

7.10 TRANSIT AND PEDESTRIANS

7.10.1 Introduction

As described in Section 7.1, “Project Description,” the E. 61st Street Shaft Site is located on the north side of E. 61st Street between First Avenue and Marginal Street within an area adjacent to the elevated Queensboro Bridge upper level Manhattan-bound off-ramp to E. 62nd Street. The construction of Shaft 33B at this site would require the acquisition of private property that could delay the initiation of Shaft 33B construction by approximately ten months. Similar to the preferred Shaft Site, water main connections from this alternative Shaft Site could follow many possible routes to the Third Avenue trunk main, including the First Avenue, Sutton Place, and E. 59th Street/E. 61st Street Routes, as evaluated in Section 5.10, “Transit and Pedestrians” for water main connections. As demonstrated in Section 3.10, “Transit and Pedestrian” for Chapter 3, “Impact Methodologies,” and Section 4.10, “Transit and Pedestrians” for the preferred Shaft Site, the activation and operation of Shaft 33B and its water main connections would not generate transit impacts or pedestrian trips exceeding the CEQR requirements for a detailed analysis, and therefore, would not be expected to have a potential for significant adverse transit or pedestrian impacts. Since this conclusion would also be applicable for the E. 61st Street Shaft Site, the following discussions address conditions related to the construction of the shaft and water main connections.

7.10.2 Shaft Site Construction Transit and Pedestrian Conditions

The construction of Shaft 33B at the E. 61st Street Shaft Site is not expected to affect existing transit service in the area. While the construction of the regulator/valve chambers, which would be approximately three months long, could extend beyond the boundaries of the Shaft Site onto the adjacent sidewalk, it is expected that a temporary sidewalk would be maintained either through steel-plating over the construction area or via the use of the north curb lane.

As detailed in Section 7.9, blasting activities would require the temporary shut down of traffic and pedestrian movements near the Shaft 33B Site pursuant to the requirements of the New York City Fire Department (FDNY). FDNY would likely cordon off the area adjacent to the E. 61st Street Shaft Site during periods of blasting, including the halting of vehicular and pedestrian traffic at specified locations and employ a warning whistle communication protocol that could take up to five minutes to implement. FDNY has indicated that they could issue a waiver to the protocol and reduce traffic stoppage to approximately one minute. The contractor intends to seek this waiver. During approximately the four or twelve-month period (depending on the excavation method used) of blasting, for which traffic stoppages may be required, this procedure could potentially result in short-term disruptions of vehicular and pedestrian traffic on E. 61st Street, Marginal Street, and the exit ramp from the Queensboro Bridge’s upper roadway. Since no active bus routes traverses E. 61st Street and the curbsides of Marginal Street are used only as a bus staging area, minimal disruptions to area bus service are anticipated. Short-term clearing of

pedestrian traffic would likely be required for both the north and south sidewalks along E. 61st Street for a safe distance from the blast site (i.e., approximately 100 feet). Following the all clear signal, nearby vehicular and pedestrian traffic are expected to recover to pre-blasting conditions within a few minutes. The period during blasting when traffic stoppages and the halting of pedestrian flow would be necessary, is short-term, temporary, and intermittent. Thus, consistent with the impact assessment guidance provided in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, such intermittent and temporary conditions would not have the potential to result in significant adverse impacts.

7.10.3 Water Main Construction Transit and Pedestrian Conditions

Similar to the preferred Shaft Site, water main connections from the E. 61st Street Shaft Site to the Third Avenue trunk main could follow many possible routes. For purposes of this EIS, it was assumed that the same potential routes would be followed as for the preferred Shaft Site, including the reasonable worst-case First Avenue Route and the two other representative routes, the Sutton Place Route and the E. 59th Street/E. 61st Street Route, as detailed in Section 5.10, “Transit and Pedestrians” for water main connections. As described in Section 7.1, the construction durations required for these connection routes from the E. 61st Street Shaft Site have been estimated at 46 months for the First Avenue Route, 56 months for the Sutton Place Route, and 31 months for the E. 59th Street/E. 61st Street Route.

For all three of these connection routes, bus service would be maintained throughout the Study Area. However, temporary relocation of bus stops and disruption of bus-only lanes are anticipated in the manner detailed in Section 5.10. Construction activities along First and Second Avenues may also interfere with the potential implementation of the bus rapid transit (BRT) program currently under study. NYCDDC, the entity responsible for the actual construction efforts, would coordinate with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to minimize disruptions to the BRT program potentially planned for the First and Second Avenue corridors.

For the First Avenue and Sutton Place Routes, extending the water mains from the E. 61st Street Shaft Site to First Avenue, similar maintenance and protection of traffic measures to those described for Segment 3 (E. 61st Street between First and Second Avenues) of the E. 59th Street/E. 61st Street Route would be required, which include constructing along the center of E. 61st Street and using the south curb as the truck staging lane. However, since the connections would require a wider trench to accommodate two water mains, it is expected that the north sidewalk would need to be narrowed by two feet to provide additional roadway space for maintaining an 11-foot traffic lane. Narrowing sidewalk widths for the construction of water main connections could also occur elsewhere. For the First Avenue Route, an evaluation of a potential construction option, Scenario A, was conducted to depict a representative condition under which five feet of sidewalks along north-south blocks would be displaced for construction. This analysis showed that adequate pedestrian flow would be maintained. Along the cross-town streets, displacing two feet of sidewalk width, as necessary for E. 61st Street between First Avenue and the E. 61st Street Shaft Site, was also contemplated. These nominal reductions in pedestrian space on Study Area sidewalks, as well as the displacement of the bicycle lane along E. 55th Street between Sutton Place and Second Avenue when construction would be taking place

on these respective blocks, would be temporary to create space for construction or provide additional roadway width for vehicular traffic. Since adequate pedestrian flow would be maintained, no potential significant adverse impacts to pedestrians would result from any of the three potential water main connection routes from the E. 61st Street Shaft Site.

7.10.4 Conclusions

The construction, activation, and operation of Shaft 33B and its water main connections at the E. 61st Street Shaft Site would not result in any potential significant adverse impacts to Study Area transit and pedestrian conditions. However, in recognition of existing traffic congestion in the area of the Queensboro Bridge, NYCDEP would commit to providing the funding for TEA(s) at the Shaft Site as needed during its construction to facilitate vehicular and pedestrian flow nearby.

