

ABSTRACT

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and NJ TRANSIT have completed a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Section 4(f) Evaluation for the Access to the Region's Core (ARC) project. As a result of public and agency comments received on the Build Alternative (documented in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement published in February 2007 and Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement published in March 2008), and advancement of preliminary engineering, NJ TRANSIT has refined elements of the Build Alternative to avoid, minimize or mitigate projected impacts, without sacrificing achievement of project goals and objectives.

The Build Alternative traverses a project area within Kearny, Secaucus, Jersey City, North Bergen, Union City and Hoboken in New Jersey, the Hudson River, and the Borough of Manhattan in New York. The project consists of additional commuter rail tracks and connections on the Northeast Corridor, new tunnels under the Palisades in New Jersey, the Hudson River and Manhattan, and connections to new station capacity and tracks under West 34th Street from Eighth Avenue to Sixth Avenue.

The purpose of ARC is to increase trans-Hudson commuter rail capacity to: accommodate projected ridership growth from rail lines west of the Hudson River; enhance passenger convenience via a one-seat ride on five NJ TRANSIT lines; and improve system safety and reliability between Frank R. Lautenberg Station in New Jersey and midtown Manhattan.

The capital cost estimate for the Build Alternative in the FEIS is \$7.6 billion (year of expenditure dollars). Subsequent to the printing of the FEIS, the capital cost of the Build Alternative increased to \$8.7 billion¹ (year of expenditure dollars). The capital cost increase is due to a change in the assumptions for annual inflation and contingency costs as a result of on-going Preliminary Engineering.

The types of social, economic and environmental impacts considered for the Build Alternative (during construction and on a long-term basis) include: transportation, land use and demographics, environmental justice, visual resources and aesthetics, air quality, noise and vibration, ecology, water resources, parklands, contaminated materials, safety and security, utilities, historic and archaeological resources, and Section 4(f) property use. Measures to mitigate anticipated impacts are detailed in this FEIS.

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¹ Project cost is \$8.7 billion with an additional \$400 million for rolling stock for the full 2030 operating plan. This brings the total cost to \$9.1 billion, the amount used in the FTA project evaluation process.