

Issued in Washington, DC, on August 6, 1999.

Eric Gabler,

Manager, Passenger Facility Charge Branch.
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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Availability of an Environmental Assessment on the Proposed New York Pennsylvania Station Redevelopment Project

AGENCY: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of availability of the Environmental Assessment, request for public comment.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality regulations and the FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts, the FRA announces the availability of an Environmental Assessment for the proposed Pennsylvania Station Redevelopment Project in New York, New York. The Environmental Assessment examines the Pennsylvania Station Redevelopment Corporation's proposal to transform a portion of the James A. Farley Post Office (located directly across Eighth Avenue from Pennsylvania Station) into an intermodal transportation facility and commercial center. The FRA is soliciting comments on this Environmental Assessment. FRA will consider these comments in making a decision pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA).

DATES: The Environmental Assessment will remain available for public comment through September 10, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Individuals wishing copies of the draft Environmental Assessment should immediately contact the FRA Office and personnel listed below. Copies of the Environmental Assessment are being mailed to agencies and individuals that have participated in the environmental assessment process. The complete Volume I of the Environmental Assessment has also been placed on FRA's Internet page at <http://www.fra.dot.gov/s/regs/env/pennstation.htm> Finally, the Environmental Assessment is also available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the following locations:

Washington DC: Federal Railroad Administration, 1120 Vermont Avenue, NW., Room 6060, Washington, DC 20590, (202) 493-6380.

New York, NY.: Pennsylvania Station Redevelopment Corporation (PSRC), 633 Third Avenue, 36th Floor, New York, NY 10017, (212) 803-3642.
Boston, MA: McGinley Hart and Associates, 77 N. Washington Street, Boston, MA, 02114, (617) 227-2932.

Comments on the Environmental Assessment should be submitted to: Mr. Alexander V. Chavrid, Federal Railroad Administration, Office of Railroad Development, Mailstop-20, 1120 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20590, (202) 493-6380. Comments can also be submitted through E-mail to pennstation@fra.dot.gov (please include the sender's full name and mailing address).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Alexander V. Chavrid, at the above address and telephone number.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Efforts to improve the National Railroad Passenger Corporation's (Amtrak) rail passenger station facilities in New York City have been underway since 1991. New York Pennsylvania Station is an aging facility and inadequate to serve the thousands of daily intercity and commuter rail passengers that pass through it let alone the expected increases in intercity and commuter rail ridership over the coming years. The environmental impacts associated with an initial Amtrak proposal to expand the Station space by moving intercity rail passenger functions to the James A. Farley Post Office (located directly across the street from Pennsylvania Station with access to the tracks and platforms) was analyzed by the FRA in a 1995 environmental assessment. Amtrak's proposal was not progressed to final design and in 1995, a new corporation, the Pennsylvania Station Redevelopment Corporation (PSRC), was formed specifically to manage the Pennsylvania Station Redevelopment Project. PSRC is a subsidiary of the New York State Urban Development Corporation, a public benefit corporation of the State of New York. PSRC has proposed a comprehensive program of improvements at the Farley Building that would transform it into a major transportation facility and commercial center. Congress has appropriated Federal funds to the FRA for the redevelopment project in Department of Transportation Appropriations Acts, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (as amended by the National Highway

Designation Act of 1995) and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. FRA's provision of funds for project purposes is subject to NEPA and NHPA.

Alternatives Analyzed in the Draft Environmental Assessment

Alternative 1. No Action

Under this alternative, the only changes anticipated at Penn Station would be routine repairs and maintenance. Amtrak has underway and will very soon complete life safety improvements and modifications to meet the needs of the start up of Acela high-speed rail service in late 1999. The only changes anticipated on the exterior or interior of the Farley Building would be routine repairs and maintenance of the structure. The No Build alternative also includes minor work at the Eight Avenue Subway concourse at 33rd Street.

Alternative 2. The Build Alternative

The Build Alternative has been designed to meet New York's transportation needs into the 21st Century. PSRC proposes to redevelop the Farley Building into an intermodal transportation facility and commercial center, which includes an Amtrak station in the original Farley Building, an intermodal hall, a sky-lit train concourse, a postal loading dock below grade, and a commuter concourse as well as Eighth Avenue subway connection improvements and ancillary retail. The new station would have two midblock entrances on West 31st and West 33rd Streets. At these entrances, (complemented by entrances at the north and south corners of Eight Avenue), at-grade Americans With Disabilities Act-compliant access would be provided for all passengers and postal retail customers and covered areas would be included for taxi pick-up and drip-off. The United States Postal Service (USPS) would improve and continue to occupy the historic postal lobby, the offices on the upper floors of the original Farley Building, and the postal rail access facilities and mail processing and distribution functions on all floors of the Farley Building Annex. New, modern USPS loading facilities would be built on the train concourse and the first-floor levels of the Farley Building Annex, accessible by ramps from Ninth Avenue. Finally, the Build Alternative includes traffic improvements, operational measures, and pedestrian improvements to streets in the vicinity of the Farley Building.

All interested agencies, organizations, and individuals are urged to provide

comments on the draft Environmental Assessment. All comments received by the closing date will be considered by the FRA as it completes its NEPA and NHPA compliance.

Dated: August 9, 1999.

Mark E. Yachmetz,

Chief, Passenger Programs Division.

[FR Doc. 99-20967 Filed 8-12-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Notice of Application for Approval of Discontinuance or Modification of a Railroad Signal System or Relief From the Requirements of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 236

Pursuant to Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 235 and 49 U.S.C. App. 26, the following railroads have petitioned the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) seeking approval for the discontinuance or modification of the signal system or relief from the requirements of 49 CFR part 236 as detailed below.

Docket No. FRA-1999-5896

Applicant: CSX Transportation, Incorporated, Mr. E.G. Peterson, Assistant Chief Engineer, Signal Design and Construction, 4901 Belfort Road, Suite 130 (S/C J-370), Jacksonville, Florida 32256.

CSX Transportation Incorporated seeks approval of the proposed modification of the traffic control system, on the single main track, between milepost CAB-79.03 and milepost CAB-80.0, near Scottsville, Virginia, on the Rivanna Subdivision, C&O Business Unit, consisting of the following:

1. The discontinuance and removal of absolute controlled signals 70R, 70L, and C at East End Scottsville, milepost CAB-79.03;
2. Conversion of the power-operated switch at the East End Scottsville to hand operation, equipped with an electric lock;
3. The discontinuance and removal of absolute controlled signals 66R and 66L at West End Scottsville, milepost CAB-80.0; and
4. Installation of back to back intermediate signals at milepost CAB-79.1.

The reason given for the proposed changes is to eliminate facilities no longer needed for present day operations.

Any interested party desiring to protest the granting of an application shall set forth specifically the grounds upon which the protest is made, and contain a concise statement of the

interest of the Protestant in the proceeding. Additionally, one copy of the protest shall be furnished to the applicant at the address listed above.

All communications concerning this proceeding should be identified by the docket number and must be submitted to the Docket Clerk, DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PI-401, Washington, DC 20590-0001. Communications received within 45 days of the date of this notice will be considered by the FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable. All written communications concerning these proceedings are available for examination during regular business hours (9 a.m.-5 p.m.) at DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PI-401 (Plaza Level), 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590-0001. All documents in the public docket are also available for inspection and copying on the internet at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FRA expects to be able to determine these matters without an oral hearing. However, if a specific request for an oral hearing is accompanied by a showing that the party is unable to adequately present his or her position by written statements, an application may be set for public hearing.

Issued in Washington, DC, on August 9, 1999.

Grady C. Cothen, Jr.,

Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Standards and Program Development.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Notice of Application for Approval of Discontinuance or Modification of a Railroad Signal System or Relief From the Requirements of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 236

Pursuant to Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 235 and 49 U.S.C. App. 26, the following railroads have petitioned the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) seeking approval for the discontinuance or modification of the signal system or relief from the requirements of 49 CFR part 236 as detailed below.

Docket No. FRA-1999-5753

Applicants:

CSX Transportation, Incorporated, Mr. E. G. Peterson, Assistant Chief Engineer, Signal Design and

Construction, 4901 Belfort Road, Suite 130 (S/C J-370), Jacksonville, Florida 32256.

Consolidated Rail Corporation, Mr. R. E. Inman, Chief Engineer—C&S Assets, 1000 Howard Boulevard, Mount Laurel, New Jersey 08054.

CSX Transportation Incorporated (CSXT) and Consolidated Rail Corporation, jointly seek approval of the proposed temporary discontinuance of the current of traffic and interlocking signal systems, at Riverdale, Illinois, milepost DC-11.40, on the CSXT Barr Subdivision, Chicago Service Lane, for a period of approximately 60 days. During the temporary discontinuance, it is proposed to govern train movements by Yard Limit Rules under the direction of the train dispatcher, and utilize a switch tender handle all switches. The proposal is associated with major modifications to track and signal arrangements, and include the installation of a traffic control system.

The reason given for the proposed changes is to safely and efficiently expedite train movements during construction and cut-over.

Any interested party desiring to protest the granting of an application shall set forth specifically the grounds upon which the protest is made, and contain a concise statement of the interest of the Protestant in the proceeding. Additionally, one copy of the protest shall be furnished to the applicant at the address listed above.

All communications concerning this proceeding should be identified by the docket number and must be submitted to the Docket Clerk, DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PI-401, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

Communications received within 45 days of the date of this notice will be considered by the FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable. All written communications concerning these proceedings are available for examination during regular business hours (9 a.m.-5 p.m.) at DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PI-401 (Plaza Level), 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590-0001. All documents in the public docket are also available for inspection and copying on the internet at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FRA expects to be able to determine these matters without an oral hearing. However, if a specific request for an oral hearing is accompanied by a showing that the party is unable to adequately present his or her position by written statements, an application may be set for public hearing.