



Access to the Region's Core

Scoping Summary Report

NJ TRANSIT BEGINS THE ACCESS TO THE REGION'S CORE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and NJ TRANSIT (NJT), in partnership with the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (PANYNJ), are sponsoring the Access to the Region's Core Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which will evaluate impacts of both near-term and long-term improvements aimed at improving trans-Hudson commuter rail service. The primary goal of the Access to the Region's Core Draft Environmental Impact Statement (ARC DEIS) is to identify a series of improvements that can be implemented in phases to provide incremental new train and passenger capacity sufficient to accommodate projected growth in travel between west-of-Hudson communities and midtown Manhattan. It is proposed that post-2010 a new two-track commuter rail tunnel under the Hudson River, along with new station capacity proximate to Penn Station New York as well as other investments in supporting rail facilities, will be needed.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS) PROCESS

An Environmental Impact Statement is undertaken when an agency, such as NJ TRANSIT, proposes a major action that will use federal funds and could potentially impact the natural and built environment. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is the first step



in the EIS process, and upon completion, the DEIS document will be widely circulated for public comment. The ARC DEIS will evaluate and document the social, economic, and environmental consequences of the proposed near-term and long-term alternatives and identify mitigation measures for any identified significant adverse impacts.



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THE SCOPING PROCESS: YOUR OPINION MATTERS

The purpose of the scoping process is to provide opportunity for the public and agencies to comment on and provide input to the DEIS as it is initiated. A Draft Scoping Document has been prepared as one part of the scoping process to provide information to the public and agencies on the DEIS process, issues, alternatives and methodologies.

If you would like a copy of the Draft Scoping Document, visit our project Web site at www.accesstotheregionscore.com or request a copy by mail by writing to Access to the Region's Core, One Penn Plaza East, 4th Floor, Newark, NJ 07105-2246.

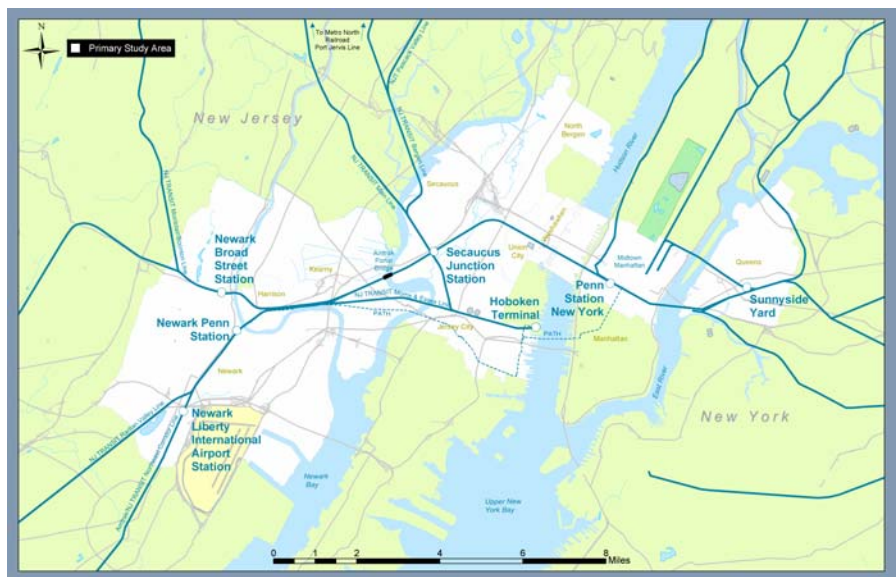
PRIMARY STUDY AREA

The primary project study area is a complex corridor both from a demographic and infrastructure standpoint. The study area extends approximately 17 miles from west to east and is bounded by Newark and Sunnyside Yard in Queens. It includes NJ TRANSIT's Newark Liberty International Airport Station, Newark Penn Station, Newark Broad Street Station, Hoboken Station and Penn Station New York. It also encompasses Portal Bridge over the Hackensack River, Secaucus Junction, and midtown Manhattan.

PROJECT OVERVIEW: A TRANS-HUDSON SYSTEM AT CAPACITY

Additional trans-Hudson commuter rail service is needed now. Penn Station New York and the trains serving it, as well as the other trans-Hudson crossings, are at or near capacity. The Exclusive Bus Lane (XBL) from New Jersey, via the Lincoln Tunnel, to the Port Authority Bus Terminal is operating near capacity in the peak hour. Delays of 30 minutes or more are routinely announced in daily traffic reports at the trans-Hudson vehicular crossings. Midtown Direct, the Montclair Connection and Secaucus Junction made commuting to Penn Station New York more accessible for tens of thousands residing west of the Hudson River. As regional growth and demand for mass transit continues, Penn Station New York cannot accommodate any future planned NJ TRANSIT rail service initiatives.

On both sides of the Hudson River, plans for growth and development rely on safe and efficient travel connections. Yet even taken together, the available rail, highway, ferry and bus networks are all unable to meet long term commuter demand. Within the next 20 years, trans-Hudson peak period demand will exceed capacity for auto, bus, and rail crossings.





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New trans-Hudson commuter rail service benefits to the region include:

- Relief to the congested sections of NJ TRANSIT's commuter rail network, resulting in enhanced reliability and service systemwide.
- Shorter commuter times and more commuting options
- Support for the growth in commuter demand and new development in west Midtown.
- Support for efforts to curb traffic congestion and related pollution in both New York and New Jersey.
- Relief to congested conditions on the trans-Hudson vehicular networks.
- Future expansion opportunities on the NJ TRANSIT commuter rail network.
- Increase resiliency of commuter rail access to and from midtown Manhattan in the event of an emergency.

PROJECT GOALS: GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The ARC Major Investment Study, which served as the first study phase, identified preliminary goals and objectives for the project. These goals and objectives have been expanded and revised to address the needs of the ARC EIS and will help serve as guidelines during the evaluation of each alternative. The project goals include:

- **Improve trans-Hudson mobility**
- **Utilize and improve the region's existing transit infrastructure to the maximum extent possible**
- **Maintain and enhance the economic viability of the NY/NJ Region**
- **Preserve and protect the environment**

THE ALTERNATIVES: A TUNNEL & EXPANDED STATION COMPLEX

The ARC MIS established the need for new trans-Hudson service to midtown Manhattan and concluded that commuter rail will best meet that need. Two "build" alternatives were advanced to the EIS phase for further analysis. In addition, two near-term phased improvements, and a no action or baseline alternative, all stemming from the ARC MIS, will also be evaluated in the ARC DEIS.

No Action or Baseline Alternative

One of the requirements of an EIS is the inclusion of a Baseline Alternative, which represents future conditions without the Access to the Region's Core project. The Baseline Alternative will include the existing transportation network plus existing and programmed projects.



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NEAR TERM IMPROVEMENT ALTERNATIVES

Near-term improvement alternatives would provide additional capacity for trains from west of the Hudson River by 2010. The phased, near-term improvements are incremental capacity enhancements that can be implemented before a long-term build alternative could be selected, designed, constructed, and placed into service. They address the need for additional train storage and staging in close proximity to those platforms that NJ TRANSIT's trains now use at Penn Station New York. The near-term improvement alternatives may be implemented as stand-alone projects, or as an initial phase of the build alternatives.

- **31st Street Linear Yard:** Breakthrough of the wall in the southeast corner of Penn Station New York and construction of a linear yard for NJ TRANSIT under 31st Street. This alternative includes the extension of Penn Station New York Tracks 1-5 to the east in a new three-track tunnel under 31st Street to provide a new storage yard for six 12-car NJ TRANSIT trains.
- **12th Avenue Yard:** Construction of a new yard west of Tenth Avenue between 30th and 31st Streets with track access through Yard "A" from Penn Station New York Tracks 1-9, and Yard "E" from Penn Station New York Track 1. This new yard would be on MTA-owned property just south of the existing LIRR West Side Yard, and would be connected to Penn Station New York tracks used by NJ TRANSIT and Amtrak.

LONG TERM IMPROVEMENT ALTERNATIVES

Two long-term, by 2015, build alternatives will be evaluated during this DEIS. Any additional

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

Long-Term Build Alternative P (Penn Station New York):

This alternative affords a significant increase to the capacity of Penn Station New York for west-of-Hudson commuters. It includes a new two track rail line from the Secaucus Junction Station and a new tunnel from a portal near Tonnelle Avenue in Union City adjacent to the existing North River tunnel. The new tunnel continues under the Palisades and the Hudson River to Penn Station New York. Also included is new station capacity at Penn Station New York. As initially proposed, key features of this alternative, from west to east, include:

- A track connection at Secaucus Junction permitting direct service from the Main/Bergen, Pascack Valley, and Port Jervis lines via the Northeast Corridor to Penn Station New York.
- A storage yard for 20-25 NJ TRANSIT trains at a new yard in New Jersey.
- A fifth track at the Secaucus Junction to accommodate the additional trains from the Main/Bergen, Pascack Valley, and Port Jervis lines.
- Two additional tracks on the Northeast Corridor High Line east of the Secaucus Junction to accommodate additional trains operating in a new tunnel.
- A new two track tunnel under the Palisades and Hudson River.
- A new lower level 8-track, 4-platform station directly beneath the existing tracks of Penn Station New York.
- New passenger circulation corridors, designed to link the new tracks and platforms with the street and with existing passenger concourses, including the Central Concourse at Penn Station New York.
- A short length of tunnel designed for future use and concealed behind a breakout wall. This feature would facilitate a future extension of service north to the vicinity of Grand Central Terminal or east to Sunnyside Yard in Queens with a minimal disruption to existing train operations.



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▪ Long-Term Build Alternative S (Sunnyside):

Alternative S is identical to Alternative P (Penn Station New York) west of the Hudson River. Alternative S includes a new two track rail line from Secaucus Junction and a new tunnel from a portal near Tonnelle Avenue in Union City, adjacent to the existing North River tunnel. The new tunnel continues under the Palisades and the Hudson River to Penn Station New York. Alternative S also includes new station capacity at Penn Station New York.

- A track connection at Secaucus Junction permitting direct service from the Main/Bergen, Pascack Valley, and Port Jervis lines via the Northeast Corridor to Penn Station New York.
- A storage yard for 20-25 NJ TRANSIT trains in New Jersey.
- A fifth track at the Secaucus Junction to accommodate the additional trains from the Main/Bergen, Pascack Valley, and Port Jervis lines.
- Two additional tracks on the Northeast Corridor High Line east of the Secaucus Junction to accommodate additional trains operating in a new tunnel.
- A new two track tunnel under the Palisades and Hudson River.
- Reconfiguration of Tracks 1-5 and extension of Platforms 1 and 2 in Penn Station New York.
- A second new two-track tunnel breaking out of Tracks 1-5 at the east end of Penn Station New York, continuing under 31st Street in Manhattan and under the East River to Sunnyside Yard in Queens.
- A short length of tunnel designed for future use and concealed behind a breakout wall. This feature would facilitate a future extension of service north to the vicinity of Grand Central Terminal with minimal disruption to existing train operations.

Freight Opportunity

The ARC long-term build alternatives analyzed during the MIS provide only for passenger rail services. A freight alignment capable of being implemented with the leading build alternatives was developed. Reflecting agency and public comments, the MIS also assessed the physical aspects of designing the project so as not to preclude future accommodation of modern rail freight equipment at a future time. The freight opportunities analysis was coordinated with the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYC EDC), sponsor of the Cross Harbor Freight MIS/DEIS, and with the respective federal oversight agencies. This DEIS team will continue to coordinate with the NYC EDC Cross Harbor Freight MIS/DEIS and other pertinent rail service plans.

The ARC EIS Timeline

Fall 2003 – Winter 2004:	Public Scoping
Winter 2004:	Final Scoping Document
Spring 2004 – Spring 2005:	Preparation of DEIS
Spring 2005:	Distribution/Review of DEIS
Spring 2005:	Public Hearings on DEIS
Summer 2005:	Selection of Locally Preferred Alternative



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SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

The ARC DEIS will evaluate both short and long-term significant social, economic, and environmental effects, and impacts, of the near-term and long-term build alternatives. Measures to mitigate any significant adverse impacts will be considered. The analysis areas include:

TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS

- Air quality
- Noise and vibration
- Traffic, parking, transit, and pedestrian

BUILT ENVIRONMENT IMPACTS

- Land use, zoning and economic development
- Historic properties and resources
- Parkland
- Aesthetics
- Archaeological Resources

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IMPACTS

- Water quality
- Wetlands
- Ecologically sensitive areas
- Hazardous materials

OTHER IMPACTS

- Environmental justice
- Construction impacts
- Cumulative impacts

BECOME AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT

NJ TRANSIT and the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey encourage everyone to offer comments and provide suggestions about the project. Your input will help guide the DEIS study and improve the overall effectiveness of the near-term and long-term improvements.

A broad array of forums (Open Houses, Workshops, Public Meetings) will be held during the ARC DEIS to provide the general public an opportunity to learn about the study and to comment on its goals and objectives, alternatives, evaluation criteria, and environmental scope and findings.

A Regional Citizens' Liaison Committee (RCLC) will be established to foster communication between the study team, representative groups, such as elected officials, business associations, community and civic organizations and advocacy groups and individual citizens. The RCLC will enable fair representation of interested parties in the study area. To become a member of the RCLC, please call the study information line at 877-ARC-0999 (272-0999) or register online at

<http://www.accessstotheregionscore.com>.

Representatives from various New York and New Jersey agencies will also be involved throughout the project duration, principally through a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), for review and discussion of the study's technical details.

Your Opinion Matters to Us

For more information, a copy of the Scoping Document, or to be placed on the project mailing list, please visit our project Web site at <http://www.accessstotheregionscore.com>.

You may also call the study information toll-free line at 877-ARC-0999 (272-0999) or e-mail the project at info@accessstotheregionscore.com.

Write to us at:

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