

## YAPHANK

## ★ Call to relocate rail station

Business leaders want it moved closer to BNL

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Several Long Island business leaders are calling on the MTA to move the Long Island Rail Road's Yaphank train station closer to Brookhaven National Laboratory, a location they say will get more use and support Brookhaven's economy.

In a letter sent Monday to Metropolitan Transportation Authority acting chairman and chief executive Janno Lieber, the business leaders called on the MTA to "immediately" get working on a long-discussed effort to relocate the Yaphank station, which sits on Park Street near Suffolk County Road 21.

In late 2018, the MTA, using \$20 million in state funding, began the effort to relocate the Yaphank station, starting with a feasibility study. The current station is served by just three eastbound and four westbound trains on weekdays. The station saw about 30 riders on an average day even before the COVID-19 pandemic, which has further reduced ridership.



The Yaphank station, the subject of a \$20 million 2018 study for a potential relocation.

According to the MTA's project overview, the station would be moved to "a new site east of the present station" that has not yet been finalized.

The letter's authors called for the station to be moved to a location that "identifies the straightest, shortest route to the East End."

"This project could help enable the MTA to better serve communities on the East End of Long Island and support regional businesses as well as Brookhaven National Labora-

tory, a critical economic development asset for our region," said the letter, which was signed by the heads of the Long Island Association, the Association for a Better Long Island, the Long Island Builders Institute, the Hauppauge Industrial Association Long Island, and the Long Island Contractor's Association.

The project was one of many put on hold by the MTA because of the uncertainty of its finances during the pandemic. MTA spokesperson Aaron Donovan said the agency is

now "lifting the pause on a project-by-project basis."

Donovan said the MTA has completed conceptual designs for three potential sites, but has not reached an agreement with Suffolk County and Brookhaven officials on a final location. Among those being considered are a site west of the Long Island Expressway and north of the tracks that would be reached via Precision Drive, and a site off Rose Executive Boulevard west of William Floyd Parkway and north of the tracks.

JAMES CARBONE

## MAN CHARGED IN SLASHING AT POST OFFICE

BY MICHAEL O'KEEFFE  
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A Queens man accused of slashing the face, arm and leg of a U.S. Postal Service inspector Monday was charged with second-degree assault and other crimes, according to Nassau police.

Nassau police were assisting postal service officials investigating larcenies at the Hicksville Post Office at 185 West John St. early Monday when two men arrived at the facility in a gray 2016 BMW, officials said.

One man, later identified as Romy Fabre, 26, entered the building and used a stolen USPS-issued master key to remove the contents of the mailboxes.

Fabre violently resisted when Nassau detectives and postal service inspectors attempted to place him in custody. Fabre used a sharp object to cut a postal inspector's face and body, police said.

The other suspect, Jahki Hawkins, 22, of the Bronx, complied with officers' commands and got out of the BMW as ordered by police. He was taken into custody without incident. The postal inspector was transported to a nearby hospital for treatment of lacerations to his eye, face, leg and arm, police said.

In addition to second-degree assault, Fabre also faces charges of third-degree and fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon, resisting arrest, second-degree resisting arrest, second-degree criminal tampering, fifth-degree possession of stolen property and petit larceny.

Hawkins faces charges of third-degree unlawful possession of a personal ID, fourth-degree criminal facilitation and fourth-degree criminal possession of stolen property.

Hawkins was released after arraignment in First District Court in Hempstead with non-monetary restrictions, meaning no cash bail set, and Fabre was held on bail of \$25,000 bond or \$12,500 cash.

## ISLANDWIDE

## LI officials vow to win battle against overdoses

BY JOHN ASBURY  
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Long Island officials vowed Tuesday to battle the opioid epidemic and reduce the number of overdose deaths on Long Island with prevention, treatment and training on how to eliminate life-threatening drug abuse.

Communities across Long Island observed International Overdose Awareness Day and pledged to help those battling addiction and boost awareness of fatal drugs like fentanyl, whose usage has spiked during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Last month, the nonprofit Community Action for Social Justice offered free naloxone, or Narcan — used to reverse an

opioid overdose — and training across the North Fork, and distributed more than 100 two-dose kits in the wake of six overdose deaths between Aug. 5 and 13 in Southold and Shelter Island towns.

In 2020, 390 people died from drug overdoses, marking a 34% increase in fatalities in Nassau County and a 12% rise in Suffolk County, putting Long Island on track for its deadliest year, according to the Garden City-based Family & Children's Association. Long Island deaths rose a combined 34% from 2019 to 2020.

"It didn't need to be that way. We know this is not specifically a Long Island problem," Family & Children's Association president Jeffrey Reynolds said Tues-

day. "We've watched the numbers climb during COVID, due to the anxiety, the depression and the uncertainty that goes along with the global pandemic."

Nationally, 93,000 people died from drug overdoses during the past year, not including 156,000 alcohol overdose deaths in 2020. Reynolds said his goal is to reduce the number of overdose deaths by 50% next year, but ultimately eliminate overdose deaths completely.

Reynolds marked International Overdose Awareness Day from the association's THRIVE Center in Hauppauge, with plans to open a new treatment facility in Bridgehampton in September.

Outreach teams from the Long Island Council on Alco-

holism and Drug Dependence are handing out fentanyl testing strips to all substance users, asking addicts to disregard any product containing the lethal drug. Any users who many continue to use drugs with fentanyl are also given Narcan, said Steve Chassman, the organization's executive director.

"It's a shame we've done so little so far. We have to do more," Chassman said. "Today's a day of memorial, yes, but it's a call to action. We're losing this fight and losing loved ones. . . . COVID is not an excuse. In times of great crisis, to do absolutely nothing is unacceptable."

Other communities like Babylon and Hempstead conducted Narcan training sessions on how to use it correctly.