

Public Notice: 168 St Station, Installation of ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Elevators, Manhattan MTA Construction & Development Contract # A-37749

Public Notification of the land use for the ADA Elevator installation at the 168th St Station in accordance with 23 CFR 774.17 governing the Section 4(f) de minimis impact determination.

Description of 168th St Station in Manhattan

The 168th St Station of the IRT, Broadway-7th Ave Line was opened on April 14, 1906. It is an underground New York City Subway station complex serving the Broadway IRT Line (1 train) – connections are also available to the IND 8th Ave Line (A, C trains).

MTA Construction & Development (C&D) proposes to make IRT portion of the 168th St Station Complex ADA compliant. The major purpose of this project is to provide an accessible path to the 1 train as well as create an ADA compliant transfer between the 1 train and A/C trains.

MTA C&D is planning to provide four (4) new elevators (**One (1) street to upper mezzanine elevator, two (2) upper mezzanine to northbound platform elevators, and one (1) lower mezzanine to southbound platform elevator**) to allow vertical access from street level to the station mezzanine and from the mezzanine to the station's two side platforms consistent with ADA requirements.

Impact of Project to a Section 4(f) Resource

The 168th St Station ADA work will necessitate the use of a portion of Mitchel Square under the jurisdiction of the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation (NYC Parks) located above the underground station which is considered a Section 4(f) resource. Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 states that projects that receive funding or require approval by an agency of the U.S. DOT cannot consider use of land from a significant publicly-owned park, recreation area, wildlife or waterfowl refuge, or any significant historic site for transportation project development unless the following conditions apply:

- There is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of land; and
- The action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from use; or
- The use of the Section 4(f) property, including any measures(s) to minimize harm (such as any avoidance, minimization, mitigation, or enhancement measures) will have a de minimis impact, as defined in 23 CFR § 774.17, on the property.

A *de minimis* impact involves the use of Section 4(f) property that is generally minor in nature. A de minimis impact is one that—after taking into account avoidance, minimization, mitigation, and enhancement measures that are committed to by the applicant—results in no adverse effect to the activities, features, or attributes qualifying a park for protection under Section 4(f).

The project is located to the east of a mapped parkland, known as Mitchel Square. Mitchel Square is a triangular property, bounded by West 166th Street, Broadway, and Audubon Avenue. The visual centerpiece of Mitchel Square is the Washington Heights-Inwood War Memorial, a bronze and granite sculpture. Mitchel Square features several benches surrounded by trees and shrubbery. This parkland is a protected property under Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act, commonly referred to as Section 4(f).

Two below-grade elevators will be installed underground approximately 50 feet north of the Washington Heights-Inwood War Memorial. These elevators and an adjacent new egress stair (east of the elevators) will provide vertical access from a new upper mezzanine passageway to the IRT northbound platform level (100 feet below grade). The elevators and the new egress stair will be installed in a shaft that will be excavated in the northeastern corner of Mitchel Square, from the street level, through rock to the depth of 100 feet below grade to reach the platform level. The excavation will take place in a planted area with shrubs and one tree. The construction staging area will be alienated temporarily for approximately 3 years and will occupy approximately 3000 square feet of Mitchel Square. Within that area, the excavation of the shaft would temporarily occupy approximately 1200 square feet (approximately 30 feet by 40 feet). Below the area of the excavation, the existing station roof must be modified (extended upward) to accommodate the elevator overrun, therefore a below grade portion of the parkland will be permanently alienated for the raised station roof. After the excavation is completed and the construction is finished, Mitchel Square will be restored to the existing conditions and its original use; no permanent above-grade structures will be added to the parkland.

Construction activity would last about three years. During construction, best management practices would be used to limit temporary impacts. This includes a maintenance and protection of traffic plan to maintain pedestrian flows using a detour around the work zone, protection of the Washington Heights-Inwood War Memorial and measures to manage noise and dust. Upon completion of the project, MTA C&D will restore the site to its original condition in accordance with NYC Parks' standards and requirements. Paved surfaces and green areas will be restored to NYC Parks' specifications.

MTA C&D will provide the community with advance notice of the detour through various media such as the MTA website, local newspapers and project site postings.

Please send us your comments.

Based on the aforementioned information, which involves the use of a small area of park space for ADA Elevator installation, MTA C&D invites you to submit comments. Comments will be accepted through Wednesday, August 10, 2022.

Please send all comments to:

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