

## Foreword

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This document is the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Second Avenue Subway project. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), in cooperation with MTA New York City Transit (NYCT), published the Major Investment Study (MIS) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the project—which was known as the Manhattan East Side Transit Alternatives (MESA) Study—and a Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register* in August 1999. The publication of the MESA MIS/DEIS marked the beginning of public review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The MIS/DEIS was circulated to involved and interested agencies and other interested parties. A public hearing, which was advertised in local newspapers, was held in September 1999 to receive comments on the project and the MIS/DEIS. At the hearing and through written comments submitted during the comment period, members of the public, community groups, and elected officials voiced their support for a full-length Second Avenue Subway from 125th Street to Lower Manhattan.

Because that full-length subway was not analyzed in detail in the MIS/DEIS, the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS), published in March 2003, was prepared to provide such analysis. A Notice of Availability of the SDEIS was published in the *Federal Register* on April 11, 2003. The SDEIS and Notice of its Availability were widely distributed to involved and interested agencies and other parties and posted on the MTA's website, and the public hearings on the document were advertised in community newspapers. In addition, a notice of public hearing was mailed to all public officials and interested parties in the MTA service area, and a press release announcing the hearing was sent to all media outlets in the area. Bi-lingual signs announcing the hearing were posted in all NYCT subway stations and on some buses. Brochures were handed out in major Manhattan East Side NYCT subway stations. The MTA held two public hearings to receive comments on the document: on May 12, 2003, in the auditorium of the Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House at One Bowling Green (Lower Manhattan); and on May 13, 2003, in the Hecksher Auditorium at El Museo del Barrio, 1230 Fifth Avenue (at 104th Street in East Harlem). The public comment period remained open until June 10, 2003.

This FEIS responds to the comments made during the public comment. The FEIS identifies the comments received and provides responses in Chapter 23, "Response to Comments on the SDEIS." In addition, where appropriate, chapters of this FEIS have been revised in response to the comments received. Changes and additions to the document since publication of the SDEIS are indicated by double-underlining.

In addition, the FEIS also reflects refinements to the project design that have been made since publication of the SDEIS and provides additional detail on the project developed during ongoing engineering. These refinements are delineated in Chapter 2, "Project Alternatives," and include adjustments to the track depth and location to minimize disruptions from construction; selection of a modified "Deep Chrystie Option" for the alignment south of Houston Street; more information on station design and entrances, including ancillary facilities; and refinements to proposals for storage yards. The FEIS analyzes the results of these refinements as appropriate. No new significant adverse impacts would be created as a result of these refinements; instead, some significant adverse impacts would be eliminated. \*