

6.0 Agency and Public Involvement

6.1 Overview

The Goethals Bridge Replacement (GBR) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being conducted under the direction of the United States Coast Guard (USCG) as the lead Federal agency, in coordination with The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (Port Authority), the project sponsor.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and with the applicable Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA (40 C.F.R. §1500-1508), it is vital that those who are interested in or potentially affected by this study have an opportunity to share their concerns and provide input regarding the GBR EIS. The USCG designed and is conducting a public participation program that includes outreach to commuters, the general public, local businesses, various associations, stakeholders, affected government agencies and others in both New York and New Jersey to effectively engage the public in the planning and impact assessment process.

The overriding goal of the public participation program was to engage a diverse group of public and agency participants to solicit relevant input and provide timely information throughout the environmental review process. In order to best accomplish this, the following objectives have been, and continue to be pursued:

- Establish ongoing, inclusive and meaningful two-way communication with stakeholders, agencies and the general public;
- Educate the public about the environmental review process and the role of government, stakeholders and the general public;
- Coordinate outreach efforts with the USCG's internal protocols and policies for timely and relevant outreach activities; and
- Evaluate the effectiveness of outreach activities on a continual basis in order to refine this agency and public involvement plan, as necessary, and utilize the most effective techniques throughout this study.

The opportunities for presenting details of the Proposed Project and for soliciting and receiving comments on the project have been multi-faceted throughout implementation of the public participation program, and have included the following major elements:

- Agency and public scoping meetings were held early in the project, in 2004;
- Three committees were created specifically for this project (i.e., Technical Advisory Committee, Environmental Task Force and Stakeholder Committee) and periodic meetings were conducted with each committee to present and discuss specific aspects of the project;
- Two rounds of public open houses were conducted in both Elizabeth and Staten Island;
- The project website was periodically updated to present information and to receive comments;
- Eight newsletters were disseminated at key milestones throughout the process;
- A variety of technical meetings with key regulatory and review agencies were conducted;
- A variety of specific-issue meetings with local businesses and stakeholders were conducted;
- A 60-day public comment period was implemented and Formal Public Meetings were conducted subsequent to the release and dissemination of the DEIS; and

- A 30-day public review period is being implemented subsequent to the release and dissemination of the FEIS and prior to the USCG issued the Record of Decision (ROD).

6.2 Agency and Public Involvement Activities

To kick off the public involvement effort for this study, the USCG hosted agency and public scoping meetings in Fall 2004 to solicit comments on the purpose and need for the proposed bridge replacement, the types of project alternatives to be considered, and the technical evaluations to be undertaken, as well as to receive input on the issues and concerns that should be addressed in the DEIS and FEIS. Additionally, three committees were formed comprised of regulatory agencies, public officials and stakeholders for which meetings were held at key stages within the EIS process.

6.2.1 Scoping Meetings

Following the publications of Notice of Intent and then Notice of Public Scoping Meetings in the Federal Register as well as release of the Draft Scoping Document in August 2004 (see Appendices M.1 and M.2), the following scoping meetings were held.

6.2.1.1 Agency Scoping Meeting

On September 14, 2004, 37 people representing 20 agencies participated in the agency scoping meeting held at the USCG offices in lower Manhattan. A total of 32 agencies had been invited to attend the meeting, including the following:

- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Federal Highways Administration (FHWA)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Environmental Protection (US EPA)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP)
- NJ Department of Transportation (NJDOT)
- NJ Turnpike Authority (NJTA)
- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)
- NYS Department of State (NYSDOS)
- NYS Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)
- NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYSHPO)
- Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)
- The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (Port Authority)
- New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC)
- North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA)
- NYC Department of City Planning (NYCDCP)
- NYC Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP)
- NYC Department of Transportation (NYCDOT)
- NYC Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC)

- NYC Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC)
- NYC Parks & Recreation (NYCDPR)
- Union County
- City of Elizabeth
- PMK Group, Representing the City of Elizabeth

Eight agency representatives made oral comments at the meeting. Many focused on the need to consider the project in the context of other projects and conditions in the area and their cumulative impacts, such as the reactivation of the Arthur Kill Lift Bridge; improvements to the New York Container Terminal (NYCT) at Howland Hook; and existing and future freight and rail activities. Potential environmental impacts to the wetlands and habitats in the area were also of concern to attendees.

6.2.1.2 Public Scoping Meetings

On October 5 and 6, 2004, the USCG hosted public scoping meetings in the afternoon and evening at the Staten Island Hotel and Elizabeth City Hall, respectively. Attendees discussed the Proposed Project and their concerns with members of the project team informally, heard a presentation by the USCG and the project team, and then provided formal comments orally. The presentation outlined the purpose and need for the project, the project goals, the environmental review process, and public involvement opportunities. It also described the study areas, potential environmental issues, preliminary project alternatives, and the project schedule.

The public scoping meetings had a total of 196 people attend the two meetings and 33 people making statements for the formal record. The public comment period remained open for 30 days, closing on November 5, 2004. Written comment sheets, letters, emails and memos resulted in a total of 335 individual comments received. These comments are presented in Appendix M.3.

6.2.1.3 Scoping Process Comments

The scoping process generated numerous comments, questions, and suggestions in relation to the GBR EIS, all of which are being addressed in some fashion as part of the EIS process. Below is a brief summary of the comments received:

- The majority of commenters favored replacement of the existing bridge, citing narrow lanes and concerns over safety and increasing truck traffic. Many specifically asked that the study consider adding transit to a new crossing. There was also strong advocacy for including bicycle and pedestrian access across the bridge. Some thought that the addition of lanes, the inclusion of emergency lanes and the widening of lanes would ease traffic congestion on the bridge. Those that did not favor bridge replacement felt that improvements would only induce more traffic, especially on local roads.
- Commenters agreed that improvements to the bridge would result in positive economic development in the area.
- Commenters were concerned that improvements to the bridge in conjunction with improvements to the New York Container Terminal (NYCT) at Howland Hook could cause an increase in truck traffic in the corridor. They suggested the use of rail and waterways as alternative solutions for improved goods movement in the area.
- Several people commented that the Proposed Project needs to be considered in a regional context with the entire I-278 corridor and other key transportation links, including the Staten Island Expressway, the West Shore Expressway, Outerbridge Crossing, and the Verrazano-Narrows

Bridge. There was concern that the numerous agencies that operate these facilities would not be able to coordinate amongst themselves to address transportation issues from a regional perspective.

- Many questioned whether the defined study area is large enough and suggested that it include the entire I-278 corridor, as well as the other arterial bridges and corridors that link the interstate highway system in New Jersey (I-95, I-78, NJ Turnpike, and Routes 1 & 9).
- Comments were received on the impact of the Proposed Project on residential properties, which would be directly affected by work done in the bridge corridor.
- Agency representatives cautioned about the potential disruption to navigation and water activities during construction of the Proposed Project, as well as the long-term impacts on navigable air and water space. Others requested a thorough investigation of the wetlands and wildlife in the area to determine the proper mitigation steps to protect these natural resources. Many commented that air and water quality would improve if traffic conditions were improved as a result of the Proposed Project.

6.2.2 Committees

Community and government agency input plays an important role in this study as it progresses. The USCG has organized three committees to provide input to the EIS: the Technical Advisory Committee, the Environmental Task Force, and the Stakeholder Committee. These committees met several times during the preparation of the DEIS, and are described below.

6.2.2.1 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The TAC is comprised of federal, state, regional, and local agencies to provide technical guidance on traffic/transportation and mobile-source air quality and noise issues and analyses. Membership includes:

- Federal Aviation Administration
- Federal Highway Administration
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S Coast Guard
- New Jersey Dept. of Environmental Protection
- New Jersey Dept. of Transportation
- New Jersey Turnpike Authority
- NJ TRANSIT
- New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Dept. of Transportation
- North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
- New York Metropolitan Transportation Council
- Metropolitan Transportation Authority
- Port Authority of NY & NJ
- New York City Dept. of City Planning
- New York City Economic Development Corporation
- New York City Dept. of Environmental Protection
- New York City Dept. of Transportation
- New York City Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination
- County of Union
- City of Elizabeth
- Borough of Staten Island

The kick-off meeting of the TAC took place on March 3, 2005, at the USCG offices in lower Manhattan with 27 attendees representing 18 agencies. This meeting included a presentation on the EIS status and summary of the scoping process, as well as on the preliminary alternatives identified and the alternatives screening methodology utilized. The TAC also received information on the traffic data collection program and Goethals Transportation Model (GTM) developed for the project, and the noise and air quality analyses undertaken for the EIS.

On June 1, 2006, the TAC met again at USCG's offices in lower Manhattan with 17 attendees representing 13 agencies. At this meeting, the study team presented information on the GTM development and refinement that had occurred since the first meeting. They also presented the alternatives screening process and results, including a brief review of alternatives considered, the screening criteria used to assess them, the results of the comparative screening analysis, and the identification of alternatives to be advanced for more detailed evaluation in the DEIS.

An interim combined meeting with the Technical Advisory Committee and the Environmental Task Force was held on September 6, 2007 at USCG's offices in lower Manhattan. This meeting was attended by a total of 38 individuals representing 20 agencies from the two committees. At this meeting, the study team presented refined alignments and revised alignment nomenclature developed since the previous meetings with both committees.

The fourth and final meeting of the TAC took place on October 14, 2008 at USCG's offices with 34 members in attendance representing 20 agencies. The purpose of this meeting was to preview the preliminary impacts and potential mitigation measures to be presented in the DEIS for the four alternative alignment concepts. While the presentation focused on traffic, noise and air quality concerns, other environmental impacts and potential mitigation measures were summarized.

6.2.2.2 Environmental Task Force (ETF)

The ETF consists of federal, state, and local agencies to provide technical guidance on all environmental aspects of the project not covered by the TAC. Membership includes:

- National Marine Fisheries Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- Federal Highway Administration
- New Jersey Dept. of Environmental Protection
- New Jersey Historic Preservation Office
- New Jersey Dept. of Transportation
- New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Dept. of State
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
- The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
- New York City Dept. of City Planning
- New York City Dept. of Environmental Protection
- New York City Dept. of Parks & Recreation
- New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
- New York City Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination
- County of Union
- City of Elizabeth
- Borough of Staten Island

On March 3, 2005, the USCG hosted the kick-off meeting of the ETF at their lower Manhattan offices with 20 attendees representing 16 agencies. At this meeting, the study team made a presentation on the EIS status and summary of the scoping process, as well as on the preliminary alternatives identified and the alternatives screening methodology utilized. The ETF also received information on existing environmental conditions in the study area.

On June 1, 2006, the ETF met again at the USCG's offices in lower Manhattan with 13 attendees representing 11 agencies. The study team presented information on the GTM development and refinement that had occurred since the first meeting. They also presented the alternatives screening process and results, including a brief review of alternatives considered, the screening criteria used to assess them, the

results of the comparative screening analysis, and the identification of alternatives to be advanced for more detailed evaluation in the DEIS.

An interim combined meeting with the Technical Advisory Committee and the Environmental Task Force was held on September 6, 2007 at USCG's offices in lower Manhattan. This meeting was attended by a total of 38 individuals representing 20 agencies from the two committees. At this meeting, the study team presented refined alignments and revised alignment nomenclature developed since the previous meetings with both committees.

The fourth and final ETF meeting took place on October 14, 2008 at USCG's offices with 14 members in attendance representing 11 agencies. The purpose of this meeting was to preview the preliminary impacts and potential mitigation measures to be presented in the DEIS for those four alternative alignment concepts. As the Technical Advisory Committee meeting which took place earlier in the day focused on the traffic, noise and air quality concerns, the ETF presentation focused on all other environmental analyses.

6.2.2.3 Stakeholder Committee (SC)

The SC is comprised of representatives from a cross-section of interests and organizations that could potentially be affected by the Proposed Project. This committee provides input via open discussion about project issues and findings. Of the 60 organizations that were invited to participate in the Stakeholder Committee, the following 40 organizations accepted the invitation:

- 380 Development, LLC
- Arcadis for CSX
- Automobile Club of New York
- Baykeeper, NY/NJ Harbor
- Black Car Assistance Corporation
- Borough of Staten Island
- Brooklyn Borough President's Office
- Central Jersey Bicycle Club
- City of Elizabeth
- City of Linden
- Con Edison
- County of Union
- CSX Transportation, Inc.
- East Coast Greenway
- Elizabeth Fire Department
- Elizabeth Police Department
- Fire Department of New York
- Future City, Inc.
- Gateway Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Gowanus Community Stakeholder Group
- Greater Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce
- Groundwork Elizabeth
- Kean University
- Keyspan Energy Delivery
- Linden Industrial Coalition
- Mariners Harbor Civic Association
- Meadowlink
- Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance
- New York Container Terminal, Inc.
- Protectors of Pine Oak Woods
- Regional Plan Association
- St. Vincent's Hospital
- Staten Island Chamber of Commerce
- Staten Island Community Board 1
- Staten Island Community Board 2
- Staten Island Economic Development Corporation
- Texas Eastern Transmissions
- Trinitas Hospital
- Tri-State Transportation Campaign
- Union County College

The SC held its first meeting on March 24, 2005, at the Staten Island Hotel with 33 attendees representing 24 organizations. This meeting included presentations on the EIS status and scoping process, as well as on the preliminary alternatives and alternatives screening methodology.

On June 15, 2006, the SC held its second meeting at the Elizabeth Public Library to review display boards and hear a presentation on the GTM development and refinement. The study team also presented the

alternatives screening process and results, including a brief review of alternatives considered, the screening criteria used to assess them, the results of the comparative screening analysis, and the identification of alternatives to be advanced for more detailed evaluation in the DEIS. The meeting was attended by 24 stakeholders representing 21 organizations.

The third and final SC meeting took place on October 15, 2008 at the Elizabeth Public Library. This meeting was attended by 24 SC members representing 20 organizations. The purpose of this meeting was to preview the preliminary impacts and potential mitigation measures to be presented in the DEIS for the four alternative alignment concepts.

6.2.3 Public Open Houses

On June 27 and 28, 2006, public open houses were held, respectively, at the Elizabeth Public Library and the Staten Island Hotel. These open houses provided a forum for discussion of the alternatives screening results and recommendations, and encouraged interaction among the public attendees and the study team. The open house in Elizabeth drew 34 public attendees, while 50 persons attended the Staten Island open house. At each open house, information was available on boards for informal discussion purposes, and the study team made presentations to the assembled groups reviewing the current status of the EIS process, the project's purpose and need, and the process by which alternatives were screened. They then presented a summary of the results of the screening process.

The second round of public open houses took place on October 21 and 23, 2008 at the Elizabeth Public Library and the Staten Island Hotel, respectively. The format of these meetings was an open house with information boards and members of the project team available to answer questions and address concerns of attendees. At 5:30 pm and repeated at 7:00 pm, attendees were asked to gather for a presentation and group question-and-answer session. The presentation focused on: a review of the project purpose and need; details of the conceptual bridge design and project alignment alternatives; an overview of the DEIS impact analyses, project impacts, and proposed mitigation measures; and next steps in the EIS process. Fifty members of the public attended the Elizabeth meeting and 46 members of the public attended the Staten Island meeting.

6.2.4 Informational Materials

6.2.4.1 Web Site

At the start of the scoping process, the USCG launched a Web site dedicated to the study at www.goethalseis.com. This site is updated at study milestones with information about meeting opportunities, copies of meeting presentations, maps and charts, and newsletters.

6.2.4.2 Newsletters

Newsletters are published at milestones throughout the study and disseminated to the entire project mailing list and to libraries and community centers in the study area. To date, there have been six newsletters printed and sent out to the entire mailing list, which consists of 1,443 people. The first newsletter was sent out in September 2004, followed by newsletters in March 2005 and June 2005. Newsletter #4 was distributed in October 2006, and Newsletter #5 was distributed in Fall of 2007. Newsletter #6 was distributed in late 2008. The seventh newsletter was distributed in the Spring of 2009 to announce the availability of the DEIS for public review and provide details about the then-upcoming public meetings. The eighth and final newsletter was distributed at the same time as this FEIS in order to announce the selection of the Preferred Alternative, the availability of the FEIS, and the most critical documented changes from the DEIS.

6.2.4.3 Meeting Publicity

Public Scoping meetings and open houses were publicized through meeting flyers mailed to the project mailing list, and posted at libraries and community centers. Meeting information was also posted on the study web site and on community calendars at several on-line newsletters such as the Tri-State Transportation Campaign's *Mobilizing the Region*, and *NYMTC Notes*. Paid notices were placed in local and regional newspapers, both in English and Spanish, in New York and New Jersey. These newspapers included: *The Staten Island Advance*; *The Staten Island Register*; *The Staten Island Savings Guide*; *The Brooklyn Paper*; *Hoy*; *The Start Ledger*; *The Jersey Journal*; *The Elizabeth News Record*; and *El Nuevo Hudson*.

6.3 Permitting and Regulatory Agencies

In addition to the TAC, ETF and SC meetings described above, key agencies have been engaged throughout the process, as detailed below:

- On July 26, 2004, USCG's consultant team met with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) to address the initiation of seasonally dependent field studies prior to the completion of scoping and to consult with the agency on more than 60 acres of State-owned preserved wetlands that are managed by NYSDEC in the immediate project study area. The Port Authority attended the meeting as well.
- On July 29, 2004, USCG convened a Federal Interagency Coordination meeting at the offices of the New York District Army Corps of Engineers in Manhattan to introduce the project to the agency representatives in attendance, and to address the initiation of seasonally dependent field studies prior to the completion of scoping. In addition to the USCG and its EIS consultant team, the following agencies were represented: US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS); US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE); US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA); National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS); NYSDEC; and the Port Authority.
- On September 9, 2004, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) to discuss inclusion of the proposed Goethals Bridge Replacement in the Long Range Transportation Plan.
- On December 10, 2004, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) to address the inclusion of the proposed Goethals Bridge Replacement in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).
- On January 31, 2005, USCG hosted a meeting on Navigational Clearances. In addition to the USCG and its EIS consultant team, the Port Authority, USACE, Maritime Association of the Port of NY/NJ and various pilot organizations such as the Sandy Hook Pilots, Metro Pilots and NY/NJ Pilots attended the meeting. Meeting participants were encouraged to give feedback on various proposed horizontal and vertical clearances that were presented as part of the Goethals Bridge Replacement.
- On February 25, 2005, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team held a Goethals Bridge Modernization Program Summit with the City of Elizabeth, the City of Linden, Union County, the New Jersey Turnpike Authority (NJTA), and the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT).

- On April 6, 2005, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with the City of Elizabeth, the City of Linden, Union County, NJTA, and NJDOT to update them on the Goethals Bridge Modernization Program.
- On April 27, 2005, the USCG, Port Authority and the EIS consultant team met with both NYMTC and NJTPA to discuss the corridor model being developed, and to reach consensus on whether to incorporate NJTPA data and forecasts in the model.
- On May 23, 2005, the USCG, Port Authority and the EIS consultant team met with NYMTC and NJTPA to discuss the incorporation of socioeconomic data and forecasts into the GTM. The meeting compared findings and forecasts between the two MPOs and it was decided that the consultant team would use NJTPA data and forecasts for the 13 New Jersey counties in the model and NYMTC's data and forecasts for the New York Counties.
- On June 10, 2005, a Coordination Meeting was convened at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) offices and was attended by NJDEP representatives, the USCG's consultant team and the Port Authority. The purpose of the meeting was to present to NJDEP the process by which alternatives were being analyzed and to solicit NJDEP's input on design concepts that were being considered for incorporation into certain alternatives.
- On June 17, 2005, the USCG, Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team held a meeting with the USACE and NYSDEC. The purpose of the meeting was to solicit the agencies' input on a number of specific design concepts that have been considered for incorporation in the New Crossing alternatives before the environmental screening is completed.
- On July 8, 2005 and on July 19 2005, USACE and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), respectively, agreed to be cooperating agencies to the USCG to assist in the development of the GBR EIS.
- On October 14, 2005, the Port Authority met with FAA to discuss pylon heights.
- On January 4, 2006, the USCG, Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with NYMTC to discuss the travel demand forecasting work for the GTM, specifically regarding the employment growth factor used for Staten Island.
- On February 28, 2006, the Port Authority held a joint meeting with New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), to give an update on the Goethals Bridge Modernization Program and to learn more about SIE HOV lanes.
- On March 22, 2006, USCG convened an Inter-Agency meeting to review the development of a moderate employment forecast for Staten Island for use in the GTM. In addition to the USCG, and its EIS consultant team, the meeting was also attended by the Port Authority, NYMTC, New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), and New York City Department of City Planning (NYCDCP).
- On June 28, 2006, USCG's consultant team and the Port Authority met with NYSDOT to discuss coordination among agencies.
- On September 12, 2006, USCG's consultant team and the Port Authority met with a representative from MTA - Bridges and Tunnels to update the agency on the study's progress.

- On September 13, 2006, USCG convened a meeting with the USEPA. Also in attendance were members of the EIS consultant team and the Port Authority. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and agree upon two issues: 1) the cumulative impact analyses to be focused on wetlands and air quality; and 2) a draft list of programmed and committed projects and ongoing studies being developed for the EIS and the GTM.
- On September 20, 2006, USCG's consultant team and the Port Authority met with a representative from NJDEP to review wetlands delineation on the NJ side of the Primary Study Area.
- On December 5, 2006, USCG's consultant team and the Port Authority met with a representative from USACE to review wetlands delineation within the Primary Study Area.
- On May 22, 2007, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with NJDOT to brief them on the project.
- On June 19, 2007, the Port Authority met with the NJTA to provide an update of the Goethals Bridge Modernization Program.
- On October 9, 2007, the USCG's consultant team held a teleconference with NJDEP regarding PM2.5 interim guidance and how it is to be applied to projects such as the GBR. It was agreed that the interim guidance would not be applicable for use on the GBR EIS if it is determined that the project does not result in an increase of at least 15 tons per year of PM 2.5.
- On October 10, 2007, the USCG's consultant team contacted NYSDEC regarding their project near the NY Toll Plaza which includes a parking area, kayak launch, etc. and is expected to be constructed in 2008. The parcel is not classified as a park.
- On October 18, 2007, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with the NJTA and NJDOT to present existing and no-build traffic.
- On November 13, 2007, the USCG, Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with the City of New York's Office of Environmental Coordination and representatives from the NYC Departments of Law, Environmental Protection, Parks and Recreation, and Transportation to begin discussion regarding the sufficiency of the GBR EIS for purposes of the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP).
- On January 31, 2008, the USCG, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with the USACE to discuss permitting strategy.
- On February 8, 2008, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with the NJTA and NJDOT to discuss GBR-related traffic impacts and potential mitigation in New Jersey.
- On February 20, 2008, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team held an agency coordination meeting with NYSDOT for the purpose of discussing existing and no-build traffic estimates, and mitigation analysis.
- On March 6, 2008, the USCG, Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with the NYC Department of City Planning Counsel and Land Use Review staff, as well as a representative from the NYC Law Department to discuss the sufficiency of the GBR EIS for the purposes of ULURP.

- On March 20, 2008, the USCG, Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team convened a meeting of the Interagency Mitigation Group (IMG) which includes several environmental review and regulatory agencies such as the USACE, USEPA, NMFS, USFWS, NJDEP, NYSDEC, and NYCDPR.
- On April 3, 2008, NYSDEC contacted the GBR EIS consultant team via the project's Web site to inform the project that NYSDEC will be commencing a remedial investigation on the RT Baker and Sons site in the next six months to one year. The existing conditions portion of the study was updated to reflect this information.
- On April 9, 2008, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with NYSDOT for discussion of the agency's studies and plans for the SIE.
- On April 23 and 24, 2008, a workshop was held with the USCG, Port Authority, the USCG's consultant team, NYCDCP, NYCDOT, NYCDEP, NYCLPC, and NYCDPR regarding the CEQR and ULURP processes and their impact on the GBR EIS.
- On June 3, 2008, a meeting was held between the Port Authority, the USCG's consultant team and NYCDOT to discuss the results of the traffic impact and mitigation analysis, per CEQR Technical Manual.
- On June 9, 2008, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with NYSDOT to present and discuss results of two additional MUL options (MUL not extending across GBR; MUL terminating at Richmond Avenue), and to discuss potential "fixes" of the SIE/WSE Interchange.
- On June 26, 2008, the USCG, Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team conducted a field visit with the Interagency Mitigation Group (IMG) to view wetlands impact areas and potential mitigation areas.
- On August 20, 2008, the USCG, Port Authority, and the USCG's consultant team met with USEPA a second time, specifically to discuss the technical approach to assessing cumulative impacts associated with the project.
- On October 3, 2008, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with the Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination regarding the GBR traffic analysis and CEQR requirements.
- On October 10, 2008, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with NYSDOT to discuss the MUL element of the GBR traffic mitigation plan and its appropriate characterization relative to NYSDOT's SIE studies for presentation at the upcoming TAC/ETF/SC meetings and public open houses.
- On April 9, 2009, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team participated in a conference call with staff from NYCDOT regarding the methodology used by the GBR EIS for forecasting future No-Build growth.
- On May 21, 2009, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with representatives of the NYC Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (OEC), the NYCDEP and the NYCDCP to review the GBR air quality analyses for the operational phase of the Proposed Project.

- On June 19, 2009, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with the NYSDEC to discuss permit strategy in advance of the Record of Decision, and to discuss other technical details.
- On June 22, 2009, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with the USACE to discuss permit strategy in advance of the Record of Decision, and to discuss other technical details.
- On August 8, 2009, the USCG, its consultant team and the Port Authority met with the NYC OEC and other NYC agencies along with the NY Container Terminal (NYCT) to discuss cumulative impacts analyses between the GBR and NYCT's Berth 4 Expansion.
- On August 27, 2009, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with NYSDEC's Long Island City offices to discuss an In-Lieu Fee site at OPC for potential use as a wetland mitigation site for the GBR Project.
- On September 16, 2009, a Wetlands Mitigation Coordination Meeting was held at USCG's offices with representatives of USCG, Port Authority, NYCT, OEC, several NYC agencies and the USCG consultant team to discuss anticipated wetlands impacts and mitigation planning.
- On November 9, 2009, the Port Authority, its design consultants, and the USCG's consultant team met with the NJDEP to review conceptual design plans in the context of the project's application for a permit from NJDEP.
- On January 21, 2010, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with NYCDPR for a field reconnaissance within the City's Saw Mill Creek Park system in Staten Island in order to assess any additional wetland restoration opportunities within the city properties.
- On February 25, 2010, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with the USEPA to discuss/review the construction-phase air quality analysis and results on the Preferred Alternative (i.e., the New Alignment South) as well as the preliminary results of the General Conformity analysis.
- On March 4, 2010, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with the NYCDEP and the OEC to discuss/review the construction-phase air quality and noise analyses on the Preferred Alternative (i.e., the New Alignment South) with respect to CEQR requirements. A follow-up conference call and an in-house meeting were also held on April 30, 2010 and May 6, 2010 respectively.
- On May 14, 2010, the NYCDEP issued a letter confirming the methodology, results and findings of the construction-phase air quality and noise analyses that were both performed on the Preferred Alternative (i.e., the New Alignment South) with respect to CEQR requirements.
- On May 28, 2010, the USCG transmitted the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Assessment to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for the issuance of its EFH Conservation Recommendations.
- On June 25, 2010, the NYCDOT issued a letter confirming the methodology, results and findings of the traffic analyses with respect to CEQR requirements.

In addition to the above-stated meetings, the study team conducted further coordination with the New Jersey and New York State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) and the Advisory Council on Historic

Preservation (ACHP), pursuant to the regulations found at 36 C.F.R. Part 800 (*Protection Historic Properties*) implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). However such Section 106 Consultation effort is already fully documented in Appendix E.7 of this document, and is therefore not reiterated in this section.

6.4 Correspondence and Stakeholder Meetings

In addition to comments received during the formal scoping process, the USCG has enlisted input from agencies, stakeholders, and the public through the following mechanisms:

- Comment sheets at meetings;
- E-mails through the study web site;
- Letters; and
- Oral comments at meetings.

Each of the comments received has been reviewed and logged, and when appropriate, responses have been sent via letter and e-mail.

Meetings have also been held with various local business property owners and/or stakeholders in order to collect information for preparation of the DEIS and FEIS regarding property-specific characteristics, as well as proposed plans and development initiatives. These meetings include:

- In Summer 2004, the Port Authority gave a presentation to the gateway Chamber of Commerce regarding the Goethals Bridge Modernization Program.
- On October 28, 2004, Port Authority staff presented information regarding the Goethals Bridge Modernization Program to Senator Martin Golden (22nd District Brooklyn).
- On November 1, 2004, Port Authority staff presented information regarding the Goethals Bridge Modernization Program to Staten Island Community Board 2, Traffic & Transportation Committee.
- On November 15, 2004, Port Authority staff presented information regarding the Goethals Bridge Modernization Program to Congressman Robert Menendez.
- On April 26, 2005, the Port Authority sat on a panel at the SI Economic Development Corp. and talked about the Goethals Bridge Modernization Program.
- On June 11, 2005, the USCG's consultant team met with the environmental consultant and legal counsel to the International Speedway Corporation and The Related Companies which, at that time, was planning to develop the NASCAR project on Staten Island. The purpose of this meeting was to exchange pertinent data and information given the two projects' proximity.
- On September 14, 2005, the Port Authority made a presentation on the Goethals Bridge Modernization program to the NY Construction/ Building Trades Employers Association.
- On October 6, 2005, the Port Authority and the USCG's consultant team met with New York Container Terminal and Port Authority's Port Commerce Department.
- On September 7, 2006, the USCG's consultant team and the Port Authority met with Duke Energy/Texas-Eastern and KeySpan to gather information on potential property impacts.

- On July 31, 2008, the Port Authority made a presentation to Staten Island elected officials on the status of the GBR Project.

6.5 DEIS Public Comment Period and Formal Public Meetings

The DEIS Public Comment Period was officially initiated on May 29, 2009, with the release of the USEPA's Notice of Availability published in the *Federal Register*.¹ At the time of the DEIS release, the Preferred Alternative had not yet been identified.

Two DEIS Formal Public Meetings were held; one was held at the Elizabeth City Hall in Elizabeth, New Jersey, on July 8, 2009, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. (Council Chambers of the Elizabeth City Hall, 50 Winfield Scott Plaza, Elizabeth, NJ) and another one was held at the Staten Island Hotel in Staten Island, New York, on July 9, 2009, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. (Harbor Room of the Staten Island Hotel, 1415 Richmond Avenue, Staten Island, NY) to provide an opportunity for oral statements and submittal of written comments. At these public meetings, attendees reviewed project information and talked informally with members of the study staff. Brief presentations were made twice during the public meetings, followed by oral statements from audience members, which were transcribed by a stenographer for the formal record. In total, oral statements were received from 18 speakers, some of whom also provided written comments on the same day. Concurrently, written comments on the DEIS were also accepted by the USCG through July 28, 2009, the official closing of the DEIS Public Comment Period. During this DEIS comment period, the USCG received an additional 36 written comments from federal, state, and local agencies, other stakeholder groups and individuals. While the DEIS was available on the project's web site at www.goethalseis.com since its public release, the transcripts of all oral comments received at the Formal Public Meetings, as well as all written comments were also placed online in the federal docket by the USCG at www.regulations.gov, under Docket No. USCG-2009-0097.

Subsequent to the close of the DEIS Public Comment Period, all comments were compiled in the *GBR DEIS Comments-Responses Summary Report*, which summarizes all oral and written comments made at the public meetings and received in the federal docket. In this report, the comments and respective USCG responses have been categorized and grouped by subject matter and can be found in Section 8.0 of this FEIS. In turn, all public comments were then considered and addressed within the main text of the FEIS, as appropriate.

6.6 FEIS and Record of Decision

Concurrent to the official release of this FEIS and the USEPA's Notice of Availability (NOA) published in the *Federal Register*, the FEIS has also been mailed to various interested parties as well as Federal, State and local agencies, and made available for public viewing at several public repositories (see Section 10.0 for more details). The FEIS is also available online in the project's web site at www.goethalseis.com, as well as in the federal docket at www.regulations.gov.

Following a 30-day review period after publication of the NOA in the *Federal Register* (as prescribed in 40 CFR 1506.10 - *Timing of Agency Action*)², the USCG will make its decision on the proposed action which, in turn, will be formally presented and issued within the Record of Decision (ROD), as prescribed

¹ See following publications in *Federal Register*:

- On 5/28/09, USCG Notice [Docket No. USCG-2009-0097] in Vol. 74, No. 101, pp. 25572-25573.
- On 5/29/09, USEPA Notice [ER-FRL-8593-8 for EIS No. 20090173] in Vol. 74, No. 102, pp. 25735-25736.
- On 6/05/09, USEPA Correction Notice [ER-FRL-8594-1 for EIS No. 20090173] in Vol. 74, No. 107, pp. 27034.

² During such period, any substantive and appropriate comments received on the FEIS will be summarized and given appropriate responses in the ROD.

by 40 CFR 1505.2 - *Record of Decision in Cases Requiring Environmental Impact Statements*. Subsequently, the ROD will be provided to the public via publication in the *Federal Register*.