

Long Island Rail Road East Side Access

New York, New York

(November 2009)

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA) Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) is constructing a new, direct 3.5-mile commuter rail extension from LIRR's Main and Port Washington Branch Lines in Long Island and Queens, to Grand Central Terminal (GCT) on Manhattan's East Side. The project includes the construction of new tunnels beneath Sunnyside Yard connecting to the currently unused lower level of the 63rd Street Tunnel beneath the East River. In Manhattan, the project will continue west beneath 63rd Street toward Park Avenue under the Lexington Avenue subway, turning south beneath the existing MTA-Metro North Railroad tracks under Park Avenue to a new LIRR passenger concourse in the lower level of GCT. At GCT, the project will provide new tracks, and a passenger concourse including platforms, entrances, waiting areas, ticket windows, and other services.

The current highway system and East River crossings (bridges and tunnels) to Manhattan from Nassau/Suffolk (and parts of eastern Queens) are at capacity and subject to severe congestion and long delays. Expansion of the highway network is not feasible due to the lack of available rights-of-way, high costs, and potentially adverse environmental impacts in a severe non-attainment area for ozone. The LIRR operates at capacity in this area with peak service of 37 trains per hour into its only Manhattan terminal, Penn Station. Nearly half of LIRR's 106,000 existing daily riders have destinations on Manhattan's East Side, and currently spend approximately 20 minutes "doubling back" from Penn Station on the island's West Side. Without the project, future LIRR trains to Penn Station will be severely congested, and are projected to operate at 27 percent over their passenger-carrying capacity. This level of crowding and discomfort would discourage or prevent new riders from using the LIRR to reach Manhattan. By redirecting trains to GCT, this congestion would be relieved and added capacity for Amtrak and New Jersey Transit service would be created at Penn Station.

The total project cost under the Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) is \$7,386.00 million. The Section 5309 New Starts funding share is \$2,632.11 million.

Status

MTA completed a major investment study for the project corridor in April 1998. FTA approved MTA's request to advance the project into preliminary engineering in September 1998. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was completed in May 2000; a Final EIS was completed in March 2001; and an environmental Record of Decision was issued by FTA in May 2001. Under a Letter of No Prejudice (LONP), MTA began construction in late 2001. The LONP granted authority to expend up to \$1,080.04 million while maintaining eligibility of the expenses for later reimbursement, and was liquidated upon FFGA execution. FTA approved the project into final design in February 2002. Due to the redesign of a vent facility at 50th Street, FTA issued a supplemental environmental Finding of No Significant Impact in July 2006. MTA and FTA entered into an FFGA in December 2006, with revenue operations scheduled for December 2013. Major tunneling construction has made significant progress in Manhattan and to a lesser degree in Queens. Costs are increasing over the original budget due to a combination of events including higher cost of materials, a less competitive bidding environment that required repackaging that delayed the project, poor contractor performance, unbudgeted stakeholder requirements, and lack of timely decisions. FTA does not believe that the costs can be recouped and expects the project will remain over budget until completed. The project revenue operation date is delayed two years and local share is being increased to cover increasing costs of about \$1,500 million.

SAFETEA-LU Section 3043(b)(20) authorized the LIRR East Side Access project for final design and construction. Through FY 2010, Congress has appropriated \$1,703.93 million in Section 5309 New Starts funds including \$195.41 million in ARRA grants for the project.

Reported in Year of Expenditure Dollars		
<u>Source of Funds</u>	<u>Total Funding (\$million)</u>	<u>Appropriations to Date</u>
Federal:		
Section 5309 New Starts FFGA Commitment	\$2,632.11	\$1,703.93 million in total appropriations through FY 2010. This includes \$195.41 million in ARRA funds
Flexible Funds (CMAQ)	\$11.20	
Section 5309 Fixed Guideway Modernization Funds	\$22.98	
Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Funds	\$16.26	
State:		
State Transportation Bond Act of 2005	\$450.00	
Local:		
MTA Dedicated Sources (bonds, surplus toll revenues, etc.)	\$3,217.35	
MTA Operating Budget	\$1,036.10	
TOTAL	\$7,386.00	

NOTE: The sum of the figures may differ from the total as listed due to rounding.

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