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**MIS/DEIS for Manhattan East Side Transit Alternatives Study**

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**MANHATTAN EAST SIDE TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES STUDY**  
**MAJOR INVESTMENT STUDY/DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Manhattan East Side Transit Alternatives Study is primarily an analysis of the transportation problems on the East Side of Manhattan. The study will look at all transportation and transit modes and their related problems in order to develop potential solutions to these problems. The study process will be characterized by an early and continuous public outreach effort. Public involvement will be encouraged throughout. The product of this Major Investment Study (MIS) will be a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) prepared in accordance with the FTA/FHWA, state and local agencies' environmental policies, regulations and procedures. This DEIS will identify the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) proposed for the region's Long Range Plan. This Scoping Document presents the goals and objectives of the project and details the environmental and implementation process it will follow. In addition, this document summarizes the alternatives and impacts that have been discussed at public hearings. A separate volume of Support Documentation, which includes the Public Hearing Transcript and presentation materials, is available for review through the New York City Transit Offices.

## **1. STUDY OVERVIEW**

The Manhattan East Side Transit Alternatives Study (MESA) will conduct a thorough examination of the needs and available options for improving mobility in the north-south corridor of Manhattan's East Side. A growing travel market has necessitated a closer analysis of the relationship between capacity and demand for the both the present and future needs on the East Side of Manhattan.

Several factors have contributed to the growth and change in the travel market on the East Side of Manhattan. These include: an increase in population and residential density, decline and subsequent rebirth of the South Bronx, growth of Metro North ridership and decline in overall bus ridership throughout the Study Area. (A location map and Study Area map are attached).

These growth factors have had pivotal effects on mobility throughout the Study Area. The overcrowding of transportation and transit services has significantly affected travel conditions on the East Side of Manhattan. Overtaxed transit services have affected reliability, created uncomfortable conditions for users, forced customers to change their daily travel patterns and modes and generally discouraged use of the transit system in the Study Area. Transit users have been forced to seek other methods of travel, particularly, private vehicular travel which has served to further crowd the congested street network and slow on-street transit. High levels of auto congestion on the north-south avenues and the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Drive, the only limited access expressway on the East Side of Manhattan, have contributed significantly to the inability of the New York Metropolitan region to meet National Ambient Air Quality Standards. This combination of problems has prompted the need for this study.

The study will evaluate the relationship between capacity and demand on the surface and rapid transit networks presently serving the north-south corridor on the east side of Manhattan between Battery Park/South Ferry and 125th Street/East Harlem, including the heavily congested Lexington

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Avenue Line (the 4, 5, and 6 train routes) along the East Side of Manhattan between 1 25th Street and Bowling Green.

A long-term capital strategy for providing additional and improved fixed-route and surface transportation alternatives in this important travel market will be developed. Such capital strategy shall include, but not be limited to, potential future options such as alternative subway services, enhancement of existing subway services to accommodate more service and passengers, and establishment of new surface services, such as electric surface routes, light rail, busways, transitways, etc. In addition, the impact of these future options and their relationship with the existing highway network and transit services will be explored in terms of reduced auto congestion, increased corridor capacity, operational benefits, and potential new transit markets. The study will address such issues as:

- The current use and operational capacity of the existing transit services in the study area (especially the Lexington Avenue Line);
- The overall long-term capacity and operational problems on the Lexington Avenue Line and NYC Transit surface routes in the Study Area;
- The options to reduce overcrowding on the Lexington Avenue Line and to retain the existing NYC Transit ridership base and seek future growth;
- The options that reduce congestion of the existing highway network (especially north-south avenue traffic);
- The advantages and disadvantages of each capital improvement considered, including operating and maintenance cost impacts;
- The effects of NYC Transit's services on other travel markets (eg. car, bicycle, walk).

The work effort includes completion of a Major Investment Study (MIS) that meets all Federal Transit Administration/Federal Highway Administration (FTA/FHWA) requirements and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Environmental analysis and public outreach shall be undertaken early in the Study. Criteria designed in coordination with the Technical Advisory Committee, the Public Advisory Committee and the Policy Committee of the MTA's Long Range Planning Framework will be developed for evaluating options. This effort will be consistent with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA's) present evaluation guidelines/criteria.

## **II. MAJOR INVESTMENT STUDY**

The purpose of a Major Investment Study (MIS) is to clearly define the nature of long standing transportation problems which need to be addressed by examining all modes and options; and to develop future alternatives to address those problems and the likely impacts of alternative transportation investment strategies at both the corridor and sub-area level. As such, a MIS will provide information necessary to fully evaluate and compare the Alternatives under consideration. A MIS involves an open, comprehensive planning process that takes a hard look at environmental and public concerns early and throughout the study process. MIS's are required to support decisions on significant transportation investments. Where federally funded major transportation investments are being contemplated, the MIS identifies all reasonable alternative strategies for addressing mobility and access needs.

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The MIS produces information on the costs, benefits, and impacts of alternatives so that the sponsor agency can make an informed choice among alternatives. The New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), in cooperation with the sponsoring agency, is responsible for the development of a financially constrained Long Range Plan for the New York Metropolitan Region. This means that the Long Range Plan must reflect a degree of realism and, as a consequence, not all MIS's will be adopted into the Long Range Plan. Thus, the cost/benefit element of the MIS is critical, given the financial constraints on the overall region's Long Range Plan.

### III. ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS

The MESA MIS/DEIS will be prepared in agreement with Federal, New York State and New York City environmental regulations as described below.

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, known as NEPA, legislated a broad national policy to prevent or eliminate damage to the environment. The MESA Study must follow NEPA regulations and, as such, the Federal Transit Authority/ Federal Highway Authority regulations (23 CFR 771), policies and guidelines will be followed to evaluate the environmental consequences of proposed actions and to consider alternatives to them.

In 1975, New York State's legislature enacted the State Environmental Quality Review Act, known as SEQRA. SEQRA requires that all State and local government agencies assess environmental effects of discretionary actions before undertaking, funding or approving a project such as one that might result from the MESA Study.

In 1973, amended in 1989, the NYC Charter established the Office of Environmental Coordination and authorized the establishment of environmental review procedures, known as City Environmental Review Procedures, CEQR. The MESA Study will closely coordinate with the CEQR regulations, but the SEQRA regulations will govern.

The following list of impacted environmental categories are specific to the needs of this project. The list includes those categories required by NEPA regulations and required in FTA/FHWA's regulations, adapted to include all relevant items from the *CEQR Technical Manual*.

#### Categories of Environmental Consequences

- *Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy* - Includes land use, urban development, conformance with public policy and plans, etc.
- *Social Conditions* - Includes population, displacement and relocation, neighborhood cohesion, neighborhood quality, access to community facilities and services, including open space. Traffic, transit, visual and historic qualities, noise and vibration all can affect neighborhood character, etc. The discussion of social conditions/neighborhoods can address the issue of equity.

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- *Economic Conditions* - Parallel to social conditions are trends in employment, business displacement and relocation, and the elements that are key to economic viability of commercial centers.
- *Visual and Aesthetic Conditions*
- *Historic and Archeological Resources*
- *Hazardous Materials*
- *Coastal Zone/ Waterfront Revitalization Program* - The area within 500 feet of the bulkhead is the coastal zone. The EIS will contain a discussion of conformance with the State and City policies.
- *Floodplains* - For any alternatives that lie within the 1 00-year floodplain, a specific analysis will be performed.
- *Infrastructure*
- *Solid Wastes and Sanitation Services*
- *Energy*
- *Transportation Impacts* - Includes transit, traffic, pedestrians, parking and bicycles.
- *Air Quality* - Regional and local regulations require different analyses and examination of different pollutants.
- *Noise and Vibration*
- *Construction Impacts* - Archeology, hazardous wastes, and infrastructure are discussed separately, even though these impacts occur primarily during construction. Other construction impacts include effects on traffic circulation and related air quality and noise, other air quality effects and construction noise, disruption to neighborhoods, temporary relocation, if any, economic effects, etc.
- *Parklands* (Section 4/f) - If the project "affects" any public parks, recreational areas, or historic sites, a section addressing this issue will be included in the MIS/DEIS. It will include consideration of alternatives that avoid the impact, show why these alternatives would not work, and identify mitigation opportunities (replacement in kind) for any significant impact.

#### IV. LONG RANGE PLANNING CONTEXT

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and its constituent agencies are examining a number of major network expansion proposals which include the New Jersey Transit/Port Authority of New York and New Jersey/Metropolitan Transportation Authority joint study involving access to Midtown Manhattan from points east and west (Access to the Region's Core Study); NYC Transit's Study of East River Crossings between Brooklyn and Manhattan (East River Crossings Study); Metro-North's Study of Trans-Hudson River Crossings north of Manhattan (Trans-Hudson Study); and the Long Island Rail Road's study of access to the east side of Manhattan (East Side Access Study). These studies will analyze how to improve transit service from various outlying areas to the Manhattan Central Business District, Downtown Brooklyn and Long Island City. The MESA Study will be closely coordinated with these MTA/agency studies.

This coordination will take place through the MTA Long Range Planning Framework Group, consisting of study managers and key staff members from the MTA, the LIRR, Metro-North and

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NYC Transit. The Long Range Planning Framework is a process that has been set up within the MTA to coordinate all of the network expansion studies and make sure that the same assumptions regarding items such as regional economic, demographic and journey-to-work forecasts (county to county), current and future levels of transit service evaluation and the future shape of the regional transit network, etc. are used. The framework is also aimed at using common criteria, including a cost-benefit methodology approved by the MTA Board.

#### **V. PUBLIC OUTREACH STRATEGY**

To achieve full and comprehensive public participation in the planning of the Manhattan East Side Transit Alternatives Study, public involvement is being sought via attendance at general public meetings, the formation of a Public Advisory Committee and on-site presentations to local civic and community groups and stakeholders. These meetings provide an optimal way for citizens to find out information about the project, meet those involved, voice their opinions and contribute to the ongoing decision making process.

Every effort is and will continue to be made to ensure that the widest possible range of public participants attend general public meetings held by the NYC Transit officials to solicit public input on the goals, objectives and other aspects of the MESA Study. Attendance is encouraged through advertising (including within non-English periodicals), leafleting, press releases, and telephone outreach. Non-traditional media such as cable television and on-line services, will also be employed.

The Outreach efforts for the Manhattan East Side Alternatives Study are on-going and continuous to ensure that those who have recently joined the group will have ample opportunity to have input into the process. Comments on materials distributed at meetings have and will be solicited via regular mailings from those unable to attend meetings. A dedicated MESA Hotline, staffed by the public outreach coordinator and the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council computer Bulletin Board System have been provided for real-time updating of the project for anyone seeking additional information. Direct access to project information is available through James Dubbs at the NYC Transit Authority, 130 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201. Important phone numbers are noted below.

General public meetings will be held in conjunction with project milestones. At every important juncture of the project, public meetings will be held to solicit input from interested parties. In this way, project sponsors can ensure that all public comments will be reviewed and implemented before the project proceeds. The planned study schedule for these milestones is shown in Section XII of this packet.

NYC Transit will continue to meet with local groups such as Community Board Transportation Committees, merchant groups, block associations, and major employers within the East Side Corridor, to explain the MESA Study and solicit comments on the planning process. Numerous meetings of this type have already been held. The public out-reach coordinator will be proactive so that a full range of candidates for such presentations can be obtained. On-site presentations will be

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conducted throughout the course of the MESA Study. Interested parties can arrange these types of meetings through James Dubbs.

On the basis of efforts to date, a Public Advisory Committee (PAC) has been formed of interested parties drawn from the general public and elected officials. To date, this group has met three times and has assisted in the development of the area needs, goals and objectives as well as future transit alternatives. Future meetings will focus on screening alternatives, identifying impacts and narrowing alternatives. Schedules of meetings and events will be available through the public outreach coordinator, through published bulletins and the Bulletin Board System.

Important Phone Numbers

Direct Access, James Dubbs .....(718) 694-5141  
NYMTC Transportation Information Exchange (Computer Bulletin Board System...(212) 938-4371

**VI. STUDY AREA BOUNDARIES**

The primary Study Area encompasses all of the East Side of Manhattan Island, including most of the southern tip of the Island and Battery Park City. It also includes the southwest tip of the Bronx from St. Ann's Avenue west to around 164th Street. Secondary study areas such as the western boundary of the East Side Study Area and tertiary areas such as parts of Brooklyn and Queens, will also be examined in terms of ancillary effects and connections to existing service.

The primary Study Area within Manhattan is separated into five principal zones: Lower Manhattan, the Lower East Side, East Midtown, the Upper East Side and East Harlem. Criteria used to determine Zone boundaries include: differences in existing and future transportation service and needs, topography, density and neighborhood character. In addition, the Study Area was divided into Zones to provide a more manageable and efficient process for determining specific needs for both underserved and unserved markets.

The Lower Manhattan Zone comprises the southern tip of Manhattan Island and is bounded on the east and west by the East and Hudson Rivers, respectively. It includes all of Community District One, except for the parcel of land (Census Tract 39) stretching from Chambers Street to Canal Street, from Hudson Street to the Hudson River. The northern boundary for the Lower Manhattan Zone is formed by a combination of north-south and east-west streets. Canal Street, between Hudson Street and the Bowery, acts as the northern boundary. The Bowery, Park Row, Pearl Street, St. James Place, and Robert F. Wagner, Sr. Place act as the northern boundary between the Lower Manhattan and Lower East Side Zones.

The Lower East Side Zone is bounded on the east by the FDR Drive and the on west by Broadway to West 4th Street, north of which the western boundary becomes Fifth Avenue. It is separated into the Chinatown neighborhood which flanks the Lower Manhattan and Lower East Side Zones, just north and south of Canal Street and the East Village neighborhood north of Houston Street and south of 14th Street. The neighborhoods within the Lower East Side Zone include Chinatown and the East Village. This Zone includes all of Community Board Three.

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The East Midtown Zone is bounded on the south by 14th Street and on the north by 59th Street. The east and west boundaries of the East Midtown Zone are the East River and Fifth Avenue, respectively. Within this Zone are five neighborhoods: Lower Fifth Avenue and the Flatiron District, from 14th Street to 42nd Street (west of Park Avenue); Midtown/South Medical Center, from 23rd Street (east of Park Avenue) to 34th Street; Murray Hill, from 34th Street to 42nd Street; Grand Central/United Nations, from 42nd Street to 53rd Street and East Midtown from 53rd Street to 59th Street. The East Midtown Zone includes all of Community Board Six.

The neighborhoods within the Upper East Side Zone are the Upper East Side/Medical Center section, from 63rd Street to 79th Street and the Carnegie/Yorkville neighborhood, from 86th Street to 96th Street. The Upper East Side Zone is bounded on the south and north by 59th Street and 96th Street, respectively. The east and west boundaries are the same as those for the East Midtown Zone, the FDR Drive (East River) and Fifth Avenue. The Upper East Side Zone includes all of Community Board Eight.

The East Harlem Zone is bounded on the south and north by 96th Street and 138th Street, respectively and on the east and west by the East River (Harlem River) and Fifth Avenue. The East Harlem Zone is divided into Northern East Harlem from 112th to 138th Street and the Southern East Harlem neighborhoods from 96th Street to 112th Street. The East Harlem Zone includes all of Community Board Eleven.

## **VII. HISTORY OF TRANSPORTATION IN THE STUDY AREA**

The transportation network on the East Side of Manhattan has evolved throughout the past century to keep pace with the travel market. It is essential to realize that while technological advances play a significant role in the development of the travel market, socioeconomic forces and demographic patterns are quite influential as well. Population growth meant more vehicles and growing street automobile congestion that necessitated changes in the way traffic would move throughout the city.

Trolley cars, on city streets, were one of the first transit modes in the Study Area. These Trolleys, which had served Third and Lexington Avenues, were systematically phased out until the last Trolley was removed in the 1940's. Nowadays, on street transit is provided by bus routes.

Vehicular use and the subsequent traffic congestion on the city streets increased rapidly. After years of struggling for financing, in 1939 construction began on the East River Drive (Franklin Delano Roosevelt Drive), a high speed, limited access facility, providing relief to traffic previously traveling north and south on the Avenues.

The physical face of Manhattan was changing as well. In the late 1960's, Avenues which formerly carried both north and south traffic were reconfigured to one-way arterials to move traffic more efficiently and to reduce delays. More recently, efforts have been made to computerize the entire traffic signal system in Manhattan to respond to demands more efficiently.

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The Lexington Avenue Line is the primary rapid transit service along the entire length of the East Side of Manhattan. The Line was constructed by the City of New York and opened in stages between 1904 and 1912 by the Interborough Rapid Transit Company (IRT), a predecessor of NYC Transit, as an addition to the already extensive rapid transit network serving the East Side of Manhattan. Since the late 1870's, the Second Avenue and Third Avenue elevated lines had provided faster and more frequent service than street level transportation to the growing areas north of 14th Street on the East Side of Manhattan and the Bronx. As a result of the growth on the east side of Manhattan and in the Bronx following the construction of the Lexington Avenue line, a Second Avenue Subway line was proposed as the second Phase of a plan to expand the New York City operated Independent (IND) subway system. As time went on, however, the structural stability of the elevated lines deteriorated and their presence was perceived as a blight. The Second Avenue Elevated was removed in 1942 and the Third Avenue Elevated, in 1959. The planned Second Avenue Subway would have provided a viable transportation alternative to the elevated lines, but despite the removal of the elevated lines, a Second Avenue subway was never built.

Though a rapid transit substitute to the elevated lines was planned prior to the demolition of the elevateds, one was never constructed. There have been many proposals for a Second Avenue Subway since. The most recent proposal was for a two-track subway line under Second Avenue from the Bronx to Lower Manhattan with connections to the 63rd Street line. Small portions of this line, two sections in Harlem and one section in the Lower East Side, were constructed before funding was cut and the project suspended in the early 1970's. A map showing the proposed location of this Second Avenue Subway Alignment can be found in the attachments to this Information Packet.

## **VIII. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Ridership on the Lexington Avenue IRT Line (4, 5, 6 trains) increased, as expected, when the elevated lines were removed. Shortly thereafter, residential and commercial growth on Manhattan's East Side, especially in the Upper East Side, increased dramatically. The conversion of industrial developments to residential housing units provided a new housing stock and encouraged further population growth in the area. Several additional factors contributed to changes in the East Side travel market and augmented congestion on the East Side. These factors include: a dramatic decline and subsequent rebirth of the Southern Bronx, the growth of Metro North ridership, and the overall decline in bus ridership.

Despite these trends, no new or replacement rapid transit services have been provided since the removal of the elevated lines resulting in the evident overcrowding on all transportation services in the area. In addition to the Lexington Avenue IRT, local bus service and auto traffic is also overcrowded and congested. The overcrowding on the transit services in the East Side of Manhattan has significantly affected reliability, created uncomfortable conditions for users, forced customers to change their daily travel patterns and modes and generally discouraged use of the transit system in the area. The following is a list of the major transportation problems that currently exist within the Study Area. The list is not in order of importance but rather identifies access issues followed by congestion related issues.

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#### Transportation Problems Within the Study Area

- Rapid transit (subway service) is relatively inaccessible in certain locations within the study area, including the areas east of First Avenue and Allen Street in Manhattan. Patrons have to walk at least a half a mile and up to one mile or ride a bus to the nearest train station.
- Although they serve the same general area south of Central Park, the Broadway BMT (N and R trains), has much lower ridership south of 23rd Street than the Lexington Avenue IRT. (The 1994 average weekday turnstile registrations, south of 23rd Street, on the BMT is 150,000 and on the Lexington Avenue IRT is 250,000.) This is most likely because most of the residential areas within the east side of Manhattan south of Lexington Avenue are located east of Third Avenue. Therefore the Lexington Avenue Line is the first line encountered when traveling west to reach transit.
- In the AM peak period, the southbound local and express train service on the Lexington Avenue IRT carry the heaviest volumes. Standing room only is available as far north on the route as the south Bronx. Trains are substantially overcrowded in the Upper East Side where passengers frequently have to let trains pass as there is not enough room to stand. Similar overcrowding conditions occur in Midtown Manhattan, where Metro North passengers enter the rapid transit system and where passengers from the heavily used N, R, E, F and 7 Lines transfer to the Lexington Avenue IRT. Overcrowding in the PM peak period is most severe in the northbound direction in these same areas.
- Subway service on the Lexington Avenue IRT is most overcrowded during the AM and PM peak periods. Express trains are more overcrowded than local trains, especially south of Grand Central Station. As the local train does not serve much of the Lower Manhattan financial and business district, most passengers choose the more direct travel route, i.e. the express 4 and 5 trains, to avoid adding travel time via a necessary transfer. (At Grand Central, 85% of the southbound express 4 and 5 train cars are filled over capacity guidelines, while just over 15% of local 6 train cars are over capacity.)
- There is a heavy accumulation of passengers within busy stations. There are several factors which contribute to this overcrowding including: out-dated platform, stairwell and subway car design (originally built for considerably lower passenger volumes), and train delays. Train frequency is less than scheduled due to long station dwell times caused by large volumes of passengers entering and exiting the trains resulting in train queuing and bunching. Once delays begin, related problems such as sick passengers or further overcrowding exacerbate delay conditions.
- North-south bus routes, in the areas where rapid transit is inaccessible, are crowded with many standees, even though service is very frequent. Scheduled headways, as short as two minutes during the peak hours, contribute to bus "bunching". Bus bunching occurs when more than one bus arrives at a stop at the same time, creating gaps in service. Bus bunching tends to occur most on routes with the shortest headways such as the M15 on First and Second Avenues and the M101/M102 on Third and Lexington Avenues.

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- Bus ridership is heavy within the study corridor; most buses are filled with many standees. North-south buses were observed to be most overcrowded in the Lower East Side and Lower Manhattan Zones in the AM peak and in the Upper East Side Zone in the PM peak.
- Bus speeds are very slow, especially during peak periods, because of street level congestion. (Average north-south bus speeds during the midday peak are between 5 to 7 mph).
- Vehicular traffic is severely constrained within the East Side of Manhattan, especially in the East Midtown Zone during the day. This congestion is caused by not only the substantial vehicular volumes, but also because of the incidence of double-parking and the heavy pedestrian traffic at many locations.
- There is only one north-south limited access expressway, the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Drive, in the east side of Manhattan. The highway is usually congested during peak hours and is frequently congested in off-peak times, especially on weekends.
- The severely congested traffic on the streets and highways, including the FDR Drive, contributes significantly to the inability of the New York Metropolitan Region to achieve National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

## IX. STATEMENT OF GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following Goals and Objectives have been developed for the Project; they include input from general public outreach, interagency comments, the Public Advisory Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee.

### Project Goal I: Improve Mobility on East Side of Manhattan

#### *Objectives:*

- Improve transit-dependant accessibility to East Harlem, Upper East Side, Lower East Side, and Lower Manhattan
- Extend existing transit routes, where appropriate, to accommodate transit-dependant demands
- Improve integration with other Metropolitan-Area transit programs
- Improve intermodal (bicycle, pedestrian, bus, subway, express, limited-stop bus) connections
- Accommodate projected future ridership
- Improve reliability of existing transit services
- Reduce overcrowding and congestion of transportation routes and transit lines
- Minimize transportation delays
- Maximize transit ridership safety
- Increase transit market
- Provide implementable alternatives within available resources
- Reduce traffic congestion

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- Improve pedestrian conditions
- Reduce travel time

#### Project Goal II: Achieve Economic Feasibility and Cost Effectiveness

##### *Objectives:*

- Maximize operating & capital cost effectiveness
- Stimulate appropriate economic development and jobs
- Maximize off-peak ridership
- Support staging/up-grade initiatives
- Equitably distribute costs and benefits

#### Project Goal III: Maintain or Improve Environmental Conditions

##### *Objectives:*

- Reduce air pollution
- Reduce energy consumption
- Minimize noise impacts
- Minimize property takings and other displacements
- Maintain and/or improve community & neighborhood character, compatibility with present/projected land use
- Support existing and planned economic activity
- Minimize community disruption during construction
- Create aesthetically pleasing transit and transportation alternatives
- Protect historical and archeological resources, parklands, and environmentally sensitive areas
- Minimize impacts on water quality and flooding
- Maximize user security and comfort

## **X. PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES**

The following is a list of the preliminary alternatives identified to date for this project. The alternatives have not been ranked in order of importance at this time. No decisions or evaluations have, as yet, been made regarding the alternatives.

### **1. Rapid Transit Alternatives**

- A. *Original Full 1974 Alignment of the Second Avenue Subway:* This alternative proposes a new north-south subway line, along the East Side of Manhattan, located under Second Avenue for most of its length. A variation of this alternative includes a possible link to the Lexington Avenue Line at the north end of the study area for connections to the Bronx. South of Houston Street, the alignment follows the Bowery, St. James Place, a small segment of Pearl Street and Water Street. A connection to and from Queens would be provided via the 63rd Street tunnel. Station locations could include: 122nd, 106th, 96th, 86th, 69th, 58th, 45th to 47th, 34th to 37th, 24th to 26th, and 13th to I 5th Streets, Houston to 2nd Street, Grand (Hester to

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Broome), Chatham Square (St. James to Bowery), Pine (Wall to Pine), and Whitehall Street (Whitehall to north of Broad).

- B. *Second Avenue Subway North (between Upper Manhattan and Midtown):* This alternative proposes a subway under Second Avenue from 14th Street to the north end of Manhattan. A variation of this alternative would also provide connections to and from the Bronx via a tunnel under the Harlem River. Potential station locations include: 122nd, 106th, 96th, 86th, 69th, 58th, 45th to 47th, 34th to 37th, 24th to 26th, and 13th to 15th Streets.
- C. *Second Avenue Subway South (between Midtown and Lower Manhattan):* This alternative proposes to construct the southern section of the Second Avenue Subway, between 63rd Street and Second Avenue in East Midtown, and Whitehall Street in Lower Manhattan. Potential station locations include: 63rd, 58th, 45th to 47th, 34<sup>th</sup> to 37th, 24th to 26th, 13th to 15th, Houston to 2nd, and Grand (Hester to Broome) Streets, Chatham Square (St. James to Bowery), Pine (Wall to Pine) and Whitehall Street (Whitehall to north of Broad).
- D. *Second Avenue Subway Eastward Alignment:* This alternative proposes a Second Avenue Subway, from the northern tip of Manhattan at Second Avenue, to some point (either at 34th Street or further south at 14th Street) after which the subway service would gradually veer eastward (from Second Avenue to Avenue B) and continue south (Avenue B to Clinton Street, to East Broadway to St. James to Pearl and to Water Street). Potential station locations include 122nd, 106th, 96th, 86th, 69th, 58th, 45th to 47th, 34th to 37th, 24th to 26th, and 13th to 15th Streets, Tompkins Square (7th Street and Avenue B), Grand Street at Seward Park, Chatham Square (St. James to Bowery), Pine (Wall to Pine), and Whitehall Street (Whitehall to north of Broad).
- E. *Second Avenue Subway with Southbound Connection:* To/From Grand Central Terminal: This alternative consists of the Full 1974 Alignment with the addition of a link to and from Grand Central Terminal along 43rd Street. A station, deep under Grand Central Terminal (GCT), would be built. Express shuttle service would be provided from GCT to Lower Manhattan via trains beginning at the new station at Grand Central Terminal. The shuttle trains would run every eight minutes in the peak period. During off-peak hours, the trains from GCT could shuttle between GCT and 34th Street station on the Second Avenue Line.
- F. *Second Avenue Subway- 43rd Street Inter-line Connection:* This alternative recognizes that the Broadway N and R Line is an underutilized service that could be used as an improved route to Lower Manhattan and serve Grand Central Terminal, East Midtown, the Upper East Side, and Queens. The alternative consists of the construction of the Second Avenue North Alternative (Option 1.B) with a 43rd Street crosstown link with tracks extending west to Broadway that would connect to the Broadway BMT. A new subway station deep under Grand Central Terminal

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(GCT) would be built. Trains from Queens (via the 63rd Street tunnel) would travel south on the new Second Avenue Line. Some trains would then travel west under 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, stop at the new Grand Central Terminal station, to Times Square and then travel express south to Lower Manhattan, stopping only at 34th and 14th Streets. The Broadway BMT north of Canal Street would need to be reconstructed in order to fit these express trains onto the BMT tracks serving Lower Manhattan.

- G. *Second Avenue Subway- 43rd Street New Jersey Connection*: This alternative consists of the construction of a crosstown connection, along 43rd Street, in addition to the Full 1974 Alignment. The subway line under 43rd Street would have a station Manhattan East Side Transit Alternatives Study deep under Grand Central Terminal (GCT). Service on the 43rd Street Connection would be extended to New Jersey as a high quality regional, or "metro-express" operation (similar to the Washington Metro).

The operating plan (as suggested by the Regional Plan Association) assumes a track capacity of 30 trains per hour. Some trains from New Jersey would turn south via the Second Avenue Subway to Lower Manhattan. Other trains would turn north on the Second Avenue Line and continue to Queens via the upper level 63rd Street tunnel. The remaining track capacity on the Second Avenue Line would serve the Second Avenue corridor.

- H. *Extend Rapid Transit Service to Lower Manhattan*: This option involves extending rapid transit, either commuter rail or subway service, under Second Avenue, from either 125th Street or Grand Central, directly to Lower Manhattan with no intermediate stops.

## 2. Lexington Avenue Subway Service Improvements

- A. *Lexington Avenue Subway Signal Improvements*: This alternative proposes improvements to the existing signal system on the Lexington Avenue Line to increase travel speeds, reduce dwell times, and consequently reduce station crowding.
- B. *Lexington Avenue Subway Platform Extensions*: In general, the Lexington Avenue Subway platforms are approximately 600 feet, accommodating 10 car trains. This alternative proposes lengthening platforms to approximately 750 feet, thereby allowing 12 car trains into each station. This would increase passenger capacity on the Lexington Avenue Line by 20 percent.
- C. *Lexington Avenue Subway Connections to Other Subway Lines (Conversion of Northern Lexington Avenue Subway Lines to Division B Service)*: This alternative would connect the northern half of the Lexington Avenue Line to the Broadway BMT subway with a tunnel that would be built near where the two lines cross at 60<sup>th</sup> Street and Lexington Avenue. Division B cars, currently used on trains on the

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Broadway line, would be used on the existing Lexington Avenue line, north of 60<sup>th</sup> Street. These Division B cars are larger, and have more passenger capacity, than the Division A cars currently used on trains on this section of the Lexington Avenue line. The lower half (south of 42nd Street) of the Lexington Avenue Line would continue to be served by Division A cars. Division A trains would travel south on the West Side IRT (1/9 Line), pass through the 42nd Street Shuttle tunnel, and then south along the existing Lexington Avenue line subway tracks.

- D. *Lexington Avenue Subway Local Service Extension to Lower Manhattan:* This alternative proposes extending the Lexington Avenue 6 train local service, which presently terminates at Brooklyn Bridge, to Lower Manhattan via Water Street. The proposed extension would involve construction of tracks underneath the existing express tracks. Potential station locations along Pearl/Water Street include: Fulton Street, Maiden Lane, Wall Street, Old Slip, Broad Street, Whitehall Street and Battery Park City.
- E. *Lexington Avenue Subway Skip Stop Operation:* This alternative proposes changes in Lexington Avenue local 6 train service to provide "skip-stop" subway service similar to the "9" service in the Bronx. Skip-stop locations are yet to be determined but could include busy local stations such as: 68th Street, 51<sup>st</sup> Street, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Astor Place.
1. **New Metro North Stations in the Bronx and Upper Manhattan:** This alternative involves the construction of new Metro North stations in the Bronx and Upper Manhattan. Stations would be located along the existing Metro North route to provide passenger access at currently unserved locations.

#### 2. **Bus Alternatives**

- A. *Bus Service on Dedicated Avenue:* This alternative involves dedicating part of the existing street space for an exclusive bi-directional bus "travelway", while providing for one-way traffic flow in the adjacent lanes. The exclusive bus lanes would be permanent, and positioned along one-half of the Avenue. The other half of the Avenue would be used by mixed traffic flows (cars, trucks, taxis). A raised median would accommodate bus stops for southbound buses and provide some taxi and truck unloading space.

First Avenue is a possible candidate for this Alternative (as suggested in a previous NYCDOT transit study). Proposed bus lane service would operate from 1 25th Street to Houston Street. The resulting lane configuration would consist of three bus lanes, a median, and three lanes for mixed traffic. Bus stops would be spaced between four and six blocks apart. Second Avenue could also be a viable candidate for this option.

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A variation of this alternative would involve the complete dedication of an avenue to bi-directional bus service. Proposed bus lane service would operate from 125th Street to Houston Street. Three 10-foot lanes would be provided for buses in each direction. Bus stops would be spaced between four and six blocks apart. First and Second Avenues are possible candidates for this Option.

- B. *Bus Service on Paired Avenues:* This alternative would provide two, one-way, bus only travel lanes, from 125th Street to Houston Street. Northbound service would be provided on one avenue, while southbound service would be provided on another avenue. One candidate pair would be northbound First Avenue and southbound Second Avenue. The resulting configuration would consist of two bus lanes, four mixed use lanes, and a single parking lane per avenue.
- C. *Trolley Bus on Dedicated Busway:* This alternative proposes Trolley Bus service on Second Avenue to replace the existing M15 service. Powered by electrical overhead wires, Trolley Buses would operate every 2 to 3 minutes during peak hours and every 5 to 10 minutes off peak. Trolley Buses would have 40 seats, heating and air conditioning, "kneeling" suspension and double doors. The Trolley Bus car units could be linked together to provide greater passenger capacity.
- D. *FDR Drive Busway:* This alternative proposes one lane in each direction on the FDR Drive for a busway. The busway would operate in the left-most lane between 96<sup>th</sup> Street and Battery Park/South Ferry exit. The busway would begin in the South Ferry area and continue to 96th Street. After entering the FDR Drive, buses would have to weave across traffic for access to the busway. It is possible that vanpools would also operate in the busway.

## 5. Light Rail Transit Alternatives

- A. *Light Rail Service on Dedicated Avenue:* This alternative proposes light rail transit (LRT), electrically powered vehicles, that would operate on tracks on city streets and either share the roadway with autos or travel in special rights-of-way. The vehicles are powered by electricity supplied by an overhead wire. The LRT would run on one dedicated avenue with two tracks, probably on First or Second Avenue and replace the M15 bus route. Service would exist from 125th Street to South Ferry in Lower Manhattan. Stations would be built every 10 blocks (approximately ~1/2 mile apart). The LRT would operate every five minutes during peak hours, and every 10 to 15 minutes off-peak.
- B. *Light Rail Service on Paired Avenues:* This alternative involves the construction of a single light rail track between 125th Street and South Ferry in Lower Manhattan. For most of its length, the LRT would run southbound on Second Avenue and northbound on First Avenue. Mixed use traffic lanes would remain on the Avenues.

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6. **Private Franchised Jitney Service:** This alternative would involve jitney-type service along Park Avenue. The jitneys (10 to 20 seat vehicles) would operate every 2 to 3 minutes, with stops every three to four blocks. One route could operate between 96th Street and Grand Central Terminal. A second route could be along Park Avenue south of Grand Central Terminal, between 42nd and 14th Streets (the present route of the M1 NYC Transit bus).
7. **Ferry Service on East River with Shuttle Bus Service:** This alternative involves running ferry service along the East River with stops at existing piers. Approximately 6 ferries would run per hour. Shuttle bus service would be provided from docks to points west for loading and unloading ferry commuters. The ferry alternative would provide service for approximately 1000 passengers/day. Potential pier locations include: Fire Boat Station, 76<sup>th</sup> Street, 34th Street, 23rd Street, South Street Seaport, and the Staten Island Ferry Pier.
8. **TSM Improvements:** This alternative refers to low-to-moderate cost improvements that are more readily implementable than the major capital cost alternatives. In the context of this study, however, TSM improvements may be in the range of several million dollars or more. The TSM Alternative will be a combination of improvements which may include one or more "Build" Alternatives. A sample TSM alternative could include the following:
  - Increased frequency of bus service
  - New local and/or express bus routes
  - New bus lanes
  - Increased hours of existing bus lanes, physical length of bus lanes, and enforcement
  - Traffic prohibitions that improve the performance of existing bus lanes
  - Jitney service on Park Avenue
  - New subway and/or Metro North stations on the East Side
  - TSM level signal improvements on the Lexington Avenue Line
  - Skip-stop subway service
  - Subway station improvements
  - Bus stop shelter amenity improvements
  - Higher capacity buses
9. **New East River Stops on Existing East-West Subway Service:** This alternative involves adding east side station stops to existing subway service on the Q, N, R, #7, E/F and L Lines. Proposed station locations include: First Avenue at 63rd Street on the Q line; First Avenue at 60th Street on the N/R line; First Avenue at 53rd Street on the E/F line; First Avenue at 42nd Street on the 7 line and; Avenue C at 14th Street on the L line.
10. **Combination Alternatives:** The first variation of this alternative is a subway-LRT. The original 1974 Second Avenue Subway alignment would be built for the northern portion of the Study Area (from the northern edge of the study area to 42nd Street). A connection to the Bronx under the Harlem River would also be proposed. The southern portion of the Study Area, from 42nd Street south to South Ferry would be served by LRT service on Second Avenue.

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The second variation of this alternative is the LRT-subway. Option which involves construction of an LRT for the northern section of the Study Area on Second Avenue (from the northern edge of the study area to 42nd Street) and the Second Avenue Subway (1974 alignment) for the southern portion of the Study Area (42nd Street to South Ferry).

11. **Elevated Transit:** Proposed elevated (overhead) transit alternatives would be built on Second Avenue for north and southbound service. Proposed elevated transit systems would run on concrete guideways, with 60 second headways. The stations would be similar to those proposed for the 1974 Second Avenue Subway alignment (Alternative IA) and could include: 122nd, 106th, 96th, 86th, 69th, 58th, 45th to 47th, 34th to 37th, 24th to 26th, 13<sup>th</sup> to I 5th, and Houston to 2nd Streets, Grand Street(Hester to Broome), Chatham Square (St. James to Bowery), Pine (Wall to Pine), and Whitehall Street (Whitehall to north of Broad).
12. **No Action Alternative:** This alternative assumes no "new" transit related construction or improvements would be implemented in the Study Area.

## XI. EVALUATION PROCESS

A staged evaluation process will be used to screen the alternatives. Initial decision-making will be qualitative in nature, however, as the study progresses and alternatives are eliminated, additional information and detail will be gathered to allow a more quantitative decision-making process. MTA guidelines will be used for evaluating alternatives throughout this process. In addition, public input will be encouraged and incorporated throughout each stage of the evaluation.

Each stage of the evaluation will build upon the previous stage in terms of detail. The initial screen will be a qualitative evaluation of each alternative against the study goals and objectives previously listed. The initial screen will eliminate alternatives that are fatally flawed (i.e. they include a component that is completely impractical). Each alternative will be evaluated to whether it is extremely effective, very effective, moderately effective or whether it has a limited or no effect on meeting that particular objective. Those alternatives that do not perform well against a significant range of these objectives as stand alone alternatives will either be combined with another alternative or eliminated.

The second stage of the evaluation process is a quantitative screen of the remaining alternatives against the study goals. Conceptual engineering and further analysis of the alternatives will already have begun. Preliminary results from this analysis will allow criteria such as travel times, travel speeds, walking distance to transit, and projected ridership to be used to evaluate each alternative. As a result of this evaluation, several alternatives will be chosen for further analysis.

The final stages of the evaluation process will be the most detailed. Quantitative characteristics of each alternative will be based upon more detailed engineering and traffic/transit computer modeling. Cost-benefit analyses of the alternatives will be completed during this stage. This stage of the evaluation process will determine the final " short list" of alternatives.

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After sufficient analysis of alternatives, NYMTC, in cooperation with the MTA, will hold a large public milestone meeting to ensure widespread involvement in the decision process to determine which alternatives move on to more detailed analysis.

When the analysis of the "short list" of alternatives is complete, the analysis, public and interagency comments and concerns will be compiled and a Locally Preferred Alternative will be identified. Work products provided for this phase of the effort will include the results of all technical efforts and summaries of all public and interagency activities to date. A Final Draft Environmental Impact Statement will contain the Locally Preferred Alternative and several interim solutions to mobility problems in the Study Area.

## **XII. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE**

Before implementation of any MESA Study alternative, the project must pass through four phases. In an effort to simplify the project implementation schedule, these phases are noted on the following graphic and in the written description that follows.

*1. Initial MIS/DEIS Study Phase* - In broad terms, the discussion above outlines the technical efforts and reports prepared in order to narrow down the number of alternatives and complete the first implementation phase. This phase is comprised of four study milestones. The first milestone, the introduction of the study as part of the Long Range Planning Framework, described in Section IV of this document, occurred in January 1995. The second milestone, the public/scoping meeting, took place in July 1995. The intention of the second milestone was to elicit public comment on defining alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS and identify any significant social, economic or environmental issues related to the alternatives. In addition, the scoping meeting introduced the general public to the details of the study, discussed transportation problems and needs identified in the study area and identified preliminary goals and objectives to address these needs. During the scoping stage, comments focus on identifying specific social, economic or environmental impacts to be evaluated and suggest alternatives which are less costly or less environmentally damaging while achieving similar transit objectives. The product of this milestone is to finalize Study Area details, alternatives and alternative evaluation criteria, and project goals and objectives.

The third milestone, anticipated to be reached in November 1995 (probably Winter 1995-96), will involve a public meeting where discussions will include the evaluation process. In particular, the discussion will describe how the alternatives were narrowed down to a short list and which alternatives remain. All study alternatives will be discussed and after specific analysis, alternatives will be eliminated or redesigned. Certain alternatives will be eliminated based upon a fatal flaw; i.e. a characteristic which renders the alternatives impossible or completely impractical. The product of this milestone will be the revision of the list of alternatives from a "long-list" to a "short-list". Prior to the fourth milestone, the evaluation process continues via Community Outreach and MTA Board involvement, and a Draft EIS will be prepared for the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). A public meeting, representing the fourth and last milestone in this phase, will then be held. It is anticipated that this meeting will be held in late 1996 or early 1997.

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After ratification by the MTA Board, the recommendation will be forwarded to NYMTC, the NY Metropolitan region's planning organization, for Long Range Plan adoption consideration. It is anticipated that the entire phase will be completed by mid- 1997. NYC Transit's consultant contract for the Manhattan East Side Transit Alternatives Study concludes at the end of this process.

2. *Long Range Plan Adoption* - NYMTC, with assistance from various transportation authorities, has the responsibility of selecting the components of a long range plan. All long range plan components must pass a test of reasonableness which entails identifying expected transportation funds and matching these available resources with a set of improvements with comparable costs. If the sum of all proposed improvements exceeds expected available resources, NYMTC must prioritize improvements and postpone planned implementation for those projects judged to have only secondary benefits. Projects not adopted into the Long Range Plan would be "shelved", until needs change or reasonable funding levels become available. The adoption of a project into the Long Range Plan could take from six months to one year, depending on the number of transportation projects under consideration.

After having been adopted into the Long Range Plan, the Locally Preferred Alternative would be included in the next Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The final NEPA document is prepared after the project is included in an approved TIP.

3. *Final EIS Stage* - If the MESA project's Locally Preferred Alternative is adopted into the Long Range Plan, a Final EIS will be prepared. The time for FEIS preparation will depend on the impacts and complexity of the alternative. Often, up to two years are required to prepare a FEIS. This step culminates with a Record of Decision, which will be prepared by the FTA/FHWA.

4. *Design and Construction Phase* - The length of the design and construction phase depends primarily upon the complexity of the alternative and therefore could vary considerably in its length. The design and construction phase could range from 2 to 3 years for a relatively simple alternative to 10 to 15 years for a subway alternative. An LRT Alternative would likely have a design and construction phase somewhere between these short and long time frames.

### **XIII. MAJOR MILESTONE/NEPA SCOPING MEETING**

A Major Milestone Meeting and NEPA Scoping meeting was held on July 26, 1995 in the MTA Boardroom at 347 Madison Avenue, in New York City. The purpose of this meeting was to receive public input on the problems, goals and objectives, alternatives, definition of the Study Area and scoping process developed to date for the Manhattan East Side Transit Alternatives (MESA) Study Area. A combined total of 73 people amended both sessions of the presentation by representatives from the FTA, MTA and consultant team. The following points were made either at the scoping meetings or by letter during the public comment period (numbers in parenthesis refer to multiple speakers making the same points).

#### **Problems, Goals and Objectives:**

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- Air quality, as it is impacted by the amount of auto and bus-caused ozone and particulate matter emissions, is a serious problem within the Study Area. Any alternative must advance the goal of improving air quality. (2)
- Economic impacts on small businesses within the Study Area of all alternatives must be carefully evaluated.
- Traffic impacts of transit changes on surrounding neighborhoods must be studied.
- Airport access plans should be coordinated within this Study to an equal degree as any other Study in the Long Range Planning Framework.
- An overall increase in the subway transit on the East Side should be achieved

#### Surface Alternatives:

- Bus lanes were favored as advancing air quality improvement goals (3j). However, one attendee pointed out that this idea had been tried and abandoned in the past. One letter suggested increasing the operating hours and traffic enforcement for the existing bus lanes.
- Option #11, Elevated Transit, was selected by one participant. Drawings of a glass enclosed model were submitted. One opposition was received by letter stating that this proposal left the streets dark, dirty and noisy.
- Free transfers between bus and subway connections should be made available to address the needs of 130,000 people who live more than a ten minute walk from the Lexington Avenue subway line. Such transfers should also be made available for westbound travelers if the Second Avenue Subway is built.
- Park and Ride and other options to reduce car usage must be part of any planning strategy.
- A light rail option was favored along Second Avenue and Madison Avenues. Plans were submitted. Opposition to the light rail option was also received (2). Writers felt that the light rail would compete with the bus and car traffic and no real reduction in traffic would be achieved.
- One letter received expressed approval for the ferry service option.
- The jitney service option received mixed feelings. One letter favored the exploration of the option while another recommended abandoning the idea immediately.
- A monorail transportation system was also presented to be considered for the list of possible alternatives.

#### Subway Alternatives:

- The Second Avenue Subway was the most chosen option. (6) However, some attendees expressed skepticism that there would ever be sufficient funding available for construction.
- The "cup handle" configuration of the Second Avenue Subway with a link encompassing the Lower East Side of Manhattan, was the most favored (3). One participant felt that any Second Avenue Subway plan should include a connection with the Delancey Street/Essex Street Station. Another urged that the needs of the Lower East Side transit users be carefully considered when screening alternatives. One letter expressed concern about the facility of

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being able to cut diagonally through the Lower East Side of Manhattan; legal issues about displacement and attainment would stall the project.

- Tunneling for construction of a Second Avenue Subway should be done as deeply as possible (rather than cut & cover) to avoid disruptions to area businesses and residents as well as to pass underneath the West-East lines.
- New signaling technology (such as "moving block" signaling) should be studied. A greater degree of automation of the signaling process was also suggested (2).
- 63rd Street and Second Avenue should serve as a site for a new subway station for the Q line (and as a possible link to the Second Avenue Subway).
- Lexington Avenue Subway platforms should be lengthened to allow for longer subway trains (2).
- 11 car trains should be considered if 12 car trains are deemed too expensive to run (the current length is 10 cars).
- Hong-Kong style "continuous" trains should be considered as a way of increasing capacity. In this model, cars are designed to form one contiguous length available to passengers, rather than separate cars.
- Ways of moving train cars between the IRT and the BMT lines should be studied.
- The Second Avenue Subway line should be used as a North/South tie to the East/West lines to the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn.
- The Second Avenue Subway line should extend further into the Bronx, into the Mott Haven yards.
- Approval was expressed for the Lexington Avenue local extension.
- New East River stops were suggested for the existing lines.
- New Metro-North stations for the Bronx were proposed.

#### **Public Participation in the MESA Study Process:**

- Presentation should allow for audience participation throughout, rather than reserving a comment period at the end.
- Meetings should not be scheduled during August since some community board transportation committees don't meet formally until September. (2) Because of this, the public comment period on the preliminary list of Alternatives and the scoping process should be extended beyond the August 7th deadline to late September. (3)
- The MESA Study should closely coordinate with other regional Major Investment Studies (MIS) particularly when compiling a final list of Alternatives (3). It was suggested that intra-regional alternatives be "grouped by family", cutting across agency lines. Similarly, the planning team should evaluate past and present transit studies from a wide range of sources.
- Better communication to the public is recommended through an increased use of the media. A question was raised about the scoping meeting and SEQRA technicalities.

#### **Public Input on the MESA Study Information Packet:**

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- The alternatives should also be presented in matrix format (e.g. short term versus long term alternatives).
- Data represented on graphs should be made available in tabular form.
- Market research data on such origin destination studies should be included.
- The screening and selection process for alternatives needs to be more explicitly stated.

**General Topics:**

- Revision of the definition of the Lower East Side neighborhood was recommended
- Potential uses for Biodiesel fuel in the suggested alternatives
- Earth and rock excavation should be removed by rail to avoid blocking traffic in the streets (3).

**APPENDIX A**  
**QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

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**Manhattan East Side Transit Alternatives Study**  
**Major Milestone/ NEPA Scoping Meeting**  
**July 26, 1996**  
**MTA Boardroom - 347 Madison Avenue, New York City**  
**QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**  
**SCOPING SESSION NUMBER ONE 3:00**

The following is a summary of the questions and comments made and the responses given at the Major Milestone/NEPA Scoping Meeting Question and Answer Session Number One on July 26, 1996. The complete Hearing Transcript is included in this Scoping Document's Support Documentation Volume which is available at the New York City Transit Offices.

**Question: Bruce Silverplatt**, Turtle Bay Association: Is it possible to use the existing plans from the 1974 Second Avenue Subway Project to cut down on planning time for this Study? It is the opinion of the residents in his area that any Alternative that will remove or preempt existing facilities should be eliminated from further consideration. In addition, Mr. Silverplatt expressed a preference for an Alternative that will provide access to the Airports (LaGuardia and JFKIA). He feels that the most popular MESA Alternatives, in terms of the Turtle Bay area residents, are the Second Avenue Subway Alternative and perhaps the Ferry Alternative.

**Response: Peter Cafiero**, New York City Transit: Mr. Cafiero stressed the fact that at this point in the Study, no Alternatives have been eliminated and therefore all options were still "live". The fundamental goal of the Study is to eliminate congestion on the East Side of Manhattan and therefore any Alternative that will preempt or disrupt surface traffic in this area will be examined carefully. The plans for the 1974 Second Avenue Subway will be used a great deal in the analysis of the project, however, as technology has changed considerably, there are other plans that must be prepared for this Study. Finally, as far as airport access, it is really outside the realm of the Study, but will be examined in terms of its potential to affect transit. The Ferry Alternative was subsequently eliminated from consideration within this Study as a "Stand Alone" Alternative because it does not adequately address the goals of the study. The reasons for its elimination are detailed in a White Paper.

**Question: Irwin Fruchtman**, Engineer: Mr. Fruchtman distributed several copies of designs for an elevated transit system ( Alternative #11). His system involves a clear, shatterproof plastic enclosed "bubble" that would operate on Third Avenue. Mr. Fruchtman went on to stress the need for a long-range prioritized plan that does not isolate the East Side from other parts of NYC, but rather a plan that integrates the different regions of the City; a plan that is well thought-out in terms of the future needs of NYC, one that involves parking issues, and highway/transitway design.

**Response: Peter Cafiero**, New York City Transit: An elevated transit system was added as an Alternative as a result of this comment. However, it was subsequently eliminated from further consideration in this Study based on a number of issues which are detailed in a White Paper.

**Question: Beverly Dolinsky**, Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee: Ms. Dolinsky expressed concern for the pending service cuts on the Lexington Avenue line in light of the current

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congestion. Second, she suggested a free bus-subway transfer as a TSM strategy that may be implemented immediately. Third, she questioned whether the Second Avenue Subway, designed as a two track subway, would provide enough carrying capacity.

**Response: Peter Cafiero**, New York City Transit: The service cuts on the Lexington Avenue line will be on the shoulders of the peak and will therefore have little effect on the congestion commonly seen during peak hours. Second, free transfers (from bus to subway) will be evaluated as part of the No-Build Alternative for this Study.

**Question: Yvonne Morrow**, Congressman Sheldon Silver's Office: Ms. Morrow endorsed the Second Avenue Subway as a viable Alternative for the Lower East Side (LES) as long as the Eastern Alignment is part of the routing. She praised the free bus-subway transfer as particularly applicable to the LES residents who now have no direct access to the subway. The LES is specifically interested in improved bus service for their area.

**Response: Peter Cafiero**, New York City Transit: The free-bus-subway transfer will be encoded in the No Build Alternative model. The MESA Team is working with the community to identify potential improvements to bus service in the Study Area zones.

**Statement: George Haikalis**, Chairman of the Auto-Free Committee of Transportation, editor of The New York Streetcar News, President of Village Crosstown Trolley Coalition: Mr. Haikalis spoke, at length, of the importance of a long-range planning framework that integrates the plans of all on-going studies into one comprehensive regional plan. He stressed the need to finance advocacy groups to build a coalition. In addition, Mr. Haikalis distributed several LRT drawings, highlighting an LRT on Madison and Second Avenues.

**Question: Shirley Jelks**, New York City Transit: Ms. Jelks questioned the validity and reliability of the model being developed. She stressed the importance of creating a model that "simulates all the Alternatives [to see] the optimum arrangement regardless of the money involved." Further, the model needs to determine whether people not currently using transit, will be absorbed into the system rather than merely distributing current transit users.

**Response: Peter Cafiero**, New York City Transit: The NYMTC model examines changes in the regional transit system over the next 20+ years, based on population and demographic changes. The individual Studies will examine the Alternatives in substantially more detail and make sure that an Alternative that may solve problems in one area, does not create problems in another.

**Question: Coralee Cooper**, Researcher for the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC): Ms. Cooper read a prepared statement reinforcing their support of the MESA Study and its efforts to reduce congestion on the East Side. The statement reiterated the importance for additional subway transit as well as increased bus service throughout the Study corridor. The NRDC also supports publicly or privately financed jitney service.

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**Note:** Peter Cafiero reiterated the importance of coordination between the different on-going Studies. He noted that the MESA Study is working closely with NYCDOT and NYSDOT to make sure that coordination continues.

**Question: Bob Olmstead,** Mr. Olmstead cited the omission of the Second Avenue Subway Eastern Alignment Option that allows the connection at Delancey with the Nassau Street Tunnel. He detailed several reasons why this Alternative should be added to the list.

**Response: Peter Cafiero,** New York City Transit: This eastern alignment option as described by Mr. Olmstead has subsequently been added to the list of Alternatives for the Study and, at present, remains on the Reduced Long List of Alternatives.

**Question: Judy Marcus,** [former] Congressman Charles Millard's Office (Community Board 8).: Ms. Marcus reiterated the need for a free bus-subway transfer. Her main concern involved the potential limiting of curbside deliveries to one side of the street, should an at-grade Alternative become the LPA.

**Response: Peter Cafiero,** New York City Transit: As noted earlier, the free bus-subway transfer will be assumed in the No-Build Alternative. Further, Peter Cafiero addressed the fact that current bus lane configurations that are supposed to prohibit curbside deliveries, have only signage to indicate that local deliveries are prohibited at certain times of the day. Signage, alone, does not work, prohibiting local deliveries is futile and therefore, different technologies and methods for enforcement need to be examined.

**Question: Jack Dean, Regional Plan Association:** Mr. Dean inquired about the evaluation criteria for screening the Alternatives and to what extent are the evaluation criteria similar among the MTA's Long Range Planning Studies.

**Response: Peter Cafiero, New York City Transit:** Mr. Cafiero responded that, in general, the evaluation criteria are similar among the Studies, in terms of issue identification and quantifiable results from each. The coordination of all the on-going network expansion studies takes place through the MTA Long Range Planning Framework Group consisting of study managers and key staff members from the MTA, LIRR, Metro-North and NYC Transit. The Long Range Planning Framework is a process to ensure that all studies are based on the same assumptions regarding regional economic, demographic, and journey-to-work forecasts (county to county), current and future levels of transit service evaluation and the future shape of the regional transit network. The framework is also aimed at using common criteria, including a cost benefit methodology approved by the MTA board. Such similarities in evaluation criteria will facilitate comparison of solutions.

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**MIS/DEIS for Manhattan East Side Transit Alternatives Study**

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**Manhattan East Side Transit Alternatives Study**  
**Major Milestone/ NEPA Scoping Meeting**  
**July 26, 1996**  
**MTA Boardroom - 347 Madison Avenue, New York City**  
**QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**  
**SCOPING SESSION NUMBER TWO 6:00-8:00PM**

The following is a summary of the questions and comments made and the responses given at the Major Milestone/NEPA Scoping Meeting Question and Answer Session Number Two on July 26, 1996. The complete Hearing Transcript is included in this Scoping Document's Support Documentation Volume which is available at the New York City Transit Offices.

**Question: Bill Otto**, Community Board 6 in Manhattan: Mr. Otto recommended that there be a matrix and potential time line detailing short and long term project Alternatives, some low and some capital intensive Alternatives. This matrix and time line would present the Alternatives in terms of potential phasing. Second, Mr. Otto was concerned that at there is not enough project progress with regard to public meetings. At the Community Board 6 meeting, the attendees were expecting a presentation and discussion of specific project Alternatives, but instead had very general discussion was held regarding the concerns of Community Board 6 members. Board 6 was displeased with this meeting forum and are hoping that meetings in the future will be more substantial.

**Response: James Dubbs**, New York City Transit: Mr. Dubbs assured Mr. Otto that at this point in the MESA project, a lot of the "paperwork" has been completed and there will be considerably more progress in the future. At the Community Board Meeting, there were still a lot of unresolved issues with respect to the broadly defined Alternatives. Specific decisions regarding Alternative alignments have not been refined and therefore have not yet been presented to the public, from whom we were expecting more suggestions regarding potential solutions to their concerns. It was essential that the project Team had a clear idea from all interested parties what the transit and transportation problems and concerns throughout the east side corridor. Now that we have a better handle on the broad issues, we can continue to refine the Alternatives.

**Response: Peter Cafiero**, New York City Transit Authority Operations Planning: As presented in today's meeting, the project time line is based on construction of the full Second Avenue subway, the lengthiest process. The project team is aware of the financial constraints of implementing such an alternative and will therefore we will look at short term, less expensive Alternatives as well.

**Question: Andrew Albert**, New York City Transit Riders Council: How can you run the Lexington Avenue lines on the Broadway lines if one is built to "A" Division standards and the other is "B" Division?

**Answer: James Dubbs**, New York City Transit: The Lexington Avenue line north of Grand Central was constructed to "B" Division standards and therefore can accommodate the wider trains. It is still uncertain whether this option is feasible, but we are investigation this Alternative.

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**Question: Joe Clift**, Community Board 5, Manhattan: Mr. Clift had several questions, as follows: (1) How can you increase dwell time and speed but not frequency? (2) What is the purpose of the Alternative which recommends extending the #6 south. (3) Will we be looking at full automation and new technology? (4) Are we going to look at 11 car stations or only 12 car stations? (5) In addition to the potential stop at 63rd and First Avenue, please look at 63rd and Second Avenue for a stop on the Q line in anticipation of the Second Avenue Subway. Also, will there be a passenger transfer station at 63rd and Lexington? (6) Will the Second Avenue Subway connect at 63rd Street to the 6th Avenue line? (7) Will the cost estimates be reevaluated in terms of current dollars rather than based on historical estimates?

**Answer: Peter Cafiero**, New York City Transit, Operations Planning: (1) With signaling, you can potentially increase the amount of trains per hour. The current limit of 30 trains per hour is because of signaling restrictions, updating signals could increase this limit. Also, decreasing dwell times, could potentially increase through-put. (2) The #6, which currently has excess capacity, extension would perhaps encourage people to use local service to Lower Manhattan relieving congestion on the express. These are lower cost Alternatives which may alleviate congestion problems on the Lexington Avenue lines, without the major capital investment of a new subway. (3) In terms of full automation, the Team will examine Alternatives which will give the best output and that may or may not include full automation. New subway car technology has its pros and cons. New technology requires new maintenance yards system-wide. This is very expensive but when compared to a new subway, it may be less. (4) The Team will look at 11 car stations and 12 car (the maximum) stations. (5) and (6) All of the mentioned stops and connections will be examined in this Study. (7) All cost estimates will be in current dollars.

**Question: Richard Eyn**, Executive Director, East Side Coalition on Airport Access: Mr. Eyn had several questions as follows: (1) There is a noticeable absence of the Port Authority Airport Access plan and the LIRR East Side Access Study in the MESA Study and in the Study Documents. We would like to see it mentioned in this document. It seems that no one involved in the NYCT studies wants to address the PANYNJ Study. (2) A DOT Study of a potential bus lane Alternative with a median on First Avenue was eliminated based on several reasons including the median and delivery problems. Why are you analyzing this again, it would save a lot of money to just review the DOT study done several years ago? (3) Because the Community Boards don't meet until the fall, as a good faith effort can you keep the comment period open until then?

**Response: Peter Cafiero**, New York City Transit: Responses are as follows: (1) We are reasonably sure that this plan has been tabled and will carefully watch for any change in the status. We will figure tying into a potential airport access terminal in the upper east side should that become a reality. All potential Study Area projects (including the 42nd Street Trolley and LIRR Grand Central access) will be assessed in terms of our project.

**Response: Bill Wheeler**: We are very interested in the amount of passengers the airport access proposal will generate and the segments that are proposed. The Managers of each study (MESA, LIRR East Side Access, ARC) meet weekly to assess the influence and the effect of each study on another. The airport access plan is one of these studies and is important to the area.

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**Response: Peter Cafiero**, New York City Transit: There is a great demand for airport access, and the related issues are two-fold: What is the best way to get service to the airport and what is the impact of airport service on the transit needs on the east side of Manhattan? The first issue is outside the scope of our study. The answer to the second issue is the proposal would converge e'l potential passengers to one terminal on the east side of Manhattan resulting in problems of distributing these people throughout Manhattan. We are looking at many potential locations for the Terminal and the resulting impacts of these locations on the east side corridor. The process of the PANYNJ study is different from ours and therefore we are not immediately active in their project. (2) No response (3) The August 7th date set as the end of the comment period is part of the framework set by the FTA, to receive broad comments on the Scoping Document and Scoping Session. As a good faith effort, we will still accept comments into the fall.

**Question: Mr. Perry Luntz**, Turtle Bay Association: Mr. Luntz feels that more 'attention should be paid to coordination between the various MIS/DEIS's and to the needs of the residents of small businesses in the Study Area. In addition, it seems that this Study and the other ongoing studies are revisiting studies of the past that have already been reviewed and rejected (i.e. busway on First Avenue, LIRR EIS's).

**Response: Peter Cafiero**, New York City Transit: Mr. Cafiero responded that although specific alternatives have been examined before, the transit and transportation problems still exist. There may be a wrinkle in these options that we may not have seen before and we need to test these to see how they will perform. We look at these options because they are a lot cheaper than building a new subway and there are perhaps new options that could make them work. For example, we could implement a bus lane alternative in which deliveries will be permitted. The intent of this study is to relieve street congestion and while the MESA project cannot alleviate all street congestion, integration with the other studies can be accomplished.

**Question: Mr. Subutay Musluoglu**, Community Board 4: Mr. Musluoglu recommends using new moving block signal technology for Alternative 2A. He applauds Alternative 2B, but points out that lengthening platforms and straightening out some platforms is a lengthy and expensive process especially for such stations as 14th Street.

#### No Response Necessary

**Question: Mr. Brian Ketchum**, Brooklyn Resident: Mr. Ketchum questioned the validity of this Scoping Session. He asked about the status of Task I and why none of the results were presented at the Scoping Meeting. He asked about the progress of the Task 2 modeling and who would be responsible for the modeling. Mr. Ketchum cited some statistics regarding resultant air pollution from passenger vehicles as quoted from a University of California Study. He recommends that the Study Team look at this report in order to identify the fundamental reasons WHY people drive into the city contributing to congestion and air pollution in midtown. He asked what the screening criteria will be for the study. He finally requested that the Study Team respond to his correspondence.

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**Response: Peter Cafiero**, New York City Transit: This Scoping Session was advertised in several newspapers and the Federal Register in sufficient time as mandated by the FTA. The results from the Task I Inventory Report are still in review and although some were presented at this meeting, the report is in draft form. In terms of modeling progress, NYCT is still waiting for the region-wide forecasts from NYMTC. This includes population, employment, work trips and travel patterns projections for the next 20 years. We expect these numbers to be available in a few weeks. The NYMTC projections which will be used to model each alternative will effect transit and transportation within the study area. The screening criteria to be used in the MESA project are the current MTA evaluation criteria.

**Question: Joe Clift**, Community Board 5, Manhattan: Can we commit to a September date for the deadline on the comment period? Is there a market research component to the MESA Study? How can you make decisions that will dramatically change peoples travel patterns without understanding the choices they currently make? Can you distribute this mode choice and O/D data to the public?

**Response: Peter Cafiero**, New York City Transit: The August 7th was a tentative deadline. Since this is an ongoing process, if there are issues that need to be addressed they will always be accepted by the Study Team. Mr. Cafiero noted that the research department is constantly researching transit riders mode choices and while the MESA Study does not have a specific market research aspect, this information will be used. Mr. Cafiero will investigate the possibility of distributing the information to the interested parties.

**APPENDIX B**

**LIST OF INTERESTED PARTIES**

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#### LIST OF INTERESTED PARTIES

The following is a list of state and local agencies, elected officials on all government levels, community boards, other agencies, interest groups (national and local), major utilities and major institutions. This list of local interest groups is as yet, incomplete, but it expected to grow as more people become aware of the project. Potential cooperating agencies are indicated with an asterisk. A cooperating agency is defined as any agency whose approval or acceptance is likely to be required for the project. Elected officials are not specifically cited as cooperating agencies, but their involvement and acceptance of the study efforts are critical.

#### Federal Agencies

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

Amtrak (National Railroad Passenger Corporation)

Centers for Disease Control: Center for Environmental Health and Injury Control

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Federal Energy Regulation Commission

National Marine Fisheries Service

National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

U.S. Department of Agriculture

U.S. Department of Commerce

U.S. Department of Defense

U.S. Department of Energy

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

\*U.S. Department of Interior (including National Park Service and Office of Environmental Affairs) U.S. Department of Transportation, Washington and Regional Offices (including the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Railroad Administration and the U.S. Coast Guard)

\*U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington and Regional Offices

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

U.S. Geological Survey

#### New York State Agencies

Battery Park City Authority

Governor's Office for Motion Picture and Television Development

Long Island Rail Road

\*New York City Transit

\*Metropolitan Transportation Authority

\*Metro North Railroad

\*New York Metropolitan Transportation Council

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

New York State Department of Economic Development

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

New York State Department of Health

New York State Department of Law

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New York State Department of State  
New York State Department of Transportation  
New York State Division of the Budget  
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation  
New York State Police  
New York State Urban Development Corporation  
State Historic Preservation Office  
MTA Bridges and Tunnels (Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority)  
County Planning or Transportation Board

#### New York City Agencies

Mayor's Office of Construction  
Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination  
Mayor's Office of Film, Theater and Broadcasting  
Mayor's Office of Intergovernmental Relations  
Mayor's Traffic and Construction Coordination Council  
New York City Arts Commission  
New York City Corporation Council  
New York City Council  
New York City Department of Business Services  
New York City Department of Buildings  
\*New York City Department of City Planning  
New York City Department of Environmental Protection  
New York City Department of General Services  
New York City Department of Health  
New York City Department of Parks and Recreation  
New York City Department of Sanitation  
\*New York City Department of Transportation  
New York City Economic Development Corporation  
New York City Fire Department  
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission  
New York City Office of Management and Budget  
New York City Police Department  
New York City School Construction Authority  
New York Public Library  
Office of the City Council President  
Office of the Comptroller  
Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Community Relations  
Office of the First Deputy Mayor  
Office of the Bronx Borough President  
Office of the Brooklyn Borough President  
Office of the Queens Borough President  
Office of the Manhattan Borough President

#### Study Area Community Boards

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\*Bronx Community Boards 1, 2, 3, and 4

\*Brooklyn Community Boards 1, 2, and 6

\*Manhattan Community Boards 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, and 11

#### Other Agencies and Interested Parties

Audubon Society

Chamber of Commerce (local and City)

City Club of New York

CIVITAS

Environmental Action Coalition

Environmental Defense Fund

General Contractors Association of New York Inc.

Local Libraries

Municipal Arts Society

Natural Resources Defense Council

Neighborhood Open Space Coalition

New York City Clear Air Campaign

New York Environmental Institute

New York Environmental Justice Alliance

New York Historical Society

New York Public Interest Research Group

Parks Council

Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC)

Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

Preservation League of New York

Regional Plan Association

Sierra Club

Society for the Architecture of the City

Strap Hangers Campaign

Transportation Alternatives

Transport Workers Union

Tri-State Transportation Campaign

#### Elected Officials

Governor George Pataki

Senator Alfonse D'Amato

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani

New York City Comptroller Alan Hevesi

Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger

Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer

Brooklyn Borough President Howard Golden

Queens Borough President Claire Shulman

U.S. Representatives

State Senators and Assembly Members

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Council Members  
New York City Public Advocate Mark Green

Utility Companies and Major Institutions

Con Edison  
Empire City Subway  
NYNEX  
Public and Private Schools and Hospitals in the Study Area.