



**Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation**

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July 16, 2007

Mr. Emil F. Dul, P.E.
Principal Environmental Engineer
MTA New York City Transit
2 Broadway, 5th floor
New York, NY 10004

**Re: Proposed Emergency Ventilation Plant for the 8th and 7th
Avenue Subway Lines, Mulry Square, Greenwich Village**

Dear Mr. Dul,

I write to express the very serious concerns of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP) regarding the Proposed Emergency Ventilation Plant project for Mulry Square, and the impact it would have upon the surrounding area. GVSHP is the largest membership organization in Greenwich Village, and we work to preserve the special architectural character and cultural heritage of Greenwich Village, the East Village, and NoHo.

The proposed ventilation plant project has the potential for tremendously negative impacts at this location. This part of the West Village was heavily impacted by years of construction from a similar MTA project on West 13th Street. The massive construction delays combined with the dust, noise, and traffic disruptions from the project had a profoundly deleterious effect from which neighboring residents and business are still recovering.

Additionally, there is the distinct possibility of large-scale demolition and new construction on about a dozen buildings on the adjacent campus of St. Vincent's Hospital. This project also has the potential for tremendous disruption and environmental impacts over an extended period of time upon the same area the MTA is studying for its project. Clearly the MTA must consider the combined effect of these two projects and the potential they have for massive disruption in this area.

Further, the sites in question are all adjacent to a high concentration of fragile 19th century structures. This makes the type of work contemplated particularly prone to damaging historic resources which are designated New York City landmarks and listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places.

In light of this, we strongly urge the MTA to consider the possibility of alternative sites beyond Mulry Square and its surroundings, as well as to consider the possibility of expanding the existing empty ventilation chamber within the subway to accommodate the necessary state-of-the-art fans. Given the concentration of older buildings surrounding the sites in question, the contemplated large-scale construction nearby by St. Vincent's Hospital, and the impact of the other recent MTA project in the area, it is hard to imagine a location which would be more heavily and negatively impacted by a project such as the proposed ventilation plant. The draft scoping document does not

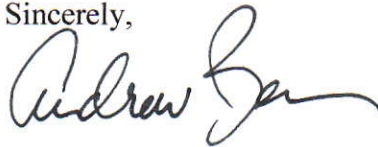
appear to adequately address the possibility of adding a ventilation plant at another location.

In addition, there are particular impacts which must be considered regarding some of the specific sites the MTA is contemplating for this project. All of the in-street sites currently being considered would no doubt create extensive traffic back-ups and problems around an intersection which is already plagued by traffic troubles. The off-street sites appear to require construction of a ventilation plant tower, apparently of as much as 60 feet in height. Since all the contemplated locations are within the Greenwich Village Historic District and State and National Register Historic Districts, any such construction would have to conform to the character of its surroundings. It would seem difficult at best for such a structure to meet these criteria.

Furthermore, there has been an effort by this community to turn the MTA lot at 61 Greenwich Avenue (at Seventh Avenue South) into public open space, as well as the hope that the lot at 76 Greenwich Avenue (at Seventh Avenue), currently owned by St. Vincent's Hospital, would become more of a public open amenity than it is now. Both of these spaces are under consideration by the MTA for construction of the ventilation plant, and in both cases such construction would seem incompatible with the stated goals of the community. As this community has one of the lowest ratios of parks space per capita in the city, the removal of the opportunity for public open space would be a significant negative impact.

I strongly urge the MTA to consider all of these factors as part of its Scoping Document, and before moving ahead with this project at this location.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director

Cc: Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer
Congressman Jerrold Nadler
City Council Speaker Christine Quinn
State Senator Tom Duane
Assemblymember Deborah Glick
Community Board #2, Manhattan
Greenwich Village Block Associations
West 13th Street 100 Block Association
West 12th Street Block Association
West 11th/Mulry Angle Block Association
175 West 12th Street Board
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