

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



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16591
July 10, 2019

North Jersey Transit Planning Authority
Attn: Ms. Sarbjit Kahlon
Principle Planner, Programming Project Development
1085 Raymond Blvd, 17th Floor
(One Newark Center)
Newark, NJ 07102

Dear Ms. Kahlon,

In order to assist the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT)/ North Jersey Transit Planning Authority (NJTPA) with submission of an application for authorization to rehabilitate/replace three bridges crossing the Passaic River, New Jersey: the Bridge Street Bridge, at mile 5.7, located in the City of Newark, Essex County and the Town of Harrison, Hudson County; the Clay Street Bridge at mile 6.1, located in the City of Newark, Essex County; and the Kingsland Avenue Bridge, at mile 10.7, located in the Township of Nutley, Essex County and the Township of Lyndhurst, Bergen County, I write to inform you of our preliminary review of navigation survey results. This survey, in conjunction with other information discussed below and the reasonable needs of navigation, requires that your bridge replacement proposals provide for a minimal vertical clearance of 18 feet for the Bridge Street and Clay Street Bridges and 16 feet for the Kingsland Avenue Bridge. Alternatively, for the Kingsland Avenue Bridge a minimum vertical clearance of 12 feet would be deemed to meet the reasonable needs of navigation provided that mitigation efforts are implemented by Bergen County and acceptable by Passaic Valley County Sewage Commission (PVSC) to continue marine trash skimmer operations transiting under the Kingsland Avenue Bridge.

As you know, the Coast Guard has been working closely with NJDOT/NJTPA for several years on the replacement of all three movable bridges. They are all over 100 years old, functionally obsolete, with structurally deficient swing-spans and in overall poor condition. From your Navigational Report of October 2018, we understand that NJDOT/NJTPA proposed replacing all three bridges with fixed bridges. As refined in a later correspondence, the minimum vertical clearance proposed, for fixed bridge replacements would reduce the vertical clearances for: the Bridge Street Bridge to 8 feet, for the Clay Street Bridge to 15 feet over one channel and 8 feet over a second channel, and 10 feet for the Kingsland Avenue Bridge. For replacement bridge projects, the Coast Guard's preference is to replace bridges with clearances equal to, or greater than, the existing bridges.

The predominant commercial users of the river are businesses that are situated along Newark Bay with the exception of Linde-Griffith Construction Company (located in the vicinity of the Clay Street Bridge), and no business activities were reported along the Passaic River north of the Amtrak Dock Bridge. Many of the counties/municipalities on the river have future plans of recreational/entertainment commercial development along the river. Public notice and outreach efforts revealed comments that the predominant users of the Passaic River appear to be three

necessary entities for the environmental health of the Passaic River, public safety, preservation of property and instrumental to recreational small craft users. These are PVSC with two trash skimmers, the cities of Kearny and Newark fire boats, and New Jersey State Police.

Additionally, more than 1,000 recreational skull boats and kayaks transit on the river. The Passaic River is used by the public for recreational vessels; and maintenance/clean-up on this waterway is mandatory to preserve the waterway for present use and future generations. Further, emergency vessels require accessibility up and down this waterway for the safety of mariners and preservation of property. Dredging operations, and access for maintenance of the bridges upstream is required and according to the U.S. Army Corps (USACE), the Passaic River is ripe for redevelopment for the marine industry and from a recreational standpoint. Especially at this time for the commitment by U.S. EPA to clean-up the lower 8.3 miles, the federal government is investing a significant amount of funds in cleaning up the river and to redevelop the waterfront.

While bridge replacements that maintain or exceed the current vertical clearances would be optimal, we were unable to produce sufficient data to support it. Based on the information presently available, we have made a preliminary determination that to provide for the current and prospective needs of navigation on waters upstream of the existing Bridge Street Bridge, applications for replacements of the Bridge Street, Clay Street and Kingsland Avenue Bridges should provide at least the clearances at mean high water stated in the first paragraph above. Please note that this preliminary determination does not constitute an approval or final agency determination, which we can only make in accordance with regulation and after the respective counties submits a complete bridge permit application.

To assist with the application for a bridge permit, please refer to the Coast Guard's Bridge permit Application Guide, COMDTPUB P16591.3 (series), which is available on line at: <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Office-of-Bridge-Programs/> . Please contact me or Donna Leoce, Bridge Management Specialist, at the number above with any questions. We look forward to working with NJDOT/NJTPA and moving these projects forward.

Sincerely,



C.J. Bisignano
Supervisory Bridge Management Specialist
U.S. Coast Guard
By direction

Copy: (1) NJDOT
(2) FHWA-NJ Division
(3) USACE – NY District
(4) EPA-Region 2
(5) CG-BRG-2
(6) USCG Sector New York