

7.0 AGENCY COORDINATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

7.1 Introduction

Federally funded mass transportation projects are required to be developed in accordance with federal legislation, as well as with FTA implementing regulations. Such policies include procedures governing the role of the public in the planning of and decision-making for federal transportation projects. This chapter describes the efforts that have been undertaken and the ongoing efforts with respect to public outreach in the planning of the South Ferry Terminal Project, and also describes the ongoing coordination with local, state, regional, and federal agencies involved in the planning of the project. Appendix G contains copies of agency correspondence and meeting documentation relative to the project, and Appendix F contains copies of public correspondence, including a comment matrix, relative to the project.

7.2 Regulatory Context

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared by MTA acting by New York City Transit with the FTA. FTA is the funding entity for the project; thus it is the Lead Agency for the NEPA environmental review process. NEPA requires that Federal agencies evaluate the environmental consequences of proposed actions and their alternatives, identify measures to mitigate any significant adverse impacts, and conduct the entire process in coordination with other agencies and the general public. In order for FTA to approve and fund the construction of the South Ferry Terminal Project, the project must comply with the public and agency coordination requirements of NEPA, and evidence of this compliance must be documented in the EA.

In addition to NEPA, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 also contains provisions and requirements for public outreach activities. Executive Order 12898 also references effective public outreach as an important component of federal decision-making related to environmental justice. In accordance with Federal guidelines, the public outreach program for this project includes early, proactive, ongoing, and customized outreach and participation activities.

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations require public involvement for EAs and Findings of No Significant Impact (FONSI) to include, at a minimum, reasonable public notice of availability of the EA and FONSI. Formal public scoping is not required for EAs as it is for an Environmental Impact Statements (EIS).

7.3 Agency Coordination

Substantial public agency coordination has occurred and is ongoing for the South Ferry Terminal Project. The following sections describe the primary components of these coordination efforts.

7.3.1 Lower Manhattan Transportation Recovery Projects

As indicated in Chapter 1, the South Ferry Terminal Project is one of three priority projects identified to address the urgent need for the rebuilding and development of comprehensive transportation improvements in Lower Manhattan in response to the events of September 11, 2001. As such, MTA/NYCT has been an active participant in several ongoing Lower Manhattan transportation project coordination meetings with NYCDOT, LMDC, PANYNJ, NYSDOT, and NYCEDC. In addition, MTC/NYCT has hosted many special coordination meetings regarding cumulative construction impacts related to Lower Manhattan projects that are likely to have overlapping construction schedules, including the South Ferry Terminal Project, the Fulton Street Transit Center, the World Trade Center Memorial and site redevelopment, and the Permanent WTC PATH Terminal.

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was established in March 2003 to assist in coordination of all Lower Manhattan recovery and development projects. The TAC is comprised of federal, state, and city agencies (listed below), and meets routinely to discuss Lower Manhattan issues. The most recent meeting of the TAC was held on December 18, 2003.

TAC Federal Agencies

- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps)

TAC State Agencies

- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)
- Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ)
- Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC)
- New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP)
- Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC)
- New York State Office of General Services (NYSOGS)

TAC City Agencies

- New York City Mayor's Office
- New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT)
- New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC)

- New York City Planning Commission (NYCCPC)
- New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC)
- New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP)
- New York City Fire Department (FDNY)
- New York Police Department, Transit Bureau (NYPD)

7.3.2 New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

The South Ferry Terminal Project would have an effect on the existing South Ferry Subway Station, a historic station eligible for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. In addition, the proposed bellmouth would be constructed underground and adjacent to the historic International Mercantile Marine Building at One Broadway; the SHPO has determined that the project would have no adverse effect on this structure (see Appendix G). The project also has the potential to affect historic archaeological resources that may exist in the project construction corridor. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires the local agency, MTA/NYCT, to take into account the effects of its projects on historic properties and to consult with the NYSOPRHP.

MTA/NYCT is conducting ongoing consultation with the NYSOPRHP. Evidence of this consultation is reflected in the draft Programmatic Agreement among SHPO, FTA, and MTA/NYCT (see Appendix B) and in Appendix G, Agency Correspondence and Coordination Documents, where letters and meeting minutes are located.

7.3.3 New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, and The Battery Conservancy

The approach tunnel component of the South Ferry Terminal Project would be located underneath the eastern edge of Battery Park. Construction of this component is anticipated to take approximately nine months, unless discovery of potentially significant archaeological resources would delay this schedule. Because of the potential for construction-related impacts on Battery Park, MTA/NYCT has held several conceptual planning meetings with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYCDPR) and The Battery Conservancy to discuss the construction methods, schedule, and restoration of the affected park area at the completion of construction. MTA/NYCT is conducting ongoing consultation with NYCDPR and The Battery Conservancy. Documentation of this consultation is contained in Appendix G.

7.4 Public Outreach

In addition to the public agency coordination described in the previous section, MTA/NYCT has conducted outreach to the general public and stakeholder meetings with specific interest groups.

7.4.1 Public Meetings

MTA/NYCT held a public information meeting on the South Ferry Terminal Project at the U.S. Custom House in Lower Manhattan on September 24, 2003. This meeting was advertised September 4 through 7, 2003 in seven local newspapers and through an advance mailing to a list of interested parties and elected officials. MTA/NYCT also held a public information meeting on the project in Staten Island on December 3, 2003. This meeting was advertised November 17 through 20, 2003 in four local newspapers. The purpose of these meetings was to share information about the project with the Lower Manhattan and Staten Island communities and to solicit public input on the project. Copies of the newspaper advertisements announcing the public meetings, the lists of newspapers in which the advertisements were published, and public comments/correspondence received at the meetings and subsequently are included in Appendix H. Appendix H also contains a summary matrix of the comments received and brief responses to those comments.

7.4.2 Stakeholder Meetings

MTA/NYCT has also conducted meetings with specific stakeholder groups to provide information to them about the South Ferry Terminal Project. A list of these meetings and groups addressed is provided below.

4/22/02	New York City Partnership
5/08/02	Rockefeller Institute
6/24/02	Citizen's Budget Commission
11/21/02	Permanent Citizens' Advisory Council (MTA)
11/22/02	Sustainable Creativity Conference
12/10/02	Second National Public Finance Conference
2/13/03	NYC Council Transportation Committee
6/11/03	Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
6/16/03	Manhattan Community Board #1
12/18/03	Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

7.4.3 Informational Materials

To help facilitate the public's participation in project planning, MTA/NYCT has maintained a project mailing list of interested parties, community members, elected officials, and those who attended South Ferry public informational meetings. Letters briefly describing the project were provided to this list in advance of the first public meeting held on September 24, 2003. A mailing will also be conducted to announce the availability of the Environmental Assessment.

In addition, the outreach effort has included ongoing communications with the public on the MTA website located at <http://www.mta.info> (click "Capital Construction" and then "South Ferry Terminal"). This website includes information about project schedule, current conditions, planned improvements, and project documents and presentations. The

presentation given to the public at the December 3, 2003 public meeting and the Environmental Assessment can be found on the website.

These materials are intended to keep the public apprised of updates to the project and notify them of upcoming events.