

4. Near-Term Improvement Alternatives: In addition, NJ TRANSIT has developed near-term improvements that could be developed incrementally in phases to expand trans-Hudson and PSNY capacity by 2010. During this near-term period, the effects of many new services such as the NJ TRANSIT Montclair Connection, the NJ TRANSIT Secaucus Junction, Amtrak High Speed Acela service, and expanded Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) service with dual-power locomotives and bi-level coaches will mature, and PSNY will not have the room to accommodate the resulting train and passenger demand. The proposed near-term improvements provide capacity enhancements at PSNY to meet these demands. The near-term improvements include: (a) A linear yard east of PSNY Tracks 1–5 under 31st Street to store up to six trains, which could be the first incremental phase of through tracks to Sunnyside Yard as in Alternative S; (b) an easterly extension of PSNY Platforms 1 and 2 to permit the operation of longer NJ TRANSIT trains; and (c) a new 12th Avenue Yard west of 10th Avenue between 30th and 31st Streets to store up to an additional 12 trains. The Near-Term Improvement Alternatives may be implemented as stand-alone projects, or as an initial phase of the build alternatives.

Any additional reasonable alternatives that emerge from the scoping process will be considered.

IV. Probable Effects

The FTA, NJ TRANSIT, and PANYNJ will evaluate both project-specific and cumulative changes to the social, economic, and physical environment, including land acquisition and displacements; land use, zoning and economic development; parklands; community disruption; aesthetics; historic and archeological resources; traffic and parking; air quality; noise and vibration; water quality; wetlands; ecologically sensitive areas; endangered species; energy requirements and potential for conservation; hazardous waste; environmental justice; and safety and security. Through the MIS process, the following environmental sensitivities have already been identified for consideration during the EIS.

In New Jersey these environmental sensitivities include: (a) Habitat and wetlands encroachment in the New Jersey Meadowlands; (b) hazardous materials disturbance and disposal associated with facilities such as the Malanka Landfill; (c) surface waters and floodplains, along with coastal wildlife habitats; (d) historic architectural (above-ground) and archaeological

(below-ground) resources; (e) electrical power transmission facilities; and (f) air quality and noise/vibration due to rail operations and park-ride facilities traffic.

In New York these environmental sensitivities include: (a) Hazardous materials disturbance and disposal; (b) air quality and noise/vibration associated with construction; (c) vehicular and pedestrian flow during construction; (d) utilities and their possible relocation during construction; (e) underground fuel tanks below buildings; (f) landmarks and historic buildings/structures; and (g) parks and recreation areas.

In the Hudson River and East River these environmental sensitivities include: (a) Regulations and associated permits from Federal and State jurisdictional agencies; (b) disturbance and disposal of hazardous materials; (c) marine and benthic (bottom-dwelling) habitat and wildlife disturbance related to alternative construction techniques.

Key areas of environmental concern would be in the areas of new construction (*e.g.*, new structures, new stations, new track). The impacts will be evaluated both for the construction period and for the long-term period of operation of each alternative. Measures to mitigate adverse impacts will be explored.

V. FTA Procedures

The EIS is being prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, and implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR parts 1500–1508), the FTA/Federal Highway Administration's Environmental Impact and Related Procedures (23 CFR part 771). This study will also address the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, Section 4(f) of the 1966 U.S. Department of Transportation Act, the Clean Air Act, as amended, Section 6(f) the Clean Water Act, the Executive Orders on Environmental Justice, Floodplain Management, and Protection of Wetlands, and other applicable environmental laws, regulations, and executive orders.

The MIS that resulted in the recommendation to build a new Hudson River rail tunnel and related infrastructure on both sides of the Hudson River was issued in 2003. FTA intends to incorporate the MIS by reference into the EIS, as well as various supplemental studies conducted subsequent to the MIS, including an initial evaluation of the potential social,

economic, and environmental impacts of the MIS alternatives.

Upon completion, the Draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment. Public hearings on the Draft EIS will be held within the study area. On the basis of the Draft EIS and the public and agency comments received, a locally preferred alternative will be selected for further analysis and refinement in the Final EIS.

Issued on: November 7, 2003.

Letitia Thompson,

Regional Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Maritime Administration

Reports, Forms and Recordkeeping Requirements; Agency Information Collection Activity Under OMB Review

AGENCY: Maritime Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), this notice announces that the information collection abstracted below has been forwarded to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and approval. The nature of the information collection is described as well as its expected burden. The Federal Register notice with a 60-day comment period soliciting comments on the following collection of information was published on August 11, 2003. No comments were received.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before December 15, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thomas Christensen, Maritime Administration, 400 7th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Telephone: 202–366–5900; FAX: 202–488–0941 or e-mail: tom.christensen@marad.dot.gov. Copies of this collection also can be obtained from that office.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Maritime Administration (MARAD).

Title: Voluntary Tanker Agreement.

OMB Control Number: 2133–0505.

Type of Request: Extension of currently approved collection.

Affected Public: Owners of tanker companies who operate in international trade and who have agreed to participate in this agreement.

Forms: None.

Abstract: The collection consists of a request from MARAD that each