



# HUDSON TUNNEL PROJECT

## INTRODUCTION

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and NJ TRANSIT are preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the Hudson Tunnel Project (the "Project"). The FRA and NJ TRANSIT have identified a Preferred Alternative that consists of a new rail tunnel under the Hudson River and rehabilitation of the existing Northeast Corridor (NEC) Hudson River crossing, the North River Tunnel. The new tunnel would be constructed first, so that upon completion of the construction, trains could be diverted from the existing tunnel to allow its rehabilitation. When the rehabilitation is complete, both the existing and new tunnels would be in service, providing redundant capability and increased operational flexibility for Amtrak and NJ TRANSIT.

The purpose of the Project is to:

- Preserve the current functionality of Amtrak's NEC service and NJ TRANSIT's commuter rail service between New Jersey and Penn Station New York by repairing the deteriorating North River Tunnel; and
- Strengthen the NEC's resiliency to support reliable passenger rail service by providing redundant capability under the Hudson River for Amtrak and NJ TRANSIT NEC trains between New Jersey and Penn Station New York.

## SCOPING MEETINGS

On May 17 and 19, 2016, the FRA held scoping meetings in the afternoon and evening at the Hotel Pennsylvania (NY) and Union City High School (NJ), respectively. These meetings included open house sessions where attendees could review display boards and interact with members of the Project team informally. The Project team also made formal presentations of Project information twice during each of the meetings at times specified in the meeting advertisements. Comment sheets were made available to attendees to provide an opportunity to submit written comments, and a stenographer was on hand to take formal comments orally. In total, 186 members of the public attended the May scoping meetings.

## WHAT IS SCOPING?

The EIS is being prepared in accordance with regulations of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. NEPA ensures that environmental information is available to the public before any decisions are made. Participation by the public is a critical part of the environmental review process to ensure that public concerns and issues are addressed in the EIS.

Scoping is the initial step in the NEPA process, and it provides the public and agencies an opportunity to review and comment on the Project's purpose and need, alternatives to be studied in the EIS, environmental issues of concern, and the methodologies for the environmental analysis.

On May 2, 2016, the FRA announced its intent to prepare an EIS for the Project by publishing a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register. Publication of the NOI initiated the scoping period for the Project. Concurrent with the NOI, FRA and NJ TRANSIT published a Scoping Document on the Project website, and copies were placed on display at local libraries for public review. Comments were accepted orally and in writing during scoping meetings, online via the Project website, and by mail. The scoping comment period closed on May 31, 2016.



*Presentation at the New York Scoping Meeting*

## SCOPING PROCESS FEEDBACK

The scoping process generated numerous comments, questions, and suggestions in relation to the Hudson Tunnel Project EIS, all of which will be addressed as part of the EIS process. Below is a brief summary of the type of comments received by topic:

- *Environmental Review Procedures and Public Outreach.* These types of comments related to: the procedures for environmental review; adding specific agencies to the list of Lead, Cooperating, and Participating agencies; the scoping meetings themselves - the dates chosen, the location, and the noticing; and the types of future public outreach activities. Comments received also related to requests for a Regional Citizens' Liaison Committee.
- *Project Definition and Purpose and Need.* These comments related to: terminology (e.g., tunnel versus tunnels, tubes versus tunnel); clarification of Project elements (e.g., that no new stations are proposed in Manhattan); general statements about what the goals of the Project should be; and the difference between the Hudson Tunnel Project and the Gateway Program.
- *Project Cost and Funding.* These comments related to: questioning high project cost; funding sources; and how cost-reducing measures would be considered in examining the range of alternatives.
- *Alternatives.* These comments related to various Project elements and alternatives to the Project. Different alternatives comments focused on the tunnel alignment as it relates to Penn Station New York, requests for modification of the Hudson Tunnel Project to include different elements, different phasing, or various companion projects.
- *Environmental Analyses (Scope of Work).* These comments related to: the scope of the technical analyses to be undertaken in the EIS; the study area for the analysis; the methodologies to be used; how the analyses would account for the larger Gateway Program; whether the analyses would follow the New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual methodologies; addressing climate change and resiliency issues; and issues of concern related to natural resources, including the Hudson River.
- *Project Schedule.* These comments related to the Project schedule, including the schedule for environmental review and for Project construction. Commenters focused on the importance of the Project and the need to implement it quickly.
- *General Support.* Statements of support for the Hudson Tunnel Project were submitted.



To read all of the comments submitted during the Scoping process, and the Project team's responses to them, please refer to the **Scoping Summary Report** on the Project website. You can find this document, as well as the original Public Scoping Document at: [www.hudsonunnelproject.com/library](http://www.hudsonunnelproject.com/library).

## PROJECT CONTACTS

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