



U.S. Department
Of Transportation
Federal Transit
Administration

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April 27, 2010

Ms. Sarah B. Rios
Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Director, Grant Management
347 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10017-3739

Sarah
Dear Ms. Rios:

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has reviewed the "MTA NYCT Second Avenue Subway Technical Memorandum No. 5 Assessing Design Change: Lexington Avenue/63rd Street Station Design Modification" (Tech Memo No. 5), dated April 5, 2010. Based on our review of the Tech Memo No. 5, the FTA has determined that the design changes to the Second Avenue Subway Project (Project), as described in the Memo No. 5, will not result in significant adverse environmental impacts.

The Memo No. 5 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 Tech Memo No. 5 as well as the enclosed FTA Memo from Nina Chung to Brigid Hynes-Cherin, dated April 26, 2010. 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 212-668-2177.

Sincerely,

Brigid Hynes-Cherin
Regional Administrator

Cc: J. McClain, MTA/NYCT
N. Danzig, FTA
H. PointduJour, FTA
N. Chung, FTA
M. Grace, FTA

enclosure



Memorandum

U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

Subject: MTA NYCT Second Avenue Subway Project
Technical Memorandum No. 5: Changes at Lexington
Avenue and 63rd Street Station

Date: April 26, 2010

From: *Nina* Nina Chung
Community Planner

Reply to
Attn. of:

To: Brigid Hynes-Cherin
Regional Administrator

File

Through: Nancy Danzig *ND*
Director of Planning and Program Development

Maisie Grace *MG*
Regional Counsel

INTRODUCTION

This memo provides FTA's analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) pursuant to 23 CFR 771.130 of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's ("MTA") proposed changes at the Lexington Avenue/63rd Street Station on the Second Avenue Subway Project (Project). MTA submitted "MTA New York City Transit Second Avenue Subway Technical Memorandum No. 5 Assessing Design Change: Lexington Avenue/63rd Street Station Design Modification" (Technical Memorandum No. 5), dated April 5, 2010 for FTA's review.

FTA issued a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), entitled "MTA New York City Transit Second Avenue Subway Final Environmental Impact Statement and Final Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) Evaluation" on April 8, 2004 and Record of Decision (ROD) on July 8, 2004 on the Project. The FTA has also reviewed four prior technical memoranda and issued memos to analyze changes to the Project as well as one Supplemental Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact since the issuance of the ROD.

This review addresses proposed changes based on Technical Memorandum No. 5, to determine if the proposed changes would result in significant environmental impacts not evaluated in previous NEPA evaluations. The proposed changes presented in Technical Memorandum No. 5 include modifications to one element previously analyzed in Technical Memorandum No. 3.

The Technical Memorandum No. 5 analyzed sixteen (16) environmental issue areas. We have reviewed the Technical Memorandum No. 5 and find that there will be no new significant environmental impacts as a result of the proposed changes. In addition, there will be 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 we recommend that no further environmental review is necessary.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED CHANGES

There are five (5) proposed changes to the entrances to the Lexington Avenue/63rd Street Station located at 63rd Street and Third Avenue as a result of the design analyzed in Technical Memorandum No. 5:

Southeast Corner of 63rd Street and Third Avenue

1. Off-street entrance – Addition of 2 escalators, return to FEIS design.
2. Off-street entrance - Elimination of 1 elevator and associated sidewalk bump-out.
3. Sidewalk entrance – Elimination of 1 staircase (emergency egress requirements still met)

Southwest corner of 63rd Street and Third Avenue

4. Sidewalk entrance – Shifting of 1 staircase 7 feet south, closer to building line instead of curb (staircase is a below-grade existing, unused street stair that was constructed in 1970's when the Station was constructed)

Northwest corner of 63rd Street and Third Avenue

5. Sidewalk entrance – Addition of 1 elevator in new sidewalk bump-out on north side of 63rd Street.

REASON FOR CHANGES

The Project is a new two-track, 8.5 mile rail line extending the length of Manhattan's east side corridor from 125th Street to Hanover Square, running beneath Second Avenue, and an extension of the existing Q line beyond its current terminus at 57th Street and Seventh Avenue to 125th Street via Second Avenue. The Project is being constructed in four (4) phases; phase 1, which extends from 105th Street to 62nd Street, is currently under construction. The changes to the Project involve changes to the entrances to the Lexington Avenue/63rd Street Station at Third Avenue. Second Avenue Subway riders will be able to transfer to/from the existing Lexington Avenue F Line at this Station. Until extension beyond 62nd Street in future phases, the Second Avenue Subway service will run south on the extended Q line only. Changes to the location of the entrances to the Lexington Avenue/63rd Street Station are needed as a result of the unanticipated need for utility line relocation and the discovery of the exact location of the existing staircase at the southwest corner of 63rd Street and Third Avenue.

Technical Memorandum No. 3 assumed that the enlarged off-street entrance at the southeast corner of 63rd Street and Third Avenue could be constructed by temporarily supporting existing Con Edison utilities across a trench. Subsequently, MTA/NYCT learned that Con Edison requires these utilities to be relocated outside the work zone. This would require utility relocation work to occur along Third Avenue from 64th Street to 55th Street. The relocation process for the high-voltage lines would require construction of a parallel system between manholes, then a depowering of the existing lines, a repowering of the new lines and then a draining and removal of existing lines. In order to avoid this additional significant construction and utility disruption, the *southeast corner off-*

street entrance at 63rd Street and Third Avenue (the entrance that was enlarged in Technical Memorandum No. 3), will be brought back to the original FEIS configuration. In addition, the location of the existing underground staircase at the *southwest corner sidewalk* of 63rd Street and Third Avenue has been discovered to be 7 feet south of where it was expected (in Technical Memorandum No. 3). Therefore, the location of that sidewalk staircase needs to be shifted.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Below is a summary of the layout of the Lexington Avenue/63rd Street Station entrances located at 63rd Street and Third Avenue from the FEIS to the current condition, which includes all changes reviewed in four prior technical memoranda and one Supplemental Environmental Assessment: FEIS Entrance Design at 63rd Street and Third Avenue

Southeast corner

Off-street - 2 escalators

Sidewalk - None

Southwest corner

Off-street - None

Sidewalk - None

Northeast corner

Off-street - None

Sidewalk - One staircase

Northwest corner

Off-street - 2 escalators, 1 staircase, 1 elevator

Sidewalk - None

Technical Memorandum No. 3 Design at 63rd Street and Third Avenue

Southeast corner

Off-street - 2 escalators (same as FEIS), 1 elevator in sidewalk bump-out (new)

Sidewalk - 1 staircase (new in TM3)

Southwest corner

Off-street - None (same as FEIS)

Sidewalk - 1 staircase (new in TM3)

Northeast corner

Off-street - None (same as FEIS)

Sidewalk - 1 staircase (same as FEIS)

Northwest corner

Off-street - None (elimination of 2 escalators, 1 staircase, 1 elevator in TM3)

Sidewalk - 1 escalator (new in TM3)

ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The Technical Memorandum No. 5 provided analysis of impacts on the following sixteen (16) environmental issue areas:

1. Transportation (subway, bus, automobile, parking, and pedestrian)
2. Social and economic conditions
3. Open space
4. Displacement and relocation
5. Historic resources

6. Archaeological resources
7. Air quality
8. Noise and vibration
9. Infrastructure and energy
10. Contaminated materials
11. Natural resources
12. Coastal zone consistency
13. Safety
14. Environmental justice
15. Indirect and cumulative effects
16. Construction impacts

We have reviewed the Technical Memorandum No. 5 and find that there will be no significant environmental impacts as a result of the proposed changes, and no mitigation is proposed. In the following two (2) areas, there are potential environmental impacts; however, the impacts are not significant: (1) Transportation, specifically regarding vehicular traffic and parking and (2) Construction, specifically regarding utilities.

1. Transportation

The parking regulations on two blocks of East 63rd Street between Lexington Avenue and Second Avenue would be changed to move the no standing lane to the south side of the street and the loading/unloading/parking lane to the north side. This would reverse the parking regulations from their current pattern and reduce the number of parking spaces available during nighttime hours from 35 spaces to 29 spaces. The loss of 6 parking spaces is not significant.

Between Second and Third Avenues, the westbound approach to Third Avenue would be restriped to provide a right-turn only lane so that the new sidewalk bump-out into the north curb lane on the west side of Third Avenue would not interfere with traffic movement. With the proposed design modification, intersection levels of service (LOS) during peak hours would improve from an unacceptable LOS F to an acceptable LOS D. In a letter from New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT), dated October 30, 2009, NYCDOT approved the revised plans for this intersection.

2. Construction

With the design modification, the construction activities that would occur at the intersection of Third Avenue and 63rd Street would be similar to those anticipated in the FEIS and in Technical Memorandum No. 3. However, the current design would eliminate the need to relocate two Con Edison 8-inch, high-voltage lines that run 2,400 feet from manhole to manhole along Third Avenue, from 64th to 55th Street. Therefore, there will be no significant construction impact as a result of the design modification.

The Project will continue to be implemented in accordance with the Programmatic Agreement, executed pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. 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.

MITIGATION

No new or additional mitigation is required as a result of the proposed changes presented in Technical Memorandum No. 5. The mitigation measures included in the FEIS and ROD remain unchanged.

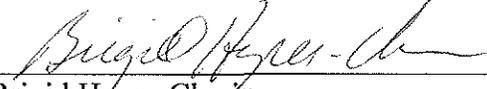
PUBLIC OUTREACH

MTA NYCT has been conducting ongoing public outreach related to the Second Avenue Subway project. This outreach is being conducted through a Second Avenue Subway Task Force established by Manhattan Community Board 8. MTA NYCT has had several discussions with CB8 related to the location of the entrances at Third Avenue and 63rd Street. These include various Community Board Task Force meetings since the completion of the FEIS and most recently, a Task Force meeting on January 26, 2010 at which MTA presented the proposed design modification analyzed in Technical Memorandum No. 5. Pages 12-15 of the Technical Memorandum No. 5 include details of questions received from community members as well as MTA NYCT responses.

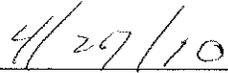
SUMMARY

Based on our review of Technical Memorandum No. 5, no new significant impacts since the issuance of the FEIS and ROD have been identified by MTA/NYCT as a result of the proposed design changes.

Concur



Brigid Hynes-Cherin
Regional Administrator



Date