

## 18. Agency Coordination and Public Participation

### 18.1 INTRODUCTION

The FHWA and the Project Sponsors have and continue to provide meaningful opportunities for public participation throughout the environmental review process for the CBD Tolling Program (the Project). This chapter describes agency coordination and public participation activities for the Project. In recognition of the social distancing requirements resulting from the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, the Project Sponsors are carrying out a program that incorporates virtual public meetings and other tools that do not require in-person or on-site participation, in addition to traditional public involvement methods.

### 18.2 COORDINATION WITH COOPERATING AND PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

#### 18.2.1 Agencies Invited to Participate in the Process

Agencies have been invited to participate in the NEPA process and advise on the scope of this EA, the potential effects of the Project and any measures to avoid, minimize or otherwise mitigate potential adverse effects, and issues and concerns identified by the interested public. FHWA and the Project Sponsors have also engaged with tribal nations in the study area.

In consideration of the resources that the Project could affect, the analyses conducted for this EA, and other important issues for this Project, FHWA and the Project Sponsors developed a list of agencies to invite to participate in the NEPA process. FHWA consulted with agencies on particular topics (i.e., Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), coastal zone consistency), sought agency expertise in the analysis of resources (i.e., transportation, environmental justice), and sought input from the agencies on the conclusions of this EA. **Table 18-1** lists the agencies that FHWA invited to participate along with their role in or expertise about the Project.

**Table 18-1. Agencies Invited to Participate in the National Environmental Policy Act Process and Their Role or Expertise**

ROLE	AGENCY	INVOLVEMENT/EXPERTISE
Federal Agencies	Federal Transit Administration	Funds transit capital projects that may also be funded with revenue generated through the Project
	U.S. National Park Service	Consultation on National Historic Landmarks
	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Section 309 Clean Air Act (CAA), NEPA, environmental justice

ROLE	AGENCY	INVOLVEMENT/EXPERTISE
<b>State Transportation Agencies</b>	Connecticut Department of Transportation	Agency with transportation expertise in a portion of the regional study area
	New Jersey Department of Transportation	Agency with transportation expertise in a portion of the regional study area
	New Jersey Transit	Agency with transportation expertise in a portion of the regional study area
	New Jersey Turnpike Authority	Agency with transportation expertise in a portion of the regional study area
<b>New York State Resource Agencies</b>	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation	Air quality conformity (Section 309 of the CAA), threatened and endangered species coordination
	New York State Department of State	Coastal zone consistency
	New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Section 106, NHPA</li> <li>▪ Cultural resource review/coordination</li> </ul>
<b>Other New York State Agencies</b>	New York State Division of Homeland Security	For informational purposes given their role in emergency management
<b>Regional Transportation Agencies</b>	Connecticut Metropolitan Council of Governments	Agency with transportation expertise in a portion of the regional study area
	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission	Agency with transportation expertise in a portion of the regional study area
	Dutchess County Transportation Council	Agency with transportation expertise in a portion of the regional study area
	New York Metropolitan Transportation Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Air quality conformity</li> <li>▪ Inclusion in fiscally constrained Transportation Improvement Plan</li> <li>▪ Agency with transportation expertise in a portion of the regional study area</li> </ul>
	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority	Agency with transportation expertise in a portion of the regional study area
	Orange County Transportation Council	Agency with transportation expertise in a portion of the regional study area
	Port Authority of New York and New Jersey	Has jurisdiction over several sites upon which it is preferable to locate tolling system infrastructure and tolling equipment
	South Central Regional Council of Governments	Agency with transportation expertise in a portion of the regional study area
	Western Connecticut Council of Governments	Agency with transportation expertise in a portion of the regional study area
<b>New York City Resource Agencies</b>	Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination	Agency with expertise in environmental considerations in New York City
	New York City Department of City Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan consistency</li> <li>▪ Agency with expertise in social, economic, and environmental considerations in New York City</li> </ul>
	New York City Department of Environmental Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Agency with expertise in environmental considerations in New York City</li> <li>▪ Coordination during construction</li> </ul>
	New York City Department of Parks and Recreation	Agency with jurisdiction over parkland where tolling system infrastructure and tolling equipment might be located

### 18.2.2 Agency Coordination

FHWA and the Project Sponsors held the following agency meetings during the course of the preparation of this EA:

- August 29, 2019, with MTA, New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) staff, and Interagency Consultation Group regarding Transportation Conformity
- April 15, 2021, Project presentation to NYMTC's Program, Finance and Administration Committee (PFAC) as a prelude to the Project's inclusion in the Federal Fiscal Years 2022–2050 Regional Transportation Plan, adopted by NYMTC's principal members on September 9, 2021, and accompanying Transportation Conformity Determination adopted by PFAC on August 19, 2021
- September 9, 2021, for Federal agencies and New York State resource agencies listed in **Table 18-1** to introduce the EA process
- September 10, 2021, for regional transportation agencies and New York City resource agencies listed in **Table 18-1** to introduce the EA process
- April 19, 2022, follow-up meeting with the Interagency Coordination Group to discuss Project-level conformity with regard to conducting particulate matter hot-spot analyses on highway segments
- Planned for August 4, 2022, a second meeting with the Federal agencies and New York State resource agencies prior to the EA Notice of Availability
- Planned for August 8, 2022, a second meeting with the regional transportation agencies and New York City resource agencies prior to the EA Notice of Availability

### 18.3 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

FHWA and the Project Sponsors are committed to providing meaningful opportunities for public involvement during the environmental review process for the Project to inform the public, encourage open discussion of Project details and issues, and provide opportunities for commenting. Meaningful opportunities for public input, as described in this section, are occurring during the environmental review process and will continue through construction of the Project.

The public involvement strategy for the Project focuses on outreach to the 28-county regional study area where travel patterns could change because of the Project (described in **Chapter 3, "Environmental Analysis Framework"**).

### 18.3.1 Public Outreach Tools and Efforts

The Project Sponsors have used and continue to use the following outreach tools to communicate with the public throughout the NEPA environmental review process:

- **Project Website:** The Project Sponsors maintain a Project website hosted by MTA ([mta.info/CBDTP](http://mta.info/CBDTP)), which is the primary platform to share Project information, download published documents, and advertise virtual public information webinars. The website provides links to recordings of public meetings. The website provides an opportunity to sign up for the Project's email list and to provide comments. The website address appears on Project information material, including meeting notices and media releases.
- **Project Fact Sheet:** The Project Sponsors have developed a Fact Sheet that includes: an overview of the Project, its location, its purpose, expected benefits, information about how tolls would be set, how people would pay the tolls, how the money would be used, public meeting opportunities, environmental justice opportunities for participation, and contact information. The Fact Sheet is available in nine languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Bengali, Korean, Russian, Italian, and Portuguese. These Fact Sheets have been made available through the following means: via the Project website; emailed to the mailing list; and shared with Federal, State, and local agencies, officials, and community organizations to post and disseminate.
- **Social Media:** The Project Sponsors use social media to provide information about both public engagement activities and general Project information. Appropriate existing MTA channels on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are used to direct members of the public to the various engagement opportunities. The social-media posts also provide a link to the comment form on the Project website. The MTA social-media effort encompasses the entire 28-county regional study area. In addition, TBTA was able to target zip codes with higher percentages of low-income and minority populations in the study area to provide information related to environmental justice webinars described in **Section 18.3.2**, and the Stakeholder Working Group described in **Section 18.3.3**. Information about virtual public meetings and opportunities to comment on social-media channels can be translated by users into multiple languages using in-app language settings.
- **Database and Email List:** The Project Sponsors maintain a master contact list of approximately 2,300 entries. Interested stakeholders may sign up for the list on the Project website, or directly by email. The Project Sponsors use the contact list to send email updates and official notifications of Project milestones and public meetings.
- **Media:** The Project Sponsors use online and print advertising in English and non-English outlets throughout the 28-county regional study area, as well as radio announcements to publicize the Project and public participation opportunities. In recognition of Executive Order 12898 described in **Chapter 17, "Environmental Justice,"** the Project Sponsors developed this list to emphasize communication to environmental justice populations in the 28-county study area. Below is a list of media outlets used by MTA for the Project:

- **Print**
    - New Haven Register
    - Connecticut Post
    - Stamford Advocate
    - Middletown Times Herald Record
    - Poughkeepsie Journal
    - Bergen Record
    - Courier News
    - Daily Record
    - New Jersey Herald
    - Jersey Journal/NJ.com
    - Newark Star-Ledger/NJ.com
    - Times of Trenton
    - Warren Reporter
    - AM New York Metro
    - Daily News
    - Journal News/Lohud
    - Newsday
    - Staten Island Advance
  - El Sol
  - Haiti Liberte
  - Haitian Times
  - Haitian Voice
  - Korea Daily
  - La Voz Hispana CT
  - Luso Americano
  - Russkaya Reklama
  - Weekley Bengalee
  - 24Horas Newspaper
  - El Diario (New York)
  - El Especialito (Essex, Hudson, Union)
  - El Hispano (bilingual)
  - Korean Bergen News
  - World Journal/Chinese Daily News
  - Americano Newspaper
- **Digital**
    - Twitter (sponsored ads)
    - World Journal (sponsored ads)

### 18.3.2 Early Outreach Webinars

The Project Sponsors conducted a series of early outreach webinars to obtain public input for consideration in the development of this EA. (See **Section 18.5.2** for information regarding public webinars during the EA comment period.) **Table 18-2** provides details about the 19 meetings (10 were advertised as general webinars and 9 for environmental justice community members throughout the regional study area). The Project Sponsors used all the public outreach tools described in **Section 18.3.1** to publicize the early outreach webinars. In addition, MTA posted digital ads and posters in nine languages in all subway stations and commuter rail stations, and posters in nine languages on all its bus routes. This effort along with the far reaching print and digital media ads, addressed both the environmental justice populations identified in **Chapter 17, “Environmental Justice,”** as well as the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) census tracts identified in **Subchapter 5A, “Social Conditions: Population Characteristics and Community Cohesion.”**

The webinars were assigned to different geographic areas; however, the webinars were open to anyone who wished to participate regardless of where they lived or worked. 1,066 people signed up to participate in these webinars. The agenda for each webinar included introductions by the Project Sponsors, a recorded presentation, and a public comment session.

Meeting attendees were asked to fill out an optional survey, which included demographic questions. The survey received 309 responses, approximately one-third of which were from individuals who identified themselves as minority.

Table 18-2. Early Outreach Virtual Webinars

MEETING	LOCATION	DATE	MEETING START TIME	MEETING END TIME	TOTAL UNIQUE ZOOM WEBINAR VIEWERS	TOTAL YOUTUBE LIVE VIEWERS	TOTAL ORAL COMMENTS	TOTAL Q&A
Public Webinar – 1	Outer Boroughs	9/23/2021	10:00 a.m.	12:40 p.m.	194	119	55	89
Public Webinar – 2	Manhattan CBD	9/23/2021	6:00 p.m.	9:40 p.m.	257	73	83	179
Public Webinar – 3	New Jersey	9/24/2021	10:00 a.m.	11:04 a.m.	54	45	16	19
Public Webinar – 4	Northern NY Suburbs	9/29/2021	10:00 a.m.	10:51 a.m.	26	34	9	21
Public Webinar – 5	Long Island	9/29/2021	6:00 p.m.	6:53 p.m.	31	26	11	16
Public Webinar – 6	Outer Boroughs	9/30/2021	6:00 p.m.	8:55 p.m.	98	28	65	96
Public Webinar – 7	Connecticut	10/1/2021	1:00 p.m.	1:41 p.m.	17	23	7	17
Public Webinar – 8	New Jersey	10/4/2021	6:00 p.m.	7:29 p.m.	42	31	26	46
Public Webinar – 9	Northern NY Suburbs	10/5/2021	6:00 p.m.	7:08 p.m.	31	18	17	25
Public Webinar – 10	Manhattan Outside CBD	10/6/2021	6:00 p.m.	8:52 p.m.	127	36	66	94
EJ Webinar – 1	New York	10/7/2021	6:00 p.m.	6:54 p.m.	31	14	11	20
EJ Webinar – 2	New Jersey	10/12/2021	6:00 p.m.	6:37 p.m.	10	13	4	27
EJ Webinar – 3	Connecticut	10/13/2021	6:00 p.m.	8:07 p.m.	12	12	3	17
EJ Webinar – 4	New York	10/26/2021	6:00 p.m.	8:09 p.m.	23	25	4	18
EJ Webinar – 5	New Jersey	10/27/2021	6:00 p.m.	8:08 p.m.	9	10	4	18
EJ Webinar – 6	Connecticut	10/28/2021	6:00 p.m.	8:11 p.m.	18	9	10	55
EJ Webinar – 7	New York	12/7/2021	6:00 p.m.	8:02 p.m.	32	15	6	20
EJ Webinar – 8	New Jersey	12/8/2021	6:00 p.m.	8:01 p.m.	7	10	1	13
EJ Webinar – 9	Connecticut	12/9/2021	6:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.	3	8	0	9
<b>TOTALS</b>					<b>1,022</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>799</b>

Meeting attendees could sign up to speak for two minutes either in advance of or during the meeting. 398 people spoke at these webinars. Attendees also had the opportunity to communicate via the Question & Answer function in real time with Project Sponsors. The Project Sponsors did not respond to Project comments via the Question & Answer function but used this to address factual, technical, and logistical questions.

Meeting attendees were able to participate via computer or telephone. Meeting information and the opportunity to sign up was accessed through the Project website and via the Project telephone hotline. Most webinars were two hours long and took place at different times of day over multiple days. Some webinars continued beyond the two-hour duration as necessary to accommodate all speakers.

American Sign Language and closed captioning were available at each webinar. Additional language interpretation services were made available upon advance request. Individuals who are hearing impaired could dial 711 to be connected free of charge with a communications assistant. The webinars were streamed live on YouTube, and recordings were subsequently posted on YouTube for on-demand viewing. As of February 2022, there were over 14,000 views of these recordings, combined.

### 18.3.3 Environmental Justice Advisory and Working Groups

FHWA and the Project Sponsors have and continue to follow Executive Order 12898 regarding environmental justice, as described in **Chapter 17, “Environmental Justice.”** In addition to the nine webinars specific to environmental justice populations, two environmental justice groups have been established to allow for more in-depth discussion and engagement by FHWA and Project Sponsors with environmental justice populations: an Environmental Justice Technical Advisory Group and Environmental Justice Stakeholder Working Group. See **Section 17.10** for more details on environmental justice public engagement activities.

### 18.3.4 Coordination with Stakeholder Groups

The Project Sponsors have and will continue to respond to requests for meetings with stakeholder groups during the preparation and public review of this EA for the Project. The following list includes the meetings held to date:

- October 13, 2021, Environmental Justice Technical Advisory Group
- November 3, 2021, Environmental Justice Technical Advisory Group
- November 9, 2021, Environmental Justice Stakeholder Working Group
- November 29, 2021, South Bronx Unite
- November 30, 2021, Environmental Justice Stakeholder Working Group
- December 14, 2021, Federal Law Enforcement Agencies (Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Homeland Security/Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Justice/Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and Federal Bureau of Investigation)

- January 12, 2022, Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York Trucking Associations
- January 25, 2022, Environmental Defense Fund
- February 9, 2022, Environmental Justice Technical Advisory Group
- March 9, 2022, Taxi and Limousine Commission
- Planned for August 19, 2022, Environmental Justice Stakeholder Working Group
- Planned for August 22, 2022, Environmental Justice Technical Advisory Group Meeting

### 18.3.5 Outreach During Construction

The Project Sponsors will develop a specific construction communications plan and implement it to inform affected road users, area residences and businesses, appropriate agencies, and the public about anticipated construction activities, including their schedule and duration, and any potential roadway or lane closures, sidewalk closures or other impacts to pedestrians, commuter alternatives, and any potential temporary impacts on traffic during construction.

## 18.4 OVERVIEW OF COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING EARLY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

During the early outreach activities from August 26, 2021, through publication of this EA described in **Section 18.3**, the Project Sponsors received 7,338 comments through the following means:

- 5,936 via online form submitted through the Project website
- 179 emails
- 534 during the public webinars, both oral and submitted via the Question & Answer function
- 610 via U.S. Postal Service
- 79 via voicemail messages on the Project's telephone hotline

Each of these comments has been collected, archived, and categorized by method of submission, identification of submitter, and content of submission. These comments have been considered during the development of this EA.

The following is a summary of comments received via all means listed above, organized by the major themes where these topics are discussed and analyzed in the EA. Comments received during early outreach are based on limited publicly available information as analyses had not yet been completed and published. The sections below follow the order of this EA's Table of Contents.

### 18.4.1 Purpose and Need

Commenters stated that the Project is a method to improve the regional transportation network, citing that it is an integral step to making urban transportation more efficient, sustainable, and equitable. Others stated that roads and highways in the region are clogged with cars and increasing the financial cost of driving into the Manhattan CBD is a method to reduce traffic congestion both in the Manhattan CBD and



across the region. Others stated that excess traffic in the Manhattan CBD and the region contributes to negative economic, public health, and environmental impacts that would be reduced as part of the Project.

Commenters stated that residents of New York City, most of whom depend on public transportation, would benefit directly from the revenue the Project would generate and infuse into the subway, bus, and rail systems. Others stated that there is need for transit investment to enhance accessibility for those with disabilities, and to address resiliency, considering extreme weather and climate change. Others stated that transit investments would benefit the entire region.

Other commenters questioned the purpose of the Project and suggested that congestion in the Manhattan CBD is caused by a lack of enforcement, resulting in illegally parked cars, as well as inappropriate use of government-issued parking placards.

Commenters stated that the Project would result in increased costs passed on to consumers and would discriminate against areas with poor transit access and against persons with disabilities and the elderly.

Other commenters stated that this is not the right time to impose a toll while the region is still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Refer to **Chapter 1, “Introduction,”** for more information on the Project’s Purpose and Need.

#### **18.4.2 Transportation – Highways and Local Intersections**

Commenters stated that the Project would reduce traffic within the Manhattan CBD as well as on streets and highways that connect to the CBD.

Other commenters stated that the Project would not alleviate traffic congestion within the Manhattan CBD or along highways that intersect and provide access to Lower Manhattan. Commenters stated that tolling would cause an increase in traffic to areas outside of the Manhattan CBD, and that tunnels and highways in other areas of the city (including low-income and minority populations) would bear the brunt of increased congestion due to shifting driving patterns.

Commenters stated that roadways that have been narrowed to accommodate bicycle infrastructure or the increase in FHV licenses have caused traffic congestion.

Commenters stated support for increased use of motorcycles as a means to reduce traffic congestion in the Manhattan CBD.

Refer to **Subchapter 4B, “Transportation: Highways and Local Intersections”** for more information on the traffic analysis and potential notable changes in traffic as a result of the CBD Tolling Alternative. **Chapter 17, “Environmental Justice,”** presents additional assessment.

### 18.4.3 Transportation – Parking

Commenters stated that implementation of tolling would result in an increase in traffic in neighborhoods just outside the Manhattan CBD as drivers search for parking there.

**Subchapter 4D, “Transportation: Parking,”** and **Subchapter 5B, “Social Conditions: Neighborhood Character,”** examine the potential effects on parking supply and demand in neighborhoods near the Manhattan CBD boundary.

### 18.4.4 Transportation – Pedestrians and Bicycles

Commenters stated that the Project would be a method to increase bicycle and pedestrian safety in the Manhattan CBD, potentially encouraging drivers to reconsider nonessential trips or switch to transit. Others stated that congestion often leads to angry and frustrated drivers who block intersections and bike lanes. Commenters stated that by discouraging driving through tolling, congestion would decrease. It was noted that reducing private-vehicle traffic would free up space to create additional bike lanes and pedestrian friendly spaces.

Other commenters stated that bike lanes take up roadway space and cause congestion. Citi Bike stands located in the street were also noted to cause congestion. Cyclists not following traffic rules and delivery people on fast-moving motorized bicycles and riding on the sidewalks were also concerns.

**Subchapter 4E, “Transportation: Pedestrians and Bicycles,”** examines the potential safety effects of the CBD Tolling Alternative. It also describes bicycle infrastructure in the Manhattan CBD.

### 18.4.5 Social Conditions – Population Characteristics and Community Cohesion

Commenters focused on the following specific populations or organizations who live or operate in the Manhattan CBD boundary or must cross the boundary and would therefore be affected:

- Persons with disabilities
- Nonprofit social service providers
- FHV drivers
- Older adults who live in the zone
- Low- and middle-income families who live in the zone

Commenters stated that that low- and middle-income residents would leave New York City.

Commenters stated that those with disabilities would be affected and should be exempted from the tolling. Others stated that funds generated by the Project should be spent on making transit more accessible for persons with disabilities. Commenters asked that persons with disabilities who have parking permits be exempt from the toll (this would include private vehicles).

**Subchapter 5A, “Social Conditions: Population Characteristics and Community Cohesion,”** describes the potential effects of the CBD Tolling Alternative on disabled populations. The subchapter also examines the potential for the CBD Tolling Alternative to inhibit travel for certain social groups or between certain neighborhoods.

#### 18.4.6 Social Conditions – Neighborhood Character

Commenters stated that tolls would improve public streetscapes for residents and visitors of the Manhattan CBD by freeing up space for playgrounds, plazas, and outdoor restaurants. Others stated that safer streets and sidewalks would improve throughout the Manhattan CBD for everyone. Commenters stated that decreasing the number of vehicles would benefit everyone who lives, works, and visits the Manhattan CBD.

Commenters discussed the Manhattan CBD boundary proximity to Lincoln Square flagging the many cultural institutions found there as traffic is already a significant problem for drivers, delivery vehicles, and pedestrians around Lincoln Square.

Commenters questioned the term “Central Business District,” stating that the area is residential, not just commercial in nature. Others stated the Project would punish residents and small businesses in the Manhattan CBD.

Commenters stated concerns about traveling regionally to visit family and friends outside of the Manhattan CBD, noting that tolling may make it cost prohibitive. Commenters who are patients from regional locations and outer boroughs expressed concerns about having to pay tolls for attending medical appointments at hospitals within the Manhattan CBD.

Refer to **Subchapter 5B, “Social Conditions: Neighborhood Character,”** for more information on the EA analysis of neighborhood character.

#### 18.4.7 Social Conditions – Public Policy

Commenters noted that the Project is consistent with various plans, policies, or laws:

- Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- New York City’s Open Streets program

Other commenters stated that the Project would be inconsistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act as it could result in an economic burden for persons with disabilities who rely on FHV’s.

Refer to **Subchapter 5C, “Social Conditions: Public Policy,”** for more information regarding the EA analysis of public policy.

#### 18.4.8 Economic Conditions

Commenters stated that the Project would “price out” residents and visitors of the Manhattan CBD. Others stated that tolling would economically penalize residents with small children, elderly with limited mobility, persons with disabilities, and those workers who work during off hours who are less well served by the transit system. Others stated that the Project would decrease property values in the Manhattan CBD and potentially cause long-term consequences such as abandonment of residential areas below 60th Street.

Commenters stated that New Yorkers are overtaxed already and that low-income residents, many on fixed incomes, would be unable to afford costs associated with the tolls. Commenters also stated that the Project is discriminatory based on geographic location, and the Project would increase the cost of living for residents living below 60th Street. Others stated that tolling would cause an increase in fees for other services in the Manhattan CBD such as deliveries. They stated that businesses would not absorb the added cost but would immediately hand it off to the consumer.

Other commenters stated that businesses may choose to move to other locations outside of the Manhattan CBD if tolls are enacted, or that businesses may be forced to close, causing empty storefronts. Commenters stated that the Project would hurt tourist areas like Chinatown and Broadway. They stated that people drive in from outside the city to visit those areas and may be fearful to take public transportation home late at night. Commenters stated that tolls may make it so that fewer people would be able to attend concerts, sporting events, and other cultural events in Manhattan. Taxi/FHV drivers who commented stated that there could be economic hardship specific to their industry if the Project were implemented and they were not exempted.

Commenters stated that tolls would make it easier for goods and products to be delivered throughout the Manhattan CBD because fewer vehicles would be on the roadways. Others stated that with less traffic, more streets can be converted to bus-only lanes, therefore speeding up travel times for bus riders. Other commenters stated that the tolls could stimulate the economy and create jobs. They stated that the Project is expected to raise more than \$1 billion annually, which will be used to make needed improvements to the transit system.

**Chapter 6, “Economic Conditions,”** provides an economic profile and regional context of the Manhattan CBD boundary and assesses the potential effects of the Project on a regional and more localized neighborhood or specific industry basis.

#### 18.4.9 Parks and Recreational Resources

Commenters stated that the Project would have positive benefits for parks or recreational space, green space, or open space. Others noted that reducing the volume of public space dedicated to cars would free up space for additional green space or opportunities for green infrastructure. Examples cited included converting street space to playgrounds, pocket parks, and pedestrian plazas. Commenters also noted that existing parks would benefit from reduced traffic noise.

Commenters stated that the Project would likely have negligible impacts in or immediately around Central Park.

**Chapter 7, “Parks and Recreational Resources,”** examines the potential effects of the CBD Tolling Alternative on Central Park. The CBD Tolling Alternative does not include closing any streets to create green spaces.

#### **18.4.10 Visual Resources**

Commenters stated concern about the physical design of tolling infrastructure as well as any associated signage or visual clutter. Others stated concern that the system would feature strobe lights. They stated that those lights would affect adjacent neighbors.

Commenters stated that truck and car traffic cause visual blight and that reducing their numbers would improve the visual environment.

**Chapter 9, “Visual Resources,”** describes the visual environment within the Manhattan CBD, including key features of the area, and it describes the potential visual effects of tolling system infrastructure and tolling equipment within the Manhattan CBD.

#### **18.4.11 Air Quality**

Commenters stated support for the Project for air quality improvements. Commenters mentioned vehicular exhaust and soot as being detrimental to air quality. Others stated concerns about asthma levels and overall health impacts from poor air quality. Others commented on the contribution of vehicles to overall greenhouse gas emissions, and the negative impacts of climate change on the study area. Others stated their concern about potential impacts of emissions on environmental justice populations due to diminished air quality conditions that could result from increases in traffic levels and congestion on local streets and highways.

During early public outreach for the Project, participants in the environmental justice outreach sessions raised concerns that the CBD Tolling Alternative would divert traffic to circumferential highways around the Manhattan CBD and that these additional vehicles would adversely affect the nearby neighborhoods by degrading air quality. Other participants were concerned that changes in traffic at local intersections, including on the Lower East Side in the Manhattan CBD and in the South Bronx outside the Manhattan CBD, would adversely affect air quality nearby.

**Chapter 10, “Air Quality,”** includes an assessment of regional and local (intersection-level) changes in air quality as a result of the Project. The chapter concludes that the Project would not result in any adverse localized effects on air quality and would reduce regional emissions. The Project Sponsors screened all Scenarios (including G) and analyzed the areas with the highest truck traffic, highest increases in trucks, and a site in the south Bronx due to community concerns.

### 18.4.12 Energy

Commenters stated that the Project would be an important way to reduce fuel consumption and the use of combustion engines.

For more information regarding the EA analysis of energy, refer to **Chapter 11, “Energy.”**

### 18.4.13 Noise

Commenters noted noise benefits associated with the Project stating that traffic in the Manhattan CBD generates noise. Commenters cited car horns and general traffic noise as a nuisance. They also noted that emergency vehicles stuck in traffic are a source of noise and that the Project would help reduce those sounds. Other commenters illustrated the impacts of current noise by explaining that they have trouble putting children to sleep or getting work done. Others noted that environmental justice populations bear the brunt of noise pollution. Commenters noted health benefits from a less noisy environment. Others commented whether the Project could reduce the use of loud dirt bikes and motorcycles.

Commenters noted a potential for increased noise in areas just outside the Manhattan CBD boundary from people looking for parking. Others stated that there would be a decrease in noise pollution and that areas like Jersey City and Hoboken—where congestion is also bad—would also benefit from the Project. Commenters stated that the Project may redistribute traffic throughout the day, resulting in an increase in the amount of traffic noise at night.

**Chapter 12, “Noise,”** examines potential increases in traffic noise at locations that may realize an increase in traffic because of the CBD Tolling Alternative. The chapter concludes that the CBD Tolling Alternative would not result in perceptible increases in noise.

### 18.4.14 Environmental Justice

Commenters stated that the Project would benefit low-income and minority populations who depend on the transit system. Commenters stated that low-income populations represent the largest share of public transit riders in New York City and would benefit from public transit improvements. Commenters stated that the Project would not only decrease the number of traffic-causing vehicles on the road but would generate a ripple effect of positive health and environmental benefits due to the reduced emissions associated with fewer road-miles being driven.

Commenters noted the potential for displacement of environmental justice community members should improvements to the public transit system contribute to neighborhood gentrification. Others stated that the Project would increase traffic in some environmental justice populations outside the Manhattan CBD, which would diminish air quality. Commenters stated that CBD tolling could reinforce segregation or other racial disparities for environmental justice populations outside the zone.

As described in **Section 18.4** and **Chapter 17, “Environmental Justice,”** FHWA and the Project Sponsors have provided meaningful opportunities to engage with environmental justice populations to address their concerns. **Chapter 17** examines the potential effects of the Project on identified environmental justice

populations in the 28-county regional study area and describes how concerns raised during public outreach related to environmental justice have been addressed.

As an independent action, MTA is currently transitioning its fleet to zero-emission buses, which will reduce air pollutants and improve air quality near bus depots and along bus routes. MTA is committed to prioritizing service to traditionally underserved communities and particularly for areas with concerns related to air quality and climate change, and has developed a new Environmental Justice Scoring framework to actively incorporate these priorities in the deployment phasing process of the bus fleet transition. Based on feedback and concerns raised during public outreach for the Project related to environmental justice, MTA will prioritize transitioning the fleet at two bus depots in Upper Manhattan and the Bronx—the Kingsbridge Depot and Gun Hill Depot—when MTA receives its next major procurement of battery electric buses later in 2022. Both of these depots are in and provide service to environmental justice neighborhoods.

#### **18.4.15 Comments Outside the Scope of this Environmental Assessment**

Certain comments received were outside the scope of this Project, which is specific to the Value Pricing Pilot Program (VPPP) application and the CBD Tolling Alternative as established by the MTA Reform and Traffic Mobility Act.

Commenters offered specific suggestions about aspects of the toll rate that will not be determined in this EA. Project toll rates will ultimately be set by a vote of the TBTA Board after the environmental review process and after the Traffic Mobility Review Board makes its recommendations.

### **18.5 AVAILABILITY OF THIS EA, EA PUBLIC HEARINGS, AND WAYS TO PROVIDE COMMENTS ON THIS EA**

This EA is available for public viewing at the Project’s website.

For further information about viewing this EA, virtual public hearings, or providing comments on the Project during the public comment period, please contact:

CBD Tolling Program  
c/o Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority  
2 Broadway, 23rd Floor  
New York, NY 10004  
Telephone: 646-252-7440  
Fax: 212-504-3148  
Email: CBDTP@mtabt.org

Individuals may offer comments on this EA in the following ways:

- Via the Project website: [mta.info/CBDTP](http://mta.info/CBDTP)
- Via U.S. Postal Service to the address listed above
- Via email to the email address listed above
- Via fax
- Via telephone

The comment period begins on Wednesday, August 10, 2022, and ends on Friday, September 9, 2022.

### 18.5.1 Repositories for Reviewing the Environmental Assessment

Table 18-3 lists the locations where this EA is available for public viewing.

Table 18-3. Repositories for Reviewing the Environmental Assessment

REPOSITORY	CITY OR COUNTY/STATE	FACILITY	ADDRESS
FHWA	New York (Albany)	FHWA New York Division Office	O'Brien Federal Building, Room 719 Albany, NY 12207 (518) 431-4127
	New Jersey (Trenton)	FHWA New Jersey Division Office	840 Bear Tavern Road, Suite 202 West Trenton, NJ 08628 (609) 637-4200
	Connecticut (Hartford)	FHWA Connecticut Division Office	450 Main Street, Suite 612 Hartford, CT 06103 (860) 659-6703
TBTA	New York (New York City)		2 Broadway New York, NY 10004 (212) 878-7000
NYSDOT	New York (New York City)	Region 11	Hunter's Point Plaza 47-40 21st St. Long Island City, NY 11101 (718) 482-4526
NYCDOT	New York (New York City)		55 Water Street New York, NY 10041 (212) 639-9675



REPOSITORY	CITY OR COUNTY/STATE	FACILITY	ADDRESS
<b>LIBRARIES (New York City Counties)</b>	Bronx County	The Bronx Library Center*	310 East Kingsbridge Road Bronx, NY 10458 (718) 579-4244
	Kings County (Brooklyn)	Brooklyn Central Library	10 Grand Army Plaza Brooklyn, NY 11238 (718) 230-2100
	New York County (Manhattan)	New York Public Library - Schwarzman Building	476 5th Avenue New York, NY 10018 (917) 275-6975
	Queens County	Queens Public Library - Central Library	89-11 Merrick Boulevard Jamaica, NY 11432 (718) 990-0700
	Richmond County (Staten Island)	New Dorp Library	309 New Dorp Lane Staten Island, NY 10306 (718) 351-2977
<b>LIBRARIES (Long Island Counties)</b>	Nassau County, NY	Hempstead Public Library	115 James A. Garner Way Hempstead, NY 11550 (516) 481-6990
	Suffolk County, NY	Middle Country Public Library	575 Middle Country Road Selden, NY 11784 (631) 585-9393
<b>LIBRARIES (New York Counties North of New York City)</b>	Dutchess County, NY	Poughkeepsie Public Library	93 Market Street Poughkeepsie NY 12601 (845) 485-3445
	Orange County, NY	Middletown Thrall Library	11-19 Depot Street Middletown, New York 10940 (845) 341-5454
	Putnam County, NY	Mahopac Public Library	668 Route Six Mahopac, NY 10541 (845) 628-2009
	Rockland County, NY	Finkelstein Memorial Library	24 Chestnut Street Spring Valley, NY 10977 (845) 352-5700
	Westchester County, NY	White Plains Public Library	100 Martine Avenue White Plains, NY 10601 (914) 422-1400
<b>LIBRARIES (New Jersey Counties)</b>	Bergen County, NJ	North Bergen Free Public Library	8411 Bergenline Avenue North Bergen, NJ 07047 (201) 869-4715
	Essex County, NJ	Montclair Public Library	50 S. Fullerton Avenue Montclair, NJ 07042 (973) 744-0500
	Hudson County, NJ	Jersey City Free Library	472 Jersey Avenue Jersey City, NJ 07302 (201) 547-4526
	Hunterdon County, NJ	Hunterdon County Library	314 State Route 12 #3 Flemington, NJ 08822 (908) 788-1444

REPOSITORY	CITY OR COUNTY/STATE	FACILITY	ADDRESS
<b>LIBRARIES (New Jersey Counties) (continued)</b>	Mercer County, NJ	Hickory Corner Branch	2751 Brunswick Pike Lawrence Township, NJ 08648 (609) 448-1330
	Middlesex County, NJ	Middlesex County Library	1300 Mountain Avenue Middlesex, NJ 08846 (732) 356-6602
	Monmouth County, NJ	Monmouth County Library	125 Symmes Road Manalapan, NJ 07726 (732) 431-7220
	Morris County, NJ	Morris County Library Main	30 Hanover Avenue Whippany, NJ 07981 (973) 285-6930
	Ocean County, NJ	Ocean County Library	101 Washington Street Toms River, NJ 08753 (732) 349-6200
	Passaic County, NJ	Passaic Public Library	195 Gregory Avenue Passaic, NJ 07055 (973) 779-0474
	Somerset County, NJ	Somerset County Library System	1 Vogt Drive Bridgewater, NJ 08807 (908) 458-8415
	Sussex County, NJ	Sussex County Main Library	125 Morris Turnpike Newton, NJ 07860 (973) 948-3660
	Union County, NJ	Union Public Library	1980 Morris Avenue Union, NJ 07083 (908) 851-5450
	Warren County, NJ	Richard D. Gardner Branch	2 Shotwell Drive Belvidere, NJ 07823 (908) 818-1280
<b>LIBRARIES (Connecticut Counties)</b>	Fairfield County, CT	Fairfield Public Library	1080 Old Post Road Fairfield, CT 06824 (203) 256-3155
	New Haven County, CT	New Haven Free Public Library	133 Elm Street New Haven, CT 06510 (203) 946-8130

REPOSITORY	CITY OR COUNTY/STATE	FACILITY	ADDRESS
<b>GOVERNMENT OFFICES (New York City Counties)</b>	Bronx County	Bronx County Clerk's Office	851 Grand Concourse, Room 118 Bronx, NY 10451 (718) 618-3300
	Kings County (Brooklyn)	Brooklyn Borough Hall	209 Joralemon St. Brooklyn, NY 11201 (718) 802-3808
	New York County (Manhattan)	New York County Clerk's Office	60 Centre Street, Room 161 New York, NY 10007 (646) 386-3600
	Queens County	Queens County Clerk's Office	88-11 Sutphin Boulevard, #106 Jamaica, NY 11435 (718) 298-0600
	Richmond County (Staten Island)	Staten Island Community Board 1 Office	1 Edgewater Plaza, Room 217 Staten Island, NY 10305 (718) 981-6900
<b>GOVERNMENT OFFICES (Long Island Counties)</b>	Nassau County, NY	Nassau County Clerk's Office	240 Old Country Road Mineola, NY 11501 (516) 571-2660
	Suffolk County, NY	Suffolk County Department of Public Works, Transportation Office	335 Yaphank Avenue Riverhead, NY 11901 (631) 852-4010
<b>GOVERNMENT OFFICES (New York Counties North of New York City)</b>	Dutchess County, NY	Dutchess County Executive Record Room	22 Market Street Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 (845) 486-2000
	Orange County, NY	Orange County Clerk's Office	255 Main Street Goshen, NY 10924 (845) 291-2690
	Putnam County, NY	Putnam County Clerk's Office	40 Gleneida Avenue, Room 100 Carmel, NY 10512 (845) 808-1142
	Rockland County, NY	Rockland County Clerk's Office	1 South Main Street, Suite 100 New City, NY 10956 (845) 638-5070
	Westchester County, NY	Westchester County Clerk's Office	110 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Room 330 White Plains, NY 10601 (914) 995-4218

REPOSITORY	CITY OR COUNTY/STATE	FACILITY	ADDRESS
<b>GOVERNMENT OFFICES (New Jersey Counties)</b>	Bergen County, NJ	Bergen County Clerk's Office	1 Bergen County Plaza Hackensack, NJ 07601 (201) 336-7000
	Essex County, NJ	Essex County Clerk's Office	495 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd Newark, NJ 07102 (973) 621-4920
	Hudson County, NJ	Hudson County Register Office	257 Cornelison Avenue, 4th Floor Jersey City, NJ 07302 (201) 395-4760
	Hunterdon County, NJ	Hunterdon County Clerk's Office	71 Main Street Flemington, NJ 08822 (908) 788-1214
	Mercer County, NJ	Mercer County Planning Department	640 S. Broad Street Trenton, NJ 08650 (609) 989-6545
	Middlesex County, NJ	Middlesex County Clerk's Office	75 Bayard Street, 4th Floor New Brunswick, NJ 08901 (732) 745-3365
	Monmouth County, NJ	Monmouth County Clerk of the Board's Office	1 East Main Street Freehold, NJ 07728 (732) 431-7387
	Morris County, NJ	Morris County Clerk's Office	10 Court Street Morristown, NJ 07963 (973) 285-6120
	Ocean County, NJ	Ocean County Planning Board's Office	129 Hooper Avenue Toms River, NJ 08754 (732) 929-2054
	Passaic County, NJ	Passaic County Clerk's Office	401 Grant Street, Room 130 Paterson, NJ 07505 (973) 881-4127
	Somerset County, NJ	Somerset County Office of Planning, Policy and Econ. Dev. Office	20 Grove Street Somerville, NJ 08876 (908) 231-7021
	Sussex County, NJ	Sussex County Clerk's Office	1 Spring Street Newton, NJ 07860 (973) 579-0250
	Union County, NJ	Union County Bureau of Transportation Planning Office	10 Elizabethtown Plaza Elizabeth, NJ 07207 (908) 558-2273
Warren County, NJ	Warren County Clerk's Office	413 2nd Street Belvidere, NJ 07823 (908) 475-6211	
<b>GOVERNMENT OFFICES (Connecticut Counties)</b>	Fairfield County, CT	Western Connecticut Council of Governments	1 Riverside Road Sandy Hook, CT 06482 (475) 323-2060
	New Haven County, CT	Connecticut Metro Council of Governments	1000 Lafayette Blvd Bridgeport, CT 06604 (203) 366-5405

\* Digital access only

### 18.5.2 Virtual Public Hearings During Environmental Assessment Comment Period

FHWA and the Project Sponsors are hosting virtual public hearings to solicit public comments on this EA. Similar to the webinars described in **Section 18.3.2**, these virtual hearings are being conducted using the Zoom Webinar platform and will be posted to YouTube. They will include a presentation and the opportunity to comment orally. The presentation will include information on how to submit comments via other means, such as via the Project website, email, fax, telephone, and U.S. Postal Service during the public comment period.

The Project Sponsors are using all the public outreach tools described in **Section 18.3.1** to publicize the public hearings during the EA comment period. In addition, MTA is posting digital ads and posters in nine languages in all subway stations and commuter rail stations, and posters in nine languages on all its bus routes. This effort along with the far-reaching print and digital media ads, address both the environmental justice populations identified in **Chapter 17, “Environmental Justice,”** as well as the Title VI census tracts identified in **Subchapter 5A, “Social Conditions: Population Characteristics and Community Cohesion.”**

Hearing attendees can participate via computer or telephone. Hearing information is available through the Project website and via the Project telephone hotline. Publicly accessible computers can be reserved at the library repositories listed in **Table 18-3** to participate in these hearing.

**Table 18-4** provides information on these hearings scheduled in August 2022.

**Table 18-4. Public Hearing Dates and Times**

PUBLIC HEARING SESSION NO.	DATE	TIME
1	Thursday, August 25, 2022	5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (EDT)
2	Saturday, August 27, 2022	10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (EDT)
3	Sunday, August 28, 2022	1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (EDT)
4	Monday, August 29, 2022	1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (EDT)
5	Tuesday, August 30, 2022	5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (EDT)
6	Wednesday, August 31, 2022	10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (EDT)