

**NORTHERN BRANCH CORRIDOR  
SUPPLEMENTAL DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT and  
SECTION 4(f) STATEMENT  
IN  
BERGEN COUNTY and HUDSON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

**Abstract**

The proposed action involves the reinstatement of passenger rail service on an active freight rail line, which includes the rehabilitation of the rail line and construction of seven passenger stations, a vehicle base facility, and associated infrastructure improvements, such as viaducts, necessary to operate freight and passenger service on the Northern Branch line. The project improvements would take place in Bergen County and Hudson County, New Jersey pursuant to Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, codified at 42 U.S.C. § 4332; the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations implementing NEPA at 40 C.F.R. Part 1500; the environmental provisions of 23 U.S.C. § 139 and 49 U.S.C. § 5323(c); the joint Federal Transit Administration and Federal Highway Administration Environmental Impact and Related Procedures Rule at 23 C.F.R. Part 771; and related laws, regulations, and guidance as amended by the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

The study corridor extends 10 miles from the existing terminus of the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail (HBLR) system in the Township of North Bergen, Hudson County, and continues through the Boroughs of Fairview, Ridgefield, Palisades Park, and Leonia in Bergen County and terminates in the City of Englewood, also in Bergen County. The electric light rail service would operate on West Side Avenue in North Bergen, and then use an existing, active freight railway operated by CSX Transportation. Historically, the CSX freight line supported passenger rail service, but that service was discontinued in the 1960s. Consequently, the reinstatement of passenger rail service would return to the area a mode of transit currently unavailable, with the intentions of decreasing roadway congestion and improving overall mobility in the region.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and NJ TRANSIT published a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in December 2011. The DEIS analyzed two alternatives. The Preferred Alternative proposed to extend light rail service from North Bergen to the north border of Tenafly. The second alternative proposed to extend service only to Route 4 in Englewood. A total of 380 comments, containing over 1,200 discrete questions, concerns, and recommendations, were received during the comment period. While many comments expressed support for the Northern Branch Corridor project, residents and community leaders in Tenafly were strongly opposed to the extension of service into their community, leading the Borough Council to pass a resolution against the project. In addition, both the City of Englewood and Englewood Hospital and Medical Center, strongly supportive of the project, recommended that rather than ending the line at the Englewood Route 4 station, the service be extended further north to terminate at Englewood Hospital and Medical Center. The Preferred Alternative has thus been revised to terminate service at Englewood Hospital and Medical Center.

The new alignment results in changes to the service plan and potential environmental and social impacts that were analyzed in the DEIS. The Northern Branch Corridor Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) was prepared to update the assessment of benefits, costs, and social, economic, and environmental impacts of constructing and operating passenger rail service between North Bergen in Hudson County and Englewood in Bergen County. The SDEIS examines two alternatives: the No Build Alternative and the SDEIS Preferred Alternative. This analysis and impact statement consider potential effects on land use and economic activity, community facilities and services, natural resources and habitats, air quality, noise, vibration, hazardous materials, traffic and parking, historic resources, archaeological resources, environmental justice, and construction impacts. Additionally, potential adverse effects on parkland, historic, and archaeological resources were examined pursuant to Title 49 U.S.C. §303, formerly Department of Transportation Act of 1966, §4(f).

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