



# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

## GOETHALS BRIDGE REPLACEMENT

NEWSLETTER 8 / SUMMER 2010

### INTRODUCTION

The United States Coast Guard (USCG) is the lead federal agency for preparation of the Goethals Bridge Replacement (GBR) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ), the project sponsor, proposes the bridge replacement as part of its Goethals Bridge Modernization Program. This is the eighth in a series of newsletters about this study as it progresses.

The Goethals Bridge is a critical bi-state crossing, connecting Staten Island, New York, and Elizabeth, New Jersey. The bridge carries approximately 76,000 cars and trucks daily and provides direct connections to the New Jersey Turnpike and Route 1 & 9 in New Jersey, and to the Staten Island Expressway and the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge in New York. Constructed in the 1920s, the 82-year-old bridge has become outdated, with narrow lanes, lack of emergency breakdown lanes, and other structural problems. These deficiencies contribute to deteriorating traffic and safety conditions on the bridge, as well as increasing maintenance and repair costs.



United States Coast Guard

## GOETHALS BRIDGE REPLACEMENT FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (FEIS) AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

### FEIS PUBLISHED

The FEIS has been issued by the USCG for public review. The Notice of Availability of the FEIS may be found in the *Federal Register* dated August 13, 2010. The FEIS analyzes the potential for impact to the natural and manmade environment by the proposed Goethals Bridge Replacement Project. The FEIS has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended.

On May 28, 2009, the USCG made available the Draft EIS (DEIS). Two formal public meetings were held on July 8 and 9, 2009, to provide an opportunity for submittal of oral comments to the USCG; written comments were accepted by the USCG through July 28, 2009.

### PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE SELECTED – NEW ALIGNMENT SOUTH

Following the close of the public comment period in July 2009, PANYNJ chose the *New Alignment South* as its proposed alignment. The USCG has identified the *New Alignment South* as the Preferred Alternative for presentation and evaluation in the FEIS.

The Preferred Alternative consists of a cable-stayed replacement bridge on an alignment south of the existing bridge, and removal of the existing bridge after construction of the new bridge. The replacement bridge would consist of the following components:

- six 12-foot-wide travel lanes, three on each roadway deck (i.e., one roadway for eastbound traffic and one roadway for westbound traffic);

- a 12-foot-wide outer shoulder on each roadway;
- a 5-foot-wide inner shoulder on each roadway;
- a minimum 10-foot-wide sidewalk/bikeway along the northern edge of the westbound roadway; and
- a central area to be maintained between the eastbound and westbound roadway decks with sufficient width to accommodate the provision of transit service, should future conditions warrant inclusion of such service during the service life of the bridge.

The maximum out-to-out width of the main span of the bridge would be 210 feet. Part of that width comprises a 65-foot-wide central area between the eastbound and westbound decks, which accommodates the towers and support cables, as well as the 27-foot-wide potential mass transit corridor. Navigational clearance

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The FEIS can be viewed in its entirety on the project Web site, [www.goethalseis.com](http://www.goethalseis.com). Hard copies are available for viewing at the following locations:

### New York

- **Brooklyn Public Library- Central Library**  
Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn
- **NY Public Library- Mid Manhattan Library**  
5th Ave. at 42nd St., Manhattan
- **NY Public Library- Port Richmond Branch**  
75 Bennett St., Staten Island
- **NY Public Library- St. George Library Center**  
5 Central Avenue, Staten Island
- **NY Public Library- Todt Hill- Westerleigh Branch**  
2550 Victory Blvd., Staten Island
- **Staten Island Community Board 1**  
One Edgewater Plaza, Suite 217, Staten Island
- **Staten Island Community Board 2**  
460 Brielle Ave., Staten Island
- **Staten Island Community Board 3**  
655 Rossville Ave # 218, Staten Island
- **United States Coast Guard**  
One South St., Manhattan

### New Jersey

- **City Hall of Elizabeth**  
Office of the Clerk, 50 Winfield Scott Plaza, Elizabeth
- **Elizabeth Public Library- Elmora Branch**  
740 West Grand St., Elizabeth
- **Elizabeth Public Library- Elizabeth**  
11 South Broad St., Elizabeth
- **City Hall of Linden**  
Office of the Clerk, 301 North Wood Avenue, Linden
- **Linden Free Public Library**  
31 East Henry St., Linden
- **Roselle Public Library**  
104 West Fourth Ave., Roselle

Copies of the FEIS are also available on CD-ROM. To request a copy, please call 917-339-0488.

## SECTION 106

Given the Findings of Adverse Effect on three historic properties (including the existing Goethals Bridge) and the ongoing development of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), as per Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the MOA for the Preferred Alternative will be executed in consultation with the New York and New Jersey State Historic Preservation Offices, and will be completed prior to the Record of Decision.

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beneath the new bridge is proposed to be a minimum of 135 feet above mean high water (MHW) at the channel margins, equal to the minimum vertical clearance of the existing bridge. The main piers are proposed to be constructed 900 feet apart, an increase from the existing horizontal separation of 617 feet, thereby removing all bridge structure-related hazards out of the Arthur Kill's 500-foot navigation channel. The elevation of the two bridge towers is proposed to be 272 feet above mean sea level (MSL), as compared to the 248 feet above MSL associated with the existing bridge's truss superstructure.

Other elements of the Preferred Alternative include:

- new approach spans at both the New Jersey and the New York ends of the new bridge with roadway dimensions similar to the bridge section;
- a 50-foot wide buffer on both sides of the replacement bridge and approach spans;
- permanent right-of-way fencing at ground level along both sides of the proposed replacement bridge approach spans, except through open waters;
- a permanent access road located generally below the proposed replacement bridge approach spans for purposes of construction, maintenance and security;
- replacement of the Travis Branch railroad bridge over I-278 in Staten Island in order to accommodate the wider roadway;
- re-alignment of Gulf Avenue in Staten Island; and
- construction staging areas of approximately five acres on each side of the Arthur Kill, which are required for storage of the materials, pre-assembly activities and office space for the construction effort.

The existing bridge, including its main truss span, New Jersey and New York approach spans and abutments, would be entirely demolished and removed, after construction of the new bridge is completed.

The PANYNJ anticipates that the construction period for the new bridge and demolition of the existing bridge would range between 52 and 60 months, depending on the type of superstructure (i.e., steel girder, pre-cast/stressed concrete, or segmental concrete) to be selected for the main bridge span and its approaches.

## GENERAL CONFORMITY

*In accordance with the applicable requirements of the General Conformity Rule (pursuant to the Clean Air Act) and given the findings that the estimated annual emission rates of two pollutants (CO and NOx) are predicted to exceed the General Conformity applicability thresholds during three years of the GBR Project's construction period, the USCG has issued its Draft General Conformity Determination (see FEIS Appendix N.3). Public notice of the Draft Determination has been placed in the Staten Island Advance and the Star-Ledger. The public review period for the Draft Determination ends on September 13, 2010.*

## MODIFICATIONS IN THE FEIS SINCE PUBLICATION OF THE DEIS

During the 60-day DEIS comment period, the USCG received oral statements from 18 speakers at formal public meetings and an additional 36 written comments from federal, state, and local agencies, other stakeholder groups and individuals. The comments and corresponding responses are included in a summary report located in Section 8.0 of the FEIS.

A list of the most substantive modifications that have been made since the publication of the DEIS follows. The FEIS:

- identifies the Preferred Alternative;
- provides updated information on project design details, impacts and proposed mitigation, as appropriate;
- presents the results of additional or updated technical studies undertaken since the DEIS was released;
- documents the formal public meetings and the comments received on the DEIS; and
- responds to the substantive comments received from federal, state, and local agencies as well as stakeholders and individuals.

Specific modifications to the FEIS, which are based on one or more of the primary modifications identified above, include but are not necessarily limited to the following:

- **New Sub-Section 3.4.2.5 (Construction Vehicle Access Routes and Staging Areas)**: discusses the potential access routes and staging areas in both New Jersey and New York that would be used during the construction period.
- **Sub-Section 3.4.5 (Maintenance and Protection of Traffic [MPT] During Construction)**: updated to reflect the need for a temporary U-turn within the I-278 median in New Jersey to maintain traffic during project construction, which would be needed for any of the four Build Alternatives.
- **New Sub-Section 3.5 (Identification of the Preferred Alternative)**: discusses the selection of the New Alignment South as the Preferred Alternative for the Proposed Project.
- **Sub-Section 4.14.5.3 (Regulated Wetlands)**: updated to reflect the recent freshwater wetland delineation conducted within the I-278 median, near Route 1 & 9 in Linden.
- **Sub-Section 4.14.5.6 (Endangered and Threatened Species)**: updated to reflect the most recent Section 7 Consultation per the Endangered Species Act. Consequently, some impact analyses in Section 5.13.4.5 (Wildlife) and Section 5.13.4.6 (Endangered and Threatened Species and Critical Habitats) have also been updated.
- **Sub-Section 4.20.1.4 (Regulatory Setting and Compliance with Standards)**: updated to reflect the inclusion of the GBR Project in the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council's and North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority's State Implementation Plans.
- **Sub-Section 5.7.5 (Mitigation of Impacts) & Sub-Section 5.8.5 (Mitigation of Impacts)**: discussion of the ongoing Section 106 Consultation and development of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) per Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, has been updated.
- **Sub-Section 5.11.6 (Mitigation of Impacts)**: updated to reflect development of the conceptual Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan for both New Jersey and New York.
- **Sub-Section 5.13.4.1 (Aquatic Communities)**: update on the revised Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Assessment Report was presented.
- **Sub-Section 5.13.4.2 (Vegetative Habitats) & Section 5.13.4.3 (Regulated Wetlands)**: revised to reflect impacts of the temporary U-turn within the I-278 median in New Jersey.
- **Sub-Section 5.13.5 (Mitigation of Impacts)**: updated with information regarding current status of the development of the conceptual Wetland Mitigation Plan for both New Jersey and New York.
- **Sub-Section 5.20.6.3 (Impact Analysis of 2014 Conditions)**: updated to present the traffic impact analysis of future conditions (No-Build, Build and Build with Mitigation) in 2014, the estimated time of completion (ETC), as per New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) requirements.
- **Sub-Section 5.21.5 (Mobile Source Air Toxics)**: updated per current U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) guidance.
- **Sub-Section 5.21.7 (Construction Impacts)**: updated to include discussion of the quantitative construction-phase air quality impact analysis of the Preferred Alternative, per USEPA and CEQR requirements. Consequently, Section 5.22 (Public Health) was also updated.
- **Sub-Section 5.21.8 (Conformity Analysis)**: revised to reflect results of the construction-phase air quality analysis for the Preferred Alternative, and the Draft General Conformity Determination.
- **Sub-Section 5.23.5 (Noise Impacts During Construction Period)**: updated to include discussion of the quantitative construction-phase noise impact analysis of the Preferred Alternative, per CEQR requirements.
- **Sub-Section 6.3 (Permitting and Regulatory Agencies)**: updated to document additional coordination meetings that have occurred since publication of the DEIS.
- **Section 6.5 (DEIS Public Comment Period and Formal Public Meetings)**: updated to summarize the formal public meetings and DEIS Public Comment Period.
- **New Sub-Section 6.6 (FEIS and Record of Decision)**: discusses the remaining steps of the NEPA environmental review process after the FEIS release and leading up to Record of Decision (ROD).
- **Sub-Section 7.1 (Federal Permits and Approvals)**: updated to document the current environmental permitting strategy and status.
- **Sub-Section 7.4 (New York City Actions)**: updated to document the compliance of this NEPA document with CEQR.
- **New Section 8.0 (GBR DEIS Public Comments/Responses Summary Report)**: This new section documents all the comments received on the DEIS during the DEIS Public Comment Period, as well as the USCG's responses to each comment, including reference to FEIS Sections containing new data and/or information relative to each comment, as appropriate.

## HOW TO SUBMIT COMMENTS

Written comments can be submitted at any time during the 30-day public review period, **which ends September 13, 2010** to:

Commander (dpb)  
First Coast Guard District  
Battery Building  
One South Street  
New York, NY 10004 -1466  
Attn: Mr. Gary Kassof

Telephone: (212) 668-7165  
Fax: (212) 668-7967

Comments can also be e-mailed via the project Web site at [www.goethalseis.com](http://www.goethalseis.com). All comments received will be posted, without change, to <http://www.regulations.gov>, Docket Number USCG-2009-0097 and will include any personal information you have provided.

**Absent new information coming to its attention prior to the conclusion of the 30-day public review period, the USCG intends to complete its Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD will identify the environmentally preferred alternative for the proposed action.**



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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For project information, visit the GBR EIS Web site at [www.goethalseis.com](http://www.goethalseis.com). The site contains the FEIS document in downloadable format, links to meeting presentations, as well as to previous newsletters and other study materials.



*Current Bridge*



*Proposed Bridge*

