



New York City Transit

May 17, 2016

Ms. Diane Barlow
Murray Hill neighborhood Assoc.
P.O. Box 1897
New York, NY 10156-1897

Re: Environmental Impact Statement for Proposed Emergency Ventilation Plant

Dear Ms. Barlow:

This is to inform you of MTA New York City Transit's plan to hold a public meeting to allow the public to comment on MTA New York City Transit's (NYC Transit) intention to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), Article 8 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law (ECL). The Proposed Action consists of MTA funding for the construction of a new emergency ventilation plant to principally serve the Lexington Avenue Subway Line tunnels between the 33rd Street/Park Avenue South Station and the Grand Central Terminal/42nd Street Station subway tunnel below Park Avenue northbound traffic lanes.

The emergency ventilation plant construction would be occurring in the Murray Hill Historic District, as designated by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and the National Register of Historic Places.

A comprehensive ventilation study was conducted by NYC Transit to categorize each of the subway tunnels in order of priority with regard to safety. The tunnel section between 33rd Street/Park Avenue South Station and the Grand Central Terminal/42nd Street Station on Park Avenue has a priority ranking of 5 and is the principal subject of this Proposed Action.

The emergency ventilation plant would be constructed below the street bed in the northbound traffic lanes of Park Avenue. At present, two alternatives are under consideration for the emergency ventilation plant as follows: in the street bed on Park Avenue between 36th and 38th Street; and, in the street bed on Park Avenue between 37th and 39th Street. For each of these alternatives, the ventilation ducts would connect to the subway tunnels below grade in the intersection at 37th or at 38th Street, respectively. Certain ventilation ducts would incur "cut and cover" construction; others would be tunneled.

Considering the potential effects of the proposed emergency ventilation plant project on aesthetic/historic/visual resources, open space resources, noise and vibration and transportation during the construction phase, MTA NYC Transit, has determined that the

Environmental Impact Statement for Proposed Emergency Ventilation Plant

May 17, 2016

Page 2

Proposed Action may cause one or more significant impacts on the environment and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will be prepared under SEQRA, Article 8 of the NYS ECL. A Notice of Intent and Positive Declaration on the DEIS has been submitted to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation for publication in the Environmental Notice Bulletin (ENB) on May 18, 2016. A Draft Scoping Document outlining the content of the DEIS will be prepared and a Public Scoping Meeting has been scheduled.

Date and Place of the Public Meeting

Thursday, June 16, 2016

**Beth Israel/Podell Hall – 1st Floor Bernstein Pavilion
Nathan D. Perlman Place (between East 15th & 16th Streets)
New York, NY 10004**

Meeting Time: 6:30 P.M. to 8:30 P.M.

The Draft Scoping Document and Appendices and the Environmental Assessment Form for the Proposed Action may be obtained at MTA NYC Transit website: www.mta.info. All written statements must be submitted by July 1, 2016. Comments received after that date will not be considered.

If you have questions or require any additional information, please contact Marcus Book, Assistant Director for Government and Community Relations. Mr. Book can be reached at 646-252-2675.

Sincerely,



Veronique Hakim
President

cc: W. Habersham
J. O'Grady
L. Tendler

State Environmental Quality Review Act

POSITIVE DECLARATION

Notice of Intent to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Date Issued: May 18, 2016

Proposed Action: Proposed Emergency Ventilation Plant for the Lexington Avenue Subway Line Between the 33rd Street/Park Avenue South Station & the Grand Central Terminal/42nd Street Station

SEQRA Classification: Type I

Lead Agency:

Metropolitan Transportation Authority- New York City Transit
2 Broadway, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10004
Emil F. Dul, P.E.
Principal Environmental Engineer
646.252.2405

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This document is a Positive Declaration prepared pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) 6 NYCRR 617.12, Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law. The Proposed Action consists of the construction of an Emergency Ventilation Plant (EVP) to provide emergency mechanical ventilation to the Lexington Avenue Subway Line tunnels between the 33rd Street/Park Avenue South Station and the Grand Central Terminal/42nd Street Station. EVPs typically consist of a large chamber or cavern where several fans are located, with plenums (or ductwork) that connect the fan chamber to the subway tunnels and to ambient air. The proposed EVP will contain multiple fans having a total nominal air-moving capacity of approximately 500,000 cubic feet per minute (cfm). With the exception of sidewalk ventilation grates, all the alternatives under consideration involve ventilation plant infrastructure being located underground in the streetbed.

The Proposed Action is classified as a Type I action under SEQRA because the alternatives under consideration would be within or contiguous to designated historic and parkland resources, including the Murray Hill Historic District (which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places) and the Park Avenue Malls (parkland within the jurisdiction of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation). Type I actions may have a significant adverse impact to the environment and may require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

The original construction of the New York City subway system included natural ventilation sufficient for normal operations, but did not address the special ventilation needs during emergency conditions

- Under northbound Park Avenue between East 36th and East 38th Streets;
- Under northbound Park Avenue between East 37th and East 39th Streets; and
- Under northbound Park Avenue between East 36th and 37th Streets.

The AA/FE includes an integrated analysis of engineering, economic and environmental implications of each alternative. From among the array of Potential Alternatives, two alternatives located within the streetbed of Park Avenue northbound between East 36th Street and East 39th Street have been preliminarily identified as Candidate Alternatives and will be the focus of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). One alternative (Alternative 11) would be located under the northbound Park Avenue streetbed between East 37th Street and East 39th Street; the other alternative (Alternative 12) would be located under the northbound Park Avenue streetbed between East 36th Street and East 38th Street. A final decision on the alternatives to advance to the Draft EIS will be provided in the Final Scoping Document, after review and consideration of public input during the scoping process. For more information on the alternatives analysis process, refer to the Draft Scoping Document and AA/FE report.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Potential significant environmental effects/impacts resulting from constructing and operating the proposed EVP identified in the Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) include:

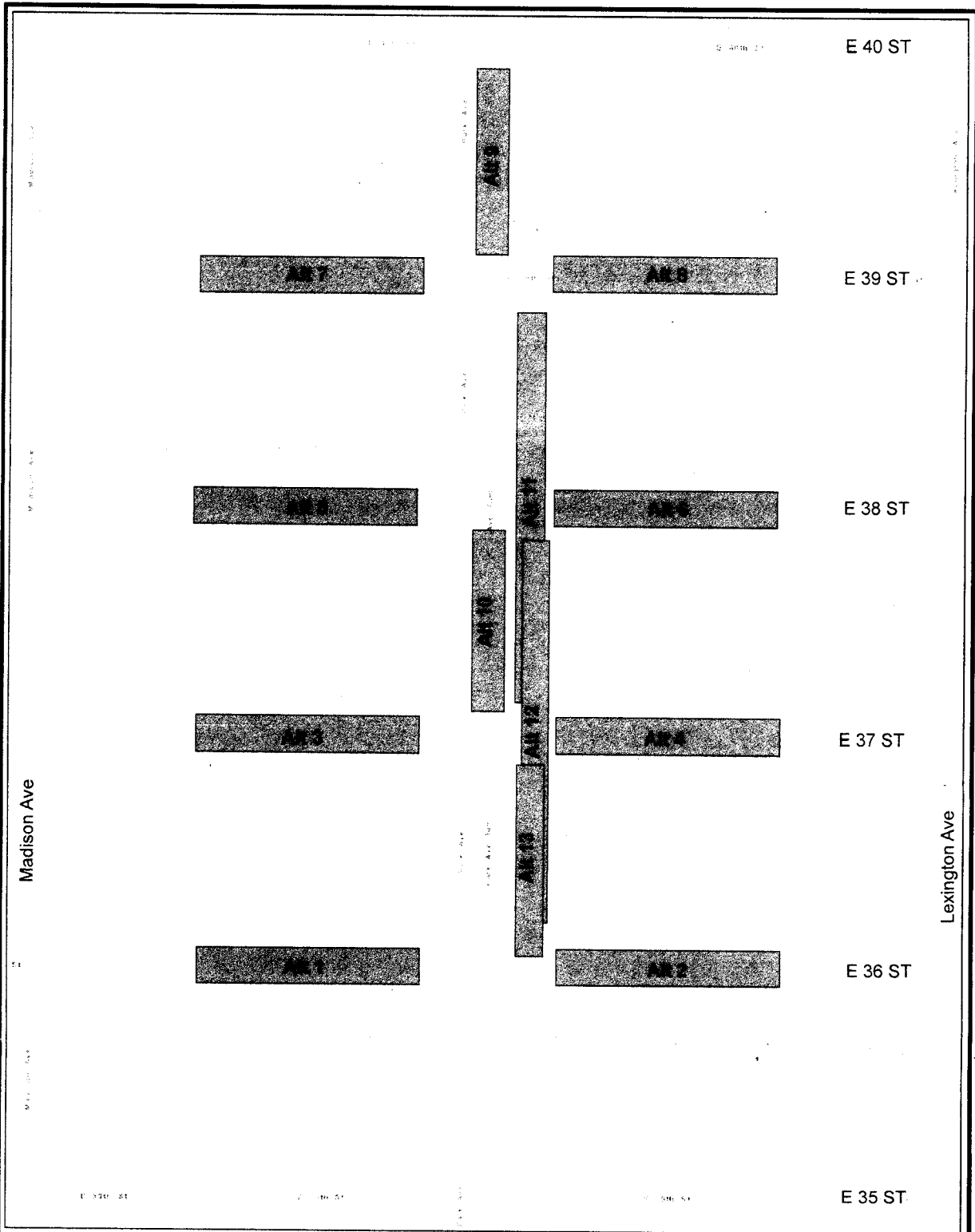
- **Impacts to Historic Resources** – Because portions of the project area would be located within the National Register and/or New York City Murray Hill Historic District and numerous individual historic resources are also present in the project area, construction in the vicinity of these resources could result in temporary or permanent impacts and require mitigation.
- **Impacts to Noise, Vibration, and Air Quality Sensitive Receptors** – Given the dense mix of buildings in the project area, it is likely that construction activity would occur in close proximity to sensitive land uses and for extended periods of time. Therefore, construction activity could potentially result in impacts related to noise, vibration, and air quality.
- **Impacts to Transportation** – Traffic and pedestrian movement could be impacted during construction as a result of temporary lane closures, detours, or other traffic modifications necessary to allow construction of an EVP in the street bed.

DETERMINATION TO PREPARE AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Considering the potential impacts outlined above, MTA NYCT, acting as lead state agency for SEQRA, has determined that the Proposed Action may cause one or more significant impacts to the environment and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will be prepared. The Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS/FEIS) will be prepared in accordance with Article 8 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law and in compliance with all applicable state laws and regulations.

PUBLIC SCOPING

A Draft Scoping Document outlining the content of the DEIS has been prepared. The purpose of the Draft Scoping Document is to provide the public and state and local agencies with an initial opportunity to comment on the DEIS process, including the project's purpose and need, alternatives considered, and the study areas/methodologies to be used in the analyses. Appendix A to the Draft Scoping Document is the AA/FE report which describes the engineering, economic and environmental implications of the alternatives. The Draft Scoping Document and the EAF for the Proposed Action may be downloaded at <http://www.mta.info/> or obtained in hard copy from MTA NYCT and at the addresses listed below.



Legend

 Proposed Alternative Locations

0 50 100 200 Feet



Alternatives Overview

**Emergency Ventilation Plant
Lexington Avenue Line**

E 33rd Street to E 42nd Street,
Manhattan, New York



Louis Berger

Figure 1