

6.10 TRANSIT AND PEDESTRIANS

6.10.1 Introduction

As described in Section 6.1, “Project Description,” the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site is located on the north side of E. 59th Street between First and Second Avenues within an area adjacent to the Queensboro Bridge that is currently used by NYCDOT as an equipment storage area for construction activities related to the ongoing rehabilitation of the Queensboro Bridge. The construction of Shaft 33B at this site would require the relocation of existing utilities, including a sensitive Con Edison oil-o-static line, which would delay the initiation of Shaft 33B construction by approximately one year. 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 Pedestrians Methodology” 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 and pedestrian trips exceeding the CEQR requirements for a detailed analysis. Therefore, the permanent operating conditions would not result in any potential adverse transit and pedestrian impacts. The following discussions address conditions related to the construction of the shaft and water main connections.

6.10.2 Shaft Site Construction Transit and Pedestrian Conditions

The construction of Shaft 33B at the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site is not expected to affect existing transit service in the area nor would it occupy adjacent pedestrian space. There is no pedestrian sidewalk or connecting crosswalks on the northeast corner of Second Avenue and E. 59th Street and the south sidewalk across the street from the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site would not be affected by construction activities related to the Shaft and the regulator/valve chambers. Therefore, no potential adverse transit or pedestrian impacts are anticipated, and a detailed analysis is not required.

As detailed in Section 6.9, 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. 59th Street/Second Avenue 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 traffic at the E. 59th Street intersection with Second Avenue, which are traversed by the M15, M57, Q32,

Q60, and Q101 bus routes. Short-term clearing of pedestrian traffic would also likely be required for the south sidewalk across the street from the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site and the adjoining east sidewalk and south crosswalk, both south of the E. 59th Street roadway. Following the all clear signal, nearby traffic and the travel of the above bus routes, as well as nearby pedestrian flow, are expected to recover to pre-blasting conditions within a few minutes. The period during blasting when traffic stoppages and the halting of area bus routes and 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.

6.10.3 Water Main Connection Construction Transit and Pedestrian Conditions

Similar to the preferred Shaft Site, water main connections from the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue 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”. As described in Section 6.1, the construction durations required for these connection routes from the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site have been estimated at 47 months for the First Avenue route, 57 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. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site to First Avenue, would require similar maintenance and protection of traffic measures as those described for Segment 6 (E. 59th Street between First and Second Avenues) of the E. 59th Street/E. 61st Street route. These measures include using six feet of the south sidewalk for the construction trench. Pedestrian volumes on this sidewalk are relatively low, never exceeding 110 pedestrians during a peak 15-minute period; thus the reduction of sidewalk width would not result in adverse impacts, as determined by the analysis presented in Section 5.10. 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 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. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site.

6.10.4 Conclusions

The construction, activation, and operation of Shaft 33B and its water main connections at the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue 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.

