65, Pizarro-69, Liu-71, Park-Rogers-73, Paulin-77, Giulietti-78, Mayer-80, Dinowitz-81, Kamper-82, Pollack-83, Latimer-86, Kelleher-87, Ravitz-88, Daglian-89, Tepelus-91, Wood-92, Fritsch-94, Park-Rogers-97, Chandler-95, Fernandez-96, Winkel-99, Wood-106, Aryel-108, Pizarro-110, Macchia-113, Vondrak-116, Tse-118, Otis-119, Beltran-125, Bramson-130, Altman-132, Strauss-134, Abrams-143, Hunt-150*).

Response 1: Comment noted.

Comment 2: Several commenters expressed support for creating a second Metro-North terminal in Manhattan, adding redundancy to the region's commuter rail network, increasing Metro-North's operational flexibility, and providing an alternative route for service in the case of emergencies. A few commenters cited major delays to Metro-North service in the past due to fires and gas leaks, emphasizing that the flexibility provided by utilizing the Hell Gate Line (HGL) for Metro-North service will alleviate pressure on the existing Park Avenue Viaduct bottleneck and mitigate the negative impacts from major service disruptions, severe weather events, and other emergency situations (*Park-Rogers-73, Giulietti-78, Kamper-82, Park-Rogers-97, Vondrak-116, Strauss-134*).

Response 2: Comment noted.

Comment 3: A group of petitioners and several commenters expressed opposition to the project due to a perceived lack of benefits for and potential adverse effects on communities in Queens. A few commenters stated that Queens residents should not have to bear the burden for regional transportation improvements that primarily serve commuters outside of New York City. Another commenter opined that funds would be better spent on New York City Transit (NYCT) improvements (*Ferstendig-85, Hui-98, Bentley-Quinn-124, Marchesi-126, Vella-129, Dampsey-140, Breedy-154*).

Response 3: PSA is a social equity project that will significantly improve mobility for underserved neighborhoods by building four new accessible stations in the Bronx, provide regional connectivity, and have universal benefits to New York City and the region, including Queens. The Queens portion of the project area already has sound transportation access and mobility options. The new reliable Metro-North service will reduce transit travel times and result in more people traveling by train rather than private vehicle, thereby reducing congestion and improving air quality throughout the region. . Further, only minimal infrastructure improvements will occur in Queens and there will be no increase in emissions to Queens neighborhoods.



### *Economic Vitality & Regional Connectivity*

Comment 4: Many commenters noted the economic benefits for the greater New York metropolitan region, particularly for residents and businesses in the Bronx, Westchester, and Connecticut. Commenters noted significant improvements in access to jobs, medical centers, educational campuses, commercial centers and recreational amenities. Some commenters also noted the benefits of reverse commuting opportunities. A few commenters emphasized that the Proposed Project will stimulate the economy, improve connectivity, support local development efforts, allow for economic mobility, and help the Bronx and the region rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic. (*Boykin-49, Joseph-58, Goyal-62, Gordon-65, Pollack-83, Latimer-86, Kelleher-87, Ravitz-88, Daglian-89, Tepelus-91, Fritsch-94, Chandler-95, Fernandez-96, Winkel-99, Otis-119, Bramson-130, Abrams-143*).

Response 4: Comment noted.

### *Project Cost & Schedule*

Comment 5: One commenter asked about the cost of PSA (*Unidentified-103*).

Response 5: As stated in Chapter 1, "Background and Purpose and Need", the current budget is \$1.583 billion. However, the cost of the Proposed Project will be based upon competitive proposals made by construction teams, who will be incentivized to design and build the project with minimized community impact and cost.

Comment 6: Two commenters asked about the timeline for Proposed Project (*Friedman-11, Waddell-39*). Several commenters noted that PSA has been long awaited (*Oleaga-18, Harada-12, Waddell-39, Ruggiero-48, Joseph-58, Kamper-82, Daglian-89, Peterson-147*). Several commenters encouraged MTA to accelerate the project schedule (*DGuerra-24, Aucoin-42, Goyal-62*).

Response 6: The preliminary estimate of the construction duration for the Proposed Project is approximately four to five years, with construction projected to begin in 2022; however, the exact duration will be determined by the selected design-build team. The construction schedule was developed by experienced professionals with extensive knowledge of large transportation projects. The contract for the design-build process will provide incentives to deliver on or ahead of schedule.

### *Fares*

Comment 7: Several commenters expressed concern regarding the price of Metro-North fares within city limits, noting that the cost of a Metro-North trip is multiple times that of the subway and does not provide a free transfer to MTA subway or bus service (*Duncan-17, Re-26, Fritsch-94*). Some commenters suggested that in order to draw ridership, Metro-North service should be more competitively priced with subway fares and included in an unlimited MTA MetroCard (*Acabeo-5, Booker-21, Greenberg-31*). One commenter cited the combined San Francisco Municipal Railway and San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit monthly pass for the city zone, which costs \$98, only \$17 more than the railway monthly pass alone. (*Roncoroni-23*). Several commenters stated that the expanded service and shorter travel times provided by the Proposed Project will remain inaccessible to low-income commuters, urging the MTA to consider subsidizing Metro-North fares from the four new stations to match subway fares and/or expanding the implementation of a freedom ticket for commuter rail discounts with transfers to subways and buses (*Acabeo-5, Booker-21, Liu-72, Daglian-89*). Another commenter suggested that the CityTicket fare program for one-way Metro-North and LIRR service be available at PSNY and GCT, upon completion of ESA and PSA projects (*Endo-90*).

Response 7: Metro-North fares are set using zones based on the distance traveled. Metro-North fares are designed to be equivalent with each other on this distance basis, and PSA fares are likely to be on a par with



fares on the New Haven, Hudson and Harlem lines for similar distances. Any decision to adjust fares to approach subway levels could have a significant impact on Metro-North's ability to provide the service its customers deserve and expect, including severe overcrowding and train delays. The PSA project is not specifically a social-equity project; it is a regional-access project that has the potential to provide social-equity benefits, providing a faster ride to/from employment centers than the existing lengthier rides via bus and subway. MTA is analyzing potential "City Fare" types of tickets which may offer reduced-rate fares within New York City limits.

## Comments Pertaining to Project Elements

### *Rail Alignment, Interlockings, Bridges & Substations*

Comment 8: One commenter asked why Metro-North trains will travel from the East Bronx to Queens prior to terminating in Manhattan (*Sullivan-32*). Another commenter was concerned that utilizing the HGL for Metro-North service will increase commuting times to New Haven (*Whipple-44*).

Response 8: Amtrak's existing HGL is currently underutilized, and PSA will improve the HGL so it can be used by Metro-North. This is far cheaper than building a new rail line. The existing HGL passes through the East Bronx over the Hell Gate Bridge into western Queens and onward through the existing East River Tunnels to PSNY. The new service will not increase commuting times between New Haven and GCT, since only certain trains will be diverted to the new route. PSA will reduce Connecticut riders' travel time to Manhattan's west side by up to 40 minutes per day by eliminating the need for subway/bus transfers, cabs or for-hire vehicles, or a 1.2-mile walk between GCT and PSNY. PSA will also save East Bronx riders traveling to Connecticut up to approximately 75 minutes in each direction, greatly expanding reverse commuting opportunities.

Comment 9: Many commenters expressed support for the cost-effective approach of utilizing existing Amtrak right-of-way, limiting disruptions to local communities from the amount of infrastructure work required, bringing the Hell Gate Bridge to a state of good repair, rehabilitating tracks along the HGL, and adding new tracks for increased rail capacity and flexibility for Metro-North and Amtrak service (*Oleaga-18, Davenel-30, Boykin-49, Gordon-65, Paulin-77, Mayer-80, Ravitz-88, Daglian-89, Endo-90, Fritsch-94, Strauss-134*).

Response 9: Comment noted.

Comment 10: Two commenters recommended increasing track capacity along as much of the HGL as possible—such as a four-track segment between New Rochelle and the Hell Gate Bridge and/or to Harold Interlocking, replacing the Pelham Bay Bridge with a four-track bridge, and reactivating the freight track over the Hell Gate Bridge for passenger use and having it continue to Young Interlocking. One of the commenters noted that having four tracks along the corridor will help maintain planned schedules and provide for better future planning with the replacement of the Pelham Bay Bridge (*Jones-3, Levai-8*).

Response 10: The Proposed Project will turn the existing two-track railroad into a predominantly four-track railroad, with 15.4 miles of new and rehabilitated track work. Upon completion of the project, three tracks will exist from approximately Milepost (MP) 10.5 to MP 12.5 and four tracks will exist from MP 12.5 to MP 15.5 (See Section 2.5 of the EA). Operations of this alignment were simulated for the future condition (as J1 in Appendix A of the EA) which demonstrated there will be no degradation of existing service. In addition, the project team has worked with Amtrak and CSX to ensure corridor operations are accommodated effectively, especially over the Hell Gate Bridge. Amtrak owns the movable Pelham Bay Bridge and plans to replace it as part of a separate project. Co-op City Station will be designed so as not to preclude a replacement of the



Pelham Bay Bridge. The track alignment developed for PSA was directly coordinated with Amtrak to ensure compatibility with their future project.

Comment 11: Two commenters stated that Shell Interlocking in New Rochelle needs to be redesigned to avoid interference for trains to/from PSNY and GCT, including higher speed trains. One of the commenters suggested the project include grade separation of this interlocking (*Meehan-157*). The other recommended future project phases include provisions to mitigate issues with future modifications (*Jones-3*). Another commenter asked whether the project assumed the at-grade interlocking will remain and questioned whether the planned improvements to the Shell Interlocking will be sufficient for the proposed additions to Metro-North and Amtrak service. The commenter noted the EA did not evaluate a New Rochelle flyover option for southbound and westbound New Haven Line (NHL) trains bound for the Hell Gate Bridge and stated that any potential impacts of a flyover option, including adverse effects on New Rochelle's downtown area and benefits to safety and operational reliability, should be fully disclosed in the EA (*Strauss-109, Strauss-134*).

Response 11: The project team has worked with Amtrak and other rail service providers to ensure the project's compatibility with the regional network layout and operations. This work included simulations of train operations through Shell Interlocking, which found little to no degradation in operations from the Proposed Project (See Section 12.6.4 and Appendix A of the EA). Substantial investments were made at Shell Interlocking a decade ago to realign the junction. The PSA project assumes continued operation of the current configuration of Shell Interlocking. The simulations performed for PSA for the 2025 service indicate that through the combination of those improvements and train schedule development, a flyover is not required.

Comment 12: One commenter urged the MTA to start initial design work and planning for the conversion of the overhead lines west of PSNY, Sunnyside Yard, and Harold Interlocking to 12.5 Kv 60 Hz power for improved reliability (*Jones-3*).

Response 12: The conversion of the existing powering system is part of a larger discussion concerning the PSNY complex, the connected tunnels, and the station itself. The MTA, Amtrak, and NJ TRANSIT are actively engaging in this conversation outside of the Proposed Project.

### *Rail Operations*

Comment 13: Several commenters questioned the planned service pattern for the Proposed Project, indicating that while PSA will decrease commuting times, frequent and reliable service is critical to drawing ridership and achieving the goals of the project. A few commenters asked about headways at the new Metro-North stations, with one commenter recommending trains arrive no less than every fifteen minutes (*Hyams-15, Rogucki-16, Duncan-17, Son-38*). One commenter suggested Metro-North prioritize off-peak reverse-commuting travel, for better efficiency and job access (*Meehan-157*). Another commenter stated that service should be available to those who work non-traditional hours or are commuting for recreational purposes (*Acabeo-5*). Another commenter asked whether the Stamford and New Rochelle trains operating during off-peak hours will make all stops in the East Bronx (*Beltran-125*). One commenter questioned how many additional trains will run through Queens per day (*Barnwell-152*).

Response 13: The service planned for the PSA project represents a collaborative effort by Metro-North and Amtrak to provide consistent and reliable train service along the HGL corridor, with headways similar to those at existing stations in the Bronx. As noted within Chapter 2, "Project Alternatives," service will include three trains per hour per direction for the peak period (6-10 a.m., 4-8 p.m.), and two trains per hour per direction during the off-peak period (See Chapter 2.6). The hours of operation will be comparable to existing Metro-North services, with arrivals and departures at PSNY between 5 a.m. and 2 a.m. (next day). All off-peak PSA trains will stop at all four proposed Bronx stations.





Comment 14: One commenter asked whether Metro-North Harlem Line service will run from Hudson Yards or PSNY (*Schulman-66*).

Response 14: PSA will not impact Metro-North's Harlem Line. PSA will divert certain NHL trains via Amtrak's existing HGL for service into and out of PSNY.

Comment 15: One commenter asked whether Danbury, New Canaan, and Waterbury branch trains would be going to PSNY under the proposed service plan (*Rogucki-16*).

Response 15: Branch line trains are currently planned to remain in their current patterns, with peak through-service between GCT and the Danbury and New Canaan branches, and shuttles at other times and on the Waterbury Branch. Transfer options will be available using the hourly trains between Stamford and PSNY. This will require passengers from the Danbury and Waterbury branches to transfer to main line trains at South Norwalk or Bridgeport, respectively, and then transfer again at Stamford.

Comment 16: One commenter suggested expanding the HGL to four tracks and subsequently altering Amtrak, CSX, and Metro-North rail operations to better accommodate scheduled service as well as service during unplanned events. The commenter's proposed changes to the rail operations included: routing Amtrak trains and some Metro-North express trains on the inner tracks and Metro-North local trains on the outer tracks; restoring the fourth main track over the Hell Gate Bridge and assigning it to Amtrak; transferring the existing CSX track on the HGL to Amtrak; providing for the occasional CSX freight to have fluid entrance and exit of the line; and protecting the line from CSX freight with wheel impact load detectors, dragging equipment and other measures (*Jones-3*).

Response 16: The project team has worked with Amtrak and CSX to ensure the Proposed Project's compatibility with the regional network layout and operations, while respecting operational agreements and practices. Detailed rail operation simulations were performed, which concluded the project will result in little to no degradation in operations (See Section 12.6 and Appendix A of the EA). These simulations considered various delay scenarios, which showed the project will allow Amtrak services to better recover from delays than in no-build conditions (See Section 12.6 and Appendix A of the EA).

Comment 17: Two commenters encouraged using PSA as an opportunity to implement through-running trains within the tri-state region (e.g., allowing trains arriving at PSNY to continue to NJ TRANSIT lines). They offered specific strategies including: changing CTDOT locomotives from M-8 electric multiple units (EMUs) to locomotives with coaches or EMUs designed to operate on the PRR 25Hz AC electrical system (which will eliminate the need for the new PRR third rail substations), and having Metro-North and NJ TRANSIT jointly procure dual-voltage trainsets that can run through PSNY (*Wood-92, Wood-106, Meehan-157*).

Response 17: The use of M-8 EMUs for the initial PSA service does not preclude the use of other types of equipment to serve the Bronx and the region. There are, however, significant physical, operational, mechanical, and institutional hurdles to the operation of regular, attractive through-commuter service at PSNY (distinct from Amtrak or weekend special event service). As a result, at this time, there are no plans for NJTRANSIT or Metro-North to offer service outside of their respective territories.

Comment 18: One commenter encouraged the MTA to more fully disclose the investment and potential benefits of the Proposed Project's significant ancillary improvements to freight rail access in the region (*Strauss-134*).

Response 18: As described in Chapter 12, "Transportation," the additional track flexibility provided by the Proposed Project will largely improve overall rail operations for the area, including freight service.



Comment 19: One commenter asked how the Proposed Project will impact freight carriers, what the hours of operation will be, and whether any freight outages will be required (*Hutcheson-100*).

Response 19: As noted in Chapter 2, "Project Alternatives," the Proposed Project will maintain freight operations in the HGL corridor. All freight operations occur outside of peak passenger service hours (6-10 a.m., 4-8 p.m.). The project team has worked with Amtrak and CSX to ensure corridor operations are accommodated effectively, respecting existing operational agreements and practices. As noted in Section 19.5.9.1 of the EA, for construction activities that necessitate taking tracks out of service, MTA and the design-builder will work closely with Amtrak and CSX to coordinate the construction outage plan. It is anticipated that current levels of weekday Amtrak passenger service and CSX freight service will be maintained, and that changes to service at night or during weekends will likely be required.

Comment 20: Amtrak expressed support for the Proposed Project, indicating Amtrak will continue working closely with the MTA to advance the engineering and design for PSA and forging an agreement on a cost-sharing framework that appropriately supports the project, while complying with all federal requirements around intercity and commuter rail cross-subsidization (*Abrams-143*).

Response 20: Comment noted.

### *Rail Stations*

#### General Station Design

Comment 21: Several commenters expressed support for the addition of four new stations in the Bronx that will be fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Commenters noted that many subway stations in the Bronx are not yet ADA-accessible, emphasizing that it is critical to provide access to Metro-North service for people with disabilities (*Gordon-65, Paulin-77, Ravitz-88, Daglian-89, Fernandez-96, Aryel-108*).

Response 21: Comment noted.

Comment 22: One commenter suggested that stations designs should include weather protection for commuters, provide shade from the sun across the platforms, and allow for diffused light during the day. The commenter stated that door-protected heating and cooling on the platforms will improve the experience for commuters. The commenter also noted that large LED screens on the street level will be helpful for allowing commuters to access information regarding arrivals and departures prior to entering the station (*Acabeo-5*).

Response 22: Station design will conform to Metro-North's Standards and Guidelines. Consistent with these requirements, each station will include platforms, canopied areas of the platform, stairs, elevators, plaza area and a pedestrian overpass. Metro-North's station standards require that appropriate signage be placed at key decision points in the customer's path to their desired train in such a way as to make navigating the station intuitive. As a result, signage will be placed at locations where the customer will face a choice of paths. The need for street-level signage will be determined based on this standard.

Comment 23: Two commenters asked whether parking will be included at the four new Metro-North stations (*Poon-40, Chirico-51*). One of the commenters opined that each of the new stations should have parking included, so as not to over-burden the surrounding neighborhoods with additional cars (*Chirico-51*). Another commenter expressed support for the fact that the Proposed Project does not include car parking, citing the adverse effects of private automobiles (*Meehan-157*).

Response 23: Consistent with Metro-North's guidelines for urban stations, PSA will not include parking facilities at the four new stations. MTA will continue to work with NYCDOP and NYCDOT to ensure best possible planning for these stations, however. As noted in Section 12.3.2.2 of the EA, MTA used Regional



Transit Forecasting Model (RTFM) results and data from Metro-North's 2016 Origin-Destination Survey to estimate the Proposed Project's net increase in vehicle trips, parking demand, transit trips, and pedestrian trips. It is anticipated that many riders will walk, bike, or travel by bus to the new stations.

Comment 24: A few commenters encouraged enhancing the areas surrounding the new stations, such as green spaces and trees to improve the aesthetic value of the neighborhoods and support property values (*Ogando-33, Aryel-108, Amabile-114*).

Response 24: The scope and budget for the Proposed Project is limited to the construction of the four ADA-compliant stations and associated platforms, canopies, elevators, stairs, plaza area and pedestrian overpasses. The New York City Department of City Planning (NYCDCP) is concurrently conducting the Bronx Metro-North Station Area Study, which is a station area planning effort independent of the MTA's PSA project. As part of that study, NYCDCP has held public information sessions and workshops with East Bronx stakeholders and is preparing recommendations to integrate the four new stations into the surrounding neighborhoods.

Comment 25: One commenter noted the community in Morris Park is having challenges with MTA properties, stations, and structures being littered with graffiti and suggested the project include funds for maintenance of the cityscape around the four new stations (*Tepehus-97*). Another commenter questioned how the MTA will prevent graffiti on sound walls erected for noise protection in Queens (*Fitzpatrick-146*).

Response 25: Consistent with MTA Metro-North's Station Standards and Guidelines, stairwells, walls, and elevators will be designed to resist graffiti by use of such measures as anti-graffiti coatings on concrete and brick surfaces and uneven surface textures to prevent vandalism. Cleaning and maintenance of stations is included in the MTA operating budget. Metro-North will operate and maintain the new service once PSA is implemented. The Proposed Project does not include the construction of sound walls in Queens.

### Hunts Point Station

Comment 26: One commenter suggested a pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the Bronx River at Lafayette Avenue to improve access to the Hunts Point Station for Soundview, Castle Hill and Clason Point residents. The commenter stated that the bridge, along with a parking protected bicycle lane on Lafayette Avenue would encourage micro-mobility for Hunts Point residents accessing Soundview Park (*Acabeo-5*).

Response 26: The scope and budget for the Proposed Project is limited to the construction of the four ADA-compliant stations and associated platforms, canopies, elevators, stairs, plaza area and pedestrian overpasses. As part of the Proposed Project, bicycle racks will be provided at the entrance plaza of each station. As stated above, the NYCDCP is concurrently conducting the Bronx Metro-North Station Area Study, which is a station area planning effort primarily focused on first and last mile improvements, which may include pedestrian and bicycle network improvements. MTA will continue to coordinate with NYCDCP and NYCDOT regarding safe and accessible paths of travel to the stations.

### Parkchester/Van Nest Station

Comment 27: One commenter expressed support for the Parkchester/Van Nest Station location, citing benefits to Parkchester's residential community (*Pizarro-69, Pizarro-110*).

Response 27: Comment noted.

Comment 28: Two commenters suggested a connection should be considered from the Parkchester/Van Nest Station to the Unionport Road Bridge for commuters walking from the Bx39 and Bx36 bus stops (*Acabeo-5, Beltran-125*).



Response 28: As noted in Section 2.3.2.2 of the EA, the project team and NYCDOT have discussed potentially creating a connection from the station platform to the Unionport Bridge to better serve the Van Nest neighborhood. Similarly, a private developer that owns a site adjacent to the station area has suggested a connection to the north side of the site. Given the uncertainty of these plans, however, the EA analyses assume only the E. Tremont Avenue entrance will be constructed. If the proposed entrance is changed during the final design process, a supplemental NEPA evaluation will be conducted.

#### Morris Park Station

Comment 29: Several commenters emphasized their support for the addition of a Metro-North station at Morris Park, citing that the neighborhood is a hub for healthcare, education, and research, with institutions such as the Einstein College of Medicine and associated hospital campuses in need of better transit access (*Davenel-30, Aucoin-42, Frait-50, Kelleher-87, Tepelus-91, Chandler-95*).

Response 29: Comment noted.

#### Co-op City Station

Comment 30: A few commenters expressed support for adding a Metro-North station in Co-op City, citing Co-op City residents' long-time enthusiasm for the Proposed Project (*Waddell-39, Pearson-127, McGregor-142*).

Response 30: Comment noted.

Comment 31: One commenter suggested that the project include a pedestrian walkway connecting the intersection at E. Gun Hill Road to the Co-op City Station to benefit Pelham Gardens residents. The commenter also suggested pedestrian access from the Co-op City Station to Pelham Bay Park would serve potential commuters who might wish to spend a day at the park. The commenter also suggested building a pedestrian walkway from Pelham Parkway South and Burr Avenue to the west limit of the Co-op City Station (*Levai-8*). Another commenter recommended building a "kiss-and-ride" at this station to facilitate passenger drop-offs and pick-ups (*Aryel-108*).

Response 31: The scope and budget for the Proposed Project is limited to the construction of the four ADA-compliant stations and associated platforms, canopies, elevators, stairs, plaza area and pedestrian overpasses. As stated above, the NYCDOP is conducting the Bronx Metro-North Station Area Study, which may include pedestrian station area improvements beyond the scope of the PSA project. MTA will continue to coordinate with NYCDOP and NYCDOT regarding safe and accessible path of travel to the stations.

Comment 32: A few commenters expressed concern regarding the lack of planned parking at the Co-op City Station. One commenter noted existing parking issues on Erskine Place (*Sweeting-145*). Another commenter stated that Co-op City is an out-of-the-way station that could benefit from some commuters driving there from nearby neighborhoods, suggesting that even a small parking area would increase the number of train customers (*Boatti-47*). One commenter cited the current shortage of parking spaces in Co-op City, noting that the influx of vehicles in the neighborhood could make it even more difficult for residents to find street parking (*Daley-122*).

Response 32: Consistent with Metro-North's guidelines for urban stations, PSA will not include new parking spaces or new parking facilities at the four new stations in the Bronx. It is anticipated that many riders will walk, bike, or take the bus to the new stations. As described in Chapter 12, "Transportation," existing on-street curbside parking in the Co-op City study area comprises more than 400 parking spaces, with an approximately 30 percent utilization rate during the peak-period analysis hours. Since existing on-street parking utilization is low, MTA expects that the existing parking supply will be sufficient to accommodate the small



increase in parking demand with the Proposed Project. MTA and the selected design-builder will coordinate closely with the community and evaluate travel patterns to and from station.

Comment 33: One commenter suggested that the platform and entrance for the Co-op City Station be relocated to the other side of the tracks, to be away from the Co-op City residential properties (*Daley-122*).

Response 33: The station entrance location is intended to serve the Co-op City population, as well as provide a connection to the bus service that terminates at Erskine Place. The opposite side of the tracks is property within Pelham Bay Park, which was determined to be less suitable for the station platform.

Comment 34: One commenter suggested that the project modify the Pelham Bay Interlocking in order to move the Co-op City Station further east, away from the highway and towards the bus terminal on Earhart Lane (*Beltran-125*).

Response 34: The Co-op City Station and associated interlocking have been located as far east as possible while not precluding Amtrak's future replacement of the Pelham Bay Bridge.

Comment 35: A few commenters suggested that Co-op City Station needs an additional entrance on the other side of the tracks to mitigate the increase in congestion for Co-op City residents along Erskine Place. Commenters stated that the secondary entrance would provide more direct access to the station for commuters driving from outside of Co-op City, while the entrance on Erskine Place would serve Co-op City residents and bus connections. The commenters noted that a service vehicle road already exists at the secondary proposed location and would make an effective drop-off/pick-up area. One commenter cited that Co-op City residents expressed their concerns regarding the single station entrance at a public meeting led by the MTA more than two years ago and asked whether any further evaluation of the station entrance design has been conducted since then (*Pearson-127, Waddell-141, McGregor-142, Peterson-147, Abel-149*).

Response 35: Comment noted. The opposite side of the tracks is property within Pelham Bay Park, which was determined to be less suitable for the station entrance. Placing a new entrance on the south side of the station is not currently in the project scope and budget but could be added in the future if ridership levels warrant an additional entrance.

## Comments Pertaining to Environmental Effects

### *Land Use, Zoning & Public Policy*

Comment 36: One commenter noted that MTA should work with the City to zone the areas around the new stations for dense, mixed use, transit-oriented development. The commenter noted this is crucial to allow for more New Yorkers to live in close proximity to the new transportation mode (*Acabeo-5*).

Response 36: Rezoning the station areas is outside the scope of the PSA project. As stated previously, NYCDOP is conducting the Bronx Metro-North Station Area Study, which may include transit-oriented development.

Comment 37: One commenter noted that PSA will improve quality of life in the surrounding station areas and reduce crime in the communities by increasing foot traffic (*Aryel-108*).

Response 37: Comment noted.

Comment 38: A group of petitioners and a few commenters opined that PSA will have an adverse effect on quality of life for residential communities along the Queens portion of the HGL corridor. Commenters expressed concern that PSA will increase homeless populations, pollution, and crowding, attract undesirable activities, and reduce parking availability adjacent to the HGL in Queens. Petitioners and commenters



expressed concern regarding the poor cleaning and maintenance of the existing HGL corridor and stated that increasing service will lead to more garbage and debris, which will attract rodents to the surrounding areas (*Marchesi-126, Elie-137, Dampsey-140, Molloy-151*).

Response 38: The Proposed Project will be using an existing active rail line. No new passenger rail stations, parking facilities, or publicly accessible project elements will be located in Queens. The project team will work with Amtrak to ensure the corridor is maintained effectively, respecting existing agreements and practices.

Comment 39: NYCDPR provided detailed comments on the Land Use, Zoning & Public Policy chapter of the EA, as follows:

- The Sheridan Boulevard project should be listed as complete, not under construction, in Table 3-1 on page 3-17.
- On page 3-21, the anticipated completion for the Starlight Park Phase 2 project should be mid-2022, not in 2021. Additionally, the Starlight Park Phase 2 project will include two bridges, not three. The third bridge was built by NYSDOT as part of the Sheridan Boulevard project and turned over to NYCDPR (completed 12/2019).
- The location and anticipated year of completion for the Starlight Park Phase 2 project should state “along the Bronx River between Westchester Ave. and E. 174th St.,” and “2022” in Table 3-2 on page 3-21 (*Cuff-144*).

Response 39: These changes have been incorporated in the Modifications, Clarifications and Errata Sheet, see Attachment C.

#### *Socioeconomic Conditions*

Comment 40: Many commenters stated that improving connectivity between New York and Connecticut economies will drive socioeconomic growth in the region by providing access to new employment opportunities and expanding the employee pool for employers. Commenters specified that reverse commuting opportunities will benefit Westchester and Connecticut employers and employees commuting from the Bronx. Commenters also noted that improving access to commercial, cultural, medical, educational, and recreational centers will benefit local businesses and support economic development in the Bronx and throughout the region (*Oleaga-18, Boykin-49, Joseph-58, Goyal-62, Gordon-65, Paulin-77, Giulietti-78, Mayer-80, Latimer-86, Kelleher-87, Ravitz-88, Daglian-89, Tepelus-91, Chandler-95, Fritsch-94, Otis-119*). Two commenters suggested that improved access to medical and educational centers will also promote job creation, economic competitiveness, and innovation (*Davenel-30, Winkel-99*). Another commenter expressed support for the well-paying jobs that will be created during construction of the project and the permanent jobs associated with operating Metro-North service along the line (*Aryel-108*). Several commenters emphasized the significance of the project given the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, noting that PSA will improve commuting for the essential workforce and encourage post-COVID return to work trends (*Park-Rogers-73, Mayer-80, Winkel-99*).

Response 40: Comment noted. As discussed in Chapter 4, “Socioeconomic Conditions,” MTA anticipates the Proposed Project will have substantial positive benefits to the neighborhoods within the study area. The Proposed Project will greatly improve transit access for communities in the East Bronx and the proposed Metro-North stations will provide better access to employment opportunities, shopping, and entertainment.

Comment 41: Comments submitted by EPA noted that property acquisitions for the Proposed Project will not require residential or business relocations (*Austin-139*). One commenter expressed support for the fact that the Proposed Project involves no property acquisition through eminent domain (*Davenel-30*).





Response 41: As described in Chapter 3, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy” and Chapter 4, “Socioeconomic Conditions,” MTA will acquire property and easements on Amtrak- and City of New York-owned and private property to implement the Proposed Project. In almost all cases, MTA will acquire only portions of the private lots, which will allow the existing uses to continue. Letters have been sent out to owners of all property that may be impacted by the project. As design and property acquisition needs are finalized, MTA and the design-builder will coordinate with any affected businesses, property owners, and tenants to avoid or minimize property impacts. Property acquisitions will adhere with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, as codified in Title 42, Section 4601 et seq. of the United States Code, and the applicable implementing regulations set forth in Title 49, Part 24 of the Code of Federal Regulations (collectively, “the Uniform Act”). If full property acquisition is required, MTA will fairly compensate the owners of properties for the land acquired and will provide relocation assistance to businesses to facilitate their reestablishment elsewhere, as necessary.

Comment 42: One commenter expressed concern regarding the financial investment they have committed to develop plans for a vacant lot that has been identified as an impacted property. The commenter asked whether the planning and construction process for the development can proceed and if not, will there be reimbursement for the losses accrued (*Unidentified-102*).

Response 42: Property acquisitions will adhere with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, as codified in Title 42, Section 4601 et seq. of the United States Code, and the applicable implementing regulations set forth in Title 49, Part 24 of the Code of Federal Regulations (collectively, “the Uniform Act”).

Comment 43: One commenter expressed concern regarding a proposed property condemnation for the construction of a substation in Woodside, Queens. The commenter stated that the proposed temporary construction easement and the permanent easement will have adverse impacts on the property owner and tenants in the surrounding area. The commenter cited that the impacted property is under private ownership with a shared access pursuant an agreement and explained that the private road impacted is essential for access to the respective premises, deliveries, garbage pickup, and for designated parking spaces provided for in the tenants’ leases. The commenter requested clarification on the extent and duration of the construction. The commenter opined that the MTA must pay a regular easement fee, in addition to the award for the taking, to cover the cost of snow removal and other maintenance. The commenter stated that the property owner is willing and able to discuss these issues with the MTA in an attempt to amicably work out terms of the easements (*Flitt-133*).

Response 43: Property acquisitions will adhere with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, as codified in Title 42, Section 4601 et seq. of the United States Code, and the applicable implementing regulations set forth in Title 49, Part 24 of the Code of Federal Regulations (collectively, “the Uniform Act”). As discussed in Chapter 19, “Construction and Construction Impacts”, construction for the Proposed Project will last approximately four to five years, with up to 24 months of work at each new substation.

Comment 44: A group of petitioners and several commenters expressed concern that noise and vibration from the Proposed Project will negatively affect the value of Queens properties adjacent to the HGL. Petitioners stated increases in ground vibration will also lead to structural problems and require expensive repairs. Commenters questioned whether compensation will be provided to account for the commenters’ anticipated home value depreciation (*Sorokin-75, Hui-98, Fitzpatrick-104, Unidentified-105, Quinn-123, Bentley-Quinn-124, Marchesi-126, Vella-129, Barelli-131, Fitzpatrick-135, Rodriguez-136, Dampsey-140, Molloy-151*).



Response 44: As described in Section 16.4.1 of the EA, noise modeling following the FTA *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual* (FTA Report No. 0123, September 2018) found that receptors in Queens will experience a small increase of up to 1 decibel in total noise exposure from what the communities experience today. An increase of 3 dBA or less is barely perceptible by the human ear. The Proposed Project will not generate vibration impacts in Queens, largely because the train tracks are not directly at-grade with the surrounding buildings but rather on an elevated structure, which provides a poor conduit for vibration to travel into the ground (see Section 16.4.1.2). No compensation to homeowners adjacent to the existing HGL is anticipated.

#### *Public Open Space & Recreation*

Comment 45: NYCDPR requested the opportunity to review plans for any proposed fencing, discussed on page 7-14, between Pelham Bay Park and the railroad right-of-way in the Co-op City Station area (*Cuff-144*).

Response 45: MTA and the selected design-build contractor will coordinate with NYCDPR in advance of any new fencing in this area, as indicated in the Modifications, Clarifications and Errata Sheet, see Attachment C.

Comment 46: A group of petitioners and several commenters expressed concern regarding the adverse impacts of increased noise on the Boulevard Gardens children's playground and picnic area in Woodside, Queens (*Marchesi-126, Fitzpatrick-135, Dampsey-140, Fitzpatrick-146, Hunt-150*).

Response 46: As described in Section 16.4.1 of the EA, noise modeling following the FTA's *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual* (FTA Report No. 0123, September 2018) concluded that receptors in Queens will experience a small increase of up to 1 decibel in total noise exposure from what the communities experience today. An increase of 3 dBA or less is barely perceptible by the human ear.

#### *Environmental Justice*

Comment 47: Several commenters stated the importance of expanding transit access to neighborhoods in the East Bronx, which have long been underserved by public transit (*Roncoroni-23, Connolly-28, Ruggiero-48, Gordon-65, Pizarro-69, Kamper-82, Ravitz-88, Daglian-89, Fritsch-94, Fernandez-96, Pizarro-110*) and include large percentages of minority and low-income residents (*Park-Rogers-73, Park-Rogers-97, Aryel-108, Austin-139, Abrams-143*). Comments submitted by EPA also emphasized the anticipated benefits to residents of the study area, noting that the EA includes an adequate Environmental Justice Analysis (*Austin-139*).

Response 47: Comment noted. As discussed in Chapter 20, "Environmental Justice," the Proposed Project will benefit residents in the study area, including the surrounding minority and low-income populations, by providing new passenger rail service and increasing regional accessibility to the eastern Bronx community.

#### *Historic Resources*

Comment 48: One commenter expressed concern that the Historic Resources chapter of the EA does not address the historic Westchester Avenue Station of the New York Westchester, and Boston Railway (NYW&B). The commenter noted several community-driven preservation proposals now circulating, cited the deterioration of the Westchester Avenue Station, and opined that it will need to be stabilized and protected if the PSA project is undertaken. The commenter requested that if funding allowed, the Proposed Project restore and adaptively reuse the structure, perhaps under the Arts for Transit program's auspices. (*Untermeyer-2*).

Response 48: The Westchester Avenue Station has been evaluated by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and no determination has been made regarding its eligibility for the National/State Register of



Historic Places; therefore, it was not addressed in the EA. An existing conditions report prepared in 2010 noted its state of disrepair and there have been no improvements since that time. The design-builder will perform a structural assessment of the station for review by MTA and Amtrak, to determine if the structure poses a hazard for trains operating beneath and identify the potential for stabilization.

Comment 49: One commenter expressed concern that the Historic Resources chapter of the EA does not address the New Haven Railroad's trademark tapered-leg catenary bridges running across the entirety of the project area and urged the MTA to preserve the tapered-leg latticework bridges, given that they are crucial pieces of America's industrial heritage and should continue their duties into the next century. The commenter also requested an appropriate coat of black paint. The commenter further described that on the Hell Gate Bridge, the New Haven Railroad utilized a catenary bridge design not found anywhere else on its network, or the rest of the world, and requested the project avoid inserting additional new bridges between them or materially altering the current bridges, as their unique status in engineering history will be blurred by any incursion or alteration (*Untermeyer-2*).

Response 49: The catenary structures within this section of the NHL have been previously modified over the life of the railroad. They are not National Register-listed or eligible. As part of the Proposed Project, MTA will receive \$30 million from the FRA's FY 2019 Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair Grant Program to replace the 210 catenary structures on the HGL that have exceeded their useful life. MTA will require replacement of most of the existing catenary support portal structures where the new track alignment will not fit under the existing portals or due to the poor condition of the structures. If possible, existing catenary structures will be used, requiring only the relocation of the attachments of the catenaries to the portals to match the reconfigured track layout. The hybrid catenary bridges were not identified as contributing elements to the Hell Gate Bridge's National Register eligibility determination.

#### *Archaeological Resources*

Comment 50: One commenter expressed concern around the impacts to archaeological resources identified in the EA (*Breedy-84*).

Response 50: Chapter 10, "Archaeological Resources" contains a detailed assessment regarding whether the Proposed Project has any potential to affect archaeological resources. MTA has determined that the Proposed Project could affect potential archaeological resources in some areas. However, the Programmatic Agreement (see Attachment D) outlines how MTA will avoid these impacts through further investigation and, if necessary, mitigation prior to construction.

#### *Natural Resources*

Comment 51: NYCDPR provided detailed comments on the Natural Resources chapter of the EA, as follows:

- The ecological community, wetlands, wildlife, etc. are not described specifically for the area of parkland that will be disturbed as a result of the new bridge construction (i.e., the bridge over the Bronx River). The EA should provide more detail in these areas, including a better understanding of their function and value and how it will be disrupted by the project (e.g., how long, in what way, etc.).
- Review for typos (*Distichlis spicata*, *Iva frutescens*) on page 8-9.
- The study area characterizations on page 8-17 ("The study area also includes the natural landscape associated with Pelham Bay Park (PBP), which includes rocky shoreline, saltwater wetlands, mud flats, forest, and meadow.") are not Edinger characterizations. The natural area south of the tracks from the Co-op City Station and the natural area in Segment 4 through PBP should be characterized

according to Edinger and the methodology on page 8-3. It should be noted that these natural habitats will not be considered a “terrestrial cultural” community according to guidance provided in the CEQR Technical Manual, as it includes intact habitats and ecosystems with minimal disruption and human influence.

- Review for typos (The scientific name for violet woodsorrel is *Oxalis violacea* not ‘exalis’) on page 8-17.
- Regarding the wildlife discussed on page 8-19, the entire stretch of the Bronx River within New York City has been identified as a water with imperiled mussels by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). Potential impacts to imperiled mussels resulting from the Proposed Action should be assessed in the EA. Mussel surveys should be conducted in accordance with the April 2021 New York State Freshwater Mussel Survey Guidelines for Waterbody Disturbance Projects. NYCDPR recommends consultation with NYSDEC.
- Regarding the wildlife discussed on page 8-19, diamondback terrapins have been observed in the saltmarsh in Pelham Bay Park near the Bartow Pell Mansion.
- NYCDPR requested the EA describe best management practices to avoid and minimize disturbance to ecological communities from tree removals discussed on page 8-27. NYCDPR noted that seasonal timing restrictions are typically implemented for tree removals on public parkland to protect migratory birds and stated that tree removal work should not be conducted between April 1st and September 31st to protect migratory birds and breeding birds.
- NYCDPR requested clarification on a statement made on page 8-31 (“Because wildlife within the Co-op City Station area and Pelham Bay Park has co-existed with the active rail line for more than 100 years, MTA expects that the additional track and service along the HGL under the Proposed Project will adversely affect such resources,”) noting that the statement seems to contradict an earlier statement about the Proposed Project not having a negative impact on wildlife species.
- Several species of the secretive salt marsh sparrows have been observed in the Pelham Bay marshes mapped in Figure 8-6 during the migratory season. These species are recognized as rare, yet are not included in Table 8-1 nor described in the text on page 8-18, which states there are five known rare bird species within the vicinity of Goose Island, Hutchinson River Hutchinson River Bridge, and the Co-op City Station area (*Cuff-144*).

Response 51: These changes and requests, including seasonal timing restrictions for tree removals on public parkland, have been addressed in the Modifications, Clarifications and Errata Sheet, see Attachment C. They do not have a substantive impact on the EA and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation findings.

Comment 52: NYCDPR requested clarification on the work being done at 177th St and Concrete Plant Park resulting in tree removals, as seen in Figure 8-9. There is no mention of 177th St or Concrete Plant Park in the documents other than this map (*Cuff-144*).

Response 52: The tree removal in this area will be limited to small trees and shrubs within or immediately adjacent to the railroad right-of-way.

Comment 53: NYCDPR requested clarification on a statement made on page 8-31 (“Because wildlife within the Co-op City Station area and Pelham Bay Park has co-existed with the active rail line for more than 100 years, MTA expects that the additional track and service along the HGL under the Proposed Project will adversely affect such resources,”) noting that the statement seems to contradict an earlier statement about the Proposed Project not having a negative impact on wildlife species (*Cuff-144*).

Response 53: This was a typographical error. It should read “will not adversely affect such resources.” This edit has been addressed in the Modifications, Clarifications and Errata Sheet, see Attachment C.

Comment 54: NYCDPR provided comments regarding the wetlands data provided in the Natural Resources chapter of the EA, as follows:

- NYCDPR asked for the wetland delineation files and report.
- There are freshwater wetlands adjacent to the Pelham Lane Bridge. NYCDPR expressed concern regarding the impacts to these wetlands if the Pelham Lane Bridge is rebuilt and requested the MTA consult with NYCDPR in a timely manner for potential impacts at this location.
- Figure 8-4 on page 8-12 does not show full extent of existing salt marsh. IM section north of Westchester Ave is larger and recently restored, and there is marsh at the south end of the extent of the map.
- NYCDPR recognizes all wetland features, discussed on page 8-27, as having conservation value regardless of their regulatory status. There is a surface water feature on Randall’s Island immediately adjacent to the tracks. There are also emergent wetland features in the Bronx both east (shown on National Wetland Inventory) and west of the Bruckner crossing, south of the tracks. These are less than 500-feet from the tracks and should be mapped and delineated. These are less than 12.4 acres and will not be regulated by NYSDEC but may be considered jurisdictional by United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).
- Figures 8-2 and 8-3 on pages 8-10 and 8-11, respectively, appear outdated and potentially do not reflect existing conditions. At Randall’s Island an existing salt marsh and a freshwater marsh appear to be missing. The restored tidal marsh is located nearest Icahn Stadium. The NYSDEC permitted this project and it is managed by NYCDPR. Please note that on the NWIs given through the NYCDEC’s Environmental Mapper link it incorrectly remains listed as E1UBL/Estuarine and Marine Deepwater. The restoration includes a mix of low and high marsh. NYCDPR suggested contacting Ross Diamond (212-360-3318) at NYCDPR for further information, if needed.
- Figures 8-4 and 8-5 on pages 8-12 and 8-13, respectively, appear outdated and potentially do not reflect existing conditions. Concrete Plant restored salt marsh in the Bronx appears to be missing. NYCDPR suggested contacting Ross Diamond (212-360-3318) at NYCDPR for further information, if needed (Cuff-144).

Response 54: MTA will share the wetland delineation report and maps with NYCDPR. The report reflects the most up-to-date assessment of wetland resources that may be impacted by the Proposed Project. The requested clarifications have been addressed in the Modifications, Clarifications and Errata Sheet (see Attachment C but do not have a substantive impact on the EA and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation findings).

Comment 55: NYCDPR requested clarification on whether the Proposed Project will be rebuilding the undersized culvert adjacent to the golf course parking lot and whether the work along the HGL will result in any additional volume of runoff into Pelham Bay Park (Cuff-144).

Response 55: Rebuilding of the culvert is not part of the PSA Project. There will be no additional volume of runoff into Pelham Bay Park due to the PSA project and the work along the HGL.

Comment 56: Two commenters questioned the Proposed Project’s impact on trees. One commenter asked about the existing tree conditions along the NHL and whether a significant number of trees will be cut down in Westchester (Dattilo-101). Another commenter questioned the benefit of the Proposed Project considering 300-500 trees will be removed (Breedy-84).





Response 56: As described in Chapter 8, “Natural Resources,” between 300 and 500 trees may be removed along the right-of-way. The larger areas of tree removal (more than 20 trees in a given area) will not be within the Westchester segment of the project. A preliminary analysis shows many of these trees are NYSDEC invasive species that provide little to no habitat value. As per NYCDPR requirements, where the Proposed Project will involve work on or within 50 feet of a tree under City jurisdiction, the design-builder will obtain a Tree Work Permit from NYCDPR prior to the start of construction, and perform all work in compliance with NYCDPR’s Tree Valuation Protocol and Tree Protection Protocol. A Memorandum of Agreement between MTA and NYCDPR will establish the procedures for surveying the trees by a certified arborist, submitting project design plans for NYCDPR review, and determining restitution requirements. Any resulting restitution requirements will be satisfied as part of the project design.

#### *Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation*

Comment 57: NYCDPR provided detailed comments on the Draft Section 4(f) chapter of the EA, as follows:

- On page 11-7, Starlight Park is not owned by NYCDPR, but rather is owned by the City of New York and under jurisdiction of NYCDPR. NYCDPR requested that this correction be made throughout the EA.
- On page 11-7, Phase II of Starlight Park should include the expansion of the existing park to the east side of the Bronx River, not the west side.
- Regarding Starlight Park discussed on page 11-7, NYCDPR noted that the portion of the park under construction will add seating areas overlooking the Bronx River, lawns and plantings, and a dog run.
- On page 11-7, the “Underutilized portions of Starlight Park” should more accurately be described as “Recently acquired properties that will allow NYC to expand Starlight Park are undergoing construction.”
- Regarding Starlight Park discussed on page 11-7, NYCDPR noted that one bridge over the river and one bridge over the railroad are in construction; two other bridges over the river are already built and in use.
- (Cuff-144).

Response 57: These suggested changes have been incorporated in the Modifications, Clarifications and Errata Sheet, see Attachment C. They do not have a substantive impact on the EA and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation findings.

Comment 58: On page 11-13, NYCDPR requested clarification on whether there is an existing access agreement with Amtrak for the access road in Pelham Bay Park. In addition, the ownership and/or jurisdiction for Block 4411 Lot 125 is not certain and requires further research (Cuff-144).

Response 58: MTA is continuing to investigate any access agreement with Amtrak for the access road in Pelham Bay Park and resolve ownership and jurisdiction for Block 4411 Lot 125.

Comment 59: The permanent easements sought as part of the Proposed Project will require alienation authorization by the New York State Legislature. NYCDPR noted that this should be discussed in the EA (Cuff-144).

Response 59: The following has been added to the Modifications, Clarifications and Errata Sheet, see Attachment C: “For all permanent easements on park property, MTA will submit proposed New York State legislation bills for approval through the parkland alienation procedures (expected in 2022 legislative session).”





Comment 60: NYCDPR recommended that the MTA continue to coordinate with NYSOPRHP regarding the Proposed Project's potential to conflict with past grant obligations and restrictions (*Cuff-144*).

Response 60: As described below in response to Comment 63, MTA will coordinate with NYSOPRHP as design continues to understand the final real impacts to the park as they relate to the LWCF obligations. Text has been added to the Modifications, Clarifications and Errata Sheet, see Attachment C.

Comment 61: NYCDPR noted that the Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation chapter should include an assessment of the four (4) permanent easements proposed for the area north of the Pelham Lane Pathway Bridge (*Cuff-144*).

Response 61: The four permanent easements in Pelham Bay Park, as well as four additional permanent easements in Concrete Plant Park, have been identified as necessary as design progresses but were not noted in the EA. They are small areas immediately adjacent to the railroad right-of-way that will be used for realignment of catenary structures and will not adversely change the activities, features or properties of the park resource. FTA has made a de minimis finding for the use of those portions of the parks. The changes are documented in the Modifications, Clarifications and Errata Sheet, see Attachment C.

Comment 62: NYCDPR discusses minimization and mitigation measures that are associated with its concurrence of the de minimis impact finding for the project in a concurrence letter provided under separate cover. NYCDPR requested that the Section 4(f) Resources on page M-5 of Appendix M, "Mitigation, Minimization, and Monitoring Requirements," be updated to reflect the NYCDPR Section 4(f) Concurrence Letter (*Cuff-144*).

Response 62: These minimization and mitigation measures have been incorporated into the Modifications, Clarifications and Errata Sheet, see Attachment C.

Comment 63: A comment received from NYSOPRHP stated that the Proposed Project will impact outdoor recreation at Pelham Bay Park, which is owned and managed by NYCDPR and has previously received LWCF assistance. NYSOPRHP requested a meeting with the NYCDPR and MTA to discuss two permanent easements that are under consideration. NYSOPRHP cited that the easements include two small areas (200 square feet and 1,750 square feet) within the Pelham Bay and Split Rock Golf Courses immediately to the east and west of the railroad right-of way and will require a permanent easement for the Pelham Lane Pathway Bridge to accommodate parts of the proposed wing walls for the rehabilitated or replaced bridge. These small areas are part of the golf cart path and bridle path, which MTA will realign underneath the bridge as part of the Proposed Project (*Benjamin-64*).

Response 63: A conference call between representatives of NYSOPRHP, NYCDPR and MTA was held on June 21, 2021 to discuss the use of property in Pelham Bay Park that has received LWCF assistance. Further research is needed to understand previous agreements in place for use of an access road near Co-op City and MTA will coordinate with NYSOPRHP as design continues to understand the final real impacts to the park (as a result of the Pelham Lane Pathway Bridge and catenary structures). The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will recognize the impact to LWCF-assisted property and the potential need for mitigation. .

Comment 64: DOI provided comment on the Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation chapter of the EA, concurring that there is no prudent and feasible alternative to the proposed use of Section 4(f) lands. DOI stated that the Proposed Project will have an adverse effect on the Pelham Lane Pathway Bridge (part of the Pelham Bay Golf Course) which constitutes a Section 4(f) use and will result in the physical use of this Section 4(f) resource, citing that Pelham Lane Pathway Bridge currently carries two railroad tracks over a golf cart path and a bridle path. DOI also concurred with the FTA's proposed de minimis finding for the proposed permanent and



temporary easements within Starlight Park and the permanent easements within the Pelham Bay and Split Rock Golf Course, given that the easements will not adversely change the activities, features, or properties of the Section 4(f) protected resources. DOI noted that the assessment of adverse effects has been made in consultation with the SHPO and NYCDPR and described that a Draft Programmatic Agreement is being developed between MTA, FTA, SHPO and NYCDPR, which will include minimization and mitigation measures for the Pelham Lane Pathway Bridge (*Raddant-153*).

Response 64: Comment noted.

Comment 65: DOI provided comment on the permanent easements planned for Pelham Bay Park which could trigger LWCF parkland conversions. DOI stated additional coordination is needed to make a determination about the easements and any other potential LWCF compliance concerns, noting that the National Park Service (NPS) is currently working on this determination with NYSOPRHP and NYCDPR. DOI cited that Pelham Bay Park received LWCF funding in 1976 for the Orchard Beach Rehabilitation project. DOI expressed no objection to the Section 4(f) approval, provided that all measures to minimize harm are included in the final Section 4(f) evaluation, including an acceptable LWCF conversion request package submitted to the NPS by NYSOPRHP on behalf of NYCDPR, if it is determined that the project triggers a conversion(s) (*Raddant-153*).

Response 65: A conference call between representatives of NYSOPRHP, NYCDPR and MTA was held on June 21, 2021 to discuss the use of property in Pelham Bay Park that has received LWCF assistance. Further research is needed to understand previous agreements in place for use of an access road near Co-op City and MTA will coordinate with NYSOPRHP as design continues to understand the final real impacts to the park (as a result of the Pelham Lane Pathway Bridge and catenary structures) and NYSOPRHP will coordinate with NPS on behalf of NYCDPR, if a conversion is necessary. The FONSI will recognize the impact to LWCF-assisted property and the potential need for mitigation.

### *Transportation*

Comment 66: A few commenters expressed support for the Proposed Project, citing decreased congestion across East Bronx neighborhoods (*Oleaga-18, Mayer-80, Aryel-108*).

Response 66: Comment noted. The Proposed Project will encourage drivers to switch from single-driver car travel to mass transit, decreasing vehicle miles traveled for car travel.

Comment 67: Two commenters expressed concern regarding the increase in vehicular congestion due to the proposed Co-op City Station. One of the commenters stated that an increase in vehicle traffic will adversely impact existing bus traffic (*Daley-122*). The other commenter described that there is already a large amount of traffic in the area, in particular along Erskine Place, and claimed that when Co-op City residents raised concerns about the project's negative impact on congestion at a public meeting led by the MTA more than two years ago, residents were informed that Erskine Place could be converted to a one-way street (*Pearson-127*).

Response 67: Appendix H, "Transportation" Figure H-23 and Figure H-28 present the proposed Co-op City Station area traffic volumes at intersections and for movements, respectively, for the increment between the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Project. Based on the traffic analysis conducted in Chapter 12, "Transportation," the projected increase in traffic demand with the Proposed Project will not result in any traffic impacts in the Co-op City Station area. PSA does not preclude converting Erskine Place to a one-way street. MTA will coordinate with NYCDOT once closer to the beginning of operations.



Comment 68: One commenter questioned whether bus routes will be adjusted to make it easier to connect to the proposed stations. The commenter noted they live near Morris Park, and questioned how easily residents in Throgs Neck, Waterbury, or Pelham Bay will be able to get to the proposed Morris Park Station by bus. The commenter stated that without adjustments to bus routes, they will not save time if they must travel through the crowded Westchester Square to access the proposed station (*Hyams-15*).

Response 68: As described in Chapter 12, "Transportation," the modest increase in bus trips at the proposed Morris Park Station could be accommodated by the two existing local and one express bus routes in the station area. However, if any capacity or service deficiencies occur due to future growth in the station area, NYCT will address them during its ongoing systemwide planning and programming of service improvements and modifications.

Comment 69: One commenter noted the proposed Co-op City Station is too far for most residents to walk to and asked that the MTA implement an efficient public shuttle service to get Co-op City residents to and from the station location (*Aryel-108*).

Response 69: As described in Chapter 12, "Transportation," six NYCT local bus routes (Bx23, Bx26, Bx28, Bx29, Bx30, and Q50) and one express route (BxM7) serve the Co-op City Station area. Approximately 45 percent of passengers arriving at or departing from the proposed Co-op City Station will use the extensive network of bus routes that already pass directly by the proposed station area. In addition, NYCT has stated that the four bus routes currently terminating at Earhart Lane could be modified to provide better transfer connection adjacent to the new Co-op City Station; NYCT will define and implement such modifications during later project development phases. If any capacity or service deficiencies occur due to future growth in the station area, NYCT will address them in the course of its ongoing systemwide planning and programming of service improvements and modifications.

Comment 70: One commenter expressed concern regarding the fact that the EA omits the Proposed Project's impact on MTA express bus service between the East Bronx and Midtown Manhattan. The commenter suggested that the EA outline impacts to express bus ridership and discuss whether PSA will reduce the fare recovery ratio or lead to changes in service frequency (*Strauss-134*).

Response 70: Chapter 12, "Transportation," analyzes potential adverse impacts of the Proposed Project on transit, including local and express buses. At the proposed Bronx stations, existing services will adequately accommodate increases in bus trips within the vicinity of the stations because neither are at capacity. NYCT will evaluate the need for future changes to express bus capacity or service over the course of its ongoing systemwide planning and programming of service improvements and modifications.

Comment 71: Two commenters noted the MTA should prioritize buses, pedestrians, and micro-mobility (bicycles, bike share, electric scooter) access to the new Metro-North stations. One of the commenters noted the need for bus lanes and traffic signal prioritization (particularly for bus routes Bx5 and Bx6 SBS) as well as safe street crossings at each of the proposed stations (*Acabeo-5*). The other commenter suggested that the proposed stations be located as close to bus routes as possible and include secure bicycle parking, with room for future addition of CitiBike docks (*Meehan-157*).

Response 71: The scope and budget for the Proposed Project is limited to the construction of the four ADA-compliant stations and associated platforms, canopies, elevators, stairs, plaza area and pedestrian overpasses. Each station will feature bicycle racks at station entrances to encourage and support those choosing to commute by bicycle to the station. As stated previously, NYCDOP is conducting the Bronx Metro-North Station Area Study, which is a station area planning effort independent of MTA's PSA project that may include other station area amenities, such pedestrian safety and circulation improvements. MTA will



continue to coordinate with NYCDCP and NYCDOT regarding safe and accessible path of travel to the stations.

Comment 72: NYCDOT - Division of Transportation Planning & Management requested the following information:

- Backup information for the traffic analysis (data collection plan, TMC and ATR raw counts and peak hour summary, peak hour factor and heavy vehicle percentage summary, calibration memo, physical inventory and field observations) and trip distribution and trip incremental percentages for the assignment maps.
- Trip generation backup information for the sources stated under Table 12.5 PSNY and Proposed Bronx Stations' Study Areas: Incremental Trips by Mode by Direction AM Peak Hour.
- Backup information for Metro-North's 2016 Origin-Destination Survey.
- Backup information for the RTFM to explain how the projected ridership and incremental traffic volume were determined.
- Site plans for each of the four new stations.
- Pedestrian counts for existing volumes per pedestrian facility and incremental pedestrian assignment maps surrounding the proposed station area to verify if they will exceed CEQR Technical Manual analysis thresholds.
- Confirmation of whether Synchro or HCS was used for the traffic analysis and the executable files (*Li-53*).

Response 72: The project team has been coordinating station area planning with NYCDOT and NYCDCP and will continue to do so once the design-builder is on board early next year. Although MTA is not subject to CEQR, the transportation analyses did consider the thresholds in the CEQR Technical Manual. The technical analyses, including transportation, showed no significant impacts.

Comment 73: NYCDPR noted, in regard to page ES-7 of the Executive Summary chapter, that NYSDOT is working on highway on/off ramps at the clover leaf south of the proposed Co-op City Station, indicating that construction will begin in Fall, 2021 and is anticipated to end in 2023 (*Cuff-144*).

Response 73: Comment noted. The No Action project has been incorporated in the Modifications, Clarifications and Errata Sheet, see Attachment C. MTA and the design-build contractor will coordinate with NYSDOT regarding construction.

Comment 74: One commenter expressed concern regarding re-routing Metro-North service to an already congested PSNY (*Allen-6*).

Response 74: Chapter 12, "Transportation," analyzes potential adverse impacts of the Proposed Project on traffic, parking, transit, intercity passenger rail, and pedestrian travel modes. As stated in the chapter, the Proposed Project will largely not affect PSNY pedestrian circulation spaces due to the passenger volume reduction associated with the ESA project, which will reduce passengers at PSNY by roughly 40,000 AM peak-period inbound passenger-trips.

### *Air Quality & Greenhouse Gases*

Comment 75: Several commenters were encouraged by the environmental benefits of the Proposed Project, stating that PSA will help decrease air pollution in the Bronx by promoting transit usage and providing alternative travel options to interest points without relying on car travel. One commenter emphasized that reduction in air pollution will benefit the health of local residents. Commenters were also encouraged by the reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that will result from this project, noting that

PSA will move the region towards more sustainable, resilient transportation and help address climate change. (*Davenel-30, Mendelson-43, Boykin-49, Paulin-77, Mayer-80, Dinowitz-81, Wood-92, Fritsch-94, Fernandez-96, Wood-106, Aryel-108, Otis-119, Bramson-130, Strauss-134, Abrams-143*). Comments submitted by EPA similarly supported the conclusion of the EA that the Proposed Project will likely decrease GHG emissions compared with the No Action Alternative (*Austin-139*).

Response 75: Comment noted. As described in Chapter 13, "Air Quality," the Proposed Project will decrease regional emissions from the reduction in region-wide vehicle miles traveled, because trips will be diverted from personal vehicles to transit.

Comment 76: Comments submitted by EPA stated that the GHG analysis in the EA will be better supported by clarifying references and inputs to the models used to calculate GHG emissions, such as the source of the total emissions for the new employee welfare station (*Austin-139*).

Response 76: Clarifying references and inputs have been incorporated in the Modifications, Clarifications and Errata Sheet, see Attachment C.

Comment 77: One commenter stated that the EA does not sufficiently document PSA's positive environmental impacts, such as encouraging rail travel over automobile use. The commenter noted that the EA awards more attention to micro traffic analysis of the proposed station areas than the discussion of environmental benefits of expanding rail service to the East Bronx and the region. The commenter opined that this is a general shortcoming of the NEPA process as commonly executed (*Strauss-134*).

Response 77: As highlighted in Chapter 13, "Air Quality" and Chapter 15, "Greenhouse Gases," the Proposed Project will reduce emissions on a regional level. The Proposed Project will decrease regional emissions from the reduction in region-wide vehicle miles traveled, because trips will be diverted from personal vehicles to transit. The emissions from power-generating facilities that provide electricity for the increased rail service will be offset by the emissions decrease due to the reduction in region-wide vehicle-miles traveled.

Comment 78: One commenter encouraged the use of recycled materials (*Chessler-128*).

Response 78: The project aims to meet the ENVISION v3 framework – the transportation and infrastructure industry standard for sustainability. ENVISION encourages more cost-effective and resource-efficient infrastructure investments. Projects are assessed based on a range of sustainability indicators. Different than other standard sustainable guidelines such as the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification, ENVISION goes beyond the physical building and structure. ENVISION engages the affected community and its leadership to collaborate on planning, economic development, and resiliency efforts.

### Noise and Vibration

Comment 79: A group of petitioners and several commenters in Queens expressed opposition to the Proposed Project due to concerns regarding the potential increase in noise and vibration. The petitioners and commenters described the existing high levels of noise and vibration for those residing adjacent to the Queens portion of the HGL corridor and stated that running additional Metro-North trains along the line will negatively impact the quality of life for the surrounding areas, particularly children and elderly populations. These petitioners and commenters stated construction will lead to an increase in the use of loud drills and machinery for maintenance and repairs throughout the overnight hours, and questioned the impacts of noise and vibration on the structural integrity of their homes, urging the MTA to avoid increasing service on the HGL and/or to commit to implementing preventative measures, such as sound barriers or trees, to reduce the adverse effects on impacted properties (*Sorokin-75, Breedy-84, Ferstendig-85, Hui-98, Fitzpatrick-104, Quinn-*





123, Bentley-Quinn-124, Marchesi-126, Vella-129, Barelli-131, Fitzpatrick-135, Rodriguez-136, Elie-137, Dampsey-140, Fitzpatrick-146, G.-148, Hunt-150, Molloy-151, Barnwell-152). A few commenters opined that the EA underestimates current and future levels of noise and vibration. One commenter cited that trees in the neighborhood used to dampen the noise but were removed by Amtrak (*Bentley-Quinn-124*). Another commenter stated that ambient noise should not be considered acceptable and expressed concern regarding the fact that existing levels of noise along the corridor are cited to justify avoiding preventative measures on account of an incremental noise increase. Commenters stated that the calculations for noise and vibration impacts should reflect not only the increase in decibel levels, but also the increase in frequency of noise occurrences from train service along the line (*Hui-98, Vella-129, Hunt-150*).

Response 79: Section 16.4.1 of the EA describes the detailed noise modeling performed in accordance with the FTA *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual*, which accounted for existing site conditions and the frequency of proposed train service on the HGL. The analysis concluded that receptors in Queens will experience a small increase of up to 1 decibel in total noise exposure from what the communities experience today. An increase of 3 dBA or less is barely perceptible by the human ear. For context, a typical whisper is about 25 dBA. The Proposed Project will not generate vibration impacts in Queens, largely because the train tracks are not directly at-grade with the surrounding buildings but rather on an elevated structure, which provides a poor conduit for vibration to travel into the ground (see Section 16.4.1.2).

Comment 80: One commenter expressed concern regarding adverse effects of noise on the residential community adjacent to the Co-op City Station. The commenter cited listening to the testimonies of Queens residents at the virtual public meeting and questioned whether the MTA has considered the installation of a sound barrier and sound resistant windows in Co-op City, in addition to the under-rail pads proposed (*Peterson-147*).

Response 80: Chapter 16, "Noise and Vibration" analyzes the Proposed Project's potential effect on noise and vibration levels within the study area. Two receptors were studied in the vicinity of Co-op City Station. As described in Section 16.4.3 of the EA, noise modeling following the FTA *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual* found that these receptors will experience a small increase of up to 1 decibel in total noise exposure from what the communities experience today. An increase of 3 dBA or less is barely perceptible by the human ear. No impact was identified.

Comment 81: One commenter expressed support for the Proposed Project, indicating that the project will not lead to adverse impacts from increased noise and vibration. The commenter described residing adjacent to the existing HGL and indicated that currently few trains utilize the tracks, so additional train service will not result in major disturbances to the quality of life in the area (*Dunn-112*).

Response 81: Comment noted.

#### *Construction and Construction Impacts*

Comment 82: Comments submitted by EPA stated that the use of an environmental compliance plan during construction is expected to mitigate the temporary adverse impacts on communities located near the Proposed Project (*Austin-139*).

Response 82: Comment noted. MTA will require the design-builder to communicate with the surrounding community, ensure community safety and maintain quality of life, and establish environmental performance plans.

Comment 83: NYCDPR provided detailed comments on the Construction and Construction Impacts chapter of the EA, as follows:



- The Construction and Construction Impacts chapter should reference the need for a NYCDPR Construction Permit for any activities with the potential to affect City parklands.
- Is the perimeter fence at Starlight Park, included in the construction work discussed on page 19-3, i.e. will deteriorated sections of the fence be repaired or replaced?
- The work at Bronx River Bridge, discussed on page 19-4, should include protection for the new Starlight Park bridge and pedestrians on the bridge during restoration of the bascule bridge and construction of the new parallel bridge structure.
- The cardinal directions used to describe the anticipated construction effects for Bronx River Bridge on page 19-4 are hard to follow. NYCDPR suggested revising for clarity and/or providing a figure to show locations described.
- The design of the new bridge over the Bronx River, discussed on page 19-5, should provide clearance over the river for boating use, including canoes and kayaks.
- NYCDPR requested to be coordinated with if any caissons, discussed on page 19-6, are proposed near park retaining walls or other park features that will need protection during construction.
- Regarding the construction of new two-span bridge over the Bronx River, discussed in Table 19-1 on page 19-8, NYCDPR requested that in-water work be coordinated with NYCDPR and the Bronx River Alliance to ensure it does not conflict with planned boating events.
- Regarding Table 19-2 on page 19-10, NYCDPR requested that at any city park location, disruption be kept to a minimum and no staging, storage, or vehicle parking is allowed unless a permit or other agreement is negotiated.
- NYCDPR noted the text regarding trees near work areas on page 19-16. NYCDPR described looking forward to working on a Memorandum of Agreement with the MTA regarding the protection of trees in park areas (*Cuff-144*).

Response 83: These changes and requests have been addressed in the Modifications, Clarifications and Errata Sheet, see Attachment C. The replacement of the perimeter fence in Starlight Park is part of the PSA project and the new bridge over the Bronx River will have consistent vertical and horizontal clearances to the existing bridge, ensuring no impact to boating use.

#### Comments Pertaining to Project Alternatives

Comment 84: Many commenters suggested additional stations be added to the scope of the Proposed Project. The majority of suggestions were to add one to three stations in Queens, citing benefits such as providing the first direct rail connection between Queens and the Bronx, Westchester, and Connecticut, reducing commuting times and congestion, increasing flexibility in regional travel options, and setting the foundation for regional through-running service (*Nin-41, Yao-55, Metwaly-59, Perrera-63, Park-Rogers-73, Daglian-89, Endo-90, Park-Rogers-97, Felix-117*). Commenters emphasized the need for improved transit connectivity for outer-borough residents, particularly given increases in tolls and congestion pricing fees (*Carryl-67, Liu-71*). One commenter expressed concern regarding the fact that Queens stations were included in the Final Scoping Documents for the project, resulting in initial support from Queens communities, but have now been removed without demonstrated cause (*Perrera-63*). Proposed station locations included:

- Sunnyside, Queens for LIRR transfer (*Conklin-4, Harada-12, Duncan-17, Park-Rogers-73, Endo-90, Park-Rogers-97*).
- Astoria-Ditmars for transfer to NYCT N/W subway and bus service (*Harada-12, Alam-20, Panagiotou-22, Perrera-63, Liu-71, Park-Rogers-73, Endo-90, Park-Rogers-97, Felix-117, Vella-129*).



- Northern Blvd/Broadway for transfer to NYCT M/R subway and bus service (*Vidal-19, Perrera-63, Liu-71, Endo-90, Wood-92, Wood-106, Vella-129, Elie-137*).
- Steinway Street, south of 23rd Avenue in Astoria for transfer to NYCT bus service (*Perrera-63*).
- LIC for transfer to NYCT 7 and bus service (*Duncan-17, Mancini-68, Felix-117*).

One commenter also suggested expanding bus service to connect with the additional Queens station locations (*Endo-90*). Another commenter suggested future station additions in the Bronx and Westchester. Suggested station locations included east of the Pelham Bay Bridge near the intersection of Shore Road and Orchard Beach Road, in Pelham Manor near Pelhamdale Avenue, and in New Rochelle along Main Street or U.S. Rt. 1. The commenter stated that rail service to these additional stations will provide easier access to local residents and employees (*Levai-8*).

Response 84: Ten station locations for the Proposed Project were evaluated during an earlier phase of the project. Each of the locations suggested by the commenters were considered at that time and are summarized in the Comparative Screening Results Report from 2002 (<https://new.mta.info/media/36621>). Criteria for evaluating the stations included projected ridership, constructability and cost, socioeconomic and environmental benefits, conformance with Metro-North station guidelines, and compatibility with existing transportation services. Three stations were originally selected but then based on input received from the local communities, Metro-North introduced a new station at Morris Park, bringing the total number of stations to four. By building four new accessible stations at specific locations in the Bronx, PSA will serve as an important social equity project. PSA does not preclude the potential for future stations in Queens or other portions of the HGL.

Comment 85: Several commenters suggested that the Proposed Project consider a different alignment. A few commenters suggested utilizing the Harlem Line in Manhattan instead of the HGL to avoid potential adverse effects on communities in Queens (*Breedy-84, Ferstendig-85, Hui-98, Fitzpatrick-135, Dampsey-140*). Several commenters called for PSA for the Hudson Line by utilizing Amtrak's Empire Line Connection (*Musarskiy-56, Dinowitz-81, Wood-106, Amabile-114, Vondrak-116*). One commenter suggested the activation of the Port Morris Branch to bring Harlem Line service to PSNY via the HGL, stating that all three Metro-North lines should connect to PSNY (*Gong-156*). One commenter suggested connecting Metro-North to Atlantic Terminal (*King-67*), while another commenter suggested bringing Metro-North service to Mets-Willets Point Station for access to Citi Field (*Mancini-68*).

Response 85: As discussed in Chapter 1, "Background and Purpose and Need," MTA evaluated a long list of alternatives and potential station locations. As part of this process, MTA evaluated options for improving access between PSNY and the Harlem Line, Hudson Line, and NHL. Use of the Harlem Line was eliminated due to the need for track reconstruction, but NHL service via Amtrak's HGL and Hudson Line service via Amtrak's Empire Connection were recommended for further consideration. However, multiple constraints (including physical constraints at the Empire Tunnel and Spuyten Duyvil) eliminated the Hudson Line alternative from further consideration. PSA does not preclude connecting Hudson Line service to PSNY via the Empire Connection.

The project optimizes the use of the existing HGL, which does not pass through Atlantic Terminal or Mets-Willets Point Station, and therefore those stations are not included as part of the project corridor.



## Comments Pertaining to the EA Process

### *EA Comment Period*

Comment 86: One commenter requested that the Proposed Project not be slowed down with too many details for the EA process (*Mendelson-43*).

Response 86: This EA was prepared to meet the environmental review requirements of FTA and the FHWA's Environmental Impact and Related Procedures (23 C.F.R. Part 771) and the CEQ regulations implementing NEPA (40 C.F.R. 1500). The EA has also been prepared to meet 6 NYCRR Part 617 SEQRA requirements. The analyses were performed in accordance with rigorous methodologies that are considered the best standard for this kind of study.

Comment 87: One commenter asked whether comments could be submitted after the end of the comment period (*Breedy-115*).

Response 87: The 45-day public comment period ended on July 3, 2021. A brief grace period was granted to late responders.

### *Public Outreach*

Comment 88: Several commenters described involvement in past public outreach efforts, expressing excitement about PSA reaching the EA stage. One commenter complimented the MTA and NYCDCP on being forthright and informative throughout the entire project planning process. A few commenters expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate and comment on the project (*Ruggiero-48, Paulin-77, Giulietti-78, Mattera-79, Latimer-86, Kelleher-87, Otis-119*).

Response 88: Comment noted.

Comment 89: Two commenters expressed satisfaction with the MTA's EA process. One of the commenters was encouraged by the limited nature of adverse effects to local communities identified and urged the MTA to take all impacts seriously, thoroughly addressing them through public engagement over the course of the project (*Mayer-80, Bramson-130*).

Response 89: Comment noted.

Comment 90: A few commenters called on the MTA to increase community engagement for residents of the Boulevard Gardens housing complex in Woodside, Queens to address concerns regarding adverse impacts of the Proposed Project. One commenter opined that the project was sprung on the community at the very last moment. One commenter expressed concern regarding the fact that public outreach for the project focused primarily on benefits to the Bronx and asked that a public meeting be held at the Boulevard Gardens. Another commenter requested that the Proposed Project be presented before the Community Board so that residents could hold a meeting and voice their concerns (*Breedy-74, Barelli-131, Rodriguez-136, Fitzpatrick-146, Molloy-151*).

Response 90: A virtual public meeting was held on June 15, 2021 and was heavily advertised throughout the New York City region. Advertisement of the virtual public meeting included: emailing multi-lingual notices to elected officials, Community Boards, interested organizations, stakeholders, and members of the public on the project notification list; placing advertisements in local newspapers; issuing a press release; posting weekly on MTA and Metro-North social media accounts; and updating the MTA Public Hearing and PSA project websites. The meeting was open to the public and was intended to serve a broad area, including but not limited to stakeholders in Connecticut, near the proposed station areas in the Bronx, as well as those along the corridor



in Queens. MTA is committed to continuing to work with communities along the corridor throughout the course of the Proposed Project.

Comment 91: Two commenters described the public outreach efforts they have undertaken to inform local organizations and stakeholders in the East Bronx about the Proposed Project. The commenters expressed support for the open line of communication with the MTA and noted they intend to continue disseminating information to their communities as the project progresses (*Tepelus-91, Fernandez-96*).

Response 91: Comment noted.

Comment 92: One commenter requested that the MTA conduct walkthroughs of the proposed Co-op City Station location. The commenter stated that stakeholders must be given the opportunity to visualize the planned station entrance, ramp and parking spaces in the surrounding area in order to fully grasp the effects of the Proposed Project and voice potential concerns (*Overman-138*).

Response 92: Station design will conform to MTA Metro-North's Station Standards and Guidelines and will reflect the local community character. Considering the neighborhood context of Metro-North stations is essential for proper integration between project elements and the surrounding neighborhoods. More specific design information will be coordinated in the design-build phase.

#### *Relationship to Other Projects*

Comment 93: One commenter questioned whether sufficient system-level planning is being conducted to account for the TriBoroRX proposal and ensure sufficient right-of-way space is provided for each project. The commenter expressed concern that PSA will not allow separate TriBoroRX tracks to operate as an FRA heavy rail rapid transit line, or create the need for planning for an interlocking or interlockings that will allow for them to operate together on the same trackage as an FRA heavy rail commuter rail line. Other proposals cited partially impact the Port Morris Branch, or tunnel underneath parts of the Bronx and the commenter stated these alternatives should have connectivity to PSA as a transfer station (*Wood-92, Wood-106*).

Response 93: The FRA was consulted during the NEPA process as a cooperating agency and steward of the Northeast Corridor. Substantial coordination with CSX freight carriers was also undertaken. The project team will continue to work with our project partners to ensure HGL corridor operations are accommodated effectively, and do not actively preclude committed regional projects.

Comment 94: One commenter expressed concern around the lack of system-level planning being done to consider the proposed Cross-Harbor freight rail tunnel. The commenter stated that the increase in freight traffic that will result from the Cross-Harbor freight rail tunnel between Oak Point and Cedar Hill must be factored into PSA so as not to preclude future interlocking and power upgrades (*Wood-92, Wood-106*).

Response 94: The design intent is to not to preclude future implementation of planned projects. It should be noted that freight trains operate at night and off-peak, and there is sufficient space on the HGL to accommodate them with the Proposed Project.

#### *Federal Oversight*

Comment 95: Comments submitted by EPA stated that if all project and permit conditions described in the EA are met, EPA concurs that the EA supports the FONSI. EPA also requested that the EA include a list of references for the sources that are not detailed in footnotes (*Austin-139*).

Response 95: Comment noted. Additional references have been incorporated in the Modifications, Clarifications and Errata Sheet, see Attachment C.



Comment 96: One commenter asked why PSA does not appear on the FTA's Environmental Dashboard, questioning the FTA's role in approving or rejecting the EA (*Strauss-109*).

Response 96: The PSA project can be found on the Federal Infrastructure Permitting Dashboard by following this link: <https://www.permits.performance.gov/permitting-project/penn-station-access-project-ea>

#### Informational Requests

Comment 97: A number of comments submitted were administrative in nature:

- Requests to purchase a hard copy of the EA, view a hard copy of the EA at a repository, or receive a flash drive with the EA (*Borrelli-1, Ribadeneira-36, Breedy-107*).
- Requests to be added to the project mailing list (*Galloway-7, Walker-10, Nathanson-29, Travers-34, Woods-35, Gaon-46*).
- Requests for information regarding the public meeting and public comment submission (*Peterson-9, Doyle-70, Schwartz-76, Dattilo-101, Kain-120, McMyers-121*).
- Property owners of properties impacted by the project asking about the project or requesting a copy of the initial notice sent on May 5, 2021 (*Landau-14, Natal-37, DeRaffele-52*).
- Advertisement of media services (*Lalwani-60*).
- Request for information on the scope of the design-build work and a copy of the RFQ document (*Schueller-111*).
- Technical support during the public meeting.
- Question regarding the procurement schedule for the PSA Program Management/Construction Management contracts (*Nigro-155*).

Response 97: These comments were responded to individually in a timely manner.

#### Comments Outside of Project Scope

Comment 98: A number of comments submitted were outside of the project scope:

- Concerns regarding LIRR service being expanded to GCT as part of the ESA project (*Allen-6*).
- Question about the service schedule for the NYCT Shuttle service (*Coffaro-13*).
- Concerns regarding MTA's cost structure for commuter railroads. Suggestion to eliminate conductors, retaining the positions for engineering roles to allow for more service, and to implement periodic proof of payment spot checks (*Roncoroni-23*).
- Concerns regarding establishing a public benefit corporation or agency to manage the maintenance of Metro North's right-of-way (*Izurieta-27*).
- Suggestion to restore express Metro-North service to/from Wassaic prior to the implementation of PSA (*Son-38*).
- Question about when the MTA will be hiring for a Locomotive Engineer Trainee position (*Hernandez-45*).
- Suggestion to add an Amtrak station in Queens or the Bronx (*Wood-92, Wood-106*).
- Concerns regarding Metro-North's removal of trees in Larchmont and Mamaroneck (*Atria-93, Dattilo-101*).
- Support for the Regional Planning Association's Triboro Line proposal (*Fritsch-94*).
- Concerns regarding the flooding of NYCT stations (*Breedy-154*).



Response 98: These comments are outside the scope of the PSA project. For further questions and feedback regarding the MTA visit <https://new.mta.info/contact-us>.