

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), in cooperation with MTA New York City Transit (NYCT),* are undertaking a Major Investment Study (MIS) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to consider options for improving transit access and mobility on Manhattan's East Side. The alternatives would provide service to an area including Lower Manhattan, the Lower East Side, East Midtown, the Upper East Side, and East Harlem. A secondary area, just west of the primary area south of 59th Street, is also included in the study. After considerable study and evaluation of many options, four alternatives are addressed in this MIS/DEIS: No Build; Transportation Systems Management (TSM), including dedicated bus lanes on First and Second Avenues; a new East Side subway extension on Second Avenue north of 63rd Street and continuing on the Broadway express tracks down to Lower Manhattan; and the same new subway supplemented by new light rail transit (LRT) serving the Lower East Side and Lower Manhattan.

The need for transit improvement on Manhattan's East Side is clear. In the primary area, only the Lexington Avenue line (4, 5, 6 lines) provides full north-south rapid transit service. South of 64th Street (primarily in East Midtown), several east-west lines (Q, N, R, E, F, 7, Shuttle, and L) cross the area and connect to other north-south services. The N and R trains provide north-south service along Broadway from 57th Street to Lower Manhattan. Several subway lines serve the Lower East Side (F, B, D, Q, J, M and Z), but these do not offer direct north-south service on the East Side, and their stations are at some distance from residents living in the easterly portions of the neighborhood. In summary, five categories of interrelated public transportation problems were identified in the Manhattan East Side Transit Alternatives (MESA) study area: constrained capacity, poor transit accessibility (particularly for lines running north-south), overly long travel time, lack of flexibility to accommodate demand, and environmental and socioeconomic concerns associated with a strained transit system.

B. CURRENT PLANNING CONTEXT

MTA LONG RANGE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

MTA has developed a Long Range Planning Framework to create a unified program of improvements to its subway and commuter rail systems. These improvements are aimed at alleviating overcrowding, reducing travel time, better connecting the rail and subway lines, providing high-quality service, and extending service to underserved areas. To this end, MTA and its operating authorities, in coordination with FTA and other agencies, as appropriate, are undertaking seven

* The legal name of MTA New York City Transit is New York City Transit Authority.

Manhattan East Side Transit Alternatives MIS/DEIS

coordinated but independent major investment studies, including the MESA study. The other six are:

- East River Crossing Study to assess alternative strategies to improve transit service between Brooklyn and Manhattan;
- Long Island Rail Road East Side Access Project, which evaluated alternatives for improving mobility between Long Island (Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk) and Manhattan’s East Side and is now considering as its preferred alternative provision of new LIRR service to Grand Central Terminal using the existing 63rd Street tunnel beneath the East River;
- Access to the Region’s Core (ARC), a study to examine long-term transportation initiatives to improve access and mobility from New Jersey to Long Island, through Manhattan’s central business district (“the core”);
- Lower Manhattan Access study to identify, evaluate, and recommend alternatives for short- and long-term access improvements to Lower Manhattan for New York’s suburban commuters using Metro-North or the LIRR; and
- Metro-North West Side Access, a study to consider options for bringing some Hudson Line commuter trains down the West Side and into Penn Station.
- LaGuardia Subway Access Study, a study to develop an airport access link from Lower and Midtown Manhattan to LaGuardia Airport, emphasizing an extension of the Broadway Line “N” train.

All seven studies are being coordinated through the MTA Long Range Planning Framework Group, which consists of study managers and key staff from MTA and its subsidiaries, LIRR, Metro-North, and NYCT, as well as New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ), and New Jersey Transit.

OTHER PUBLIC PLANS

Other local and regional plans also affect the planning context for MESA and include: MTA/ NYCT projects to provide a 63rd Street tunnel connection to the Queens Boulevard line, restore Grand Central Terminal and provide access to the terminal’s northern end, and system-wide improvements that involve the Lexington Avenue and 63rd Street lines; PANYNJ’s Airtrain, a new light rail link connecting John F. Kennedy International Airport, the Howard Beach subway station on the A line, and LIRR’s Jamaica station; the Regional Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program for the New York Metropolitan Region, sponsored by the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council; the 42nd Street Light Rail Transit proposal sponsored by the New York City Department of Transportation; and the New York State Air Quality Implementation Program.

MESA WITHIN REGIONAL PLANNING CONTEXT

MESA would improve commuter movement on Manhattan’s East Side from Lower Manhattan to East Harlem, and would facilitate transit connections into the region’s “core”—from the Bronx, Queens (and its airports), Nassau and Suffolk Counties, and points beyond. It would therefore represent an important link with other parts of the region, and be compatible with other ongoing regional plans to improve transit and transportation options.

C. PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

Development and evaluation of alternatives in the MESA study considered all options suggested, evaluating each against the project's goals and objectives (see 1, Section G). From a large list, alternatives were grouped and organized into a somewhat smaller list, called the "long list" of alternatives. This was subjected to a coarse screen using relatively broad criteria, which eliminated those options that could not reasonably be built and combined others together to form several new full "combination" alternatives. These were subjected to much more detailed criteria in three successive screens. The work was closely supervised by NYCT, and it was coordinated with other state and city agencies, as appropriate, and discussed in the public outreach program. The evaluation concluded that four alternatives would be addressed in detail in this MIS/DEIS: No Build; Transportation Systems Management (TSM); new East Side subway extension on Second Avenue north of 63rd Street and continuing on the Broadway (N and R route) express tracks down to Lower Manhattan; and the new subway with new light rail transit (LRT) serving the Lower East Side and Lower Manhattan.

NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE

The No Build Alternative consists of those improvements in the city's transportation system instituted after 1995 (the base year for the MESA study) that would be in place by 2020. This includes completion of MTA operating agency initiatives to bring the system into a state of good repair (such as the purchase of new subway cars, rehabilitation of certain stations, track improvements, etc.) and three specific changes: the introduction of the MetroCard and system-wide free transfers in July 1997, the introduction of unlimited ride passes in July 1998, and the 63rd Street Tunnel Connector (currently under construction), a 1,500-foot connection between the Queens Boulevard line and the subway portion of the 63rd Street tunnel.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT (TSM) ALTERNATIVE

The TSM Alternative is a relatively low-cost option that could be implemented to partially meet project goals and objectives. It contains three major transit elements: Lexington Avenue line station "dwell time" improvements; the implementation of bus priority lanes, called "New York Bus Lanes," on First and Second Avenues between Houston and 96th Streets; and, for Lower East Side streets—which are narrow and often do not follow the traditional north-south grid—a series of new bus routes and route modifications (see Figures S-1 and S-2). Additional ferry service, privately franchised jitney service, and use of electric trolley buses are not specifically proposed in this alternative, although implementation of these systems is not precluded.

Construction of the bus lanes would be similar to repaving projects undertaken by the city's Department of Transportation, and would proceed in short segments of three to four blocks, with several such segments to be constructed concurrently. Construction of segments with new bus stops could take up to 12 weeks, and construction of segments where only resurfacing is required could take from 1 to 2 weeks. All together, construction of the New York Bus Lanes from Houston to 96th Street is expected to take up to approximately 2 years.

SUBWAY ALTERNATIVE (BUILD ALTERNATIVE 1)

OVERVIEW AND ALIGNMENT

This alternative would provide express subway service on the existing Broadway (N and R) line north from one of three termini (lower level of City Hall station, Whitehall Street station, or 95th Street station in Brooklyn) to 63rd Street, to join a new subway line extending northward beneath Second Avenue to approximately 115th Street. From there the new subway would transition via a curved tunnel alignment to a location adjacent to the east side of the 125th Street station on the Lexington Avenue line. Figure S-3 shows the proposed route of the new subway north of 63rd Street.

Five new stations would serve the new subway, spaced approximately 10 blocks apart. They would be located between 69th and 72nd Streets; between 83rd and 86th Streets; between 95th and just north of 97th Street; between 106th and 109th Streets; and between 124th and 126th Streets. This last station would be connected to the 125th Street station on the Lexington Avenue line, for free transfer to the 4, 5, and 6 trains, serving the Bronx. In addition, at the suggestion of residents of East Harlem, the possibility of including a sixth station at 116th Street will be analyzed in full in the MESA Final EIS.

Most stations would have a mezzanine above the tracks and platform, where passengers could pay their fare and access either the uptown or downtown trains. The mezzanine would be about 25 feet below street level. Stairs and elevators to and from the street would be provided; in some cases, access would be via stairs within building lobbies or within the building line. Stations would have either side or center platforms, depending on design constraints. The 125th Street station would be different from the others, because it must accommodate expected heavy passenger transfers. It would provide several passageways to connect to the existing Lexington Avenue line; also, it would be fairly deep, with the mezzanine under the bedrock, to avoid having to acquire properties above.

South of the new station at 69th-72nd Street, the new subway service would continue on the 63rd Street line and then onto the Broadway express tracks to Lower Manhattan. The service would stop at 63rd Street at Lexington Avenue, Broadway at 57th Street, 42nd Street (Times Square), 34th Street, 14th Street (Union Square), Canal Street, City Hall, Cortlandt Street, Rector Street, and Whitehall Street.

To allow the ridership benefits created by providing through service on the same train between the new subway and Lower Manhattan, the tracks at the Canal Street station would be modified to allow express trains onto the local tracks and local trains onto the express tracks. The express tracks do not currently continue south of Canal Street, but head east, over the Manhattan Bridge. By making this switch (called the “Canal Street flip”), the East Side subway extension trains would connect directly to Lower Manhattan, with no transfer required. Some Second Avenue trains would short-turn at either the City Hall (lower level) or Whitehall Street stations during the peak periods. Other trains would continue to Brooklyn via the Montague Street tunnel. The permanent track connections proposed by the Canal Street flip would change the trip for existing Broadway line passengers. Those who normally ride express trains over the Manhattan Bridge would instead ride local trains, and those who currently use the local trains to travel to Lower Manhattan and/or Brooklyn via the Montague Street tunnel would instead need to transfer to the express service.

The new subway service would also require new space at a yard for subway trains when not in use, as well as for maintenance. The existing NYCT yard in Brooklyn at 36th/38th Street near the junction of the Fourth Avenue subway and the West End lines could accommodate the light maintenance, inspection, and storage of the new line's additional cars—heavy maintenance would be performed at the Coney Island facility. Reconfiguration of the yard near 10th Avenue and 38th Street could involve minor impacts to private property.

PROPERTY EASEMENTS

The new stations to be constructed as part of the East Side subway extension may be constructed using easements through private property, to allow construction of entrances through existing buildings, where possible. The transit easement areas that are mapped along Second Avenue are for this purpose; they give NYCT the right to use space within buildings constructed after the easement areas were mapped for subway entrances. Some of these easement areas may currently be in other use. Easements would also be required beneath private property in some locations. This alternative would also require the use of public or private property for up to 10 years to accommodate the construction access shaft, as described below.

CONSTRUCTION METHOD

The depth of the new subway tunnel depended on several factors, including the depth of existing tunnels and stations at its termini, the need to use previously constructed tunnel sections (which are between 99th and 105th Streets, 110th and 120th Streets, and in a small portion of the 63rd Street Tunnel), the objective of avoiding the disruption caused by “cut-and-cover” construction, and the quality and depth of rock beneath Second Avenue. The construction plan maximizes use of the tunnel-bore method or a drill-and-blast mining method, both well beneath the surface (see Figure S-4). Cut-and-cover construction would be used predominantly for stations.

The TBM, basically a very large diameter drill, would be used to excavate the portions of the tunnel south of 92nd Street. With the TBM, all the construction activities would occur in bedrock, deep below the ground surface, with no disruption at the surface except at a construction staging location (discussed below). North of 92nd Street, conditions would not be appropriate for a TBM for two reasons: (1) the bedrock is too deep to accommodate a railroad profile, and (2) the existing (and shallow) tunnel portions there are not large enough for the TBM to pass through, while the length of new tunnel between and beyond the existing segments (north of 115th Street) would be too short to warrant use of a separate TBM. North of the existing tunnel section at 115th Street, traditional mining techniques—drilling and blasting or modern hydraulic or chemical rock splitting techniques—would be used to construct the part of the tunnel that would curve over to Lexington Avenue.

For the duration of the construction, access to the deep tunnel work would be via a construction shaft. This shaft would be used as the entry point for the TBM at the beginning of construction, and for entry and exit of construction workers and materials to and from the tunnel during construction. The site must be located close to either the north or south end of the new tunnel to allow the TBM to proceed from one end to the other without turning. Numerous candidate locations were considered as possible sites for the shaft and staging area; three locations remain under consideration:

- The site currently reserved for possible use for the access shaft and staging area for the MTA/LIRR East Side Access project. This site, under jurisdiction of the MTA, is on the east

side of Second Avenue between 62nd and 63rd Streets and is temporarily occupied by a garden furnishings retailer.

- The east side of Second Avenue between 65th and 66th Streets. This private property is currently occupied by low-rise commercial buildings.
- A site on the west side of Second Avenue between 96th and 97th Streets. This private property is occupied by a low-rise lumber store.

(An additional site, at a park and playground on the east side of Second Avenue between 96th and 97th Streets, was removed from consideration because it would involve closing the park for the entire construction period.)

“Cut-and-cover” construction, which requires excavation down from the street surface, would be limited to the sites of the five new subway stations, and where it is required to connect new stations to the two tunnel segments that already exist. It would also be necessary for small vent shafts located approximately every 400 feet between stations, and for fan plants, located halfway between each station. This technique involves excavating the tunnel by digging from the street level downward. Once the tunnel is deep enough, temporary decking can be installed to permit traffic and pedestrians to use the street and sidewalk above while construction continues underneath. As the excavation proceeds downward, piles, sheeting, and bracing are installed at the sides of the excavation site to support the sides and to prevent movement of the surrounding ground. The excavations for the station areas would affect most of the width of the street and portions of the sidewalk as well. To minimize disruption to traffic and pedestrians, the work in each segment would be done in four approximately 15-foot-wide stages.

CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

The schedule for construction of the new subway, which would depend on the characteristics of the rock encountered, the number of shifts per day, the number of elements constructed simultaneously, and the location selected for the construction shaft and staging site, is estimated to last up to 10 years. Drilling the new tunnel south of 96th Street would require approximately two years, and the tunneling work north of 96th Street approximately four years. At each station requiring cut-and-cover construction, work would proceed in longitudinal sections, probably one block at a time. Each block would take approximately 3 to 4 months to excavate and cover with decking, so that the total excavation time at each station would be approximately 1 year, with construction of each station beneath the decking continuing for an additional 1½ years.

SUBWAY WITH LIGHT RAIL OPTION ON LOWER EAST SIDE (BUILD ALTERNATIVE 2)

OVERVIEW AND ALIGNMENT

This alternative would contain all the elements of the subway alternative (Build Alternative 1), but would add an LRT to serve the Lower East Side and Lower Manhattan. The basic alignment of the proposed two-way LRT would begin near the intersection of Water and Broad Streets, and proceed along Water and Pearl Streets to Frankfort Street, where it would descend into a new tunnel to the Chambers Street/Brooklyn Bridge station of the Nassau Street (J and M) subway line. From there it would continue in an existing subway tunnel section under Centre and Canal Streets to approximately Allen Street, where it would surface and travel along the center of East

Broadway to Grand Street, and then turn north to Kazan and Columbia Streets, under the Williamsburg Bridge, and onto Avenue D up to 14th Street. The right-of-way would extend across 14th Street between Avenue D and Union Square, where it would end. Figure S-5 shows the route of the LRT. To accommodate the LRT right-of-way, Avenue D, now two-way, would become one-way southbound. Stations would be provided at Broad Street and Pine Street on Water Street, near Fulton and Pearl Streets, within the Chambers Street/Brooklyn Bridge station near the J and M trains, at Essex Street on Canal Street, near Grand Street on Kazan Street, near Houston, 8th, and 13th Streets on Avenue D, and at Avenue B, First Avenue, Irving Place, and at Union Square on the north side of 14th Street.

LRT stations would have 200-foot-long platforms, at grade in the center of the street or on the side, accessible from the crosswalks at nearby intersections. Depending on the location, there would be one center or two side platforms. The platforms would be low (approximately curb height) and would offer amenities such as lighting, benches, canopies, and windscreens. An exception would be at Seward Park and Straus and Union Squares, where the design of the stops would be minimized to avoid visual and other intrusions on these parks.

Along this alignment, the new LRT service would travel on a pair of tracks (one northbound track and one southbound). For most of the route, the at-grade track would be shared with rubber-tired vehicles (cars, trucks, buses, bicycles): the tracks in these segments would be embedded within the pavement so that general traffic could use the right-of-way as well, except at LRT stations. In certain sections of the route, however, the LRT right-of-way would be separated from vehicular traffic. This includes the tunnel segment of the route, the portals connecting the tunnel to the at-grade section of the route, and the portion of the alignment along Avenue D. Vehicles would be able to turn onto side streets across the tracks, however.

Storage and repairs for the LRT vehicles would be accommodated at an underground facility, which would be built on property along the south side of Delancey Street, from Essex Street to just east of Clinton Street. This property is city-owned and has been largely cleared for the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area Extension. It is now in use for shopper parking. To reach this site, the LRT would travel from Avenue D on a single set of tracks along the southern portion of Delancey Street. The tracks would begin to descend below grade just east of Bialystoker Street and pass through a portal to become fully below grade before crossing Pitt Street.

CONSTRUCTION METHOD

The LRT would be constructed predominantly at-grade, but would also require some work in existing tunnel and transitions between the tunnel and the surface. The at-grade portion of the LRT would be constructed one track at a time, to minimize disruption. Construction would likely proceed one block at a time, between cross streets, and after several blocks of track have been constructed, the portions that cross other streets could be constructed during off-peak hours. The existing pavement would be taken up, and any utilities located in the top 2 to 3 feet of the roadbed would be relocated. New concrete slabs would then be laid to support the tracks.

Within existing subway tunnels beneath Centre and Canal Streets, work would involve realigning tracks. Beneath Canal Street between the Bowery (where the LRT would connect with an existing subway tunnel) and Allen Street, additional new tunnel would have to be constructed. Some of this work would be done using traditional hard rock mining techniques. At the northern and southern ends of the tunnel segment, additional work would be required to transition to the

at-grade portion of the route. In these two transition areas—on Canal Street between Chrystie and Ludlow Streets on the north end and on Frankfort Street between Pearl and Chambers Streets at the south end—cut-and-cover construction would be used to construct the sloping section where the LRT makes the transition between the tunnel and street level. Cut-and-cover construction would also be used for the proposed storage yard on the south side of Delancey Street and for the track connection to the yard along Delancey Street South. The western end of the yard, beneath the Essex Street Market Building, would be hand excavated and the building would be underpinned.

CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

Construction of the LRT would take 2 to 3 months per block, and many blocks could be constructed simultaneously. The cut-and-cover work required to construct the portals and adjoining tunnels on Canal and Frankfort Streets could take up to 2 years, although after about 3 to 4 months, the excavation site could be decked over so that traffic could use the roadway above. Construction activities would continue at those locations for 3 to 4 years, as interior work in the tunnels continues. Construction equipment and workers would access the tunnel from the portal locations, and some kind of storage yard would likely be required near the entrance. Construction of the entire system would likely require about 3 to 4 years, but this schedule could be expedited or slowed down, depending how many segments are constructed at once.

D. SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

All project alternatives other than the No Build would improve transit service and accessibility on the East Side of Manhattan, providing a substantial benefit to residents, workers, and visitors there and to the city as a whole. The new subway would reinforce ongoing revitalization efforts in Lower Manhattan and East Harlem, as well as the Times Square area and other locations close to the East Side.

At the same time, the project alternatives would also result in some adverse impacts. Most of these would occur during construction of the Build alternatives; there would be relatively few impacts related to operation of any of the project alternatives, with the exception of those described below. The No Build Alternative would avoid any adverse impacts, but also would provide no benefit and would meet the project's goals and objectives. Public transit would remain less available to portions of the study area. The TSM Alternative would have only limited adverse impacts, as described below. Most of the impacts that could result from the project are associated with Build Alternatives 1 and 2. A number of these impacts would depend on which construction shaft and staging site is selected. Major impacts would be related to traffic, potential displacement of businesses, visual quality, historic resources, noise, and archaeological resources. Hazardous materials would require remediation and mitigation. Areas with some effects include land use and neighborhood character, social conditions, economic conditions, utilities, and energy. Significant impacts associated with the project alternatives are summarized below.

LAND USE AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Construction of the new subway under Build Alternatives 1 and 2 would result in temporary disruptions and inconveniences in the surrounding areas. The potential for impacts would be limited greatly by the use of a tunnel boring machine to excavate most segments of the new tunnel. Construction activities would be disruptive, to surrounding uses, however, at the locations where

cut-and-cover work would occur (predominantly at new station locations) and at the tunnel access site and construction staging area. All of these locations are within predominantly residential neighborhoods with some local retail uses as well as community facilities. NYCT will work with the affected communities to select the shaft site that would be least disruptive. Some impacts to nearby uses could also occur near the 36th-38th Street Yard in Brooklyn.

The new stations to be constructed as part of the East Side subway extension may be constructed using easements through private property, to allow construction of entrances through existing buildings, where possible. Some of these easement areas may currently be in other use. Easements would also be required beneath private property in some locations, but this would not affect the use of the property.

In addition, construction of the subway requires use of public or private property along the alignment for an access shaft and possible staging area. If the MTA-owned property is selected as the shaft site, the tenant on the site would have to move to another location. If either of the private properties is selected, the commercial uses on those sites would be displaced and the property owners would be compensated for their property. After construction is complete, the properties could be redeveloped with active uses.

Construction of the LRT under Build Alternative 2, particularly its cut-and-cover sections on Frankfort, Canal, and Delancey Streets, could also be disruptive to neighborhood activities. These excavation areas are within mixed commercial and residential neighborhoods; the section on Frankfort Street is close to Pace University.

Operation of any of the project alternatives other than the No Build would have beneficial effects on land use. These alternatives would support public initiatives to revitalize neighborhood activity in East Harlem and Lower Manhattan in particular, and would improve conditions elsewhere in the study area as well as ease transit conditions.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND DISPLACEMENT

Cut-and-cover activities associated with construction of the new subway could disturb the operation of businesses nearby through increases in dust, noise, and vibration; temporary reduction in sidewalk width; temporary loss of curbside parking; and storage and handling of construction materials, all of which would lessen the shopping environment and discourage pedestrian and vehicular traffic. In some cases (for smaller businesses that have competitors nearby), this could lead to a potential decrease in sales, perhaps with a concurrent increase in operating expenses, that could result in the closing of some retail and neighborhood service establishments in the construction zone. In addition, two of the potential shaft locations are located on private property; selection of either of these sites would result in the direct displacement and relocation of businesses.

Construction associated with the new LRT could also be disruptive to neighborhood businesses nearby. In most cases, because of the short duration of LRT construction work, this effect would be minimal. The potential for impacts is greatest along Canal Street, which is very narrow and lined with small businesses, and along East Broadway, where construction activities would significantly constrain curbside pick-ups and deliveries, adding to the time and cost of doing business.

The impacts during operation of the new subway and LRT service would be largely beneficial—with one major exception. On Canal Street between Ludlow and Allen Streets, the LRT would operate in an open cut, sloping down to a tunnel portal. This would reduce the size of the street

itself, making access and deliveries more difficult, and it would effectively divide and separate the shopping resources on either side of Canal Street, eliminating pedestrian movement north and south among the various appliance and electronic stores on the street. This could result in significant adverse impacts to businesses along this part of Canal Street. Some effects could also occur to businesses along East Broadway.

For any properties that would have to be acquired for the new subway (properties used for a construction shaft site or, if applicable, properties to be used for easements to allow new station entrances) owners would be compensated at fair market value and relocation benefits would be provided for displaced businesses. Relocation benefits would also be provided for businesses that are indirectly displaced as a result of project activities nearby. For any necessary relocation, relocation assistance offices would be established to facilitate the appropriate activities.

VISUAL AND AESTHETIC CONSIDERATIONS

The construction necessary for Build Alternatives 1 and 2 would introduce temporary but incongruous visual elements, particularly where the cut-and-cover construction method would be used, and at shaft sites for the new subway.

Build Alternatives 1 and 2 would affect the appearance of the Upper East Side and East Harlem study area by adding four new stations on Second Avenue. Overall, however, the visual impacts would be minimal. Even at locations where entrances to the new subway would not be within buildings, these new entrances would not result in significant adverse impacts. They would be similar to subway entrances throughout the city.

During operation, the new LRT under Build Alternative 2 would change the appearance of its route because of the presence of new tracks in the street, overhead wires, and at three locations, new portals (on Canal, Frankfort, and Delancey Streets). Design elements that visually minimize obstructions would be incorporated into this alternative to help mitigate visual impacts. To address potential concerns about visual impacts of the LRT on Union Square Park as well as Straus Square and Seward Park, the LRT stops there would not include any shelter or other street furniture. With a terminus along the south side of Union Square Park, light rail vehicles would be stopped by the park for several minutes at a time and therefore could affect views of the park, especially from the south side of 14th Street. Possible mitigation for this change would include terminating the LRT just east of the park, or continuing the LRT westward past the park. (However, continuation of the LRT along 14th Street west of Union Square Park raises the potential for a number of other significant adverse impacts, including impacts related to historic or archaeological resources, traffic conditions, noise and vibration, and hazardous materials. If an extension of the LRT is included in the preferred alternative, these impacts and possible mitigation will be detailed in the Final EIS.)

HISTORIC RESOURCES

The studies undertaken for this MIS/DEIS identified potential significant adverse impacts to historic resources related to both Build Alternative 1 and Build Alternative 2. As project plans proceed with selection of a preferred alternative and preparation of a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), ongoing consultation will be undertaken with the State Historic Preservation Office at the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and with the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. This ongoing consultation is mandated by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

With the construction of the new subway under Build Alternative 1 or 2, two buildings near the northeast corner of 125th Street and Lexington Avenue that have been found eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places would require underpinning because the new subway would be relatively shallow in this location. Similarly, construction of the LRT below-grade storage yards for Build Alternative 2 would require underpinning of the Essex Street Market building, a Register-eligible resource. A construction protection plan would be prepared by qualified engineers and implemented by qualified personnel, including an independent engineer authorized to stop work if damage is found at the buildings. This plan would be submitted to the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review and approval prior to the start of construction. At all other locations, appropriate care would also be taken to ensure that the construction not result in any structural impacts to buildings.

In addition, Build Alternative 1 would require the selection of an access shaft and construction staging site. One of the possible shaft and staging sites—the site located between 65th and 66th Streets—contains a potential historic resource. If this resource is determined to be Register-eligible or merit landmark status, the project could adversely affect the resource on the site. In order to avoid an adverse effect, another site could be selected or, if this site is the most reasonable and prudent location for the shaft site, appropriate mitigation would be proposed through consultation with SHPO.

As project plans proceed after selection of a preferred alternative, to avoid potential contextual impacts on historic resources from operation of the proposed project stemming from the addition of new elements such as signs, stairways, vents, and other features related to the new subway, project components would be carefully designed, and proposed plans would be submitted to SHPO as well as the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) for review during the ongoing consultation process.

Since the LRT component of Build Alternative 2 is proposed to be located primarily on the street surface, it was examined carefully for contextual impacts on historic resources. The study found that all of the historic resources in the area of potential effect were built and currently stand in a dense, highly urban context; moreover, many were along trolley routes in the past. For these reasons, the LRT portion of Build Alternative 2 is unlikely to result in significant adverse contextual impacts on historic resources. If necessary, project components would be relocated and/or redesigned to avoid contextual impacts to historic resources. For example, efforts would be made to design light rail components, such as platform areas, that are compatible with adjacent historic resources. Proposed plans would be submitted to SHPO and LPC for review during the ongoing consultation process for this alternative.

As project plans proceed with selection of a preferred alternative, the ongoing consultation process with SHPO would continue. As necessary, field surveys would be conducted for any project elements not already analyzed; building-structure inventory forms would be submitted to the SHPO for determinations of eligibility about listing on the State and National Registers for any structures that could experience direct physical impacts due to construction, construction protection plans would be prepared for any historic resources, and a Memorandum of Agreement and/or a Programmatic Agreement would be executed by New York City Transit, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the Federal Transit Administration, the SHPO, and, if necessary, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, outlining the process and measures to be undertaken to avoid any adverse impacts to historic resources.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

As noted above, as project plans proceed after selection of a preferred alternative, the ongoing consultation process with SHPO, and, if necessary, the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, will continue, to avoid impacts to archaeological resources to the extent practicable. The process will include execution of a Memorandum of Agreement and/or Programmatic Agreement, as described above.

Construction of Build Alternatives 1 and 2 will require continued study of potential impacts on archaeological resources. This research will be conducted in consultation with SHPO. For the subway portion of the alternatives, once vent shaft and fan plant sites are known, it will be necessary to determine whether they might affect potentially sensitive archaeological resources and take steps to avoid impact (move the vent shaft to a different location) or mitigate impact (archaeological testing or excavation). Additional research will also be necessary to determine whether the shaft site selected may contain archaeological resources. In order to avoid an adverse effect, a site that is not sensitive could be selected, or, if a sensitive site is the most reasonable and prudent location, further documentation, and, if necessary, testing and mitigation would be carried out. Additional research will also be required at the potential location of small areas of cut-and-cover work on 124th Street.

The LRT component of Build Alternative 2 would be routed through six areas of the Lower East Side and Lower Manhattan that are considered potentially sensitive for archaeological resources. Should this component be included in the preferred alternative, additional archaeological study would be required to help avoid or mitigate significant impacts on archaeological resources. In addition, this alternative requires electrical substations that could affect archaeological resources. Once these locations are known, similar to the vent shafts and fan plants for the subway, it will be necessary to determine whether they might affect potentially sensitive archaeological resources and take steps to avoid or mitigate the impact. This work would be undertaken in coordination with SHPO and LPC.

TRANSPORTATION

The overall effect of operation of the TSM Alternative, Build Alternative 1, and Build Alternative 2 would be beneficial. Improved transit service—whether surface transit (TSM Alternative), subway transit (Build Alternative 1), or a combination of both (Build Alternative 2)—would ease congestion on existing East Side transit lines, provide access to public transit in areas (particularly in the far northern and southern portions of the study area) that are currently underserved, and improve the ease and speed of both journey-to-work and discretionary trips. Under all three alternatives, peak hour throughput and thus system capacity on the Lexington Avenue line would increase. For example, southbound in the AM, express service would increase from 23 to 24 trains per hour, and local trains would increase from 24 to 28 per hour. Build Alternatives 1 and 2 would further relieve overcrowding on the Lexington Avenue line by providing additional capacity on Second Avenue/Broadway express, plus the Lower East Side LRT (Build Alternative 2). Overall, Build Alternatives 1 and 2 would significantly relieve overcrowding on the Lexington Avenue line.

The TSM Alternative and Build Alternatives 1 and 2 would all create temporary traffic diversions and impacts during construction and might require some temporary adjustments in transit service. Once it is built, the TSM Alternative would divert some traffic away from First and Second

Avenues and would cause significant worsening or significant impacts on traffic at locations along 14th, 23rd, 42nd, 59th, 62nd-64th, 72nd, 79th, 92nd, and 96th Streets. These impacts could all be mitigated by standard traffic engineering improvements; on Second Avenue near the Queensboro Bridge, more costly traffic measures and/or intensive enforcement strategies would be needed. The TSM Alternative would also eliminate some on-street parking spaces along the bus priority routes during midday, but would increase parking supplies in the AM and PM peaks. The LRT component of Build Alternative 2 would create traffic impacts which could be mitigated by standard traffic engineering improvements, but significant on-street parking space losses of about 440 spaces would result.

AIR QUALITY

None of the project alternatives would result in significant air quality impacts in the study area, and the proposed alternatives would conform to the New York State Implementation Plan for air quality (the SIP).

NOISE AND VIBRATION

Noise impacts associated with increases in bus traffic would occur with the TSM Alternative, primarily on the Lower East Side.

During construction, noise from the construction shaft site and cut-and-cover areas of both the subway and LRT would be intrusive and annoying, particularly during the earliest phases of the project when pile-driving and blasting would occur. Given the length of time the shaft site would be in use, noise impacts at that site could be considered significant. In terms of vibration, blasting, pile driving, and pavement-breaking operations would create noticeable ground-borne vibration. Although it would be discernible at locations nearby, this vibration is not expected to result in significant impacts at neighboring buildings. Any required blasting would be carefully implemented to protect nearby structures from damage.

The new subway under both Build Alternatives 1 and 2 would require vibration mitigation to eliminate impacts at proposed subway stations and subway crossover tracks. In addition, the new subway service's operations at the 36th-38th Street Yard in Brooklyn could result in significant adverse noise impacts at nearby residences. These impacts, to be examined in more detail in the Final EIS once operating plans are more defined, could potentially be mitigated through the use of noise barriers at the boundaries of the yard. The new LRT under Build Alternative 2 would require vibration mitigation to avoid impacts at LRT crossover tracks.

UTILITIES

None of the Build alternatives would result in significant impacts to utilities. For the new subway under Build Alternatives 1 and 2, utilities buried beneath Second Avenue could be affected in areas where cut-and-cover construction would occur. In these areas, some utility lines would likely need to be relocated. In all locations, utility service would be maintained throughout construction. Under Build Alternative 2, the new LRT would be situated on a concrete slab on the street surface, above existing buried utilities. Any utilities in the top 2 to 3 feet of the roadbed would be relocated, to allow construction of the slab. The LRT tracks would be built on two separate slabs, to permit access to utilities below with a minimum of disruptions to LRT service. Utilities can be replaced either while single-track operation is maintained or while the slabs bridge over excavations below.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Both Build Alternatives 1 and 2 would introduce potential risk to workers, pedestrians, and residents from exposure to hazardous materials at the sites where earthmoving activities would occur. During construction of the subway tunnel and LRT, asbestos-covered steam pipes, underground petroleum storage tanks, and contaminated soil and/or groundwater could be encountered. To eliminate any potential health concerns, prior to the commencement of construction a thorough investigation would be undertaken of each segment where cut-and-cover construction techniques would be utilized. Based on this investigation, a site-specific Health and Safety Plan would be developed for each phase of the construction to eliminate the potential for worker and public contact with any contamination found in either the soil or groundwater.

EQUITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

No high and disproportionate adverse impacts on minority or low-income populations were identified as a result of any of the project alternatives. Those experiencing impacts from construction of the project would eventually benefit from the completed project. Therefore, no mitigation for impacts related to equity and environmental justice is required.

COASTAL ISSUES

Portions of the project alternatives pass through the federal Coastal Zone and therefore the project will be subject to special coastal zone regulations. All of the project alternatives would be consistent with these regulations. The project routes are not directly associated with the waterfront, and Manhattan's East River coastal area does not contain any of the special natural waterfront or significant maritime and industrial areas identified in the city's waterfront plans. The proposed project alternatives (except the No Build alternative) would be generally beneficial to Manhattan's East Side coastal area in that they would improve transportation to the far East Side and thus enhance public access to the waterfront.

Portions of the alignments of project alternatives pass through the 100-year floodplain mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This is the area that may be subject to flooding from large storms (those of the magnitude that they would occur once every 100 years). During the unlikely event that these areas are actually flooded, service would have to be suspended for any of the alternatives. In such a major storm, the flooding would be gradual and predicted in advance by the U.S. Weather Service. Disruptions to service would be temporary in nature. None of the project alternatives would adversely affect the floodplain's ability to store flood waters or lead to additional or increased flooding, as none would increase the amount of paved surface or place obstructions or buildings within the floodplain.

E. PROJECT COSTS

CAPITAL COSTS

The total capital cost of an alternative comprises two components, the initial capital cost and reinvestment capital cost. The low end of the capital cost range excludes a design contingency and the high end of the range includes a 25 percent design contingency, which is typical for a project at the conceptual engineering stage of design. Hence, the mid-point capital costs presented in this document effectively include a 12.5 percent design contingency. This approach is reflected in the numbers shown in Table S-1.

The initial capital cost is the full cost of the capital improvement, which includes engineering design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, rolling stock, and other equipment. For a multi-year project like MESA, the initial capital costs include all expenditures from start to completion of the project. Over the 50-year standard service life of the project, various capital investments would have to be made to keep the initial system improvements in service. These costs are summarized under the reinvestment capital cost category in Table S-1.

Table S-1

**Comparison of Project Alternatives:
Capital Costs—Initial and Reinvestment (Millions of 1997 Dollars)**

Cost Component	Alternative vs. No Build			Alternative vs. TSM	
	TSM	Build 1	Build 2	Build 1	Build 2
Initial Capital Costs: Mid-Point of Range					
Construction					
Excavation, structures, track, stations, etc. ¹	38.5	2,705.1	3,577.5	2,666.6	3,539.1
Signals, power, line equipment, etc. ²	1.2	371.3	422.3	370.1	421.1
Rolling Stock					
Subway Cars	66.3	389.9	389.9	323.6	323.6
LRT Cars	0.0	0.0	107.3	0.0	107.3
Articulated Buses	13.0	-0.4	-2.5	-13.4	-15.5
Property Acquisition	0.0	84.4	84.4	84.4	84.4
Total Initial Capital Costs ³	119.0	3,550.3	4,579.0	3,431.4	4,460.0
Reinvestment Capital Costs: Mid-Point of Range					
Construction					
Excavation, structures, track, stations, etc. ¹	56.7	78.2	346.0	21.5	289.3
Signals, power, line equipment, etc. ²	0.0	84.0	94.1	84.0	94.1
Rolling Stock					
Subway Cars	28.5	167.7	167.7	139.2	139.2
LRT Cars	0.0	0.0	107.3	0.0	107.3
Articulated Buses	41.2	-1.3	-7.9	-42.5	-49.1
Property Acquisition	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	133.9
Total Reinvestment Capital Costs ³	126.4	328.6	707.2	202.2	580.8
Notes:					
¹ Includes excavation, structures, track, stations, yards, and shops.					
² Includes line equipment, signal equipment, communications equipment, power equipment, and traffic signals, signs, and pavement markings.					
³ Detailed capital cost estimates can be found in Appendix C.					

OPERATING COSTS AND REVENUES

The implementation of the TSM Alternative or either of the two Build alternatives would affect NYCT’s operating and maintenance budgets for its subway and bus systems. The incremental operating costs above those for the future No Build condition were derived component-by-component from 1996 data provided by NYCT.

Table S-2 summarizes the net annual operating costs (savings) for the bus, subway, and light rail system improvements in 1997 dollars for the three project alternatives. The operating costs for the TSM Alternative and Build Alternative 2 include traffic enforcement costs needed to maintain the reliability of the proposed busway and light rail system, respectively.

Table S-2
Comparison of Project Alternatives:
Operating Cost and Fare Revenue (Millions of 1997 Dollars)

Cost Component	Alternative vs. No Build			Alternative vs. TSM	
	TSM	Build 1	Build 2	Build 1	Build 2
Operating and Maintenance Costs for Project Services: Net Annual Operating Costs (Savings)					
Subway System	2.15	26.03	26.08	23.88	23.93
Light Rail System	0.00	0.00	10.64	0.00	10.64
Bus System	3.18	-0.19	-0.67	-3.37	-3.85
Traffic Enforcement Agents	1.18	0.00	0.63	-1.18	-0.56
Total Operating and Maintenance Cost	6.51	25.84	36.68	19.33	30.16
Fare Revenue: Net Change in Fare Revenue					
Subway/LRT	0.55	3.17	3.99	2.62	3.44
Bus	-0.16	-1.70	-1.83	-1.54	-1.67
Total Fare Revenue	0.39	1.47	2.16	1.08	1.77
Note: * Trips/year.					

The bus, subway, and light rail system improvements proposed in the TSM and Build alternatives would divert large numbers of existing bus and subway riders to the new project transit services, but these improvements would also attract new transit riders. These new bus and subway/LRT riders would produce additional fare revenue for NYCT, but would lower the bus revenues, as shown in Table S-2.

F. COMPARATIVE BENEFITS AND COSTS

The potential costs and benefits of the project alternatives were examined in accordance with the evaluation criteria established by MTA and FTA. The criteria are used to evaluate all MTA Long Range Planning Framework projects, and enable MTA to provide comparable information about them for consideration by regional decision-makers.

Project costs and benefits to costs are presented in Table S-3 as *present values*. All the alternatives would reduce crowding and provide more reliable service, both during peak periods and overall.

Table S-3
Cost Effectiveness Summary (1997 Dollars)

	TSM	Build Alternatives	
		1	2
MTA Cost Effectiveness Measures			
Net Present Value, Public Investment (\$ millions)	672.5	1,675.4	1,058.6
Benefit-Cost Ratio (\$ millions)	3.46	1.56	1.26
FTA Cost Effectiveness Measures			
Incremental Cost/Incremental Passenger (\$ per trip)	42	128	115
Incremental Cost/Benefitting Passenger (\$ per trip)	4.38	1.21	1.61
Note: See Chapter 20, "Comparative Benefits and Costs," and Appendix C for more detailed estimates.			

The limited customer and social benefits of the TSM Alternative would be provided in a very cost-effective manner, giving this alternative the highest benefit-cost ratio. However, this alternative would not address the project's purpose and needs (for example, it would have the lowest reduction in subway overcrowding and the smallest travel time savings benefits), giving it the highest cost per passenger benefit under the FTA's cost-effectiveness criteria. Overall, therefore, the TSM is not a viable stand-alone alternative, although it could be combined with another alternative in the locally preferred alternative selected.

Build Alternative 1 would provide substantial transit mobility improvements and the best reduction in auto and taxi travel. Overall, it provides the best combination of improved transit mobility and accessibility, reduced auto and taxi trip making, and cost effectiveness. It addresses the project's purpose and needs, as demonstrated by its second-place ranking in reducing subway overcrowding and saving travel time. Unlike the other two project alternatives, Build Alternative 1 would not increase traffic congestion in Manhattan.

With the addition of the LRT, Build Alternative 2 would provide the best transit mobility and accessibility improvements and the most favorable reduction in non-transit trips. This alternative, however, would have large increases in vehicle hours of travel in the primary study area, which indicates an increase in traffic congestion due to the on-street operation of the proposed LRT. Build Alternative 2 would produce the highest customer and social benefits, but its benefit-cost ratio would be the lowest of the three alternatives. This is because the addition of the LRT would not add sufficient benefits to offset the \$1.03 billion increase in initial capital cost.

F. COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

The MESA project team has coordinated extensively with other federal, state, and city agencies and with the public. A public outreach program has been established and continues to monitor this coordination and document agency and public comments. The program has included coordination with the five involved Community Boards, environmental scoping meetings, a substantial number of small group meetings and presentations, and public tours of a section of the Second Avenue subway tunnel. Public hearings will be held on this MIS/DEIS. In addition, a Public Advisory Committee (PAC) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) were formed to evaluate the work

underway for the study. The PAC consists of interested parties drawn from the public outreach program; the TAC includes representatives of transportation, environmental, and planning agencies and organizations, local elected officials, and representatives of NYMTC. TAC members have helped to advance the study by sharing expertise, representing the interests and concerns of their organizations, and assisting with the distribution of study information to their constituent groups. Well over 100 meetings have been held as part of the Public Outreach Program.

MAJOR ISSUES AND AREAS OF CONCERN

Concerns and issues expressed by some participants in the public outreach program are summarized below. These issues were recognized in the project goals and objectives and have been considered and analyzed in the formulation, evaluation, and screening of the project alternatives.

- Support for transit improvements in general and concern that these improvements be implemented as quickly as possible.
- Call for short-term improvements in the interim.
- Request for an additional subway station at 116th Street under Build Alternatives 1 and 2.
- Specific concerns for bus bunching and improved bus service, particularly on the Lower East Side.
- Concern about the visual, character, and traffic/parking impacts of an LRT. Particular concern that the LRT not be placed in a curb lane.
- Opposition to the use of Union Square as a LRT terminal, and placement of passenger shelters at Union Square, Straus Square, and Seward Park.

UNRESOLVED ISSUES WITH CITY AGENCIES

MTA NYCT is currently coordinating with a number of agencies to resolve issues related to the project alternatives. Those issues that are as yet unresolved but that will be addressed during detailed design studies are as follows:

ISSUES REQUIRING AGENCY ACTION

- Approval by NYCDOT of the TSM bus lanes and related parking regulations and traffic mitigation measures, should the bus lanes be included in the locally preferred alternative, and resolution, with NYCDOT, of the configuration near the Queensboro Bridge.
- For Build Alternative 2, should it become the locally preferred alternative, coordination with NYCDOT on operation of LRT on city streets and changes in parking regulations and bus stop locations.
- Revisions, if necessary, to Second Avenue Special Transit District zoning to account for different station locations and other subway features. This requires coordination with the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) and would be subject to the City's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP).

ISSUES REQUIRING AGENCY COORDINATION

- Coordination with the Mayor’s Transportation and Traffic Construction Coordinating Committee (MTTCCC) during project construction.
- Coordination with New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) for use of land in the Seward Park Extension Urban Renewal Area and possible joint development opportunities in connection with the proposed LRT storage and maintenance yard (if the LRT is included in the locally preferred alternative).
- Coordination with New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) over the location of the LRT in relation to Union Square, Straus Square, and Seward Park, to avoid visual and access effects on the parks.
- Coordination with NYCT LaGuardia Airport Access Study on joint use of the City Hall station.

G. FEDERAL AND STATE ACTIONS, DECISIONS, AND DETERMINATIONS REQUIRED FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT

- *Identification of the Locally Preferred Alternative.* Following completion of this MIS/DEIS and public review, MTA and NYCT will identify a locally preferred alternative for further analysis in the FEIS. The locally preferred alternative may be one of the alternatives described above (TSM, Build Alternative 1, or Build Alternative 2), or it may join elements from each of those alternatives to form a combination alternative.
- *Acceptance of FEIS (40CFR 1502.2 and 23 CFR 771.127).* After public review of this DEIS, a preliminary final environmental impact statement (FEIS) will be prepared, focusing on the locally preferred alternative. Once it is approved by FTA/FHWA, the FEIS will be made available for public review to interested individuals and organizations. Notices of document availability will be published.
- *Section 106 (36 CFR 800).* If necessary, fulfillment of Section 106 requirements for historic structures and properties and archaeological resources will be accomplished via a Programmatic Agreement. This will be developed by FTA/FHWA and NYCT in conjunction with the SHPO at the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), and will be entered into by FTA/FHWA and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation with NYCT and SHPO as additional signatories. The development of a Programmatic Agreement is allowed for large scale projects.
- *Coastal Zone Management Consistency Determination (15 CFR 930.50).* Because portions of the project alternatives’ routes pass through the federal Coastal Zone, MTA and NYCT, as well as the New York City Department of City Planning and the New York State Department of State (NYS DOS), must determine whether the project would be consistent with the federal Coastal Zone Management Program set forth in the 44 statewide policies and 12 policies specifically for New York City.
- *Floodplain Consistency Finding (23 CFR 650. Subpart A).* Because portions of the project alternatives’ routes pass through the 100-year floodplain (area subject to flooding from large storms occurring once every 100 years), FTA regulations require an analysis of possible

Manhattan East Side Transit Alternatives MIS/DEIS

impacts. Based on those findings, FTA will assess the project's effects on the floodplain or its ability to contain floodwaters.

- National Environmental Policy Act Record of Decision (ROD) (40 CFR 1502.2 and 23 CFR 771.127). After approval of the preferred alternative and acceptance of the FEIS, FTA/FHWA would issue the ROD explaining the reasons for the selection of the locally preferred alternative, as well as summarizing any mitigation measures incorporated into the project. The ROD is prepared at least 30 days after publication of the FEIS notice of availability in the Federal Register. No further approvals other than administrative actions can be given until the ROD is signed.
- State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) (17 CFR 15). Following SEQR regulations, NYCT will use the approved FTA NEPA FEIS to make SEQR findings on the preferred alternative. NYCT must wait at least 10 days after the FEIS is approved before making findings. SEQR findings document that a thorough environmental review has taken place, that alternatives have been examined, and that all practicable mitigation measures for identified significant adverse environmental impacts have been considered. NYCT can take no administrative action until SEQR findings have been prepared.
- Funding and Programming. Once MTA has identified and advanced a preferred alternative, NYMTC and the Governor must approve the amendment of the financially constrained State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), of which NYMTC region's TIP is a component, to include the preferred alternative. Along with FTA and FHWA, NYMTC must also make a determination in accordance with the Clean Air Act requirements and EPA's conformity regulations that the modified TIP conforms to the state's [air quality] implementation plan (SIP).
- Eminent Domain Procedure Law (ART.2 of NYSEDPC). Based on the findings in the FEIS, a determination will be made on whether the acquisition of property through the State's Eminent Domain Procedure Law would be necessary. If the findings deem condemnation actions appropriate, notice will be given and eminent domain public hearings will be held. ❖