

**A. INTRODUCTION**

This Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) considers the proposed redevelopment of approximately 43 acres of land located within Belmont Park in the unincorporated hamlet of Elmont, Town of Hempstead, Nassau County, NY. As shown in **Figure 1-1**, the area proposed for redevelopment is located on two “Project Sites” south of the existing Belmont Park Racetrack and Grandstand, and includes approximately 15 acres on “Site A,” north of Hempstead Turnpike, and approximately 28 acres on “Site B,” south of Hempstead Turnpike. The Project Sites are owned by the State of New York (the State) acting by and through the Franchise Oversight Board (FOB), and are leased through a ground lease (the “Ground Lease”) to The New York Racing Association, Inc. (NYRA).<sup>1</sup>

New York Belmont Development Partners, LLC and its affiliates, including New York Arena Partners, LLC (collectively, “NYAP” or “the Applicant”), propose to construct a sports, hospitality, retail, and entertainment destination (the “Proposed Project”) at Belmont Park. The Proposed Project would redevelop the Project Sites with: an arena for the New York Islanders National Hockey League (NHL) franchise and for other sports, music, and entertainment events; dining, retail, and entertainment uses; a hotel; commercial office space; community space; publicly accessible open space; parking; and one or more pedestrian connections providing access between Sites A and B. At the time of the issuance of the Final Scope of Work, it was anticipated that Site B would include two levels of new structured parking below the proposed retail uses, and visitors to the Proposed Project would also utilize parking at Belmont Park in the “North Lot” and “South Lot” through a shared parking agreement with the FOB and NYRA.<sup>2</sup> The Proposed Project has since been modified to include only one level of structured parking below the proposed retail, and the inclusion of a portion of the existing parking lot in the interior of the Training Track (the “East Lot”) for additional visitor parking (see **Figure 1-1**). Construction of the Proposed Project would be expected to occur in a single phase over a period of approximately 28 months, starting in 2019, with completion of the full build-out of all project components in 2021.

The Proposed Project requires a number of actions (collectively, the “Proposed Actions”), including adoption and authorization of a General Project Plan (GPP) by Empire State Development (ESD) in accordance with the New York State Urban Development Corporation Act, which will include an override of the Town of Hempstead Building Zone Ordinance and provisions in the Town Code, where applicable. In addition, the Proposed Actions include conveyance of the Project Sites to ESD from the FOB, lease approval from the FOB, and the






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<sup>1</sup> The tax parcels that comprise the Project Sites include the following: 32-B-82A (portion of) north of Hempstead Turnpike, and 32-372-81, 32-374-1, 32-391-36, 32-392-226, 32-393-1, 32-394-1, 32-395-1, 32-396-1, and 32-397-50 south of Hempstead Turnpike.

<sup>2</sup> It is anticipated that the North Lot would only be utilized to accommodate parking demand for events at the arena and Racetrack.



0 1,000 FEET

-  Project Sites
-  North, South, and East Parking Lots
-  Proposed Belmont Electrical Substation
-  Long Island Rail Road (LIRR)
-  Belmont Park LIRR Station





necessary approvals to facilitate the construction of an electrical substation immediately adjacent to the North Lot to the west, and associated underground distribution feeders and underground transmission lines to serve the Proposed Project (to be constructed by the Long Island Lighting Company d/b/a Long Island Power Authority [LIPA] and operated by the Public Service Enterprise Group Long Island [PSEG Long Island]). These Proposed Actions involve several discretionary actions subject to environmental review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law, and its implementing regulations at 6 NYCRR Part 617. ESD is the lead agency under SEQRA. Because the Proposed Actions may have significant adverse environmental impacts, ESD has determined that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared. To ensure comprehensive environmental review in accordance with SEQRA, the potential adverse environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Proposed Actions are evaluated in this DEIS.

This chapter has been prepared to describe the Proposed Project and its purpose and need; describe the Proposed Project location and boundaries as well as existing uses on the Project Sites and other directly affected areas;<sup>3</sup> and present the proposed regulatory and analytical framework for the EIS analysis.

## **B. BACKGROUND**

The Project Sites are located within Belmont Park, a State-owned property that is leased by the FOB to NYRA. Belmont Park is one of the major thoroughbred horseracing facilities in the country and has been in active use since 1905. It hosts the annual Belmont Stakes, the final race of the Triple Crown, as part of its Spring Meet that runs from the end of April through mid-July. The Fall Meet runs from early September through October. In addition, Belmont Park is used year-round for training facilities, including stables and residential accommodations for racing-related workers. The Grandstand, one of the largest in thoroughbred racing, was redeveloped between 1964 and 1968, and has a seating capacity of 33,000 with a total capacity for 100,000 attendees. The premier racing event is the Belmont Stakes, which typically attracts between 60,000 to 100,000 attendees. Several stakes races in the Spring and Fall Meets also attract a larger-than-average daily attendance. Outside of these specific events, Belmont Park has an average daily attendance of approximately 3,000 visitors during the Spring and Fall Meets. In 2017, total attendance during the Spring Meet was 285,250 (54 days, including the Belmont Stakes), with 106,306 total visitors during the Fall Meet (35 days).<sup>4</sup>

Construction and operation of the Proposed Project would be coordinated with NYRA and the FOB to protect the operational requirements of the Belmont Stakes and other horse racing events held during the Spring and Fall Meets. For example, as required by the Developer Request for Proposals (RFP), any parking provided on the Project Sites would be made available for use by Belmont Park in connection with the running of the Belmont Stakes and the Breeder's Cup. Moreover, there would be no arena events held on Belmont Stakes day.

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<sup>3</sup> The "other directly affected areas" include the North, South, and East Lots and the locations of the proposed electrical substation and transmission lines, where parking and other improvements are proposed to serve the Proposed Project.

<sup>4</sup> NYRA, *2018 Media Guide*, accessed on May 9, 2018 at [https://www.nyrainc.com/uploads/wysiwyg/assets/uploads/MG18\\_Pages1-20.pdf](https://www.nyrainc.com/uploads/wysiwyg/assets/uploads/MG18_Pages1-20.pdf).

## **PLANNING HISTORY AND DEVELOPER REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) PROCESS**

The underutilization of certain parcels within Belmont Park has led the State to formulate strategies to enhance economic development opportunities. A planning study was prepared by ESD in 2008 that examined the potential redevelopment opportunities at Belmont Park. The 2008 study included an assessment of Belmont Park, its regional market context, and a range of development scenarios with an extensive community outreach component. During the time of the 2008 planning study, a number of “Racino” projects (race-track-based-casinos with video lottery terminals [VLT]) were being developed, including the Aqueduct Race Track in Queens County and Yonkers Raceway in Westchester County. The 2008 study recommended 10 uses, which included: a transportation center (Long Island Rail Road and bus hub); a Racino (4,500 VLT stations plus amenities); a lifestyle retail center; mixed-use residential/office; integrated community open space; a 300- to 400-room hotel conference center facility or 100- to 150-room hotel with minimal amenities; senior housing; neighborhood retail center; outlet retail center; and a big-box power retail center.

To implement the 2008 plan, using the long-term lease by the FOB for the Project Sites, ESD issued a developer RFP in 2012. The four submissions received through this process generally included retail development, community athletic facilities, and a 25,000-seat soccer stadium for the New York Cosmos; however, the process was terminated in 2016.

The RFP solicitation for redevelopment of the Project Sites was issued on July 31, 2017 with the intention of strengthening Belmont Park as a premier destination for entertainment, sports, recreation, retail, and hospitality on Long Island. In addition to the overall goal of development that would complement the horse racing and wagering at Belmont Park, several other development objectives were outlined in the RFP (see “Purpose and Need,” below).

Proposals were encouraged to consider entertainment, sports, recreation, hospitality, and retail uses. Residential development, gaming (e.g., VLT, table games, pari-mutuel, simulcast wagering, and casinos), and horseracing were specifically excluded from further consideration. Three submissions were presented to ESD by September 28, 2017, including a proposal submitted by NYAP. On December 21, 2017, NYAP was conditionally designated by ESD as developer of the Project Sites, subject to completion of the requisite environmental review, among other conditions.

Following the RFP process and NYAP’s conditional designation, NYAP, in consultation with ESD and members of the community, modified the placement of proposed uses on the Project Sites. This modified plan constitutes the Proposed Project as described in this chapter and analyzed in this DEIS. NYAP’s contemplated site plan included in its original submission to ESD is considered as an alternative to the Proposed Project in Chapter 16, “Alternatives.”

## **C. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE AND NEED**

### **PROJECT SITES**

The 15-acre Site A is currently used for surface parking and includes a portion of Belmont Park’s picnic area (the “Backyard”) adjacent to the Belmont Park Paddock. Site A is bordered on the south by Hempstead Turnpike, a four- to six-lane local road that is a major commercial corridor. Site A is also adjacent to the Cross Island Parkway, a six-lane limited access highway that extends north from the intersection of the Southern State and Belt Parkways near Valley Stream to its intersection with the Whitestone Expressway near College Point, Queens. West of Site A, the Cross Island Parkway runs along the Nassau-Queens border. Immediately west of Site A is the

Belmont Park Station of the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR), located on a spur of the Main Line. Belmont Park Station is a seasonal-use LIRR facility; the station is open and train service is operated only during the Belmont Park racing seasons. The ticket office is open at Belmont Park Station on Belmont Stakes day only.

Site B, located south of Hempstead Turnpike, is an approximately 28-acre parcel currently used for vehicle storage, and as surface parking for Belmont Park visitors on large-volume event days (e.g., the Belmont Stakes).

The Project Sites are owned by the State acting by and through the FOB, and are leased through a Ground Lease to NYRA. In accordance with the Ground Lease, the State has the ability to sever from the Ground Lease a portion of Site A and the entirety of Site B.<sup>5</sup>

### **OTHER DIRECTLY AFFECTED AREAS**

In addition to the two Project Sites, it is expected that NYAP would utilize the North, South, and East Lots at Belmont Park for additional parking through a shared parking agreement with the FOB and NYRA. The North Lot is an unpaved parcel located just north of the Racetrack that is currently utilized for Belmont Park parking only on Belmont Stakes day, as well as for vehicle storage. The North Lot is also bordered by the LIRR tracks to the north, the Floral Park Bellerose School athletic field to the east, and the Cross Island Parkway to the west. The South Lot is located to the east of the proposed arena, south of the Racetrack, and is currently utilized for Belmont Park event parking. The East Lot is located east of the Racetrack within the interior oval of the Belmont Park Training Track. The East Lot is currently used for vehicle storage, Belmont Park employee parking and large-volume event parking.

Directly adjacent to and to the west of the North Lot is the location of the proposed electrical substation (see **Figure 1-1**). This additional substation is required to service the Proposed Project because Belmont Park currently does not have the infrastructure necessary to accommodate the Proposed Project's energy demand. The electrical substation would be located in the vicinity of the Cross Island Parkway ramps, just north of the Racetrack in an area that is currently used for truck trailer storage.<sup>6</sup> In addition to the substation, the Proposed Actions would facilitate the construction of associated underground distribution feeders and underground transmission lines, all of which would be operated by PSEG Long Island. PSEG Long Island must obtain easements from the FOB for an approximately 42,450-square-foot (sf) area for construction of the substation and associated feeders. The underground distribution feeder cables would extend south, around the Racetrack, and to the proposed uses on Site A. Underground transmission lines would extend west from the proposed substation along Belmont Park Road approximately 1.5 miles, and tie into existing overhead power lines on Plainfield Avenue. An overhead bypass would also be installed on Plainfield Avenue.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Proposed Project would replace the paved parking lots that exist on Sites A and B with an arena for the New York Islanders NHL franchise and for other sports, music and entertainment

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<sup>5</sup> With the Proposed Actions, NYRA would surrender approximately 7 acres on Site A.

<sup>6</sup> These trailers contain emergency supplies that are available for use for large-scale disasters, large fires or localized flooding. These trailers are operated by the American Red Cross in coordination with the Nassau County Office of Emergency Management. These trailers would be relocated elsewhere once construction of the substation begins.

events; dining, retail, and entertainment uses; a hotel; commercial office space; community space; publicly accessible open space; parking; and one or more pedestrian connections providing access between Sites A and B. The Proposed Project may include a pedestrian bridge and/or the utilization and/or enlargement of the existing vehicle and pedestrian underpasses below Hempstead Turnpike that connect Site A to Site B. The proposed program for the Project Sites is specified in **Table 1-1**, and additional descriptions of the program components are provided below. **Figure 1-2** illustrates the Proposed Project site plan and **Figure 1-3** provides an illustrative aerial view of the Proposed Project.

**Table 1-1**  
**Proposed Program**

Proposed Use	Proposed Amount
Arena	690,000 gross square feet (gsf) (Up to 19,000 seats) <sup>1</sup>
Retail, Dining, and Entertainment	Up to 435,000 gsf <sup>2</sup>
Hotel	230,000 gsf (Up to 250 keys)
Office	30,000 gsf
Community Space	10,000 gsf
Open Space	250,470 sf (approximately 5.75 acres) <sup>3</sup>
Parking	1,940 spaces <sup>4</sup>
<b>Notes:</b> <sup>1</sup> Up to 18,000 seats for NHL hockey; up to 19,000 seats for other select events. <sup>2</sup> Site A would include up to 135,000 gsf of “experiential” retail and food and beverage uses; and Site B would include up to 350,000 gsf of luxury outlet stores within a “retail village.” The total amount of retail would add up to an overall maximum of 435,000 gsf of retail across the entire development. <sup>3</sup> Site A would include approximately 2.0 acres of publicly accessible open space and Site B would include approximately 3.75 acres of publicly accessible space. <sup>4</sup> Site A would include approximately 400 spaces within and below the hotel podium and an additional 40 spaces for player parking within the arena’s marshalling area; Site B would include approximately 1,500 spaces of below-grade parking. In addition to parking provided on Sites A and B, it is anticipated that NYAP, through a shared parking agreement with the FOB and NYRA, would utilize existing parking on the North, South, and East Lots (up to approximately 6,312 surface parking spaces). <b>Source:</b> NYAP, October 2018	

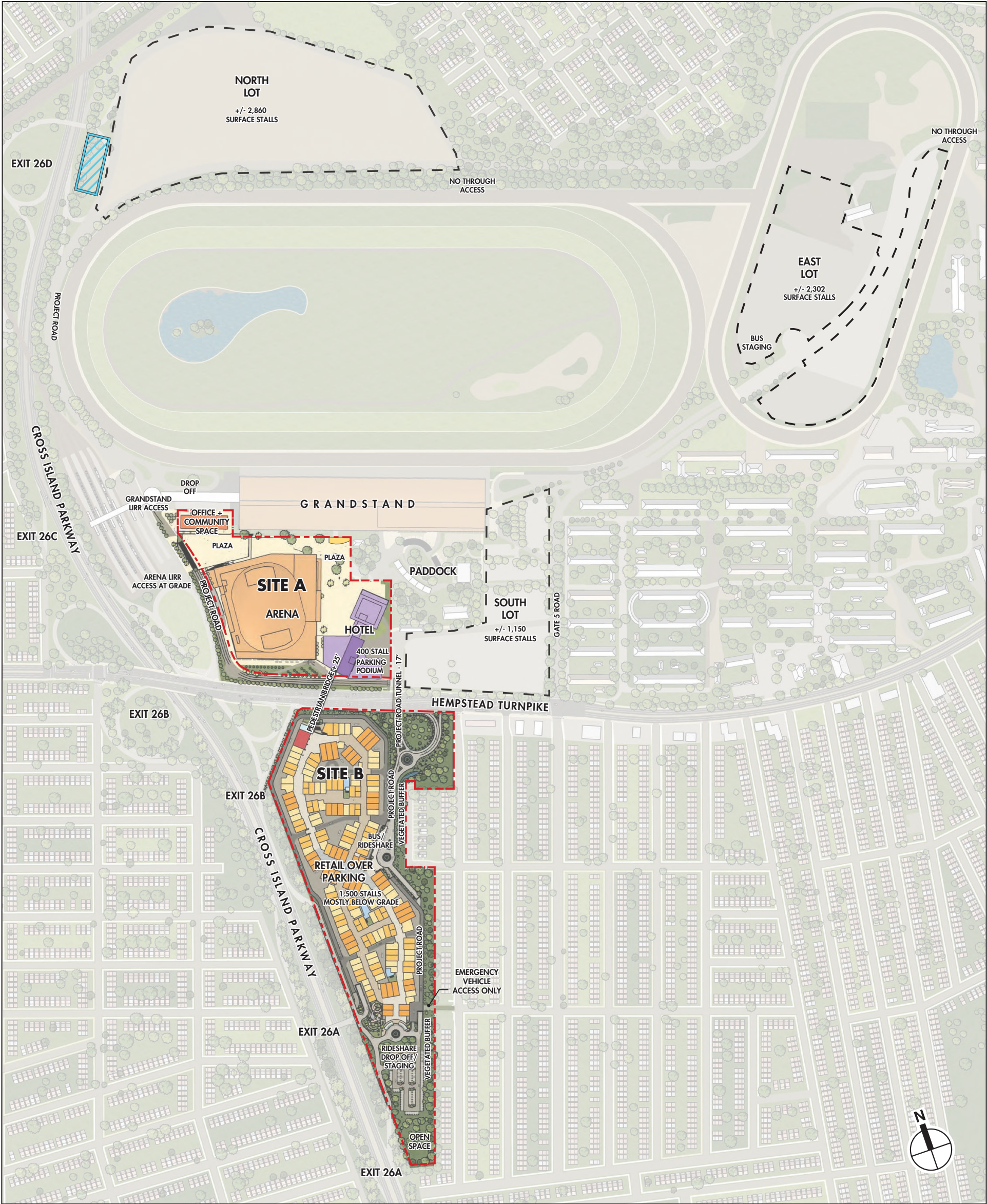
## ARENA

The proposed multi-purpose arena would be a new state-of-the-art facility located in the western central portion of Site A. The arena would contain up to 18,000 seats for hockey; it has been designed to the demand specifications of a NHL facility and would be the home of the New York Islanders. In addition to serving as a professional hockey venue, the building would host major concerts, college sports, conferences, and family events.


In addition to the approximately 44 to 60 New York Islanders home games,<sup>7</sup> NYAP envisions approximately 145 non-NHL arena event days annually, including: approximately 50 marquee concert/entertainment event days that would fully utilize the arena’s space (approximately 19,000 seats); approximately 65 large to medium event days (utilizing between 6,000 and 11,500 seats),

<sup>7</sup> Based on a current NHL schedule, there would be approximately 3 pre-season home games, 41 regular season home games, and up to 16 post-season home games.





FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

- Project Sites
- North, South, and East Parking Lots
-  Proposed Belmont Electrical Substation



11.27.18



Source: New York Arena Partners, LLC

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

## BELMONT PARK REDEVELOPMENT CIVIC AND LAND USE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Illustrative Aerial View  
Figure 1-3



such as Disney on Ice, Cirque Du Soleil, E-Sports, or High School sports; and approximately 30 small or non-ticketed event days (3,500 seats or fewer), such as conferences, expos, graduations, or community events. **Figures 1-4 and 1-5** provide illustrative views of the proposed arena.

#### *RETAIL, DINING, AND ENTERTAINMENT*

As detailed below, on Sites A and B, two separate and distinct retail, dining, and entertainment experiences are proposed. The site plan includes up to 435,000 gsf of retail.

##### *Site A*

Up to approximately 135,000 gsf of “experiential” retail and food and beverage uses would be located on Site A, consisting primarily of dining uses. Unlike the retail proposed on Site B (see below), the experiential retail proposed on Site A would be expected to be attractive to not only the proposed hotel’s guests and arena attendees, but also to Belmont Park patrons and the community at large in order to animate the area independent of arena events. In addition to retail storefronts within the proposed buildings, retail may be located within a dedicated structure, and a program of pop-up installations and special events would complement the dining experience.

##### *Site B*

Up to approximately 350,000 gsf of destination retail uses with an average store size of 2,000 sf is proposed within a “retail village” on Site B. This retail area is intended to create a village-type atmosphere that would incorporate pedestrian pathways and squares, lined with small and unique buildings featuring boutiques, restaurants, and special events to complement the shopping experience. NYAP does not propose to include any large-format “big box” retail uses. The complex is anticipated to host a collection of international, regional and local brands, as well as a collection of emerging, entrepreneurial and innovative brands identified within the New York metropolitan area. The retail village is intended to be a complementary, stand-alone use, meaning that it would not be reliant on the arena’s attendees but would be expected to draw customers from Long Island and the Greater New York City metropolitan area, as well as from the national and international tourism industry. **Figure 1-6** provides an illustrative view of the proposed retail village.

#### *HOTEL*

The proposed hotel would be located along Hempstead Turnpike on Site A, between the proposed arena and the South Lot. The hotel is designed with two wings connected by a pedestrian fly-over; the tallest element would rise to a maximum height of approximately 150 feet, and would be set back from Hempstead Turnpike by an access road and a corridor of trees. In addition to up to 250 guest rooms, the hotel would include amenities, possible retail and food and beverage uses, conference and ballroom facilities, and structured parking. The western façades of the hotel buildings would share a plaza with the proposed arena. The hotel is intended to serve the existing Belmont Park Racetrack and surrounding community, as well as new demand generated by the Proposed Project.

#### *OFFICE*

The proposed office space totaling approximately 30,000 gsf would be located on Site A and is expected to be used by employees associated with New York Islanders and Proposed Project operations.



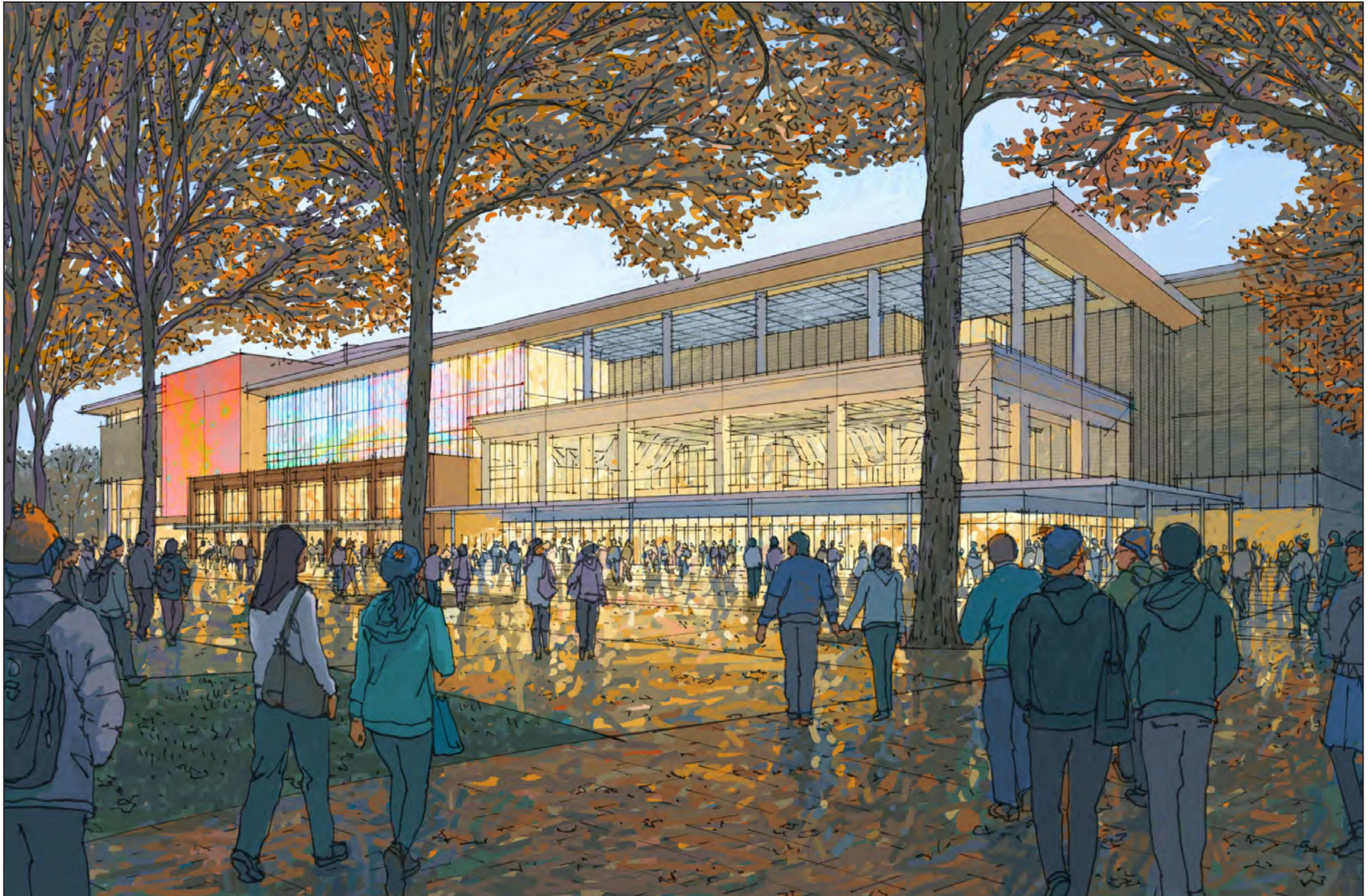
Source: New York Arena Partners, LLC

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Proposed Arena - Illustrative View  
from LIRR Belmont Park Station

Figure 1-4





Source: New York Arena Partners, LLC

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Proposed Arena - Illustrative View  
from Site A Plaza  
Figure 1-5





Source: New York Arena Partners, LLC

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY



### *COMMUNITY SPACE*

Approximately 10,000 gsf of community space would be maintained and operated by NYAP or its partners. It is anticipated that the community space would be located within a number of proposed structures (e.g., the office building, hotel, arena, and retail buildings) and would offer an array of educational and career development services.

In keeping with NYAP's goal to use the arena and other elements of the Proposed Project as a platform for innovation in live entertainment and guest experience, NYAP intends to create and operate facilities in this space that would provide educational and job training opportunities for students, young adults, veterans, and other community members interested in careers in: sports and entertainment (e.g., sales, technology and systems operations, event production, and journalism); hospitality (e.g., guest relations, manager training, marketing, sales); food and beverage (e.g., culinary skills training, food business incubation, food service training, urban agriculture) and retail (e.g., product management, visual merchandising, retail fundamentals, and manager training). Upon its conditional designation in December 2017, NYAP commenced discussions with leading New York-based enterprises to provide content and programming for the facilities to be incorporated into this component of the development, and NYAP is seeking community input—including at least three meetings with the Belmont Community Advisory Committee—in finalizing the program.

### *OPEN SPACE*

The proposed open spaces would provide hard- and soft-scaped plazas on Site A and naturally landscaped areas on Site B. Approximately 3.75 acres of publicly accessible landscaped open spaces with walking paths are proposed to be located on Site B. An additional approximately 2.0 acres of landscaped plazas would be located on Site A. The multiple plaza areas would include sitting areas, gathering spaces for on-site events, and programming. The plazas are intended to be accessible to Belmont Park patrons at all times. In addition, NYAP would provide improvements and/or renovation to an existing community park located off-site based on coordination with local officials and community stakeholders.

As there are no residences that are directly adjacent to Site A, vegetated buffer areas would be somewhat narrower, but would separate the proposed development from Hempstead Turnpike and the Cross Island Parkway interchange.

### *PARKING AND CIRCULATION*

New parking on Sites A and B, and improved parking in the North, South and East lots would accommodate the Proposed Project's patrons and employees. Pedestrian access between Sites A and B would be through one or more of the following: a new pedestrian bridge above Hempstead Turnpike; an improved pedestrian/vehicular tunnel under Hempstead Turnpike that currently connects Site B to the Racetrack (the project road tunnel); and/or an improved pedestrian-only tunnel under Hempstead Turnpike that currently connects Sites B to Belmont Park Racetrack. A pedestrian walkway would also be constructed from the south side of Hempstead Turnpike near the intersection of Wellington Road to the bus stop along the east side of the retail village, running on the east side of the project road.

#### *Site A*

There would be structured parking on Site A, including 400 spaces in new structured parking within and below the hotel's podium and 40 spaces in new parking within the arena's marshalling area, available to New York Islanders team members and staff.

*Site B*

NYAP proposes to construct approximately 1,500 parking spaces on one level of new structured parking beneath the proposed retail village on Site B. Site B also would include a taxi/ride-share services staging area and drop-off areas for taxi/ride-share and buses.

*North, South, and East Lots*

It is anticipated that NYAP, through a shared parking agreement with the FOB and NYRA, would utilize up to approximately 6,312 surface parking spaces on the North, South and East Lots.<sup>8</sup> The exact number of parking spaces that would be available on the North, and South and East Lots would be subject to the conditions of the shared parking agreement. When the North and East Lots are utilized for parking, NYAP would provide shuttle transportation from these lots to the Project Sites. The North, South and East Lots would be resurfaced and restriped to maximize the number of spaces that can be achieved, and new lighting would be installed. A buffer composed of dense vegetation and a chain-link fence would be provided along the northeastern boundary of the North Lot. Vehicle access/egress to parking in the North Lot would be via the Cross Island Parkway. Vehicle access/egress to parking in the East and South Lots would be via Hempstead Turnpike (e.g., Gate 5, Gate 14). The East Lot would contain a bus staging area with an approximately 1,250-gsf, single-level pavilion with a lounge area, kitchenette, and restrooms for use by bus drivers.

*ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS*

As part of the Proposed Project, improvements would be made at the intersection of Hempstead Turnpike at Locustwood Boulevard/Gate 5 Road (a Belmont Park entrance/exit). These would include: reconfiguring Hempstead Turnpike to include two eastbound left turn lanes, one eastbound through lane, and one eastbound shared through and right turn lane; extending the length of the eastbound left turn; modifying the traffic signal phasing to provide an eastbound left turn phase with a southbound right turn overlap; reconfiguring Gate 5 Road to include one southbound shared left turn and through lane, one southbound right turn lane, and two northbound receiving lanes; and relocating the crosswalk on Hempstead Turnpike from the west side of the intersection to the east side of the intersection.

*PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND SITE SECURITY*

The Proposed Project incorporates a number of measures to ensure that the proposed redevelopment is safe and reliable. Public gathering spaces such as the existing Belmont Park and the proposed new arena, hotel, and retail village require a strategic approach to safety and security. NYRA already coordinates with the Nassau County Police Department and other agencies for large events such as the Belmont Stakes. While it is anticipated that the individual uses (arena, hotel, and retail) would establish security staffing and protocols specific to their needs, NYAP and NYRA would also implement a campus-wide security plan in conjunction with this development.

Sporting events, concerts and other large-scale events typically require close coordination with emergency service providers and public agencies. NYAP would partner with NYRA and all involved service providers to best manage Belmont Park's safety and security plan.

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<sup>8</sup> The 6,312-space total includes approximately 150 parking spaces (located in a proposed rideshare staging area in the North Lot) that would not be available on full event days. Figure 1-2 shows the interior portion of the Training Track (the East Lot) to be utilized by the Proposed Project.



In addition to utilizing best operational practices with respect to security, all components of the proposed development would be designed with state-of-the-art security and safety components incorporated therein. Areas of focus include the use of the most modern and effective screening and surveillance equipment as well as the establishment of a “secured perimeter” to the arena.

NYAP also intends to pursue Support Anti-Terrorism by Fostering Effective Technologies (SAFETY) Act verification by the Department of Homeland Security. Such certification requires that the development include a security command center, annual reporting, and self-testing as well as an integrated operational plan with local, state, federal, and international law enforcement.

As part of that effort, NYAP will be developing comprehensive emergency plans prior to the arena opening for (a) fire, (b) evacuation, (c) bomb threats, (d) suspicious packages or letters, (e) medical situations (which shall contain specified emergency facilities and routes from the Arena), (f) Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) or Vehicle Born Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs), (g) power failures, (h) severe weather and other natural disasters, (i) active shooter/police response, (j) crisis communications, (k) chemical and biological, radiological, nuclear (CBRN) events, (l) continuity of operations, and (m) spontaneous fan civil disobedience demonstrations, use of drones, cyber, and active shooter.

### **PURPOSE AND NEED**

The RFP solicitation for redevelopment of the Project Sites was issued on July 31, 2017 with the intention of strengthening Belmont Park as a premier destination for entertainment, sports, recreation, retail, and hospitality on Long Island. ESD identified the following development objectives for the redevelopment of the Project Sites in the RFP:

- Enhance Belmont Park to become one of Long Island’s premier destinations for entertainment, sports, hospitality, and retail, with uses that are complementary to the existing Belmont Park Racetrack;
- Maximize economic benefit to the State while minimizing significant adverse environmental impacts;
- Provide a source of quality jobs for area and New York State residents;
- Benefit the neighborhoods and communities adjacent to and surrounding Belmont Park;
- Maximize incorporation of green building and sustainable design practices; and
- Feature meaningful participation of Minority-and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE), and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses (SDVOB).

The Proposed Project responds to the development objectives in several ways. First, it intends to create a gateway to Long Island by creating a striking new presence for Belmont; attentive and sensitive architectural design, signage, public art, and landscape elements would transform the current vacant and underutilized space on the Project Sites to the benefit of the community. Second, it aims to create a premier destination by providing a year-round retail village, office space, community space, hotel, and arena, all of which would complement Belmont Park, enhancing economic benefit in comparison with the current underutilized character of the Project Sites. Economic risk would be minimized by commitment to lease terms as negotiated between NYAP and ESD and the combination of proposed world-class sports, entertainment, retail, and hospitality uses.

NYAP’s Proposed Project aims to prioritize environmental sustainability, promote public safety, and build an asset of lasting importance and value to the greater community. The implementation

of the plan is estimated to create approximately 3,000 permanent jobs and over 10,000 temporary construction jobs, including direct and indirect jobs. This significant investment in the metropolitan New York region would spur economic development and produce reliable and permanent revenue streams for the benefit of the public. Moreover, NYAP is committed to paying a living wage, hiring locally, and encouraging MWBE and SDVOB participation, with apprenticeship programs and diversity initiatives and commitments anticipated during both construction and operations.

In addition, the proposed sports and entertainment arena would serve as the new and permanent home for the New York Islanders. The new arena is expected to attract a wide audience of new and existing fans, due to its modern and innovative design, and due to it being centrally located at the border of New York City and Long Island. The proposed arena would be an adaptable NHL-ready venue that would serve as the new and permanent home for the New York Islanders.

Overall, the Proposed Project would benefit the local community by providing new retail, hospitality and entertainment and substantial employment opportunities that can be locally accessed by adjacent communities. The Proposed Project would also provide local recreational and entertainment resources and community space. The Proposed Project incorporates passive public open space on Sites A and B, and would include the renovation and improvement of an off-site park facility within the Elmont community. The Proposed Project would target Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) v4 certification, which indicates NYAP's commitment to a sustainably designed and built project. The Proposed Project would implement a variety of low-impact development methods, including the use of green stormwater infrastructure, pre- and post-consumer recycled materials, and high efficiency LED lighting and other infrastructure to reduce total energy demand.

## **D. REQUIRED ACTIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

### **ESD DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS**

The Proposed Project is expected to require the following ESD discretionary actions (the "Proposed Actions"):

- ESD adoption and authorization of a GPP in accordance with the New York State Urban Development Corporation Act, which will include an override of the Town of Hempstead Building Zone Ordinance (BZO) and provisions in the Town Code, where applicable, to facilitate the Proposed Project.
- Acquisition of the Project Sites, including NYRA's surrendered property, and long-term lease to NYAP.

### **OTHER INVOLVED OR INTERESTED AGENCIES**

In addition to ESD, several other involved or interested public agencies or authorities have been identified as being required to implement the Proposed Project, as follows:

- FOB: assemblage and conveyance of the Project Sites to ESD (including 7 acres that NYRA would surrender); entering into a lease amendment and shared parking agreement with NYRA; and granting of easements including for substation and cables;
- NYS Office of General Services (OGS): review of transaction on behalf of the FOB as agent; building permits, code inspection and the issuance of a Code Compliance Certificate and general code authority as the Authority Having Jurisdiction for design and construction activities on the Belmont Park Racetrack property;



- NYS Department of Transportation (NYSDOT): highway work permits for curb cut access; pedestrian bridge; Hempstead Turnpike improvements at Locustwood Boulevard/Gate 5 Road; review of traffic mitigation measures;
- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC): State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit/approval of Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP);
- NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP): historic resources determination (On May 25, 2018, OPRHP provided a letter determining that Belmont Park does not meet the criteria for inclusion in the New York State or National Registers of Historic Places. In a letter dated August 10, 2018, OPRHP determined that no historic or archaeological properties would be impacted by the Proposed Actions.);
- NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC): fire code review and assembly permitting;
- Long Island Electric Utility Servco, LLC, as agent and acting on behalf of Long Island Lighting Company d/b/a LIPA: proposed substation, underground distribution feeders and transmission lines, and electrical connection;
- Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) LIRR: improved train service; switch and signal upgrades at existing Belmont Park Station;
- MTA Bus Company and MTA New York City Transit (NYCT): review and implementation of transportation mitigation measures;
- New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT): review and implementation of transportation mitigation measures;
- Nassau Inter-County Express (NICE): review and implementation of transportation mitigation measures;
- Nassau County Department of Public Works (NCDPW): sewer permit/stormwater management requirements; review and implementation of transportation mitigation measures;
- Nassau County Department of Health: water supply and bulk storage approval, if applicable; and
- Town of Hempstead Supervisor: offsite open space improvement; consultation regarding use of override; and easement for emergency vehicle access to/from Site B at 109th Avenue.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

SEQRA requires that an EIS include a concise description of the environmental setting of the areas to be affected, sufficient to understand the impacts of a proposed action and alternatives. This DEIS includes a discussion of existing conditions as well as conditions expected in the future with the Proposed Project. As noted above, construction of the Proposed Project is expected to occur in a single phase over a period of approximately 28 months. Therefore, analysis of the Proposed Project's potential impacts will be performed for one analysis year (2021). In accordance with SEQRA, this DEIS considers the Proposed Project's potential significant adverse impacts on the environmental setting, taking into account planned and in-construction development as well as major infrastructure projects in the area that are anticipated to be completed by 2021. This DEIS also includes analysis of the Proposed Project's potential for temporary effects during the construction period.

In accordance with SEQRA, this DEIS also analyzes the cumulative impacts of the Proposed Project and other relevant projects that will affect conditions in any of the relevant study areas in

2021. Governmental entities with jurisdiction in an approximately ½-mile radius surrounding the Project Sites—including Nassau County, the Town of Hempstead, Village of Floral Park, Village of South Floral Park, Village of Bellerose, and the City of New York—as well as NYRA, were contacted for information regarding planned future development and capital projects (see Chapter 2, “Land Use, Zoning, and Community Character”).

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS**

The environmental review process allows decision-makers to systematically consider potential significant adverse environmental impacts of the Proposed Project, to evaluate reasonable alternatives, and to identify measures to mitigate significant adverse environmental impacts to the extent practicable, considering social, economic, and other important factors. The SEQRA process facilitates public involvement in the process by providing the opportunity for public comment on the DEIS and Draft Scope.

The lead agency’s first charge was to determine whether the Proposed Project may have a significant adverse impact on the environment. ESD prepared an Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) and determined that the Proposed Project may result in one or more significant adverse environmental impacts. On February 27, 2018, ESD issued a Combined Notice that included its intent to act as lead agency, a Positive Declaration—thereby requiring the preparation of this DEIS—and a public scoping meeting notice, along with the Draft Scope for the DEIS.

Public scoping meetings were held under the direction of ESD on March 22, 2018 at the Elmont Memorial Library at 700 Hempstead Turnpike, Elmont, NY 11003. Two scoping sessions were held, both on March 22, 2018: one from 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM; and a second session from 6:30 PM to 9:30 PM. In addition to public comments received orally and in writing at the March 22, 2018 scoping sessions, written comments on the Draft Scope were accepted through 5:00 PM on Thursday, April 12, 2018, at which point the public comment period for the Draft Scope closed. All comments received prior to the close of the comment period were considered by the lead agency and any changes as appropriate were included in the Final Scope that was prepared and distributed on August 29, 2018.

Publication of the DEIS and issuance of the Notice of Completion signal the beginning of the public review period. During this time, which must extend for a minimum of 30 days, the public may review and comment on the DEIS, either in writing or at a public hearing convened for the purpose of receiving such comments. All substantive comments received on the DEIS, at the hearing or during the comment period, become part of the SEQRA record and will be summarized and responded to in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

Once the public comment period for the DEIS has closed, the lead agency prepares the FEIS. This document will include a summary of, and response to, each substantive comment made about the DEIS. Once ESD determines that the FEIS is complete, it will issue a Notice of Completion and circulate the FEIS. The completed FEIS will be available to agencies and the public for a minimum of 10 days before ESD will make its SEQRA findings and any additional findings with respect to the GPP. \*