What's Next?

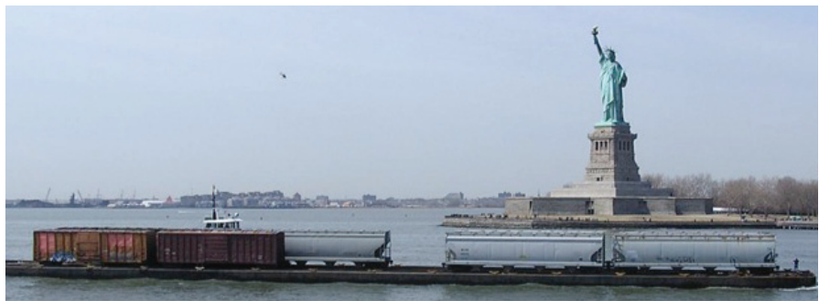
Fall 2015: Record of Decision (ROD)

The FEIS will be followed in 30 days or more by a Tier I Record of Decision (ROD), issued by FHWA as lead agency, which will serve to close out the NEPA Tier I evaluation. The ROD will identify which alternatives are selected for further study and potential implementation. It is important to note that neither the Tier I FEIS, nor the Tier I ROD, constitutes a final decision to implement any of the alternatives that have been under consideration.

Tier II Analysis

For those alternatives that are advanced to Tier II, this next phase will include further detailed analysis and evaluation, by appropriate environmental, scientific, and technical experts, of potential environmental effects of the alternative(s) under review on local communities, such as traffic, air quality, vibration, and noise. In addition, Tier II will include consideration of detailed and specific mitigation measures to avoid or minimize any anticipated negative effects.

For more information on the Cross Harbor Freight Program, visit www.crossharborstudy.com.



Get Involved

Public involvement from the communities throughout the designated study area is very important to the project. Your input is encouraged and welcomed.

Questions? Contact: Mark D. Hoffer
Director, New Port Initiatives
Port Commerce Department
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
E-mail: feedback@crossharborstudy.com

NEWSLETTER

Issue 3 • September 2015

In This Issue

CHFP: What It Is and Why It's Needed

Where Are We Now?

The Importance of Public Input

The Preferred Alternatives

What's Next

Cross Harbor Freight Program: What It Is and Why It's Needed

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ), as project sponsor, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), as lead agency, are working together on a Cross Harbor Freight Program (CHFP) to improve the movement of goods across New York Harbor and the lower Hudson River.

Because Hudson River bridge and tunnel crossings are shared by private vehicles, buses and freight carriers (trucks), the few remaining ways of crossing the Harbor all have reached capacity during peak hours.

Trucks currently account for about 90 percent of all freight movement in the New York / New Jersey region. Trucks carry an even larger share (97 percent) of freight movements traveling to, from, or within the parts of the region east of the Hudson River (Brooklyn, Queens, and Long Island). This dependence on truck transportation to carry such a large share of freight in the region means that, as demand for goods increases, truck vehicle miles traveled (VMT) also increases. This leads to more frequent and longer delays, increased costs, highway infrastructure damage, and air pollution.

The CHFP evaluates alternative methods to improve the movement of freight—including the flow of commodities, raw materials, agricultural and consumer products, and other industrial and finished goods—between both the east-of-Hudson and west-of-Hudson areas. Making improvements will strengthen the overall regional freight network, reduce truck traffic, improve air quality, and provide economic benefits.

This evaluation is being conducted through a "tiered" Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). Projects requiring Federal agency approval must comply with NEPA. Major initiatives that have the potential to significantly affect the environment undergo evaluation in an EIS.

Tier I of the EIS effort involves analyzing a range of alternatives at a high level, including the degree to which they advance the goals of the CHFP (see next page). At the conclusion of Tier I, a smaller number of alternatives – designated as Preferred Alternatives – will be recommended for more detailed study and analysis in Tier II.

Continued on page 2

NEW YORK

CROSS HARBOR FREIGHT PROGRAM

NEW JERSEY

Continued from page 1

CHFP Goals

- **Goal 1:** Reduce the contribution of cross-harbor truck trips to congestion along major freight corridors.
- **Goal 2:** Provide cross-harbor freight shippers, receivers and carriers attractive new alternatives to existing interstate trucking services.
- **Goal 3:** Expand facilities for cross-harbor goods movement to improve system resiliency, safety, and security, and to protect our infrastructure.
- **Goal 4:** Support development of integrated freight transportation and land use strategies.

Where Are We Now?

The CHFP Tier I EIS is complete. The Tier I Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was published in November 2014 for public review and comment.

The DEIS evaluated the environmental and socio-economic effects of a total of ten Build Alternatives (five Waterborne Alternatives and five Rail Tunnel Alternatives) and one "No Action" Alternative.

The selected Preferred Alternatives, as well as those not recommended for advancement to Tier II, are discussed in the Tier I Final EIS released on September 25, 2015. The FEIS includes the rationale for eliminating or selecting each alternative. The document can be downloaded at www.crossharborstudy.com.

No Action

Waterborne Alternatives

Rail Car Float

Truck Float

Truck Ferry

LOLO Container Barge

RORO Container Barge

Rail Tunnel Alternatives

Rail Tunnel

With Shuttle Service

With Chunnel Service

With AGV Technology

With Truck Access

FAST FACT

By 2035, freight to, from and through our region is expected to increase 37 percent.

The Importance of Public Input

The Federal Highway Administration and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey value public input as a critical part of the environmental review process. As such, the two agencies conducted a comprehensive public outreach campaign upon publication of the Tier I DEIS, to solicit public input and comment. This campaign included (among other things) seven formal public hearings at various locations in New York City, New Jersey and on Long Island; over 30 briefings for interested parties, including the CHFP Stakeholders Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee, elected officials, community groups, and business and environmental advocates; workshops for federal, state and local agencies with jurisdiction over or having an interest in the CHFP; a project newsletter and project website; and publication of meeting notices in Spanish, Chinese and Yiddish newspapers, and translations of informational materials into Spanish, Chinese and Yiddish, to reach populations along the study corridor who may have limited English proficiency or who do not follow the news through traditional mainstream media outlets.

Some comments received expressed concern that certain alternatives might increase the level of local truck or rail traffic in local neighborhoods, resulting in air quality, vibration and noise impacts. Others sought more information about the type of freight that would be transported.

Other comments received were supportive of the Rail Tunnel Alternative or Waterborne Alternatives, or favored a combination of both waterborne or rail transport as a viable option – specifically the Enhanced Railcar Float Alternative or Waterborne Alternatives as a short-term solution and the Rail Tunnel Alternative as a long-term solution.

All on-the-record comments were carefully evaluated and taken into consideration during the deliberations about which alternative(s) would be recommended for advancement to Tier II for further study. As part of the FEIS, all comments received are summarized and documented in Chapter 12, Response to Comments, in the FEIS.

The Preferred Alternatives

After a review of public and agency comments, two alternatives — the **Enhanced Railcar Float Alternative and the Rail Tunnel Alternative (a double track tunnel with vertical clearances to accommodate double stack intermodal service)** — were selected as "Preferred." The remaining eight Build Alternatives evaluated in the DEIS were not recommended for advancement to Tier II. The two Preferred Alternatives were selected based on a number of criteria, including:

- Extensive review of public and agency comments
- Alignment with the project's goals and objectives
- Anticipated benefits (including contribution to truck VMT reduction, energy savings, greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction, improved air quality, and economic benefits)
- Potential for adverse impacts and likely feasibility of mitigation measures