



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Transit  
Administration**

REGION II  
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New Jersey,  
New York,  
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April 17, 2007

Mr. Christopher Boylan  
Deputy Executive Director  
Corporate and Community Affairs  
347 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10017-3739

*Chris*  
Dear Mr. Boylan,

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has reviewed the "MTA NYCT Second Avenue Subway Technical Memorandum No. 2 Assessing Design Change," (Memorandum) dated February 12, 2007 and the MTA NYCT response to FTA's questions dated April 5, 2007. Based on our review of the Memorandum and response to questions, the FTA has determined that the design changes to the Second Avenue Subway Project will not result in additional significant adverse environmental impacts.

The February 2007 Memorandum and April response satisfy the NEPA requirements as outlined in 23 CFR 771.130 and no supplemental environmental review is necessary for the proposed changes.

Please be aware that the Project must be carried out as described in the February 2007 Memorandum. If changes to the Project are made, FTA will need to determine if additional environmental studies will be necessary before the changes are approved. Should you have any questions concerning this Project, please contact Nancy Danzig, Acting Director of Planning and Program Development at 212-668-2180.

Sincerely,

*Brigid*  
Brigid Hynes-Cherin  
Regional Administrator

cc: S. Rios, A. Parikh, P. Cafiero



# Memorandum

U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Transit  
Administration**

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Subject: Second Avenue Subway  
Design Changes

Date: April 17, 2007

From: Nancy J. Danzig, AICP *NJD*  
Acting Director  
Planning and Program Development

Reply to  
Attn. of:

To: File

Through: Brigid Hynes-Cherin, Regional Administrator  
Maisie Grace, Regional Counsel *MG*

This memo provides FTA's analysis of potential environmental impacts that could occur as a result of a change in design to the Second Avenue Subway Project (Project). FTA has analyzed changes proposed by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority/New York City Transit (MTA/NYCT) made since FTA's issuance of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on April 8, 2004 and the Record of Decision (ROD) on July 8, 2004.

MTA/NYCT submitted a document on February 12, 2007, entitled "MTA NYCT Second Avenue Subway Technical Memorandum No. 2 Assessing Design Change" (Technical Memorandum No. 2). On March 19, 2007, FTA submitted questions to the MTA/NYCT on this document. MTA/NYCT's responses to these questions were submitted to FTA April 5, 2007 (April 5 Responses). Technical Memorandum No. 2 and the April 5 Responses to FTA's questions were submitted to FTA pursuant to CFR 450.771.130(c), to determine if there are any significant changes to the Project and if there are any additional adverse impacts that could occur as a result of the changes.

We have reviewed the Technical Memorandum No. 2 and April 5 Responses and find that there are no adverse impacts as a result of the change. In addition, there are no necessary changes to the mitigation measures described in the FEIS and ROD. The NEPA requirements pursuant to 23 CFR 771.130 have been met and I recommend that no further environmental review is necessary.

## Proposed Change

The design modification involves the relocation of one ancillary facility, an above-ground ventilation structure related to the 96<sup>th</sup> Street Station. In the FEIS design, the ancillary facility was proposed at the site of a two-story building occupied by a bar called "Blondies," located at 1770 Second Avenue, between 92<sup>nd</sup> and 93<sup>rd</sup> Streets. As noted in the FEIS, page 8-10, site selection for ancillary facilities consisted of conducting site surveys within the various station areas, considering use of the following types of properties in descending order of priority: vacant lots, vacant or deteriorated building sites, open spaces (not parkland), plazas and arcades, retail or commercial properties, residential properties or

community resources. In the FEIS design, the ancillary facility was proposed at the Blondies site because it is a two-story building that could be acquired without requiring any displacement of residents.

During the early stages of Final Design, additional investigation was conducted into the various properties that will be affected by the 96<sup>th</sup> Street Station. As part of this investigation, the design team was able to gain access to these properties. Field surveys, building façade scans, and additional geotechnical investigations were conducted. These investigations revealed structural deficiencies at the buildings adjacent to the Blondies site, as the two five-story buildings on either side of the bar are leaning noticeably to the north. As explained by MTA NYCT, both buildings exceed the allowable distortion for habitable buildings, pursuant to the New York City Building Code (NYCT's design team reported their findings to the New York City Department of Buildings). As a result of the structural deficiencies of the buildings adjacent to "Blondies," MTA/NYCT has determined that construction of a ventilation structure on the site would result in substantial construction risk. This is because during the demolition of the Blondie's building, the building south of Blondie's would require underpinning and possibly some sort of bracing to prevent collapse. Evacuation of this building would be advised during demolition of Blondie's and construction of the new ancillary structure. The building north of Blondie's is being underpinned as part of a proposed renovation by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development. The building is leaning away from Blondie's but could present challenges during construction, and require temporary evacuation during construction.

As a result, an ancillary facility is now proposed on the northeast corner of Second Avenue and 93<sup>rd</sup> Street, where the facility will also serve as an emergency exit that was originally planned on this corner. This proposed site is currently planned for development of a new 11-story residential building and is in the early stages of development. NYCT would need to purchase the entire property, thereby having the developer abandon its plans for the residential building. (The costs associated with this change have not been quantified yet.)

A detailed description of the proposed changes noted above is in the Technical Memorandum No. 2.

#### Assessment of Environmental Impacts

The Technical Memorandum No. 2 describes the FEIS design, the current design modification, and the impacts of this modification during construction and operation compared to the impacts that were described in the FEIS. Also included in the memo is a description of the public outreach effort conducted, and a summary of any changes to the mitigation commitments described in the FEIS and ROD.

The proposed design change will result in the same or similar construction impacts to those identified in the FEIS. Instead of the MTA/NYCT acquiring the "Blondies" site, the vacant property would be acquired, thereby precluding the planned development of a new 11-story building.

The new ancillary facility on the vacant site will be approximately 65 feet from a building identified as a potential historic resource in the FEIS. If, after consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), this potential resource is determined to be historic, then the design of the new ancillary facility will be conducted in accordance with the Programmatic Agreement (PA). The PA required coordination

with the SHPO on the design of project elements where there is potential for contextual effects on historic resources.

Potential noise and vibration impacts are similar at the new location as they would have been at the Blondie's site. The new location is on a corner and much of the equipment will be located under the street bed, possibly reducing the noise and vibration impacts.

#### Mitigation

No new or additional mitigation is required as a result of the proposed design change. The mitigation measures included in the ROD remain unchanged.

#### Public Outreach

The MTA/NYCT and the Second Avenue project team have been conducting ongoing meetings with Community Boards 7 and 8 on design changes, construction schedules, and property acquisitions.

The Second Avenue Subway project team met with Community Board 8 Second Avenue Task Force on March 27, 2007, and updated the Task Force on the design change. There was no opposition raised regarding this design change.

As part of the outreach for this design change, the property owners of the buildings adjacent to the "Blondies" site have been notified of the structural issues regarding their properties. In addition, MTA/NYCT has contacted the owner of the property being sought for the ancillary facility.

#### Summary

No significant impacts have been identified by MTA/NYCT as a result of the design change.