

9.1 INTRODUCTION

(The following applies to the Proposed Project and the Proposed Project *with Option E1* unless otherwise indicated.) Contaminated materials are potentially harmful substances that may be present in soil, groundwater, and building materials. Contaminated materials are frequently encountered during construction activities in urban areas that have been subject to past disturbance from construction, excavation, and industrial uses. This section discusses the potential presence and type of contaminated materials that may be encountered during construction of the Proposed Project. Construction activities for the Proposed Project would occur at the intersection of East 68th Street and Lexington Avenue, at the intersection of East 69th Street west of Lexington Avenue and along the avenue between the two streets, and for this area is referred to as the “project site.”

9.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Existing conditions at the project site and within the project vicinity were determined from a review of historical, regulatory agency and other information sources. Although no studies or reports were found that identify the presence of lead-based paint (LBP) or asbestos containing materials (ACMs) in the station, because of the age of the facility, it is possible that these potential contaminants exist in the station. The following is a summary of existing conditions extracted from a review of historical sources and regulatory agency databases. The source material is available from MTA NYCT upon request.

9.2.1 HISTORICAL INFORMATION SOURCES

Historical fire insurance maps (Sanborn Maps) with coverage of the project site for the years 1892, 1907, 1951, 1976, 1979, 1982, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 were reviewed. By 1892 the area adjacent to the project site was fully developed. The 1892 Sanborn map identifies the armory on the block southwest of the intersection of East 67th Street and Lexington Avenue and Mount Sinai Hospital on the southeast corner. Educational uses occupy both sides of Lexington Avenue between East 67th and East 68th Street. The State Normal College occupies the west side of Lexington Avenue between East 68th Street and East 69th Street and the Foundling Hospital occupies the east side. Brownstone-style housing units occupy both sides of Lexington Avenue for several blocks north of East 69th Street.

With the exception of a change of land use on the east side of Lexington Avenue between East 66th and East 67th Street – from hospital use to apartments – no significant changes are indicated on the 1907 Sanborn map.

According to the 1951 map, Thomas Hunter Hall, built in 1912-13, occupies the west side of Lexington Avenue between East 68th Street and East 69th Street. Stairs leading to the Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) subway station are indicated on the four corners of the intersection of Lexington Avenue and East 68th Street, and new development has occurred on both sides of Lexington Avenue between East 69th and East 70th Streets. No changes are indicated north of East 70th Street.

Changes indicated on the 1976 map include the removal of buildings on both sides of Lexington Avenue between East 67th and East 68th Streets. The parcel on the west side is used for parking.

68th Street/Hunter College Subway Station Improvement Project EA

As some point between 1951 and 1976 the Imperial House Apartments have been developed on the block between East 68th Street and East 69th Street east of Lexington Avenue. No other significant changes are indicated.

No significant changes are indicated on the 1979 map. By 1982 facilities for Hunter College have been developed on both sides of Lexington Avenue between East 67th and East 68th Streets. No other significant changes are indicated on the 1982 map, and no significant changes are indicated on the subsequent maps.

No recognized environmental conditions (RECs) were indicated on the Sanborn Map series.

9.2.2 REGULATORY AGENCY INFORMATION SOURCES

A commercial compilation of records from federal, state and local regulatory agencies was reviewed for information regarding the project site and surrounding properties.¹⁶ The review revealed the following RECs, which are present upgradient of the project site:

- Eleven facilities within 660 feet of the project site and 41 facilities within ¼ mile of the project site that store, handle, treat or dispose of hazardous waste (as defined by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act [RCRA]). One facility is located at Hunter College, adjacent to the project site.
- Three active leaking petroleum storage tank (LTANKS) cases, 68 closed cases, and 55 historic LTANKS cases within ½ mile of the project site;
- Thirty-six active underground petroleum storage tanks (UST) and 71 above ground petroleum storage tanks (AST) within ¼ mile of the project site
- Twenty-three New York spills and 18 historic spills within approximately 650 feet of the project site; and
- Nine registered dry cleaning facilities within ¼ mile of the project site.

9.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

9.3.1 NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE

Under the No-Build Alternative the existing conditions within the project site would remain unchanged. Minor upgrades and maintenance activities that could be undertaken could impact potential ACMs and LBP surfaces. These activities may also impact equipment containing polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) and equipment, switches or light bulbs containing mercury. Such activities would be subject to MTA NYCT's usual abatement and removal procedures. No significant impacts from contaminated materials are anticipated under the No-Build Alternative.

9.3.2 PROPOSED PROJECT

The Proposed Project could potentially encounter RECs and environmental concerns that are present at the project site. American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) defines a "recognized environmental concern" as: the presence or likely presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products on a property under conditions that indicate an existing release, a past release or material threat of a release into structures on the property or into the ground,

¹⁶ Environmental Data Resources, Inc., Radius Map Report, April 2012.

ground water or surface water of the property. Areas of “potential environmental concern” are not necessarily “recognized environmental concerns.”

The RECs and environmental concerns identified involve documented and undocumented releases of petroleum-related and dry cleaning constituents from upgradient sources.

Prior to construction activities at the 68th Street/Hunter College Station, the contractor would be required to prepare a Health and Safety Plan (HASP) and a Soil Management Plan, which would detail management measures to be followed should contaminated materials (i.e., petroleum-related and dry cleaning constituents) be encountered.

Surveys of ACM, LBP and PCB would be performed at locations throughout the station where construction activities could disturb surfaces or equipment potentially containing these materials. Construction contractors would prepare a Construction Environmental Protection Plan (CEPP) with specific plans regarding the management of contaminated or hazardous materials. If identified, ACM, LBP and/or PCB would be removed and disposed of according to all applicable regulations.

Under the CEPP prepared for the Proposed Project, potential sources of contamination would be identified and remediated prior to or during construction, thus reducing or avoiding the potential for adverse impacts. Provided that construction activities comply with all applicable regulations, no adverse impacts from contaminated materials are anticipated and no further mitigation measures would be warranted.

Street Stair Options

The Proposed Project and the Proposed Project *with Option E1* would not affect, or be affected by, hazardous materials. If materials suspected of containing hazardous materials, including but not limited to petroleum, asbestos, or lead-based paint, are encountered during construction of any street stair, these materials would be handled and disposed of in accordance with all appropriate regulations.