



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Transit
Administration**

Memorandum

Subject: 68th Street/Hunter College Station Improvements Project Re-Evaluation Date: March 30, 2021

From: Daniel Moser, Community Planner and Donald Burns, Director of Planning and Program Development Reply to Attn. of:

To: Stephen Goodman, P.E., Regional Administrator

Through: Michael Culotta, Deputy Regional Administrator and John Sautter, Regional Counsel

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has completed an environmental re-evaluation of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority New York City Transit (MTA NYCT) 68th Street/Hunter College Station Improvements Project (the Project) pursuant to 23 CFR §771.129.

FTA completed an Environmental Assessment of the original project scope pursuant to 23 CFR §771.119 and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on July 28, 2016. MTA NYCT subsequently modified the Project, requiring a NEPA re-evaluation.

MTA NYCT proposes the following changes to the Project:

1. A new street-to-mezzanine elevator in the street right-of-way at the northeast corner of 68th Street. The originally planned ADA elevator at the southeast corner of East 68th street on CUNY/Hunter College property has been eliminated from the design.
2. The existing entrance stair at the northeast corner of East 68th St. will be widened to 10'-0" and made ADA compliant. The expanded stairwell and new ADA elevator will be placed in a widened sidewalk "bulb-out," requiring loss of several street parking spaces and a street tree. Sidewalk alterations will comply with NYCDOT requirements. The loss of a street tree will be mitigated per NYC Parks requirements.
3. The existing stairwell located within the Hunter College East Building at the southeast corner of East 68th Street and Lexington Avenue will be retained but not be widened as previously approved.
4. A revised plan for two new elevators connecting the mezzanine level to the northbound and southbound platforms. The elevator locations were shifted slightly to avoid utilities.

5. Acquisition of basement and retail space at 931 Lexington Avenue for construction of a new 10'0" wide subway entrance stair connecting street to mezzanine level, as originally approved.
6. Reduction in width of a proposed new subway entrance stairwell at southwest corner of Lexington Avenue and East 69th Street from 9'-0" wide to 5'7" wide. The stairwell will connect street to mezzanine. The planned widened sidewalk "bulb out" to accommodate the stair will remain unchanged from the original proposal.
7. Elimination of a new 9'-0" wide subway entrance stairwell at southeast corner of Lexington Avenue and East 69th St. The stairwell would have connected street to mezzanine.

Based on its review, FTA has determined that the Project changes are consistent with the July 28, 2016 FONSI and that the FONSI remains valid. FTA's review included the following documentation:

Document Title/Reference	Date Received by FTA
FTA Environmental Re-Evaluation Consultation Form with Attachments	March 4, 2021
New York State Historic Preservation Officer Letter of Conditional No Effect	February 17, 2021
FTA Letter Approving MTA Acquisition of parts of Imperial House property located 931 Lexington Avenue	December 10, 2018
MTA NYCT 68th Street/Hunter College Station Improvements Project - Environmental Assessment	March 15, 2016
MTA NYCT 68th Street/Hunter College Station Improvements Project – Finding of No Significant Impact	July 28, 2016

The proposed project changes to the MTA NYCT 68th Street/Hunter College Station Improvements Project are not significant with regard to potential adverse environmental impacts based upon our review of the proposed changes and referenced documents. Below is further analysis of two major environmental areas reviewed.

NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT SECTION 106 FINDING OF NO ADVERSE EFFECT

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and its implementing regulations in 36 CFR §800, FTA has re-evaluated the changes to the 68th Street/Hunter College Station Improvements project submitted through March 4, 2021 for potential effects on historic, cultural and archaeological resources. FTA's evaluation indicated that the proposed project would occur in the same project area and include the same historic resources as the original project (the Upper East Side Historic District, Thomas Hunter Hall, the Imperial House Apartments). While the revised project includes a more visible street level elevator at 68th Street and a modified below grade design, FTA has determined that there will be no adverse effects on historic, cultural, or archaeological resources, subject to the following condition requested by New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation in its letter dated February 17, 2021:

1. Development and implementation of a Historic Resource Construction Protection Plan for all historic buildings within 90 feet of the proposed construction and reviewed and approved by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation and (per the 2016 FONSI) the New York City Department of Building.

SECTION 4(f) OF THE DOT ACT OF 1966 EVALUATION AND DE MINIMIS IMPACT

FTA completed a review the proposed undertaking pursuant to Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 U.S.C. § 303) and its implementing regulations at 23 CFR §774. Based on our review of the documentation received on March 4, 2021, FTA has determined that the Project's potential use of historic sites (the Upper East Side Historic District, Thomas Hunter Hall and the Imperial House Apartments) is substantially the same as the original project and therefore would have de minimis impact as set forth in 23 CFR §774.3(b). The de minimis determination is based in part on the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation letter dated February 17, 2021 and its opinion of no effect on historic and cultural resources. FTA further finds that impact on street-trees under jurisdiction of the New York City Parks Department is also consistent with what was originally proposed under the 2016 EA subject to coordination with NYC Parks to protect and replace street trees as required, and that the coordination required in 23 CFR §774.5(b) is complete.

FTA NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT FINDING

FTA has re-evaluated the changes to the 68th Street/Hunter College Station Improvements Project submitted through March 4, 2021 pursuant to 23 CFR §771.129. In accordance with 23 CFR §771.121, FTA finds that the Proposed Project changes will have no significant impact

on the environment, and are consistent with the FONSI dated July 28, 2016, subject to plans and mitigation measures summarized in the March 4, 2021 Environmental Re-Evaluation Consultation document and applicable mitigation measures summarized in the July 28, 2016 FONSI.

Approved: _____ Date: _____
Stephen Goodman, P.E.
Regional Administrator