

YAPHANK

THE TRAINS

hardly anyone uses

LIRR has \$20M to study relocating station, which gets 30 daily riders

BY CARL MACGOWAN
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Kathleen Madigan lives about five minutes from the Yaphank train station, but the daily commuter hardly ever uses the tiny rail depot in a desolate section of the hamlet.

Madigan instead drives 20 minutes or more to Ronkonkoma for the commute to her job in Manhattan. Parking there is harder to find, but trains are plentiful before and after work. The last eastbound train to Yaphank leaves Penn Station at 5:41 p.m.

“Ronkonkoma has trains going basically every hour,” Madigan said. “If you miss the last train to Yaphank because you had to work later, you have to get a cab.”

Madigan and other residents and officials hope the hard-to-find Yaphank station — berthed adjacent to a Yaphank Avenue overpass — will be relocated and enlarged to better serve the community.

The Long Island Rail Road is using \$20 million in state funds to study possible sites and other issues related to potential relocation, said Metropolitan Transportation Authority board member Mitchell Pally, who supports the move. The study is in its early stages and he could not estimate when the move would occur or how much it would cost.

“To me it seems like a no-brainer. It helps a wide variety of Suffolk County residents, both Brookhaven Town residents and residents who live on the East End,” Pally said in an interview. “It is something that everybody wants to have happen.”

Service is limited at the Yaphank stop: The LIRR weekday schedule lists only four eastbound trains and five westbound trains. LIRR officials have said daily ridership at the Yaphank station is 30.

Residents and officials long



“People have even asked me: ‘There’s a Yaphank train? Where is it?’ ”
— Town Councilman Michael Loguercio

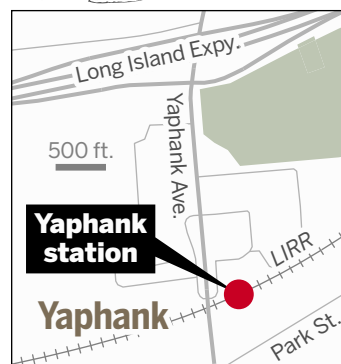
Residents complain the current station location and number of trains are inconvenient for commuters.

have complained that the current station, with only a small gravel parking lot and an unheated shelter, is inconvenient for most commuters. It’s also notoriously difficult to locate.

“Most people don’t even know it’s there,” Brookhaven Town Councilman Michael Loguercio said. “People have even asked me: ‘There’s a Yaphank train? Where is it?’ ”

Linda Petersen, president of the Yaphank Taxpayers and Civic Association, who has lived in the hamlet for more than 50 years, yearns for the time decades ago when the train station featured a grand Victorian-style peaked roof. That structure burned down around 1960.

“Somewhere along the way it left, and we got what we have



now,” Petersen said. “Which is pretty much nothing.”

Moving the station east — Brookhaven officials have recommended sites near William

Floyd Parkway — would ease congestion at the Ronkonkoma station and provide more options for commuters in eastern Long Island, officials said. Pally and town officials also favor electrifying the train line from Ronkonkoma to the new station.

“We think that this will be a game-changer for the Long Island Rail Road,” Brookhaven Supervisor Edward P. Romaine said. “This will be a major hub.”

Pally cautioned that scores of actions still await, including land acquisition, station design and track reconfiguration, before a new station can be built.

“You have to find a location first, where that can be located, because there are access issues, there are parking issues,” Pally said. “It’s more than just putting a station somewhere.”

Around LI

\$125G grant to study bay water

The Long Island Regional Economic Development Council has awarded a \$125,000 grant to North Hempstead to fund research on ways to improve water quality in Manhasset Bay.

The town plans to use the money to determine the bay’s biggest pollution sources and develop ways to manage that pollution.

Manhasset Bay is 4½ miles of shoreline that is one mile wide and feeds into the Long Island Sound between Manorhaven and Kings Point.

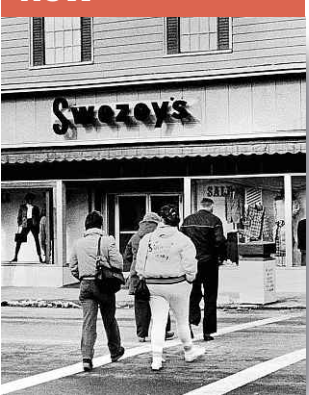
Sarah Deonarine, executive director for the multigovernment group Manhasset Bay Protection Committee, said in a statement that the group is “extremely excited” about receiving the grant.

The committee last year released a study about the bay’s water quality that found it is mostly safe for swimming. The study, prepared by Connecticut-based environmental engineering firm Fuss & O’Neill, showed that the bay has higher bacteria levels soon after rainfall. The eastern side of the bay has the highest bacteria concentration, the study stated.

— KRISTOPHER J. BROOKS

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