

Avenue, SE., Docket Operations, M-30, West Building, Ground Floor, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

4. *Hand Delivery:* U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Docket Operations, M-30, West Building, Ground Floor, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590-0001 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

*Instructions:* You must include the agency name and docket number for this notice at the beginning of your comments. Submit two copies of your comments if you submit them by mail. For confirmation that FTA has received your comments, include a self-addressed stamped postcard. Note that all comments received, including any personal information, will be posted and will be available to Internet users, without change, to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). You may review DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published April 11, 2000, (65 FR 19477), or you may visit [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). Docket: For access to the docket to read background documents and comments received, go to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) at any time. Background documents and comments received may also be viewed at the U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Docket Operations, M-30, West Building, Ground Floor, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590-0001 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. David Schneider, FTA Office of Program Management 202-493-0175, fax: 202-366-3475, or e-mail: [david.schneider@dot.gov](mailto:david.schneider@dot.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Interested parties are invited to send comments regarding any aspect of this information collection, including: (1) The necessity and utility of the information collection for the proper performance of the functions of the FTA; (2) the accuracy of the estimated burden; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the collected information; and (4) ways to minimize the collection burden without reducing the quality of the collected information. Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection.

*Title:* 49 U.S.C. 5317, New Freedom Program.

*(OMB Number: 2132-NEW)*

*Background:* 49 U.S.C. 5317, the New Freedom Program, authorizes the Secretary of Transportation to make grants to states and designated

recipients in urbanized areas of 200,000 persons or greater to reduce barriers to transportation services and expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Grant recipients are required to make information available to the public and to publish a program of projects which identifies the subrecipients and projects for which the State or designated recipient is applying for financial assistance. FTA uses the information to determine eligibility for funding and to monitor the grantees' progress in implementing and completing project activities. FTA collects performance information from designated recipients in rural areas, small urbanized areas and other direct recipients for small urbanized areas annually and collects performance information from designated recipients in large urbanized areas on a quarterly basis. The information submitted ensures FTA's compliance with applicable federal laws and OMB Circular A-102.

*Respondents:* State & local government, private non-profit organizations and public transportation authorities.

*Estimated Annual Burden on Respondents:* 251 hours for each of the 206 respondents.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden:* 122,374 hours.

*Frequency:* Annual and quarterly.

Issued: September 26, 2007.

**Ann Linnertz,**

*Associate Administrator for Administration.*

[FR Doc. E7-19420 Filed 10-1-07; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-57-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Transit Administration

#### Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on the Restoration of Rail Service in the Northern Branch Corridor, Bergen and Hudson Counties, NJ

**AGENCY:** Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

**SUMMARY:** The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ TRANSIT) intend to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement to study the restoration of rail passenger service on the Northern Branch rail corridor between North Bergen, Hudson

County, and Tenafly, Bergen County. The EIS will be prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA: 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*) of 1969 and the regulations implementing NEPA set forth in 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508 and 23 CFR Part 771, as well as provisions of the recently enacted Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The purpose of this Notice is to alert interested parties regarding the plan to prepare the EIS, to provide information on the nature of the proposed transit project, to invite participation in the EIS process, including comments on the scope of the EIS proposed in this notice, and to announce that public scoping meetings will be conducted. This notice supersedes the FTA notice of June 18, 2001 entitled "Major Investment Study/ Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Northern Branch Corridor, Bergen County, New Jersey."

**DATES:** Written comments on the scope of the EIS should be sent to Linda A. Mosch, P.E., NJ TRANSIT Project Manager, by November 7, 2007. Public scoping meetings will be held on Wednesday, October 24, 2007 at 3 to 5 p.m. and at 7 to 9 p.m. at locations indicated under **ADDRESSES** below. An interagency scoping meeting will be scheduled after agencies with an interest in the proposed project have been identified.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments on the scope of the EIS should be sent to Linda A. Mosch, P.E., Project Director—Northern Branch EIS, NJ TRANSIT, One Penn Plaza East, Newark, NJ 07105-2246. Comments may also be offered at the public scoping meetings. The address for the public scoping meeting is as follows: Crowne Plaza Englewood Hotel, 401 S. Van Brunt St., Englewood, NJ 07631.

This location is accessible by persons with disabilities. If special translation or signing services or other special accommodations are needed, please contact the Project Director, Linda A. Mosch, P.E., at (973) 491-8481 least 48 hours before the meeting. A scoping information packet is available on the NJ TRANSIT Web site at <http://NorthernBranchCorridor.com> or by calling the Project Director, Linda A. Mosch, P.E., at (973) 491-8481. Copies will also be available at the scoping meetings.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ms. Rebecca Reyes-Alicea, Community Planner, Federal Transit Administration, One Bowling Green, Room 429, New York, New York, 10004-1415, telephone (212) 668-2203.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: I. Scoping**

In accordance with Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU, FTA and NJT invite comment on the scope of the EIS, specifically on project's purpose and need, the alternatives to be evaluated that may address the purpose and need, and the impacts of the alternatives considered. To ensure that these issues are identified, the scoping meetings will begin with a formal presentation followed by the opportunity for the public to comment on the scope of the EIS. Oral and written comments may be given at the scoping meetings; a stenographer will record all comments. Those wishing to speak are required to register at the meeting location. Registration to speak will begin at 2:30 p.m. and will remain open until 4:30 p.m. for the afternoon session; registration to speak will begin at 6:30 p.m. and will remain open until 8:30 p.m. for the evening session. Written comments may be submitted at the meeting or may be mailed to the project manager at the address in **ADDRESSES** above.

**II. Purpose and Need for the Proposed Project**

The purpose of the Northern Branch project is to address the transportation needs of the Northern Branch Corridor through the re-introduction of rail transit service. The project area is heavily populated and is centrally located in the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area. The area is directly west of the Hudson River, in close proximity to Manhattan. The area's location relative to New York City has played an important role in its development and continues to be an important factor in the economy of the area.

Most of the transportation problems in the project area are the result of the great changes that have taken place during the past 30 years. While Bergen County's population had not changed significantly until 1990, there have been other significant changes. The number of households has grown, resulting in smaller households and more workers per household than in the past. Even more significant has been the growth in employment from 1960 to today. The number of jobs only tells part of the story about the project area's economy. The economy is diversifying. A growing number of the jobs are now service oriented, with fewer in the manufacturing sector. This shift has contributed to the area's transportation problems because service sector businesses generate more trips than manufacturing businesses, especially during the off-peak travel periods.

The growth in households and the diversification of the economy have caused an increase in travel in the project area in recent years. The increases have been during the peak travel periods, the off-peak weekday periods, and the weekend periods. Congestion on the roads is a growing problem, which is reducing overall mobility in the area and could constrain future economic growth, and may affect the area's very high standard of living.

While the transportation system continues to provide a fairly high level of mobility for some residents and businesses, many parts of the system are straining to accommodate the new demands caused by a growing economy. The area's roadways provide the best evidence of the strains on the system. While more roads are congested for longer periods, there are few opportunities to expand local or regional roadway capacity. The project area has a substantial transit system. However, there is evidence that the system is not providing service for all of the markets that could be served. Further investments in transit would improve mobility in Bergen County, alleviating some traffic congestion, and supporting continued economic growth. Provision of new transportation service in the Northern Branch Corridor would address:

- Commuting to New York City (trans-Hudson) from Bergen County;
- Inter- and intra-corridor commuting, both to employment centers within the project corridor, and from the project corridor to employment locations in other areas of New Jersey; and,
- Non-work trips including business, shopping, recreational, and education to New York City, within the corridor, and to destinations outside the corridor in New Jersey.

Based on the needs identified in the project area, goals and objectives in the Northern Branch Corridor were identified in the early planning studies and are as follows.

**Goal 1: Meet the Needs of Travelers in the Project Area****Objectives:**

- *Attract riders to transit.* A central goal of the project is to attract more riders to rail transit in the Northern Branch corridor. In spite of its proximity to New York, eastern Bergen County continues to have high single occupancy vehicle commutation. The goal of re-introducing rail transit is to encourage a greater transit ridership both on opening day and into the future.
- *Improve travel time.* Travelers in the project area put a high value on their

time, and are looking for travel options that will improve their travel time and reliability.

- *Improve convenience.* Travelers are looking for new travel options that will make traveling in the region more convenient. They are looking for frequent service, adequate parking at stations, competitive travel times, and convenient connections to other transit services, such as ferries, PATH, and feeder services.

- *Provide more options for travelers.* Today, travelers are severely limited in their travel options. Transit can be used for only a very small portion of the area's travel needs. Travelers want more travel options to meet their diverse travel needs. Options could include service to many destinations, including Midtown, Lower Manhattan, the Hudson River Waterfront, Newark, and recreational areas, such as the Sports Complex and the Jersey Shore, especially on weekends and at night.

- *Improve services for the low-income/minority/transit dependent travelers.* Transit dependent residents in the project area need good transit options to more of the region's jobs, not only the jobs in Manhattan, but growing employment centers in New Jersey, like the Hudson River Waterfront area, Newark, the Meadowlands, and Bergen and Rockland employment centers.

**Goal 2: Advance Cost-Effective Transit Solutions****Objectives:**

- *Support favorable farebox recovery.* For the vast majority of transit systems, fare revenue does not cover the cost of providing service. However, higher farebox recovery ratios allow transit agencies to maximize the amount of service that can be provided for the same dollar of public operating subsidy. One of the goals of the Northern Branch project is to introduce rail transit to the corridor in a manner that is sensitive to the need to minimize the operating subsidy required to run the service. This will help ensure that the provision of transit service in the corridor is financially sustainable.

- *Advance cost-effective transit solutions.* The objective is to advance a project that, from a cost-benefit perspective, provides the greatest overall benefit at the lowest capital cost.
- *Support future expansion, scalability and affordability.* The Northern Branch project should allow for future transit expansion while at the same time provide a solution that is affordable to construct. With limited capital funds, the ability to advance projects in phases helps to keep the projects affordable. Project scalability

allows projects to be constructed without precluding future expansion projects. One of the criteria on which the Northern Branch project will be evaluated is the degree to which one phase of a project integrates into a more global planning effort for transportation improvement in the region.

#### *Goal 3: Encourage Economic Growth*

##### Objectives:

- *Provide transportation capacity to support growth.* Population and employment growth in and around Bergen County and Hudson County is expected to continue in the future.

Additional transportation capacity and new travel options will be needed to support this growth, providing access between the jobs in the counties and surrounding residential communities. Growing congestion will continue to have negative impacts on the area's economy in the future.

- *Help attract new businesses.*

Companies looking to locate new facilities, or expand existing facilities in Bergen County and Hudson County, will be looking for assurances that steps are being taken to provide the area with new travel alternatives. One of the major assets of this area is its proximity to New York City and its role in sustaining the strength of the State Plan's Metropolitan Planning Area. New transportation choices that improve access to New York and the rest of the region will help Bergen County and Hudson County to maintain its competitive advantage in the region.

#### *Goal 4: Improve regional access*

##### Objectives:

- *Provide connections to a variety of locations within the region.* With the one exception of Manhattan, Bergen County's access to the rest of the region is almost entirely by auto, on highways that are becoming increasingly congested. With the completion of the Secaucus Transfer, the areas served by the Main, Bergen, and Pascack Valley lines now benefit from rail access to the growing Hudson River Waterfront area, to Newark, to Trenton, and to the major recreational attractions, like the Meadowlands and the New Jersey Shore.

#### *Goal 5: Reduce Roadway Congestion*

##### Objectives:

- *Provide more travel options for travelers trying to avoid highway congestion.* Major regional highways in the project area are heavily congested. There are a limited number of major highways, each serving intra-county and regional travel needs. Congestion in Bergen County is a growing problem,

which is likely to become more serious in the future. Transit strategies are unlikely to substantially reduce congestion, but can provide useful new travel alternatives for travelers trying to avoid congestion.

#### *Goal 6: Enhance the Transit Network*

##### Objectives:

- *Eliminate gaps in the rail network.*

Bergen County's transit share for trips to Manhattan is lower than any other part of northern New Jersey. This is due to several gaps in the transit network serving the area. For example, there is no rail service in eastern Bergen County. The closest rail line is the Pascack Valley Line, which is west of the Hackensack River. This inconvenient and capacity-constrained line is not an option for most residents of eastern Bergen County. Also, rail service is infrequent during off-peak periods. Rail service is best to Lower Manhattan, via PATH and ferry, less effective to the Valley, between Canal Street and 34th Street, via PATH, and most difficult to Midtown.

- *Eliminate gaps in the bus network.*

The bus network in eastern Bergen County also has some gaps. First, the network only serves Midtown Manhattan. Also, in the eastern most parts of the county, there is little or no bus service. In the more central parts of the study area there are many bus routes. However, these routes are generally slow because they travel on local roads and make many stops along the route to pick up passengers.

### **III. Alternatives Proposed for Consideration**

It is proposed that the EIS evaluate a Future No Build Alternative and Build alternatives of two modes: diesel-multiple-unit service from North Bergen to Tenafly, with a connection to the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail at Tonnelle Avenue in North Bergen; and an extension of the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail from its existing terminus at Tonnelle Avenue in North Bergen to Tenafly. Additionally, the EIS will evaluate both modal alternatives with a terminus at NJ Route 4 in Englewood.

*Future No Build Alternative:* the Future No Build consists of the transportation system expected to be in place in the project design year if the proposed project were not built. It includes all other projects currently in the North Jersey Transportation Authority's 20-year metropolitan transportation plan.

*Diesel-multiple-unit vehicle:* These alternatives would involve simultaneous operation of rail passenger and freight operations using the

Northern Branch Corridor right-of-way. Terminal stations would be located at Tenafly, in the vicinity of Hudson Avenue; or at NJ Route 4 in Englewood.

*Light rail vehicle:* These alternatives would involve time-separated operation of rail passenger and freight operations using the Northern Branch Corridor right-of-way. Rail passenger service would operate between 5:30 a.m. and 10:30 p.m. with freight operations between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. Terminal stations would be located at Tenafly, in the vicinity of Hudson Avenue; or at NJ Route 4 in Englewood. In order to accommodate the shift of freight service to nighttime operation, corridor improvements would be constructed between Tenafly and Northvale.

The build alternatives will involve construction of new transportation infrastructure, including tracks, stations and yards. As many as 11 station locations will be evaluated. Any additional reasonable alternatives that come to light during the scoping process will also be evaluated.

### **IV. Probable Effects**

The FTA and NJ TRANSIT will evaluate both project-specific and cumulative changes to the social, economic and physical environment—including land use and socioeconomic conditions, ecology, water resources, historic and archaeological resources, visual character and aesthetics, contaminated and hazardous materials, transportation, air quality, noise and vibration, and environmental justice effects. Mitigation of all adverse impacts will be considered.

### **V. FTA Procedures**

In accordance with 23 CFR 771.105(a) and 771.133, FTA will comply with all Federal environmental laws, regulations, and executive orders applicable to the proposed project during the environmental review process to the maximum extent practicable. These requirements include, but are not limited to, the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality and FTA implementing NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500–1508, and 23 CFR Part 771), the project-level air quality conformity regulation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (40 CFR part 93), the section 404(b)(1) guidelines of EPA (40 CFR part 230), the regulation implementing section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR Part 800), the regulation implementing section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (50 CFR part 402), section 4(f) of the DOT Act (23 CFR 771.135), and Executive Orders

12898 on environmental justice, 11988 on floodplain management, and 11990 on wetlands.

Issued on: September 24, 2007.

**Brigid Hynes-Cherin,**

*Regional Administrator, FTA Region 2.*

[FR Doc. E7-19434 Filed 10-1-07; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-57-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Transit Administration

#### Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for Proposed Transit Improvements in the Crenshaw-Prairie Transit Corridor, Los Angeles, CA

**AGENCY:** Federal Transit Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

**SUMMARY:** The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) intend to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Crenshaw-Prairie Transit Corridor Project. The proposed project would provide for transit improvements within the Crenshaw-Prairie Corridor, which extends approximately 10 miles from Wilshire Boulevard on the north to El Segundo Boulevard on the south.

The study area for the project includes portions of five jurisdictions: the Cities of Los Angeles, Inglewood, Hawthorne, El Segundo, as well as portions of unincorporated Los Angeles County, California. The study area is generally defined as the area extending north to Wilshire Boulevard, east to Arlington Avenue, south to El Segundo Boulevard, and west to Sepulveda and La Tijera Boulevards. A variety of land uses exist within the study area including single- and multi-family residences and commercial uses north of the Interstate 10 (I-10) freeway and south of Slauson Avenue, commercial uses along Crenshaw Boulevard and in Hawthorne, industrial and public land uses in Inglewood and El Segundo, as well as redevelopment areas in Los Angeles, Inglewood, and Hawthorne.

The EIS will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and its implementing regulations. The Draft EIS will be combined with the planning Alternatives Analysis required by 49 U.S.C. 5309 for New Starts-funded projects. LACMTA will also use the EIS document to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA),

which requires an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The purpose of this notice is to alert interested parties regarding the intent to prepare the EIS, to provide information on the nature of the proposed project and possible alternatives, to invite public participation in the EIS process (including providing comments on the scope of the Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (AA/DEIS), to announce that public scoping meetings will be conducted, and to identify participating and cooperating agency contacts.

**DATES:** Written comments on the scope of the EIS, including the project's purpose and need, the alternatives to be considered, the impacts to be evaluated, and the methodologies to be used in the evaluations should be sent to LACMTA on or before November 5, 2007 at the address below. See **ADDRESSES** below for the address to which written public comments may be sent. Public scoping meetings to accept comments on the scope of the EIS/EIR will be held on the following dates:

- Monday, October 15, 2007, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., at Darby Park, 3400 W. Arbor Vitae Street, Inglewood, CA 90305.
- Wednesday, October 17, 2007, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., at Nate Holden Performing Arts Center, 4718 W. Washington Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90016.
- Saturday, October 20, 2007, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., at Audubon Middle School, 4120 11th Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90008.

The project's purpose and need, and the initial set of alternatives proposed for study will be presented at these meetings. The buildings used for the scoping meetings are accessible to persons with disabilities. Any individual who requires special assistance, such as a sign language interpreter, to participate in a scoping meeting should contact Ms. Susan Gilmore, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) at 213-922-7287, or [gilmores@metro.net](mailto:gilmores@metro.net).

Scoping materials will be available at the meetings and are available on the LACMTA Web site ([www.metro.net/crenshaw](http://www.metro.net/crenshaw)). Hard copies of the scoping materials may also be obtained from Ms. Susan Gilmore, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) at 213-922-7287, or [gilmores@metro.net](mailto:gilmores@metro.net). An interagency scoping meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 16, 2007 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at LACMTA, One Gateway Plaza (Gateway Conference Room, 3rd Floor), Los Angeles, CA 90012.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments should be sent to Mr. Alan Patashnick, Project Manager and Director of South Bay Area Team, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, One Gateway Plaza, Mail Stop: 99-22-3, Los Angeles, California 90012, e-mail address [patashnickalan@metro.net](mailto:patashnickalan@metro.net). The locations of the public scoping meetings are given above under **DATES**.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Ray Tellis, Team Leader, Los Angeles Metropolitan Office, Federal Transit Administration, 888 South Figueroa Street, Suite 1850, Los Angeles, CA 90017, phone (213) 202-3950, e-mail [ray.tellis@dot.gov](mailto:ray.tellis@dot.gov).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Scoping

The FTA and LACMTA invite all interested individuals and organizations, public agencies, and Native American Tribes to comment on the scope of the EIS, including the project's purpose and need, the alternatives to be studied, the impacts to be evaluated, and the evaluation methods to be used. Comments should focus on: Alternatives that may be less costly or have less environmental or community impacts while achieving similar transportation objectives, and the identification of any significant social, economic, or environmental issues relating to the alternatives.

##### Purpose and Need for the Project

The project purpose is to improve public transit service and mobility in the Crenshaw-Prairie Corridor between Wilshire and El Segundo Boulevards. The overall goal of the proposed project is to improve mobility in the corridor by connecting with existing lines such as the Metro Green Line or approved transit lines, such as the Exposition Light Rail Transit (LRT) Line (under construction). The proposed project is included in the current LACMTA Long-Range Transportation Plan and in the Southern California Association of Governments' 2004 Regional Transportation Plan (<http://www.scag.ca.gov/rtp2004/2004/Final/07RTPProjectList.xls>).

Mobility issues in this corridor have been well documented in many studies, including the *Crenshaw-Prairie Corridor Preliminary Planning Study* (1994), the *Route Refinement Study* (2000), and the *Major Investment Study* (MIS) (2003). These reports are available for review on the LACMTA Web site (<http://www.metro.net/crenshaw>). Additional considerations supporting the project's need include: