



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314-1000

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

CEMP-NAD

13 AUG 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR Commander, New York District (ATTN: CENAN-PL-F)

SUBJECT: East River Seawall, Queens County, New York – Shoreline Protection: Disapproval of Section 905(b) WRDA 86 Report

1. Reference: CENAN-PL-F Memorandum for Deputy Commanding General for Civil Works, Headquarters, dated 27 February 2004, subject: East River Seawall, Queens County, New York – Shoreline Protection; Submission of Section 905(b) WRDA 86 Analysis.
2. Based on our review of the subject document, we have determined that there is no Federal interest in continuing into a cost shared feasibility study on this project. The District should notify the potential project sponsors and the local Congressional representatives of this decision.
3. The basic problem identified in the report is that of deterioration of an existing city seawall protecting the Queensbridge Park in the Borough of Queens, New York City. The seawall, built of timber and concrete cribbing with rock ballast is typical of the many miles of reinforced seawalls along the rivers in New York City. This section of seawall is in excess of 60 years old and is apparently typical of situations that will be increasingly faced by the city as the system continues to age.
4. Deterioration of the seawall has resulted in loss of interior ballast causing sinkholes that have adversely affected the recreational use of the park as the areas adjacent to the river have become unsafe for use by local residents. No major structural damages related to the park facilities, other than the seawall itself, would occur as a result of the loss of the seawall. Damages would consist of lost recreation opportunities and some loss of parkland owned and operated by the City of New York Department of Parks and Recreation, which is also the identified non-Federal sponsor for the project.
5. During preparation of the Section 905(b) Analysis, the New York District identified the presence of a "cathodic protection system" installed by the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) to provide protection for the 63<sup>rd</sup> Street subway tunnel under the East River. The system includes an electrified cable system and a sacrificial anode system that prevents corrosion of the metallic subway tunnel. The cable system runs through a conduit and manhole system to a low voltage power generating facility located in Queensbridge Park. The deteriorating seawall is adversely affecting the access structures of the system located near and parallel to the seawall. MTA, a public-benefit corporation chartered by New York State in 1965, has prepared a proposal for providing protection to the cathodic protection system at an estimated cost of \$4 million. After coordination with the New York District, MTA has expressed an interest in participating in the study in order to reduce their expected project costs. Given the importance of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Street Tunnel which connects Queens, Roosevelt Island, and Manhattan via the F line

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subway, it is certain MTA will not let the cathodic protection device fail and as indicated has plans to provide the necessary protection. The 63<sup>rd</sup> Street Tunnel will have even more significance in the future, as it is one of the main components of the \$4.3 billion East Side Access program to connect the Long Island Railroad to Grand Central Station. Therefore the only benefits identified for this project are to reduce MTA's costs for protecting the cathodic protection device. No other NED benefit categories are anticipated.

6. The authority for this study, a 22 May 2002 resolution of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure was initiated by Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (NY-14) in an effort to provide relief to her constituents living in the Queensbridge Houses, the New York City Housing Authority's largest public housing project, and other nearby residents who depend on the park for recreational opportunities. The District correctly concluded that loss of recreational opportunities and undeveloped land would not qualify the project for Federal involvement. During the course of their study the potential damages to MTA's facilities were identified. Reduction of local maintenance cost has been an accepted benefit category in other projects, but generally only a part of the overall storm damage reduction benefits. In this case there are no other structural damages prevented, the Federal government will instead repair a local protection seawall in order to save MTA the expense of constructing their proposed protection project. Even though other benefits will occur including incidental recreational use and reduction of potential damaging drift materials in the nearby Federal navigation channels, this project is not an appropriate Federal activity, but a local maintenance issue.

7. As stated above, the District should prepare a negative report to close out this action and notify the potential project sponsors and the local Congressional representatives of this decision. The District is encouraged to discuss this letter with the identified sponsor, the City of New York Parks & Recreation Department, and encourage them to work with the MTA to jointly repair the seawall. New York City could participate at probably the same cost of participating in the Corps sponsored project, and MTA would protect their facilities at significantly reduced costs that it is already planning to expend.

8. Questions on this memorandum should be addressed to Mr. Jeff Groska, Civil Works Planning Action Officer for the NAD Regional Integration Team.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

  
ANTHONY F. LEKETA, P.E.  
Chief, NAD Regional Integration Team  
Directorate of Military Programs