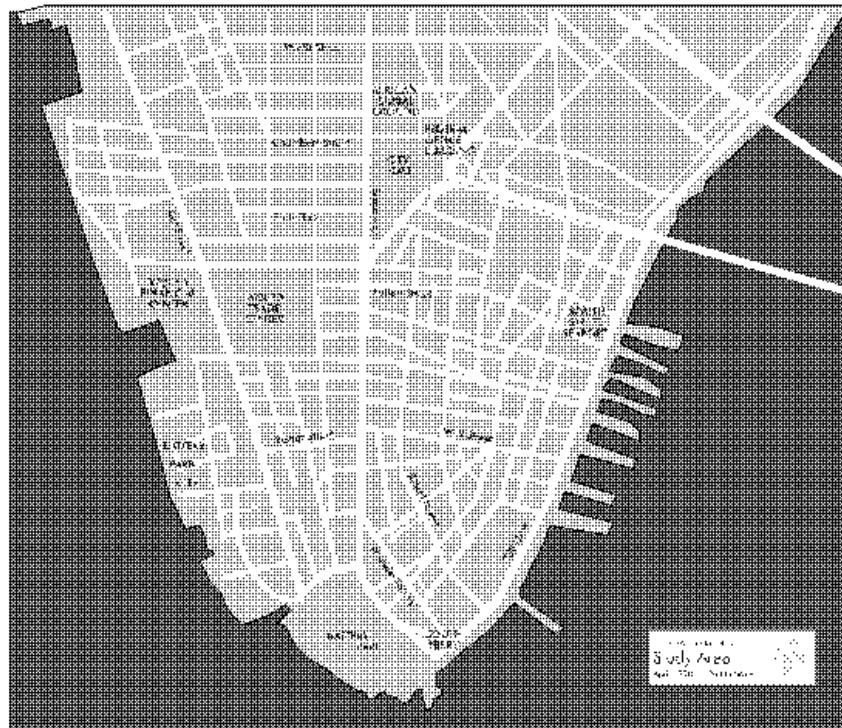


MTA Seeks to Improve Access to Lower Manhattan

As part of the MIS/DEIS process, scoping meetings are held to elicit public input on the array of alternatives the study should consider. The draft scoping document provides detail on the definition of the problem and sets forth possible short and long-range strategies that might correct the problems. Potential goals and objectives that will serve as guides for evaluation of different alternatives are also presented. These represent a starting point to begin the dialogue on what needs improvement and possible approaches to improvements. Following are highlights of the draft scoping document.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) has begun a Major Investment Study/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (MIS/DEIS) to investigate transportation access problems from New York's suburbs to Lower Manhattan and develop strategies to overcome them.

The core Study area is Lower Manhattan south of Worth Street (see map) and includes key business locations such as the World Trade Center and World Financial Center, Wall Street and Water Street corridors, civic sites such as City Hall, Federal Plaza, and Foley Square, historic and recreational areas such as South Street Seaport, Federal Hall, and the Battery, and growing residential areas such as Southbridge Towers, Battery Park City, and new residential conversions of commercial space east of Broad Street.



Trips from NYC suburbs to Lower Manhattan typically involve multimodal connections, such as from railroad to subway. The interface between modes--stations and passageways--tend to be congested, and the subway links are perceived to be unreliable, leading to customer anxiety when trying to make a train connection. Immediate improvements in travel comfort and reliability could come through improvements to station access and services. Despite the wide array of available public transit services, commuters complain of

Keeping Jobs in NYC

Study Goals and Objectives

crowded, uncomfortable unreliable and unappealing subways and buses, particularly from Upper Manhattan and Queens, and inconvenient transfers from commuter rail stations such as Grand Central Terminal, Penn Station, and Jamaica Station.

Lower Manhattan has over 120 million square feet of office space, is the third largest business district in the U.S. after midtown Manhattan and Chicago, or over four square miles in the sky. Nearly a decade ago, a severe recession eliminated as many as 100,000 jobs, and some high-profile firms have merged, moved, or gone out of business. In recent years, the economic climate has improved and profits and employment for surviving firms in the financial sector have increased. However, continued telecommunication advances and the relocation of “back office” functions to less expensive locations has occurred. Improved public transit access is believed to be a key ingredient in influencing firms to stay or relocate to Lower Manhattan, and in serving the transportation needs of the growing residential and tourist communities. This study is designed to identify the needs of the area, and to recommend transportation alternatives that respond to those needs.

Considering the on-going transformation of Lower Manhattan, and transportation conditions in the area, the following preliminary study goals have been established:

1. Development of transportation solutions which can be feasibility initiated that are cost-effective and broadly beneficial in meeting identified transportation shortcomings, with emphasis on the interface with suburban carriers, including:
 - increasing levels of reliability and attractiveness with emphasis on existing facilities;
 - providing needed capacity with emphasis on existing facilities;
 - identifying opportunities to reduce total travel times; and
 - coordinating with airport access alternatives.
2. Maintain or improve Lower Manhattan’s environmental quality; and
3. Provide meaningful and significant opportunities for business, civic, and community input on necessary transportation strategies throughout the study process.

These goals provide a general direction that will be pursued over the course of the study. However, Lower Manhattan is an area with diverse commercial, residential and tourism interests and these will only expand as Lower Manhattan redevelops itself over the next few decades.



Primary Corridors

Three preliminary access corridors link New York's northern and eastern suburbs to the Lower Manhattan "core area." They are the main connections between Lower Manhattan and the rest of the region, exhibit transportation distress (e.g., crowded, unreliable service) , and are further burdened by the addition of suburban railroad commuters transferring to the subway which causes significant additional congestion, delay, and crowding.

Radiating outward from the Lower Manhattan "core," the preliminary access corridors are:

- Eastside Corridor: northward to the Grand Central Terminal area, bounded on the east by the East River and west by Madison Avenue and Broadway, including such facilities as the FDR Drive, and Lexington Avenue and Broadway BMT Subways. Metro North Railroad customers arriving at Grand Central Terminal headed to Lower Manhattan use this corridor.
- Westside Corridor: northward to the Pennsylvania Station and Port Authority Bus Terminal areas, east to Seventh Avenue, and west to the Hudson River, including such facilities as the Seventh Avenue IRT and Eighth Avenue IND subways, and New York State Highway 9A. Long Island Rail Road customers arriving at Penn Station headed to Lower Manhattan use this corridor.
- Long Island Corridor: eastward through Downtown Brooklyn to the Jamaica Station of the Long Island Rail Road, on the north by the LIRR Main Line and NYCT Queens Boulevard Subway, and to the south to the LIRR Atlantic Branch. Long Island Rail Road customers arriving at Jamaica or Flatbush Avenue Terminal headed to Lower Manhattan use this corridor.

Metro North Railroad customers from Orange and Rockland Counties headed to Lower Manhattan arrive via PATH subway or ferries from NJ Transit's Hoboken Terminal. While these are important transportation facilities, they are not under the jurisdiction of MTA and will not be studied in this effort. However, the Study will capture market needs once the traveler enters New York. This study will not duplicate previous MTA study efforts, but will identify opportunities and synergies in strategy alternatives that are beneficial to both suburban and city-based commuters.

The Process

This MTA Study will be prepared as a combined Major Investment Study (MIS) and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). This combined approach streamlines the study and project development process. An MIS/DEIS is needed as the study may identify possible capital investment strategies that could impact existing travel corridors, have significant travel effects, or require considerable resources, including federal funds. The

Becoming a Constructive Part of the Study

purpose of an MIS is to clearly define the nature of the transportation problem to be solved, and to develop a comprehensive understanding about the likely impacts, costs, and benefits of the alternative transportation investment strategies proposed to solve the problem. The MIS process includes a comprehensive public involvement and agency participation process that ensures the openness of the planning process and the input of all interested and affected parties.

In addition to the MIS process, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires detailed environmental analyses. The State Environmental Quality Review Act (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 may result from the Lower Manhattan Study.

The MTA urges you to become an active, meaningful part of this study. The agency intends that the study reflect the desires of those who travel to, work and live in Lower Manhattan. Study goals and objectives will be discussed, revised and reinterpreted during the public outreach process and a final list of Study goals will be issued based on public input. Similarly, the lists of potential alternatives that should be explored will expand and be refined based on the input received at scoping meetings and in other outreach forums. In addition to the travel corridors presented in the preliminary scoping document, other areas will be considered as the alternatives become more fully defined and comments from the general public and interested agencies are voiced. These comments may suggest new study elements or will indicate revisions that are needed.

A Public Advisory Committee (PAC) offers a central venue where issues will be aired, agreements documented and differing points of view reconciled. All interested groups and individuals are invited to join the PAC and be active participants in this study. The first PAC meeting is scheduled for August 5, 1998, from 8 AM - 10 AM at a downtown location to be determined. For more information, please call the study information line at (212) 799-4500 or visit our web site at www.lowermanhattanaccess.com. Faxes should be sent to 212-799-2206 or send comments to Mr. John D. Dean, Project Manager, MTA, 347 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017. Comments for inclusion in the Scoping Document may be postmarked or sent up until 8 PM Tuesday, July 14, 1998.