

Coast Guard Issues Permit for Turnpike's New

Newark Bay Extension Bridge

The New Jersey Turnpike Authority has received a Finding of No Significant Impact from the agency leading the federal environmental review for the first project of the Newark Bay-Hudson County Extension Improvements Program. The finding, along with a Bridge Permit issued in connection with it, clear the way for the Turnpike Authority to proceed with the reconstruction of the Turnpike Extension between Interchanges 14 in Newark and 14A in Bayonne and Jersey City.

The Finding of No Significant Impact, known as a FONSI, validates the findings of the Environmental Assessment performed by the Turnpike Authority under the National Environmental Policy Act. That assessment found that the first project will maintain or improve environmental and community quality and relieve the chronic traffic congestion between Interchanges 14 and 14A. The FONSI and Bridge Permit were issued today by the U.S. Coast Guard, the federal agency that led the review of the Environmental Assessment.

As a mitigation condition of the FONSI, the Turnpike Authority has agreed to provide air quality, noise and vibration monitoring systems, to require the use of low-emissions construction equipment, and to continue engaging and collaborating with the community through the construction phase. These and other steps designed to avert unanticipated impacts from construction activities are included in an adaptive management plan the Turnpike Authority has committed to implement.

"While the Finding of No Significant Impact confirms that the project complies with federal public health guidelines, we are making sure we stay below those standards by implementing robust air quality and noise monitoring systems and taking other proactive steps to enhance the well-being of neighboring communities," said Turnpike Authority Executive Director James Carone.

The Newark Bay-Hudson County Extension of the New Jersey Turnpike runs for 8.1 miles between the mainline of the Turnpike at Interchange 14 in Newark and Jersey Avenue in Jersey City. Built in the mid-1950s and opened to traffic in 1956, the

Extension needs to be modernized. The 29 bridges that make up 80 percent of the corridor have reached the end of their service lives.

Construction on the first project is scheduled to begin in 2026 and last 10 years. The first project includes the replacement of the Newark Bay Bridge with twin cable-stayed bridges. The existing Newark Bay Bridge will remain in service until 2031 while one of the new cable-stayed bridges is built alongside it to the north. When that span is complete, all traffic will be shifted onto the new bridge and the existing bridge will be demolished. When the second cable-stayed bridge is completed in 2036, traffic will shift into its permanent configuration with four eastbound lanes on one bridge and four westbound lanes on the other.

“The people who rely on the Turnpike Extension everyday deserve safe, modern bridges,” said Turnpike Authority Chief Engineer Daniel L. Hesslein, P.E. “The Turnpike Authority has a plan to deliver them. The FONSI and bridge permits are important milestones in that process.”

Since 2021, the Turnpike Authority has coordinated with numerous agencies, community organizations, and stakeholders throughout the concept planning, preliminary design, and environmental review phases of the first project. Public Information Centers were held in Newark, Bayonne, and Jersey City. Additionally, a Virtual Public Information Center and fact sheets in six languages were made available on the Program website.

More than 1,200 responses were submitted to the Coast Guard during the public comment period. Those comments are reflected in the final EA and in the adaptive management plan.

In addition to federal environmental review process, the first project also underwent a vigorous state environmental review for which an Environmental Impact Statement was prepared and accepted by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

“We have prioritized listening to community voices and addressing their concerns,” said Program Manager Lisa K. Navarro, P.E., senior supervising engineer at the Turnpike Authority. “We’ve conducted over 100 community and stakeholder meetings and 80 meetings with environmental agencies. The strong public health and air quality protections outlined in the adaptive management plan reflect the comments, concerns, and recommendations relayed to us by the public during these meetings.”

More information on the FONSI and the adaptive management plan can be found on the Environmental Responsibility page of the Program website at nbhce.com.