

(A); (6) ISTEA Reauthorization Update (I/D); (7) President's Report (I); (8) National ITS Advanced Construction and Maintenance Program Action Plan (A); (9) DTAG Program Advice Memorandum (A); (10) Professional Capacity Building Update (I); (11) Research Agenda Framework (I); (12) ITS America Training Program Update (I); (13) FCC Frequency Petition Update (I); (14) Report on ITS World Congresses (I/D); (15) Update on Board Governance Policy Task Force (I); (16) Status of Planning for 9th Annual Meeting (I); (17) Coordinating Council Workshop Report-out (A), (a) Role of the Coordinating Council, (b) The IVI: Review of the RFI Analysis, and Desired Role of the Coordinating Council and Committees in the Future, and (c) ISTEA Reauthorization: Deployment Policy; (18) Roundtable Discussion Of Committee And Task Force Activities—Committee And Task Force Chairs (I/D); (19) Other Business.

ITS AMERICA provides a forum for national discussion and recommendations on ITS activities including programs, research needs, strategic planning, standards, international liaison, and priorities. The charter for the utilization of ITS AMERICA establishes this organization as an advisory committee under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), 5 USC app. 2, when it provides advice or recommendations to DOT officials on ITS policies and programs. (56 FR 9400, March 6, 1991).

DATES: The Coordinating Council of ITS AMERICA will meet on Wednesday, July 8, 1998, from 10:20 a.m.—2 p.m. (Eastern Standard time).

ADDRESSES: Airlie Conference Center, 6809 Airlie Road, Warrenton, Virginia, 20187. Phone number: (540) 347-1300. Fax number: (540) 341-3207.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Materials associated with this meeting may be examined at the offices of ITS AMERICA, 400 Virginia Avenue, SW., Suite 800, Washington, DC. 20024. Persons needing further information or to request to speak at this meeting should contact Kenneth Faunteroy at ITS AMERICA by telephone at (202) 484-4130, or by FAX at (202) 484-3483. The DOT contact is Mary Pigott, FHWA, HVH-1, Washington, D.C. 20590, (202) 366-9230. Office hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except for legal holidays.

(23 U.S.C. 315; 49 CFR 1.48)

Issued on: May 29, 1998.

Jeffrey Paniati,

Deputy Director, ITS Joint Program Office.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

Major Investment Study/Environmental Impact Statement on the Lower Manhattan Access Alternatives Study in New York County, NY

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration (FTA) DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare a Major Investment Study/Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) intend to prepare a Major Investment Study (MIS) and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in accordance with the FTA/Federal Highway Administration's Statewide Planning, Metropolitan Planning regulations under 23 CFR part 450 and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, and implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR parts 1500-1508) to study transportation improvements for access to the lower portion of Manhattan in the City of New York. This study will also comply with the requirements of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA). The MTA will ensure that the EIS also satisfies the requirements of the State of New York Environmental Quality Review Act and the City of New York Environmental Quality Review Act.

The MIS/DEIS will investigate how the transportation system serving Lower Manhattan can be improved. Lower Manhattan is an area that: (1) Is experiencing growth in new sectors (residential, recreation and tourist) resulting in a changing mix of land uses and activities; (2) is highly-dependent on quality transit services for continued economic viability; and (3) is perceived to be difficult to access, particularly from commuter railroad terminals in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

The purpose of this Lower Manhattan Access Alternatives MIS/DEIS study is to (1) develop feasible, cost-effective, and broadly beneficial transportation solutions that can meet the area's transportation shortcomings; (2) maintain or improve Lower Manhattan's environmental quality; and (3) provide

meaningful and significant opportunities for business, civic and community input throughout the study process.

Among the alternatives that the MIS/DEIS will evaluate are the No-Build Alternative; Transportation System Management (TSM) alternatives; high quality shuttle services; new subway services; extended commuter rail services; and other new alternatives generated through the scoping process. Scoping will be accomplished through correspondence with interested persons, organizations, and federal, state and local agencies, and afternoon and evening public scoping meetings.

DATES: Comment Due Date: Written comments on the alternatives and impacts to be considered should be sent to the MTA by July 14, 1998. Written comments on the project scope should be sent to John D. Dean, Project Manager, Metropolitan Transportation Authority, 347 Madison Avenue (10th Floor), New York, New York 10017. Oral comments may also be provided at the scoping meeting. *Scoping Meetings:* Public scoping meetings will be held on:

- Thursday, June 18, 1998, 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the U.S. Customs House, 1 Bowling Green, New York, New York 10041.
- Thursday, June 18, 1998, 5 PM to 7 PM, in the MTA Board Room, 347 Madison Avenue, 5th Floor, New York, New York 10017.
- Tuesday, June 23, 1998, 5 PM to 7 PM, Social Services Auditorium, 101 County Seat Drive, Mineola, New York 11501.
- Wednesday, June 24, 1998, 5 PM to 7 PM, Westchester County Center, 198 Central Avenue, White Plains, New York 10601.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Anthony Carr, Director, Office of Planning and Program Development, Federal Transit Administration, 26 Federal Plaza, Suite 2940, New York, New York 10278. Phone: (212) 264-8162, FAX (212) 264-8973.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Scoping

FTA and MTA invite all individuals, organizations, and federal, state, and local agencies to participate in defining the alternatives to be evaluated in the MIS/DEIS and identifying any significant social, economic, or environmental issues related to the alternatives. A draft Scoping Document will be prepared to describe the purpose of the project, the proposed alternatives, the impact areas to be evaluated, the public involvement program, and the preliminary project schedule. This

document will be mailed to affected federal, state, and local agencies, and will be provided upon request to interested parties on record. The draft Scoping Document may also be obtained from John D. Dean, Project Manager, Metropolitan Transportation Authority, 347 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10017 or downloaded from the project website [www.lowermanhattan.com]. Scoping comments may be made verbally at the public scoping meetings, or in writing. See the **DATES** section above for locations and times. During the scoping phase of the project, comments should focus on identifying specific social, economic, or environmental impacts to be evaluated, and suggesting alternatives that are less costly or less environmentally damaging while achieving similar transit objectives. Scoping is not the appropriate forum in which to indicate a preference for a particular alternative. Anyone wishing to be placed on the mailing list to receive further information should contact John D. Dean of the MTA as previously described.

II. Description of Study Area and Project Need

The core study area is Lower Manhattan south of the following streets: beginning at the Hudson River, east along Chambers Street, north along West Broadway, east along Worth Street, south along St. James Place, and east along Dover Street (Brooklyn Bridge) to the East River. These study area boundaries provide a rough guide, and are to be considered flexible and dependent on the outcome of the scoping process. The study area includes key business locations such as the World Trade Center and World Financial Center; Wall Street and Water Street corridor; civic sites such as City Hall, Federal Plaza, and Foley Square; historic and recreational areas such as South Street Seaport, Federal Hall, and the Battery; and growing residential areas such as Southbridge Towers, Battery Park City, and new residential conversions of former commercial space east of Broad Street.

This study will examine three primary access corridors that link New York's northern and eastern suburbs to the Lower Manhattan "core area." These corridors can be summarized as being (1) on the eastside of Manhattan, largely from the Grand Central Terminal area; (2) on the west side of Manhattan, from the Penn Station/Port Authority Bus Terminal area, and (3) across the East River, from the Atlantic Terminal Complex in downtown Brooklyn. Other reasonable access corridors identified in

the scoping process will also be considered.

The purpose of the MIS/DEIS process is, in coordination with a regional framework of transportation studies, to thoroughly examine the short and long term needs and available options for improving transportation access to Lower Manhattan, and to identify a preferred investment strategy that will address the study area's transportation needs in a cost-effective, equitable, and publicly acceptable manner. This study will consider the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of other recent and contemporary regional transportation studies and data gathering efforts, and closely coordinate with these ongoing studies.

III. Alternatives

Current Alternatives proposed for evaluation include: (1) No-Build, which involves no change to transportation services or facilities in the study area beyond already committed projects; (2) The Transportation System Management (TSM) alternative, which consists of low-to-medium cost improvements that address both short and long term needs; (3) High Quality Shuttle Service from Grand Central Terminal and/or Jamaica Station to Lower Manhattan using newly constructed and/or existing rights of way, such as the BMT Broadway Line or the LIRR Atlantic Branch; (4) New Subway Service including potential construction of the Second Avenue Subway to Lower Manhattan; and (5) Extended Commuter Rail from Grand Central Terminal and/or Jamaica to Lower Manhattan using newly constructed and/or existing rights of way. Other reasonable alternatives proposed during the scoping process would also be considered.

IV. Probable Effects/Potential Impacts for Analysis

The MIS/DEIS will evaluate all significant social, economic and environmental impacts of the proposed alternatives. Among the issues to be investigated in the study area and its access corridors are the potential increase in transit ridership on the current system, the expected increase in mobility, the capital outlays needed to construct the project improvements, and the cost of operating and maintaining the facilities created by the project. Social and environmental impacts proposed for analysis include land use and urban development impacts, visual impacts, impacts on cultural and open space resources, health and safety impacts, and noise and vibration impacts. Impacts on natural areas, geologic forms, air quality, groundwater,

and hazardous materials will also be analyzed. The impacts will be evaluated both for the construction period and for the long-term period of operation. Impacts to the markets outside the core study area and the access corridors will also be examined where it is appropriate (i.e. traffic and parking near suburban rail stations). Measures to mitigate significant adverse impacts will be considered.

IV. FTA Procedures

In accordance with Federal Transit Laws and FTA regulations and policies, the MIS/DEIS will include an evaluation of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the alternatives. After its publication, the MIS/DEIS will be available for public and agency review and comment, and a public hearing will be held. On the basis of the MIS/DEIS and the public and agency comments received, the MTA will select a locally preferred alternative for a major investment strategy. The locally preferred alternative will then be presented to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for affirmation and inclusion into the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Issued on: May 29, 1998.

Letitia Thompson,

Regional Administrator, Federal Transit Administration.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 33601]

Grand Trunk Western Railroad Incorporated—Petition for Declaratory Order—Spur, Industrial, Team, Switching or Side Tracks, in Detroit, MI

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board.

ACTION: Request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Surface Transportation Board (Board) is instituting a declaratory order proceeding and is requesting comments on the petition of Grand Trunk Western Railroad, Inc. (GTW), for an order declaring that certain tracks located near the Renaissance Center in Detroit, MI, are "spur, industrial, team, switching, or side tracks" under the regulatory exemption at 49 U.S.C. 10906.

DATES: Any interested person may file with the Board written comments concerning GTW's petition by July 2, 1998. GTW may reply by July 16, 1998.