

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Project: Pennsauken Junction Transit Center and Park and Ride

Applicant: New Jersey Transit

Project Location: Pennsauken Township, Camden County, New Jersey

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The New Jersey Transit (NJTRANSIT) proposes to construct the Pennsauken Junction Transit Center and Park and Ride, a commuter rail transfer station in the Township of Pennsauken, Camden County, New Jersey. Based on the *Pennsauken Junction Transit Center and Park and Ride RiverLINE (Light Rail) and Atlantic City Rail Line Environmental Assessment* dated August 21, 2009 (the EA) prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. Section 4321 et seq.) and Federal Transit Administration’s implementing regulations (23 CFR Part 771), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) finds, in accordance with 23 CFR Section 771.121, that the *Pennsauken Junction Transit Center and Park and Ride* (hereinafter referred to as the Project or Proposed Action), will result in no significant impact on the environment.

The EA included a Section 106 analysis and an evaluation pursuant to Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, codified at U.S.C. 303, which resulted in a “de minimis” impact recommendation.

The Project consists of the construction of a new rail transit center, including two new interconnected stations, a single, 200-foot long, floor-level platform with a 60-foot long canopy along the RiverLINE, two (2) 300-foot long, high-level, side platforms with 100-foot long canopies along the Atlantic City Rail Line (A.C.R.L.), and a new 283 space commuter parking lot. An elevator and stair tower will connect the two stations.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Summary of Project

2.1 Existing Conditions

The Project is located at the crossing of the NJ TRANSIT RiverLINE light rail line and A.C.R.L. commuter rail line, at the corner of Derosse and South Zimmerman Avenues. The Project site is bound by Derosse Avenue to the northeast; the RiverLINE railroad to the northwest; and the A.C.R.L. to the southwest.

As the sponsor for the Project, and commuter rail authority for the State of New Jersey NJTRANSIT is responsible for the programming and funding, as well as maintenance and upkeep of the system. Construction of the new rail transit center in Pennsauken will allow transfers between the A.C.R.L., which provides service between Philadelphia, PA and Atlantic City, NJ, and the RiverLINE, which

provides service between Trenton, NJ and Camden, NJ. With the new transit center, the A.C.R.L. and RiverLINE will continue to operate as they currently do upon the completion of the Project.

Currently, the two nearest stops to the Project site along the RiverLINE are the Pennsauken/Route 73 Station, located approximately 2.75-miles north, and the 36th Street Station, located approximately 1.5-miles south. The two nearest stops along the A.C.R.L. are the 30th Street Station in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, approximately 10 miles west, and the Cherry Hill Station in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, which is approximately 4.5 miles east.

The Project includes Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant lighting, access ramps, signage, and communication systems. These accessibility improvements and amenities will increase customer convenience and comfort while providing safe access to platforms and efficient boarding/de-boarding. The proposed plans allow for full accessibility to the station in compliance with ADA requirements.

The station site currently consists of grade separated rights-of-way for the grade level RiverLINE and elevated A.C.R.L. The site for the proposed parking area consists of a weeded lawn that is owned and maintained by Hess Corporation and Conrail with some peripheral brush and trees in the southeast corner of the parcel. No facilities, platforms, or parking areas currently exist within the Project site. The current A.C.R.L. schedule provides 14 to 16 trains each way per day, and the current RiverLINE schedule has service every 15 minutes during peak periods, and every 30 minutes off-peak, in each direction.

2.2 Existing and proposed conditions on the Delair Branch

On the A.C.R.L., the Project is located in Conrail-owned territory referred to as the Delair Branch, starting at milepost 2.7 and running two miles south to the Pemberton Branch. NJ TRANSIT and Conrail share trackage rights in this area. Conrail operates on Track 2 (referred to as the Hatch Industrial Track or “Hatch IT”), and allows NJ TRANSIT, under the terms of an existing, negotiated agreement, to operate passenger service on Track 1. The Project requires both Conrail and NJ TRANSIT to be able to operate through the area in a timely and unobstructed fashion. The Project will change the terms of the existing operating agreement between NJ TRANSIT and Conrail, allowing NJ TRANSIT to operate on both Track 1 and the Hatch IT while, at the same time, allowing Conrail to continue servicing its existing clients and protecting the ability to solicit and service future clients along the Hatch IT. As is the case with the existing operating agreement between NJ TRANSIT and Conrail, the future revised agreement will ensure operating rights for both parties in perpetuity. No track realignments are required, but signal and interlocking modifications will be necessary along the A.C.R.L. to complete the Project.

Joint operation along the Delair Branch will be accomplished by improving the ability to cross over between Track 1 and the Hatch IT through the installation of two new crossover tracks and by remotely controlling those crossovers and one existing switch. These elements will be incorporated in a new interlocking that will be added to the signal system to expedite train movements of both Conrail and NJ TRANSIT on the shared tracks and conform to Federal Railroad Administration regulations. The improvements to the signal system will require not more than two new signal bungalows and not more than four new 4-inch conduits, in addition to the crossover tracks. None of these track or signal related Project elements will result in a negative environmental impact as they all represent improvements and/or maintenance activities undertaken within the existing rail right-of-way.

3.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the Project is to provide a transfer point between NJ TRANSIT's southern New Jersey commuter and light rail lines (the A.C.R.L. and the RiverLINE). Currently, passengers cannot transfer between the two lines as there is no physical connection between them. This would enable residents of southern New Jersey to reach multiple northern New Jersey locations, as well as New York City, by utilizing one transit system with one set of fare policies, fulfilling the long-term goal of connecting all of the rail lines on NJ TRANSIT's system. The goals of the Project are to increase use of, and access to, mass transit, reduce regional automobile travel, reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, and provide for an integrated cost-effective transit system linking the local area to major employment and recreational destinations.

The need for the project is to increase the accessibility of transit service and improve commuting time. The objective of the Project is to reduce commuting times that currently exceed 40 to 100 minutes by between 15 and 33 %, depending upon the destination, compared to the service which is presently available. Additional ridership forecast information is contained in Appendix H of the EA.

4.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The EA reviewed two alternatives, the Proposed Action described above and the "No-Build" Alternative. The Proposed Action consists of the construction of a new rail transit center consisting of two new interconnected stations on to be constructed on two undeveloped properties Block 1005, Lots 1 and 2; Block 7001, Lot 1; and Block 7004, Lots 1 and 4 in the Township of Pennsauken. refer to the Site Map and Project Area Map in **Attachment A.** The properties are located adjacent to the rail right-of-way crossings of the RiverLine, which is at-grade, and A.C.R.L., which is above-grade. The elements of the Proposed Action include:

1. Construction of a single, 200-foot long, floor-level platform with a 60-foot long canopy along the RiverLINE.
2. Construction of two (2) 300-foot long, high-level, side platforms with 100-foot long canopies along the A.C.R.L.
3. Construction of an elevator and stair tower will connect the two stations,
4. Construction of platforms designed in accordance with NJ TRANSIT station design standards. Both the northerly and southerly high-level platforms will include elevator/stair towers, approximately 38-feet in height, to provide patron access.
5. Construction of new pedestrian walkways to allow access to the floor-level and northerly high-level platforms from the park-and-ride lot and Derosse Avenue. The pedestrian walkway that connects to the northerly high-level platform includes both stairs and ADA-compliant ramps.
6. Construction of a new commuter parking lot with 283 parking spaces. The park-and-ride lot can also accommodate emergency bus service and is expected to attract drop-off/pick-up patrons.
7. Construction of the parking lot will include seven ADA handicap-accessible parking spaces will be designated within the western end of the proposed parking lot, adjacent to the access

ramp for the RiverLINE boarding platform and in the immediate vicinity of the elevator tower. ADA compliant lighting, elevators, signage, curbing and sidewalks will provide full accessibility to all platforms.

8. Installation of additional amenities including benches, trash receptacles, brick pavers, closed circuit security cameras, ticket vending machines, pedestrian guide rails, two (2) bicycle lockers, and hazard markers.
9. Modification of signal system and install a new interlocking along the A.C.R.L. Signal system improvements will require not more than two new signal bungalows and not more than four new 4-inch conduits. The new interlocking that will be added to the signal system to expedite train movements of both Conrail and NJ TRANSIT on the shared tracks.
10. Installation of two new crossover tracks along the Delair Branch.
11. Acquisition of two undeveloped properties, one from Conrail and another from the Amarada Hess Corporation.

4.1 “No Build” Alternative

The “no build” option would not construct the transit center and parking lot to connect the RiverLINE and A.C.R.L. The “no build” option is contrary to the stated purpose and need of the Project. There would be no connection to the overall rail transit network. Local residents would not be able to reduce their commute times by 15 to 33 %. Local residents would not be able to increase mass transit use, reduce automobile travel, and provide an integrated, cost-effective transit system by linking the RiverLINE with the A.C.R.L. Instead, NJTRANSIT would continue to maintain the A.C.R.L. and RiverLINE and either shuttle or identify another means to connect passengers between the two lines.

5.0 AGENCY COORDINATION AND PUBLIC OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

Notice of availability for this EA was published in the Courier Post, a newspaper in Cherry Hill, N.J. on August 21, 2009 and the 30-day review period closed on September 21, 2009. During the public comment period five (5) letters of support were received: 1) Camden County Board of Chosen Freeholders, 2) the Township of Pennsauken, 3) the Chamber of Commerce of Southern New Jersey, 4) U.S. Congressman, 5) the Honorable Robert Andrews, and the South Jersey Transit Advisory Committee.

In addition, two correspondences were received from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):

1. Correspondence dated September 15, 2009 concerning the review of the Project’s sole-source aquifer information in accordance with 1424(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act. The EPA stated in the letter that, “this project satisfies the requirements of Section 1424(e).”
2. Correspondence dated September 21, 2009, concerning the EPA’s review of the EA under NEPA. The EPA stated that it “believes the appropriate environmental impacts have been analyzed in the document.” The correspondence also encouraged NJTRANSIT to implement greener practices and techniques during the construction and operation of the Project.

No negative comments regarding the Project were received. See **Attachment B** of this FONSI for copies of the correspondence.

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, has included the Pennsauken Junction Transit Center and Park and Ride in its list of approved American Recovery and Reinvestment Act projects (STIP #T55).

Local agencies and interested parties have been consulted as part of the Project scoping process. NJ TRANSIT has been in contact with the Township of Pennsauken to involve them in the design process and obtain their concurrence with the Project design. A meeting was held on February 19, 2009 with representatives of Pennsauken Township to discuss the Project design at the conceptual stage. As stated in the Township's March 4, 2009, letter to NJ TRANSIT, the Township of Pennsauken supports the proposed transit center Project (refer to EA Appendix B, Correspondence).

An additional meeting was held on April 9, 2009 between NJ TRANSIT representatives and the Pennsauken Mayor, Township Attorney, Administrator and Engineer. The Township reaffirmed its support of the Project at the meeting. The April 9th meeting provided Township officials the opportunity to further discuss the Project. The discussion related primarily to questions relative to anticipated traffic, noise, grade crossings, and drainage impacts, all of which were discussed during the meeting and are addressed in the EA document.

Consultation and communication between NJ TRANSIT representatives and Pennsauken Township officials is ongoing and will include coordination regarding the final design for the Project. NJ TRANSIT held an informational meeting for members of the public on August 25, 2009.

Conrail has also been consulted to obtain its support for the Project and to develop an operating agreement between NJ TRANSIT and Conrail for a transit center along the A.C.R.L. A portion of the proposed transit center will be located within the Conrail right-of-way. NJ TRANSIT representatives met with Conrail representatives on March 5, 2009 regarding the Project. Conrail endorsed the Project in an April 13, 2009 letter (refer to EA Appendix B, Correspondence).

6.0 MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM

NJTRANSIT will implement the mitigation measures described in the EA and in this FONSI. The FTA will require in any grant documents for the Project that it be built in a manner consistent with that described in the EA and that all committed mitigation be implemented in accordance with the EA and this FONSI. FTA will require NJTRANSIT to periodically submit written reports on its progress in implementing the mitigation commitments. FTA will monitor this progress through quarterly reviews of the project's progress. The Measures to Minimize Harm are fully described in the EA and are summarized in **Attachment C**.

7.0 DETERMINATION AND FINDINGS

1. Land Acquisitions and Displacements

The Proposed Action will require the acquisition of Conrail and Hess properties; the Hess property will be acquired through condemnation only, if required, following coordination with the property owner.

2. Land Use and Zoning

While there are residences within 100 feet of the Project site, the Proposed Action will not

have an adverse land use or zoning impacts. NJTRANSIT has met with the Township concerning the intermodal station's design throughout the environmental review process. While not required, NJTRANSIT will present the Proposed Action to the local planning board for design review and respond to comments.

3. Consistency with State, Regional, and Local Plans

The Proposed Action is consistent with state, regional, and local plans. The Project conforms to the New Jersey State Plan, which encourages the utilization of existing infrastructure as well as the provision of mass transit services.

4. Environmental Justice/Title VI

The Proposed Action will not have adverse impacts or result in disproportionate impacts to Environmental Justice/Title VI communities.

5. Aesthetics

NJTRANSIT will continue to consult with Pennsauken and SHPO on the final design of the Proposed Action and install a landscape buffer. See #9 Section 106 Resources below for the consultation process with SHPO.

6. Air Quality

The Proposed Action will not have adverse air quality impacts.

7. Noise/Vibration

The Proposed Action will not have adverse noise or vibration impacts.

8. Traffic, Transit and Parking

The Proposed Action will not create adverse traffic, transit, or parking impacts. The Project traffic analysis evaluated current and future conditions at one signalized, and two unsignalized, intersections in the vicinity of the site. The analysis determined that the existing Level of Service (LOS) of B at the signalized intersection (at Derosse Avenue and River Road) will remain unchanged following the completion of the Project. The future conditions at the two unsignalized intersections (Derosse and Bannard Avenues, and Derosse and South Zimmerman Avenues) will result in LOS A or B at the AM and PM peak hours.

9. Section 106 Resources

Two previously identified historic districts eligible for listing in the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places had been identified within the Project's Area of Potential Effects (APE). The NJ Department of Environmental Protection, Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred with the identification of these resources in its March 13, 2009 letter (**Attachment C**). The two districts are:

a. Camden and Amboy Railroad Historic District, NJ TRANSIT's RiverLINE

b. Delaware River Railroad Bridge Company Historic District, NJ TRANSIT's Atlantic City Rail Line

In consultation with the SHPO, FTA determined that, based on the *Cultural Resource Investigation* report, the proposed Pennsauken Junction Transit Station will not adversely

affect any historic resources provided the following conditions are met:

- a. Preconstruction photographic documentation shall be performed. (The required photographs were submitted to the SHPO for review on July 28, 2009.)
- b. All proposed new construction shall be performed in accordance with the recommended approaches and guidance set forth in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Standards)*.
- c. NJ TRANSIT shall consult with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding the design, materials, color, texture and appearance of the new construction and give the SHPO an opportunity to review a complete set of plans and specifications prior to construction.
- d. NJTRANSIT shall provide samples of materials to the SHPO such as brick, mortar, cast stone, railing, etc.

These conditions are delineated in more detail in the SHPO March 13, 2009 concurrence letter provided in **Attachment C**.

For archaeological resources, SHPO deemed the Cultural Resources Investigation report acceptable in the March 13, 2009 and confirmed that no further effort to identify archaeological properties was warranted. In the event that any archaeological resources are identified during construction, NJTRANSIT will contact and coordinate with FTA and SHPO to assess the extent of archaeological investigations based on that coordination.

10. Public Safety and Security

The Proposed Action will not have adverse public safety and/or security impacts.

11. Endangered and Threatened Species

The Proposed Action will not have adverse endangered and threatened species impacts. The bald eagle is no longer listed as an endangered species; however, it is protected under the Migratory Birds Act. The habitat for bald eagles does not exist at the project site and they have not been sited in the area; therefore there is no impact. NJTRANSIT will monitor the construction site for bald eagle activity during construction and adjust the construction plan, if any are identified.

12. Soils/Geology

The Proposed Action will not have adverse soils/geology impacts.

13. Wetlands/Open Waters

The Proposed Action will not have adverse impacts on freshwater wetlands, wetlands transition area or State open waters.

14. Stormwater and Flooding

The Proposed Action will not have adverse stormwater and flooding impacts.

15. Water Quality, Navigable Waterways and Coastal Zones

The Proposed Action will have minor temporary and permanent effects to surface water quality and groundwater. The Project will collect surface water in vegetated swale area. NJTRANSIT will file Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan for construction with the

Camden County Soil Conservation District.

16. Hazardous and non-Hazardous Materials

NJTRANSIT will perform due diligence within the A.C.R.L. right-of-way when Conrail permits environmental access to the property.

17. Cumulative Effects

NJTRANSIT has contacted local representatives with respect to development around the site. No known developments are planned in or around the Project area. While there is development activity in Pennsauken Township, none can currently be associated as a cumulative effect of the Project.

18. Indirect Effects – Construction Impacts

The Proposed Action may create temporary construction impacts from noise and dust. NJTRANSIT will limit construction activities to daytime working hours and control noise and dust impacts using the construction industry’s best management practices and in accordance with contractual requirements.

- Noise and Vibration – All work activities will conform to local noise ordinances. The primary noise sources will be construction equipment such as vehicle engines and compressors. Since residences are present within 100 feet of the Project site, noise abatement controls such as careful staging of noise intensive construction activities during daylight hours and the use of less noise intensive construction practices will be instituted to minimize potential adverse effects. At no time will noise levels exceed New Jersey Noise Regulations limits applicable to daytime construction. Temporary vibrations from construction activities are expected to be minimal and typical of the normal activities associated with construction.
- Hazardous Materials and Air Quality - All debris resulting from construction will be removed in compliance with approved standards and, as appropriate, disposed off-site in accordance with applicable regulations. In the event that contaminated or impacted materials are encountered, the material will be managed in accordance with applicable regulations and, as appropriate, the material will be contained and removed from the Project site to a proper offsite disposal/recycling facility, also in accordance with all applicable regulations. Air quality impacts from fugitive dust emissions will be controlled through best management practices, such as wetting roadways, and dust covers on vehicles hauling fill from the Project site. Additionally, NJ TRANSIT will require that all construction equipment utilize ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel.

8.0 SECTION 4(f)

FTA’s approval of the Pennsauken Junction Transit Center and Park and Ride Project must comply with Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, codified at 49 U.S.C. 303. Investigations for this EA identified two (2) historic districts in the area of potential effects of the Proposed Action. The two historic districts are:

1. **Camden and Amboy Railroad Historic District, NJ TRANSIT's RiverLINE**
2. **Delaware River Railroad Bridge Company Historic District, NJ TRANSIT's Atlantic City Rail Line**

8.1 De Minimis Section 4(f) Coordination

Under Section 774.5 (b), the Section 4(f) de minimis coordination requirements for historic properties are: “(i) The consulting parties identified in accordance with 36 CFR part 800 must be consulted; and (ii) The Administration must receive written concurrence from the pertinent State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), and from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) if participating in the consultation process, in a finding of “no adverse effect” or “no historic properties affected” in accordance with 36 CFR part 800. The Administration shall inform these officials of its intent to make a de minimis impact determination based on their concurrence in the finding of “no adverse effect” or “no historic properties affected.” (iii) Public notice and comment, beyond that required by 36 CFR part 800, is not required.”

The following supporting documents are located in **Attachment B**:

1. Correspondence dated February 2, 2009 from NJTRANSIT to FTA identifying consulting parties for the Proposed Action.
2. Correspondence dated February 24, 2009 from FTA to NJTRANSIT concurring on the list of consulting parties for the Proposed Action.
3. Correspondence dated March 13, 2009 from SHPO to NJTRANSIT issuing a conditional no adverse effect on historic properties.
4. Correspondence dated August 17, 2009 from FTA to SHPO indicating the intent to use the “no adverse effect” finding to support a de minimis Section 4(f) finding for the Proposed Action.

This coordination meets the requirements of 23 C.F.R. Section 774.5 (b).

8.2 De Minimis Section 4(f) Recommendation

The NJTRANSIT recommended the Proposed Action for consideration of Section 4(f) de minimis impact finding. Based upon the information presented in the EA and coordination with NJ SHPO, the proper mitigation measures and coordination have been undertaken. Therefore, the FTA has determined that the Project will have no adverse effect on the two Historic Districts.

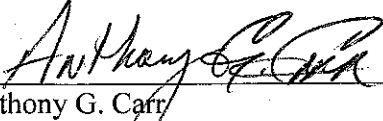
It is recommended that FTA approve the de minimis Section 4(f) request by NJTRANSIT since the impacts are minimal based upon the coordination and supporting documentation.

8.3 De Minimis Section 4(f) Finding

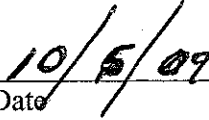
Based upon the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) review of the project description and supporting documentation on the Proposed Action as described in the EA, it is FTA's determination that the de minimis Section 4(f) requirements set forth in 23 C.F.R. Section 774. 3(b) have been met and that sufficient documentation exists to demonstrate that the impacts are de minimis.

9.0 FTA NEPA FINDING

FTA has reviewed the *Pennsauken Junction Transit Center and Park and Ride EA* and finds that the Proposed Action will have no significant impact on the environment.



Anthony G. Carr
Deputy Regional Administrator, Region II
Federal Transit Administration


Date

Attachments:

- Attachment A** – Site Map and Project Area Map
- Attachment B** – Correspondence
- Attachment C** – Measures to Minimize Harm