



Environmental and Planning Consultants

100 Centre Boulevard
North Marlton Crossing Suite 102H/J
Marlton, NJ 08053
tel: 856 797-9930
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www.akrf.com

September 14, 2007
NJ070147

David Jenkins, Acting Chief
Endangered and Nongame Species Program
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
501 East State Street, 3rd Floor
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

**Re: Threatened or Endangered Species Information Request
Portal Bridge Capacity Enhancement Project
Milepost 6.1 along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor
Between the City of Kearny and the City of Secaucus, Hudson County, New Jersey**

Dear Mr. Jenkins:

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), in cooperation with the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) and the New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ TRANSIT), are proposing to enhance the capacity and improve the operation of the Portal Bridge, a two-track rail crossing over the Hackensack River between the City of Kearny and the City of Secaucus, Hudson County, New Jersey. The Portal Bridge, which began operation in 1910, creates a bottleneck along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor and impedes efficient and reliable passenger rail service. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared to analyze the potential environmental impact from the proposed project, including several project alternatives. The Portal Bridge Capacity Enhancement Project (the Project) will require coordination with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), in addition to applicable natural resource and regulatory agencies including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP) Natural Heritage Program, and the NJDEP's Endangered and Nongame Species Program.

On January 9, 2007 AKRF, Inc. staff met with the USFWS and other agencies in Newark, NJ for a scoping meeting of the proposed project. The USFWS followed up with a letter dated February 2, 2007 reflecting on the Scoping Document and scoping meeting. The letter recommended that the New Jersey Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP) be contacted specifically to determine the recent history of nesting by the State-listed (endangered) peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) on bridges in the vicinity of Portal Bridge.

On behalf of the FRA, Amtrak, and NJ Transit we would like to request information on peregrine falcons and any other federally listed threatened or endangered species, species of special concern, and habitats of special concern within the study area for the proposed project (see Figures 1 and 2). The information provided by the ENSP will be used for evaluation of potential environmental impacts associated with this proposed project. Map(s) showing specific locations of sensitive species or habitats developed lists provided by ENSP will not be published in any document. As part of this process, we also have requested similar information on rare species from the Natural Heritage Program, and other applicable natural resource agencies.

Please send the requested information to me at the address indicated above and feel free to call me at (856) 797-9930, extension 1624, if you should have any questions regarding this information request. Thank you for your time in providing us with this information.

Sincerely,



Michael Clayton
Environmental Scientist

Attachment

File #: 20214-1005

cc:

David Valenstein, FRA
John Wilkins, NJ TRANSIT
Kenneth Kulick, Amtrak
Robert Conway, AKRF



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September 14, 2007
NJ070148

Mary Colligan
National Marine Fisheries Service
Protected Resources Division
1 Blackburn Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

**Re: Threatened or Endangered Species and Marine Mammal Species Information Request
Portal Bridge Capacity Enhancement Project
Milepost 6.1 along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor
Between the City of Kearny and the City of Secaucus, Hudson County, New Jersey**

Dear Ms. Colligan:

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), in cooperation with the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) and the New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ TRANSIT), are proposing to enhance the capacity and improve the operation of the Portal Bridge, a two-track rail crossing over the Hackensack River between the City of Kearny and the City of Secaucus, Hudson County, New Jersey. The Portal Bridge, which began operation in 1910, creates a bottleneck along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor and impedes efficient and reliable passenger rail service. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared to analyze the potential environmental impact from the proposed project, including several project alternatives. The Portal Bridge Capacity Enhancement Project (the Project) will require coordination with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), in addition to applicable natural resource and regulatory agencies including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP) Natural Heritage Program, and the NJDEP's Endangered and Nongame Species Program.

On behalf of the FRA, Amtrak, and NJ Transit, we would like to request information on federally listed threatened or endangered species, species of special concern, and marine mammals under the jurisdiction of the NMFS within the vicinity of the study area for the proposed project (see Figures 1 and 2). The information provided by NMFS will be used for evaluation of potential environmental impacts associated with this proposed project. Map(s) showing specific locations of sensitive species or habitats developed from lists provided by NMFS will not be published in any document.

Please send the requested information to me at the address indicated above and feel free to call me at (856) 797-9930, extension 1624, if you should have any questions regarding this information request. Thank you for your time in providing us with this information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Clayton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael Clayton
Environmental Scientist

Attachment

File #: 20214-1005

cc:

David Valenstein, FRA
John Wilkins, NJ TRANSIT
Kenneth Kulick, Amtrak
Robert Conway, AKRF



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September 14, 2007
NJ070149

John C. Staples, Assistant Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
New Jersey Field Office
Ecological Services
927 North Main Street, Building D
Pleasantville, New Jersey 08232

**Re: Portal Bridge Capacity Enhancement Project
Milepost 6.1 along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor
Between the City of Kearny and the City of Secaucus, Hudson County, New Jersey**

Dear Mr. Staples:

We received your letter dated February 2, 2007 in which you provided your comments and recommendations on the Scoping Document for the Portal Bridge Capacity Enhancement Project located in Kearny and Secaucus, Hudson County, New Jersey. We appreciate your input on this proposed project, and your comments and recommendations will be considered and incorporated appropriately during the preparation process of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed project.

Please let us know if any other information becomes available regarding the project area. Thanks again for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Clayton'.

Michael Clayton
Environmental Scientist

File #: 20214-1005

cc:

David Valenstein, FRA
John Wilkins, NJ TRANSIT
Kenneth Kulick, Amtrak
Robert Conway, AKRF



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September 14, 2007
NJ070150

The New Jersey Natural Heritage Program
Office of Natural Lands Management
Division of Parks and Forestry
Department of Environmental Protection
P.O. Box 404
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

**Re: Threatened or Endangered Species Information Request
Portal Bridge Capacity Enhancement Project
Milepost 6.1 along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor
Between the City of Kearny and the City of Secaucus, Hudson County, New Jersey**

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), in cooperation with the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) and the New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ TRANSIT), are proposing to enhance the capacity and improve the operation of the Portal Bridge, a two-track rail crossing over the Hackensack River between the City of Kearny and the City of Secaucus, Hudson County, New Jersey. The Portal Bridge, which began operation in 1910, creates a bottleneck along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor and impedes efficient and reliable passenger rail service. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared to analyze the potential environmental impact from the proposed project, including several project alternatives. The Portal Bridge Capacity Enhancement Project (the Project) will require coordination with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), in addition to applicable natural resource and regulatory agencies including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP) Natural Heritage Program, and the NJDEP's Endangered and Nongame Species Program.

On behalf of the FRA, Amtrak, and NJ Transit, we would like to request information on federally listed threatened or endangered species, species of special concern, and habitats of special concern within one-half mile of the study area for the proposed project (see Figures 1 and 2). The information provided by the Natural Heritage Program (NHP) will be used for evaluation of potential environmental impacts associated with this proposed project. Map(s) showing specific locations of sensitive species or habitats developed from lists provided by NHP will not be published in any document.

Please send the requested information to me at the address indicated above and feel free to call me at (856) 797-9930, extension 1624, if you should have any questions regarding this information request. Thank you for your time in providing us with this information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Clayton", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Clayton
Environmental Scientist

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September 14, 2007
NJ070151

National Marine Fisheries Service
Habitat Conservation Division
Attention: Diane Rusanowsky
Milford Field Office
212 Rogers Avenue
Milford, CT 06460

**Re: Threatened or Endangered Species Information Request
Portal Bridge Capacity Enhancement Project
Milepost 6.1 along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor
Between the City of Kearny and the City of Secaucus, Hudson County, New Jersey**

Dear Ms. Rusanowsky:

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), in cooperation with the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) and the New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ TRANSIT), are proposing to enhance the capacity and improve the operation of the Portal Bridge, a two-track rail crossing over the Hackensack River between the City of Kearny and the City of Secaucus, Hudson County, New Jersey. The Portal Bridge, which began operation in 1910, creates a bottleneck along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor and impedes efficient and reliable passenger rail service. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared to analyze the potential environmental impact from the proposed project, including several project alternatives. The Portal Bridge Capacity Enhancement Project (the Project) will require coordination with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), in addition to applicable natural resource and regulatory agencies including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP) Natural Heritage Program, and the NJDEP's Endangered and Nongame Species Program.

On behalf of the FRA, Amtrak, and NJ Transit, we would like to request information on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act species under the jurisdiction of NMFS within the vicinity of the study area for the proposed project (see Figures 1 and 2). The information provided by NMFS will be used for evaluation of potential environmental impacts associated with this proposed project. Map(s) showing specific locations of sensitive species or habitats developed from lists provided by NMFS will not be published in any document.

Please send the requested information to me at the address indicated above and feel free to call me at (856) 797-9930, extension 1624, if you should have any questions regarding this information request. Thank you for your time in providing us with this information.

Sincerely,



Michael Clayton
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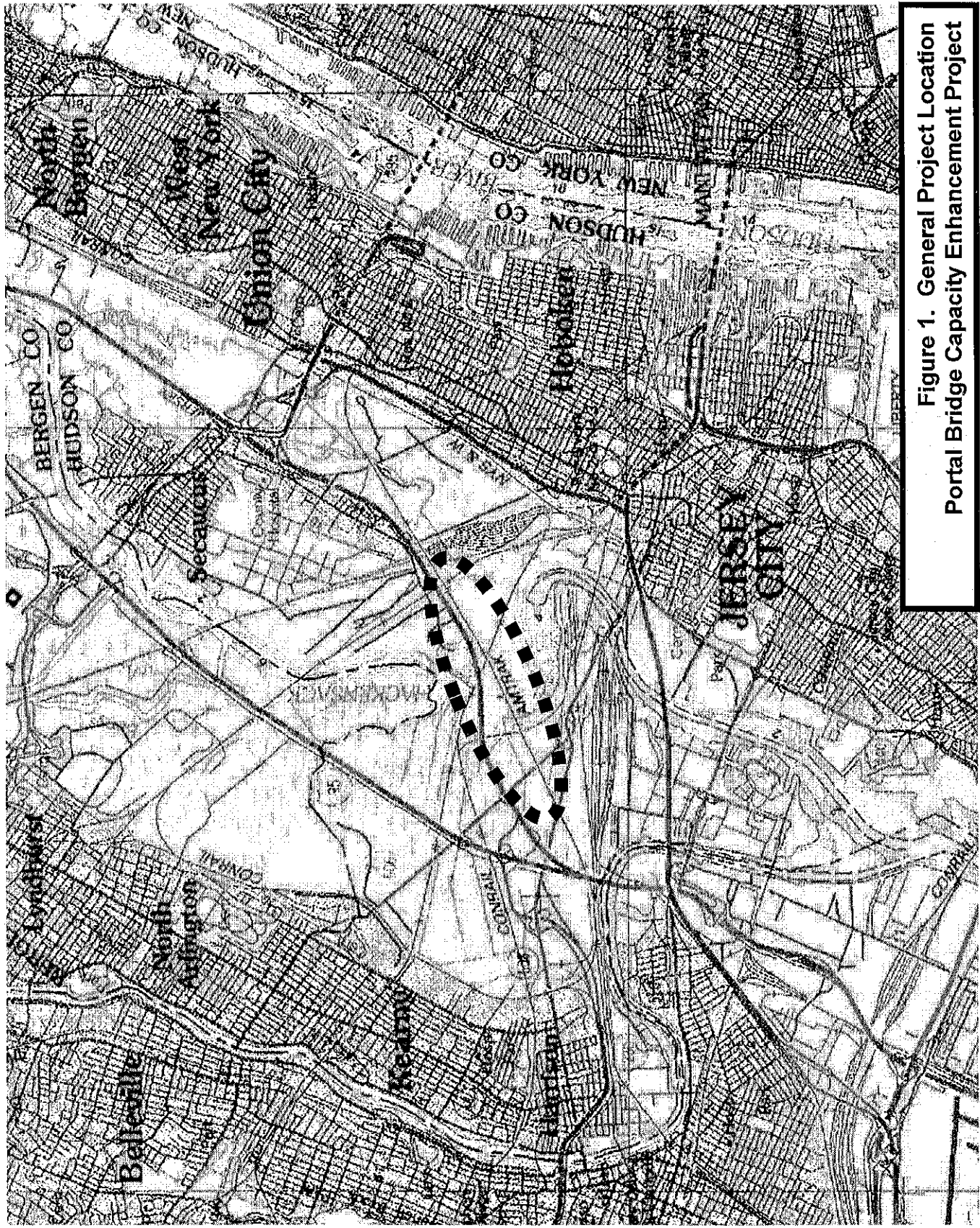


Figure 1. General Project Location
Portal Bridge Capacity Enhancement Project

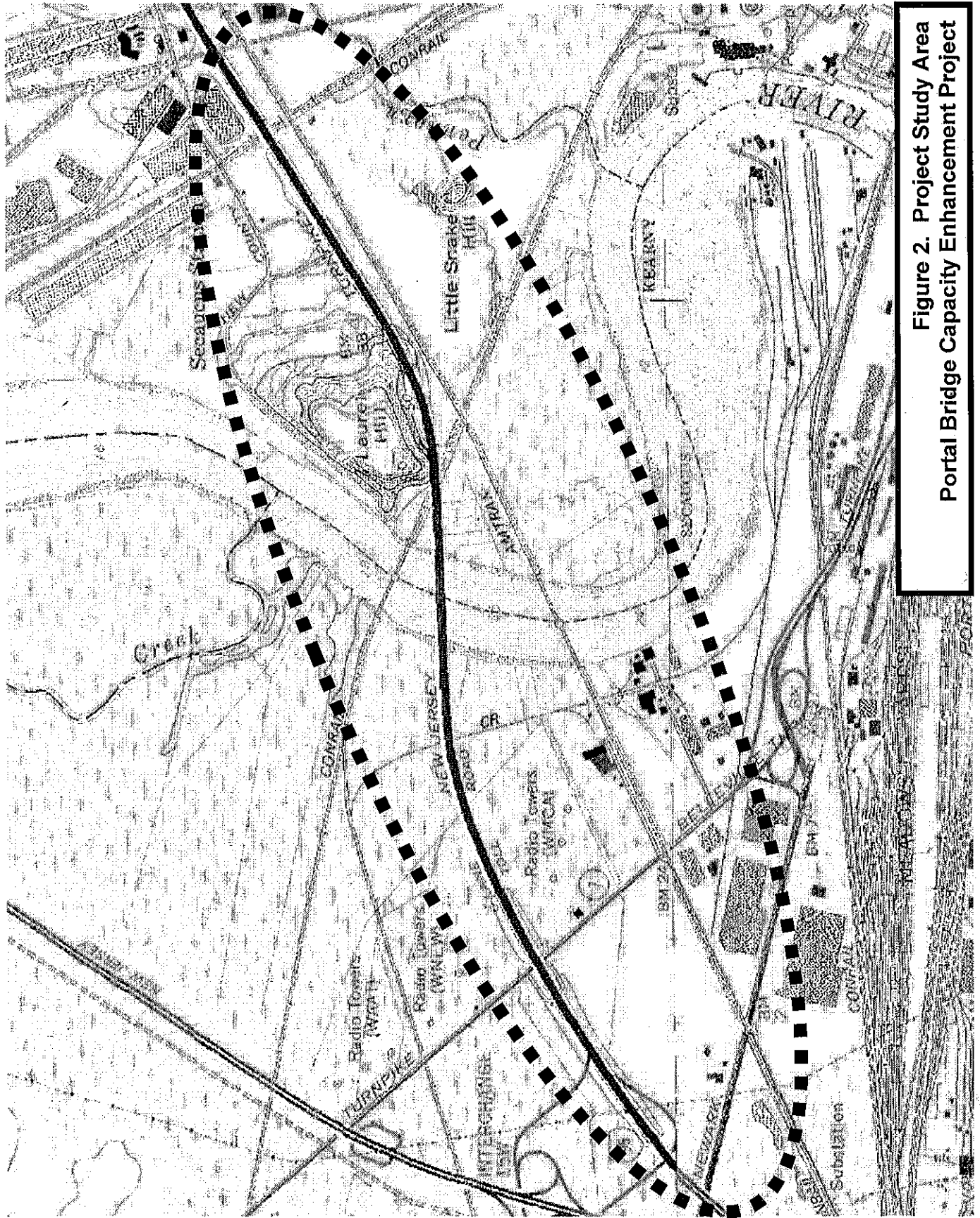


Figure 2. Project Study Area
Portal Bridge Capacity Enhancement Project