

The Proposed Action, also known as the Wassaic Extension Project, will extend north on the former Penn Central owned right-of-way from the existing Dover Plains Station, pass immediately to the west of the Wassaic Developmental Center (WDC) paralleling NYS Route 22/343, pass through the hamlet of Wassaic, and terminate approximately 3,200 feet (0.6 mile) north of the hamlet adjacent to NYS Route 22/343. The action also includes the construction of a rail yard, station, and 250 parking spaces (150 paved, 100 unpaved) to be located on a site along the alignment just north of Wassaic at the terminus of the proposed extension. A smaller passenger station will be constructed at the WDC with a parking lot of 50 spaces. The total length of the extension project is 5 miles.

The proposed project is intended to help relieve an existing congested parking situation at Dover Plains station, increase the operating efficiency of Metro-North and expand Metro-North's market.

In addition to the Proposed Action, the EIS will evaluate a No-Build alternative and two (2) Build alternatives, as well as any additional alternative(s) generated through the scoping process.

Scoping will be accomplished through correspondence with interested persons and organizations, as well as with federal, state, and local agencies. One (1) public scoping meeting will be conducted.

COMMENT DUE DATE: Written comments on the scope of alternatives and impacts should be submitted by July 20 to Ms. Janet Mainiero, Metro-North Commuter Railroad, 347 Madison Avenue, New York City, New York 10017. Verbal comments should be made at the scoping meeting scheduled below. Verbal comments made at the scoping meeting will be transcribed. Assistance will be provided for the hearing impaired.

SCOPING MEETING: The public scoping meeting concerning the proposed Wassaic Extension Project will be held on: June 20, 1995, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall, Amenia, New York.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Letitia A. Thompson, Deputy Regional Administrator, Federal Transit Administration, 26 Federal Plaza, New York, New York 10278 at 212-264-8162 or Janet Mainiero, Project Director, Metro-North Railroad, 347 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10017 at 212-340-4834.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: FTA and Metro-North Commuter Railroad invite all interested individuals and

organizations, as well as federal, state, and local agencies, to participate in identifying the alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS and identifying any significant social, economic, and environmental issues related to the Proposed Action and Alternatives described below. During the scoping process, comments should focus on identifying specific social, economic, and/or environmental issues to be evaluated and suggesting alternatives which may be less costly or less environmentally damaging, while achieving similar transportation objectives. Scoping is not the appropriate forum in which to indicate preference for a particular alternative. Comments on preferences should be communicated after the draft EIS has been completed and issued for review and comment. If you wish to be placed on the mailing list to receive further information as the project develops, contact Ms. Mainiero as described above. Following the public scoping meeting a scoping document will be prepared that will contain the transcript from the public scoping meeting, any written comments received, an outline of the decisions that have been made during the scoping process, and a summary of the issues to be evaluated in a draft EIS.

Description of the Study Area and Project Need

The corridor is approximately 5 miles long, stretching between the village of Dover Plains and the Hamlet of Wassaic, in the Town of Amenia, Dutchess County, New York. It is oriented on a north-south axis. The proposed project is intended to provide service to people residing beyond the current Dover Plains terminus, expand Metro-North's market, help relieve an existing congested parking situation at the Dover Plains station, provide more frequent service to the area, and improve the quality of life in the region by implementing a transit project which conforms to the intent of the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) of 1990. In addition, the proposed rail yard will allow Metro-North to increase the efficiency of its operation.

Previous Activity

Metro-North has performed some preliminary analysis on the feasibility of extending the Dover Plains Branch service. Meetings were held with locally elected officials regarding this work. Furthermore, the project has been discussed at public meetings conducted by the Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in 1993 and 1994.

Alternatives

The alternatives proposed for evaluation include:

(1) No Build—This alternative involves no change to transportation services or facilities in the corridor.

(2) The Proposed Action—The Proposed Action involves a 5-mile extension of the Dover Plains Branch on the Harlem Line to a point 3,200 feet (0.6 mile) north of the hamlet of Wassaic where a rail yard, passenger station, and a parking lot consisting of approximately 250 spaces will be constructed. In addition, a small passenger station will also be constructed at the WDC with a parking lot of 50 spaces.

(3) Alternative 1—Alternative 1 includes all the elements of the Proposed Action, except for one passenger station and parking lot. The passenger station and approximately 250-space parking lot will be constructed within the hamlet of Wassaic.

(4) Alternative 2—Alternative 2 involves the extension of the Dover Plains Branch on the Harlem Line to a point approximately 2,000 feet (0.4 mile) north of the existing terminus of Dover Plains. A rail yard and a 250-space parking lot will be constructed in an agricultural parcel immediately north of the Tenmile River. The parking lot will serve the existing station at Dover Plains.

In addition to the construction discussed above, the Build Alternatives will also require track replacement, bridge rehabilitation, and other improvements to bring the existing rail line up to operational standards. The extent of this work is dependent upon the distance of track required for each alternative.

The proposed project and alternatives are based upon the initial technical work performed to date and consultations with local and state officials.

Since the proposed action is preliminary, consideration will be given to modifications to it and the existing alternatives, as well as additional reasonable alternatives. Regard also would be provided to any relevant concerns.

Probable Effects

In the EIS, FTA/Metro-North will evaluate all significant social, economic, and environmental effects, or impacts, of the alternatives. Environmental and social impacts proposed for analysis include water quality, wetlands, cultural resources, community facilities, and traffic and parking impacts near