

## LOWER MANHATTAN ACCESS MIS/DEIS

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### *How Can I Find Out More About The Study?*

Public involvement in this study is extremely beneficial in helping to direct the focus of the study. Extensive public participation in the study will help produce results that are meaningful and achievable. As a commuter, transit advocate, business owner, employer or an individual interested in seeing improved access into Lower Manhattan for whatever reason, we urge you to play an active role in the study.

To date, two previous Bulletins like this one have been distributed. The first is a summary of the Public Scoping document; the second offers a summary of all public comments received. For copies of these Bulletins, other public documents, meeting schedules, study schedule, a detailed list of all potential alternatives and pertinent contact information, please visit our Web Site at:

[http://www lowermanhattanaccess.com](http://www.lowermanhattanaccess.com)  
or call us at: (212) 799-4500

# Lower Manhattan ACCESS



MARCH 1999  
BULLETIN #3

## PUBLIC HELPS DEFINE POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVES

The purpose of the MTA's Lower Manhattan Access Study is to evaluate various ways to make the commute from New York's suburbs to Lower Manhattan, the nation's third largest business center, easier.

Over the past months, the project team has aggressively sought public input to help develop the broadest range of strategies that may solve transportation access problems from New York's suburbs to Lower Manhattan. A long list of alternatives has been developed through soliciting public

comments, agency input and extensive data collection and research. Open Houses were held at Grand Central Terminal, Penn Station, Flatbush Avenue Terminal in Brooklyn, the South Street Seaport and the World Financial Center. Four Public Scoping meetings were held in Manhattan, Long Island and Westchester. If you were one of the nearly one thousand New York suburban commuters or travelers to Lower Manhattan that submitted a suggestion at these events, your input helped us craft the long list of alternatives we have developed.



### *Potential Alternatives*

The list of alternatives has been broken down into two general categories: long-term alternatives and Transportation System Management (TSM) alternatives. The long-term alternatives are capital intensive, have a longer time frame for implementation, and involve new construction and expansion of the existing transportation system. TSM measures improve rather than expand the existing system and could be in place within ten years. A typical TSM might be to add ferry service from the suburbs to Lower Manhattan.

With such a tremendous amount of public input throughout the initial stages of the study (over 190 potential alterna-

tives), several suggestions and recommendations did not necessarily fit into either the long-term or TSM categories. This was largely because their impacts on travel time, congestion, and overall effectiveness on the existing system cannot be quantified, or because they fall outside this study's purview. These particular proposals, such as better traveler information systems and improved subway visibility and signage, include improvements that could be implemented in a one-year to five-year time frame. They are being considered as Service Delivery Improvements and will be referred to the appropriate agency for review and potential implementation.

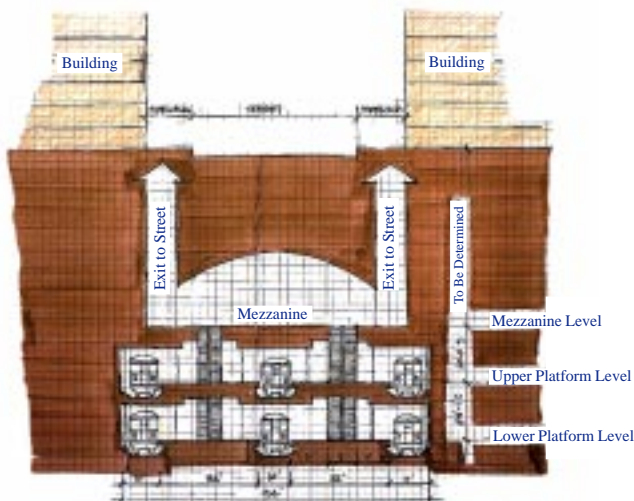
## Narrowing Down

Two Committees have been formed to help set priorities for the Study. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) composed of local, state and federal regulatory and permitting agencies provides technical guidance to the study. A Public Advisory Committee (PAC) is open to the public, and is responsible for communicating public ideas and concerns to the MTA. It is open to everyone, and its members represent a diverse cross-section of commuters, employers, elected officials, transportation advocates and business interests. It serves as a central forum to identify and discuss public issues and concerns, provide critical analysis of concepts and move the study forward. The TAC and PAC have met regularly throughout the study to assist the study team in its direction and assessment of input and findings. The TAC and the PAC established Alternative Development Subcommittees to review the list of alternatives and to develop a focus for the screening of these alternatives. Involvement in the PAC and its subcommittees is your best opportunity to play an active role in the study.

The subcommittees, meeting separately and then jointly, first addressed long-term alternatives. This was done because long-term alternatives require more time and resources to develop. As a result of their meetings, the PAC and TAC subcommittees agreed on a short list of long-term alternatives. These alternatives are more general concepts than specific plans. They deal with concepts of moving people from point "A" to point "B," but they do not approach the specifics of how this will be accomplished. Issues such as construction complexity, impacts on existing infrastructure, effects on subway congestion and travel time, and improvements in connectivity between suburban markets and Lower Manhattan were evaluated as part of an initial analysis of the potential alternatives. Following this quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the potential plans, the alternatives were then refined to a "Top Five" list of alternatives. These alternatives can be categorized into three major types: Commuter Rail, Subway and Shuttle.

## Commuter Rail

Commuter Rail alternatives simplify the commute for the rider by offering a one-seat ride or across-the-platform transfer from New York suburbs directly into and through Lower Manhattan into Brooklyn. One suggests a link from Grand Central Terminal, through Lower Manhattan, into LIRR's Flatbush Avenue Terminal in Downtown Brooklyn. A second offers the same principle, with the link from Penn Station rather than Grand Central. The link to Flatbush Avenue Terminal could allow LIRR trains to travel westward through Downtown Brooklyn to Lower Manhattan.



Conceptual prototype of Lower Manhattan Station.

## What's

*The PAC and TAC subcommittees will now turn to the issue of compiling a TSM package: potential shorter term alternatives focus on improving your existing commute, that can be in place within ten years. The TSM package will include options that improve the existing transportation system without expanding the system. Alternatives in the TSM package could include:*

- *improved subway service, such as new subway signaling systems that would allow more frequent service*
- *new express ferry service to various points in Manhattan from Westchester, Connecticut and Long Island*
- *improved stair and passageway access to commonly crowded stations in Lower Manhattan, such as Fulton Street*



## Subway

Two subway alternatives were advanced during the refining process. The first builds upon the MTA/New York City Transit's MESA (Manhattan East Side Access) Study. MESA is looking at the viability of an East Side subway, and has focused the study on a line that would run from 125th Street down to 63rd Street, where it would link with the existing Broadway Line. The Lower Manhattan Access Study subway alternative builds upon the proposed new MESA link by extending the subway south from 63rd Street to Water Street. A spur from the subway to Grand Central Terminal (for example, across 46th Street) could provide a second direct subway route to Lower Manhattan from Grand Central, in addition to the existing Lexington Avenue subway. This alternative will look at the potential of a connection to the existing Nassau Loop subway in Lower Manhattan to provide a link into Brooklyn.

A second subway alternative proposes conversion of the LIRR Atlantic Branch to NYC Transit service between Downtown Brooklyn and Jamaica. This would provide direct rapid transit service from Jamaica, through Brooklyn, and Lower Manhattan using either existing or new East River crossings.

*Conceptual station design.*

## Shuttle

The shuttle alternative proposes a transfer to a high quality shuttle from Grand Central Terminal into Lower Manhattan, and potentially continuing into Downtown



Brooklyn to Flatbush Avenue Terminal. The transfer at Grand Central Terminal could involve a short walk between trains as compared to the long walks and crowded trains that commuter rail riders currently endure.

With any of these five potential alternatives, commuter rail riders would have the benefit of accessing Lower Manhattan more easily and more quickly than they can now. Commutes from the suburbs would either be a one-seat ride, or something very close to it, such as a simple transfer to an express shuttle. Additionally, the commuter rail alternatives include the possibility of linking the LIRR in Brooklyn with Metro North - an exciting prospect for suburban dwellers throughout the New York metropolitan area. Of course, it is envisioned that any new service will attract thousands of suburban rail commuters who currently transfer to the subway to get downtown. This will reduce demand on existing subway lines, particularly the Lexington Avenue line, improving the commute for current and future subway riders as well.

## Next...

*Ultimately, TSM measures will be evaluated individually and the most productive combinations of TSM measures will be compiled into a TSM package. The TSM package of alternatives will allow us to test whether we can approximate the level of improvement offered by long-term alternatives at a lower cost.*

*Now that the potential long-term alternatives have been identified, and the initial screening of these alternatives has begun, the social and environmental impacts, as well as the viability of the alternatives need to be assessed. If an idea, or collection of ideas, meets the financial, social, and environmental criteria set forth by the FTA, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the public, it will be included in the final set of alternatives. As the study progresses, the analysis of each alternative will continue to be refined. Each alternative will be evaluated in terms of how it meets the goals, objectives and performance measures of the LMA Study. The public will be involved in this process through the PAC and its subcommittees.*