



U.S. Department
Of Transportation
Federal Transit
Administration

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July 30, 2007

Mr. Christopher Boylan
Metropolitan Transportation Authority
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. 3 Assessing Design Change" (Memo No. 3) dated June 22, 2007. Based on our review of the Memo No. 3, the FTA has determined that the design changes to the Second Avenue Subway Project (Project), as described in the Memo No. 3, will not result in additional significant adverse environmental impacts.

The Memo No. 3 satisfies 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 Memo No. 3. 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, Director of Planning and Program Development at 212-668-2180.

Sincerely,

Brigid
Brigid Hynes-Cherin
Regional Administrator

Cc: S. Rios
P. Cafiero
A. Parikh



Memorandum

U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Transit
Administration

Subject: Second Avenue Subway
Design Changes

Date: July 12, 2007

From: Nina Chung *NC*
Community Planner

Reply to
Attn. of:

To: File

Through: Brigid Hynes-Cherin, Regional Administrator *BHC*
Nancy Danzig, AICP, Director of Planning and Program Development *ND*
Maisie Grace, Regional Counsel *MG*

This memo provides FTA's analysis of potential environmental impacts that could occur as a result of changes in design to the Second Avenue Subway Project (Project). FTA has analyzed the 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, dated June 2007 and entitled "MTA NYCT Second Avenue Subway Technical Memorandum No. 3 Assessing Design Change" (Technical Memorandum No. 3). Technical Memorandum No. 3 was 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 design changes.

We have reviewed the Technical Memorandum No. 3 and find that there are no adverse impacts as a result of the changes. 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 Changes

The 63rd Street/Lexington Avenue Station (Station) is already constructed and in operation, serving the F line. The Project will share this Station with the F line. The proposed design changes involve the redesign of the ventilation facilities at the Station and changes to the entrance locations for the Station.

Proposed Changes at Ventilation Facility

The FEIS design for ventilation at the Station included replacing the existing, below-ground ventilation facility with three (3) new above-ground ventilation facilities. This required partial acquisition of private property at each of the three (3) locations, as shown on Figure 8-8 of the FEIS. As noted on page 8-11 of the FEIS, site selection for ancillary facilities, such as ventilation, 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 Second Avenue Subway community resources.

As a result of further analysis of the Station cooling requirements, MTA/NYCT determined that the existing fan plant and the existing sidewalk grates are adequately sized to supply emergency ventilation for the entire station. Therefore, one (1) ventilation facility located on the east side of Lexington Avenue between 63rd and 64th Streets, as shown on Figure 8-8 of the FEIS, is no longer needed. With the proposed changes, the Project now includes two (2), rather than three (3) above-ground ventilation facilities at this Station. The designs of the two remaining above ground facilities remain unchanged.

Proposed Changes at New Station Entrances

As described on pages 2-16, 2-17, and Figure 8-8 of the FEIS, the FEIS design included three (3) new entrances to the Station at its eastern end, at Third Avenue and 63rd Street. These entrances would provide access to an existing station mezzanine at the eastern end of the station, where the fare control area would be located.

The proposed design change involves modifications to two (2) of the three (3) entrances and the addition of two (2) new entrances. During ongoing design, MTA/NYCT determined that the proposed entrance located at the northwest corner of 63rd Street and Third Avenue would require relocation of a supermarket's escalators and office space. In order to avoid impacts to the supermarket, the proposed design modification includes reducing the size of this entrance so that it can avoid the below-grade supermarket. This entrance will now be one sidewalk escalator and will no longer pass through the supermarket. To maintain the same overall entrance capacity for this Station, the storefront entrance at the southeast corner of Third Avenue and 63rd Street, as described in the FEIS, will be made larger. In addition, two (2) new entrances will be added. The new entrances include one staircase located at the southwest corner on 63rd Street and another staircase located at the southeast corner on Third Avenue. With the proposed design changes at the Station entrances, there will be a total of five (5) entrances instead of three (3).

Assessment of Environmental Impacts

The Technical Memorandum No. 3 describes the FEIS design, the current design changes, and the impacts of these changes 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.

During operation of the Project, the changes to the ventilation facilities and the entrances do not alter the conclusions of the FEIS. In terms of construction impacts, the design change to the ventilation facilities at the Station eliminates one (1) of the ventilation facilities, thus reducing the number of private properties to be acquired and reducing impacts during construction. The design change to the Station entrance located at the northwest corner will reduce construction impacts because the below-grade supermarket will no longer lose its entrance or office space, as designed in the FEIS. Additional construction will occur at the southeast and southwest corners of Third Avenue and 63rd Street that was not anticipated in the FEIS design. At the southeast corner, a new staircase will be constructed, thus increasing the amount of construction activity at this corner, compared to the FEIS design. In order to accommodate this new staircase, the sidewalk along the south side of 63rd Street will be widened by 6 feet, for a length of 25 feet. The construction of this sidewalk extension has been reviewed and approved by New York City Department of Transportation in a letter dated May 30, 2007. At the southwest corner, the design change includes the addition of a new staircase in the sidewalk that was not included

in the FEIS design. This will increase the amount of construction activity at this location. However, the amount of construction required will not be substantial, since the southwest corner sidewalk entrance to the subway has already been constructed and is currently beneath the sidewalk.

The FEIS (page 6-27) indicated that some construction work would be required at each of the subway stations, and that this construction work would at times be noisy and disruptive. The addition of two (2) new staircases and the corresponding reduction in the amount of construction at the northwest corner will not change the overall construction impacts at Third Avenue and 63rd Street. The proposed design change will result in the same or similar construction impacts to those identified in the FEIS.

If any Section 106 resource(s) are discovered during construction, the MTA/NYCT will consult with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), to determine whether or not the resource(s) are historic. The Project, including these proposed design changes, will continue to be conducted in accordance with the Programmatic Agreement.

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 design modifications for the 63rd Street/Lexington Avenue Subway Station were presented at a meeting with the Community Board 8's Second Avenue Subway Task Force held on March 27, 2007. At that meeting, questions were addressed and no concerns with the design modifications were voiced.

Summary

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