



JON S. CORZINE
Governor

State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
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LISA P. JACKSON
Commissioner

June 29, 2007

Mr. Mark Yachmetz
Associate Administrator
for Railroad Development
Federal Railroad Administration
1120 Vermont Ave. NW
Washington D.C., 20590

Dear Mr. Yachmetz:

As Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer for New Jersey, in accordance with 36 CFR Part 800: Protection of Historic Properties, as published in the Federal Register on 6 July 2004 (69 FR 40544-40555), I am providing **Initial Consultation Comments** for the following proposed undertaking:

**Secaucus Town, Hudson County
Portal Bridge Capacity Enhancement Project
Federal Transit Administration, NJ Transit.**

This letter is in response to your submission of documents initiating consultation pursuant to the requirements of 36 CFR Parts 800.3 and 800.4. The project will include an examination of alternatives including replacement, rehabilitation or modification of the existing Portal Bridge. To address the bottleneck between Swift Interlocking and Secaucus Junction, several of the project alternatives will include construction of additional track(s) between those two points, while others may include additional track(s) only along the eastbound and westbound bridge approaches.

800.3 Initiation of the Section 106 Process

With the addition of NJ Transit, I concur that the Historic Preservation Office (HPO), the Town of Secaucus, the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission, and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are the appropriate public agency consulting parties for the initiation of consultation. Public involvement activities may identify additional public agency or private organization consulting parties.

As is noted in the submitted documentation, the public outreach program for the proposed project will consist of soliciting comments on the historic resources from all consulting and interested parties as well as the intention to prepare a project presentation for interested and consulting parties. I would recommend consulting with the same parties in the event of an Adverse Effect determination, and requesting comments on a draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), if required. Overall, the HPO approves of the plan for public involvement.

800.4 Identification of Historic Properties

Generally, I agree with the architectural Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the project as defined in the revised APE delineation dated June 4, 2007. However, before I can concur formally, I request that the description for the architectural APE be re-written to better explain how the boundaries relate to above-ground resources and the proposed constructive activity. For example, why is the northern boundary approximately 500-600 feet from the railroad ROW before it crosses Belleville Turnpike, but follows Route I-95 after it crosses the Belleville Turnpike, even though the extent of constructive activity appears the same?

The HPO also has reviewed the documentation submitted that defines the archaeological APE for the above-referenced project. The HPO concurs with the archaeological APE as defined in the revised APE delineation submitted in a letter from you dated June 4, 2007, provided that any future project changes result in appropriate changes in the archaeological (and architectural) APE. The HPO also concurs with the Phase IA methodology outlined in your previous correspondence dated February 27, 2007.

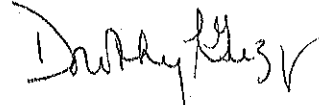
I also agree that the list of interested parties, 33 in all, are entities with a potential interest in and a knowledge of historic properties within the APE and should be considered information resources for the pending cultural resources evaluation. Please note that in the course of conducting background research for the Phase IA survey, it may be appropriate to consult with Dr. Joel Grossman, a local expert in the paleoenvironment and archaeology of the New Jersey Meadowlands. He may be reached at jwgnyny@optonline.net.

Lastly, I would like to point out that the Hudson County Division of Cultural & Heritage Affairs/Tourism Development (with Bill Larosa and Stephen Masks as contacts) is located in Jersey City, Hudson County, not Newark City, Essex County.

Additional Comments:

This office looks forward to receiving the revised architectural APE description for review and approval. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Marianne Walsh at 609-984-0850 or marianne.walsh@dep.state.nj.us.

Sincerely,



Dorothy P. Guzzo
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer

C: John Wilkins, NJT
Dara Callender, NJT
Ken Kulick, Amtrak, 60 Massachusetts Ave., NE, 4W-113, Washington, DC
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