

**Statement of Findings
New York State Thruway Authority
Interchange 23 to 24 Reconstruction and Mobility Improvements EIS
Albany County, New York
Adopted October 16, 2006**

GENERAL

The project area is comprised of the New York State Thruway between the Normanskill Bridge and Interchange 24 northbound ramps. It is located in the City of Albany, Town of Bethlehem, and Town of Guilderland in Albany County, New York. The New York State Thruway is a major north-south transportation corridor between New York City and Albany and an east-west corridor between Albany and Buffalo. The project area is illustrated on Figure 1, Project Area Location in Appendix A of these Findings.

The Reconstruction with a Permanent Third Lane alternative has been selected as the preferred alternative because it satisfies all of the project objectives. This alternative includes full depth reconstruction of the 10.85 km (6.74 miles) of the New York State Thruway between the Normanskill Bridge (south of Interchange 23) and Interchange 24. The pavement will be reconstructed with new, full-depth Portland cement concrete pavement travel lanes and full-depth asphalt pavement shoulders. In addition to the reconstruction, a new third lane will be constructed in each direction of travel within the median of the existing travel lanes. This alternative will not restrict use of the proposed lanes, and the new lanes will be open to all traffic in both directions. The proposed third lane could be converted from a general use lane to a managed lane in the future by re-striping the general use lanes and shifting the left lane 0.6 m toward the median barrier to create two general use lanes and a managed lane separated by 0.6 m of pavement.

This alternative also includes reconstruction of the existing drainage system and replacement or rehabilitation of cross culverts, as necessary. No changes to the interchange ramps or to the existing Thruway access are included in the proposed alternative.

Pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), the New York State Thruway Authority as lead agency, after classifying the proposed action as a Type I action, prepared an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the purpose of evaluating the social, economic, environmental and cumulative impacts of reconstruction and the addition of a third lane on the Thruway between Interchange 23 and 24 and to identify appropriate mitigation for these impacts.

Pursuant to the requirements of SEQRA, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was prepared and determined complete on January 20, 2006, and subsequently filed along with a Notice of Completion and Hearing Notice pursuant to 6 NYCRR 617.8(d). A public hearing was held on March 14, 2006. The comment period for the DEIS closed on March 31, 2006. A Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was prepared and deemed complete on September 12, 2006.

This Statement of Findings has been prepared in accordance with article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law. For further information regarding this action, please contact:

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FACTS & CONCLUSIONS

A. Traffic

Design year traffic forecasts of the proposed alternative for weekday peak hour conditions are based on the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) regional travel demand model (STEP model). The STEP model predicted a two-way design hour volume increase of only 100 vehicles (7,950 vehicles per hour for the no-build alternative versus 8,050 vehicles per hour for the build alternative) in the design year (2028), which represents only a 1% increase, to occur due to the mainline widening from two lanes in each direction to three lanes in each direction.

Freeway capacity analyses for the proposed alternative were conducted using the directional design hour volumes (DDHV) forecasts for the ETC (2008), ETC+10 (2018), and ETC+20 (2028) design years and Highway Capacity Software 2000 (HCS 2000). The resulting predicted Level of Service (LOS) for the design years on the Thruway mainline between Interchanges 23 and 24 will be LOS C or better through ETC+20 (2028). This compares to no-build LOS F for the northbound by 2018 and LOS D on the southbound through 2028.

B. Surface Waters/Wetlands

Surface Waters

The Normans Kill crosses the project corridor near Interchange 23, and the Krum Kill crosses the project corridor between Krumkill Road and Russell Road, and also near Crossgates Mall. Various smaller streams and drainage courses that are tributaries of the Normans Kill or the Krum Kill further transect the project corridor.

The proposed project does not involve work within the bed or banks of the Krum Kill or changes in size to the Krum Kill culverts. Thus, coordination with the NYSDEC for consistency with Article 15 of the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) is not required (note that the Thruway Authority is exempt under the ECL for applying for an Article 15 permit). In addition, the project does not involve work within the Normans Kill or changes to bridge elevations above the Normans Kill. Since the project does not involve work within either stream, coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) under Section 10 of the Federal Rivers and Harbors Act is not required. The project includes either sliplining or replacement of existing culverts.

As work will be performed in the proximity of the water courses, the NYSDEC may require a Section 401 Water Quality Certification to ensure that earthwork does not cause silt and sediment impacts to the water courses. The use of best management practices and standard highway construction practices for the control of sedimentation and erosion will be employed to control potential silt and sediment releases to surface waters. No significant impacts to surface waters are anticipated.

Wetlands

Wetlands within the project area were identified and field delineated according to the observable distribution of vegetation, soil conditions, and hydrology characteristics. The hydrology of many of the wetland areas is influenced by roadside drainage along the Thruway. The Normans Kill, the Krum Kill, and numerous tributary streams and culverts also influence the wetlands within the project area. Adjacent off-site wetlands were also observed as contributing or receiving drainage from the wetlands within the project area.

The proposed project involves approximately 1,420 square meters (0.35 acre) of disturbance to wetlands and other waters of the United States. The on-site wetlands are jurisdictional wetlands under Section 404

of the Clean Water Act. Approximately 213 square meters (0.05 acres) of disturbance is associated with repair, rehabilitation, or replacement of previously authorized, currently serviceable structures or fills of the Thruway, an activity that qualifies for permitting under ACOE Nationwide Permit No. 3 (NWP-3). It is anticipated that the approximately 1,207 square meters (0.30 acres) of disturbance that is beyond the scope of NWP-3 will be permitted under Nationwide Permit No. 14 for Linear Transportation Projects (NWP-14).

A mitigation plan for unavoidable impacts will be developed and coordinated with the ACOE in accordance with ACOE guidelines during the permitting process. Opportunities exist for mitigation to be conducted within the Thruway right of way (ROW). The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recommends that impacted forested wetlands be replaced at a 2:1 ratio and impacted wet meadow and other wetlands be replaced at a 1:1 ratio.

The on-site wetlands are not shown on the NYSDEC FWW mapping and are less than 50,181 square meters (12.4 acres) in size. These characteristics classify the on-site wetlands as non-regulatory under Article 24 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law. Therefore, the project does not require Article 24 permits based on the current delineation.

Coordination with the ACOE and NYSDEC will occur to verify the regulatory determinations.

C. Water Quality and Stormwater Considerations

Topography, Geology and Soils

The drainage of the soils within the project area varies widely from very poorly drained to somewhat excessively drained. The depth to the seasonal high water table ranges from less than 0.30 meters (one foot) to over 1.83 meters (six feet). The depth to bedrock is greater than 1.52 meters (60 inches) for the majority of the soils.

The topography within the project area ranges from level to hilly. Based on the Geologic Map of New York, Hudson-Mohawk Sheet (Y.W. Isachsen, L.V. Rickard & D.W. Fisher, 1970), the underlying bedrock at Interchange 23 is mapped as Normanskill Shale, which consists of minor mudstone and sandstone. The Normanskill Shale formation extends throughout the entire project area.

Stormwater Quality and Quantity

The NYSDEC requires a State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activities for activities that disturb one or more acres land. As such, a SPDES permit will be obtained for the proposed project. To comply with the SPDES permit, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be developed. The SWPPP will include an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan.

It is a violation of the SPDES permit and the Environmental Conservation Law for any discharge authorized by the permit to either cause or contribute to a violation of water quality standards (as contained in Parts 700 through 705 of Title 6 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules, and Regulations of the State of New York) including, but not limited to:

- An increase in turbidity that will cause a substantial visible contrast to natural conditions
- An increase in suspended, colloidal, and settleable solids that will cause deposition or impair the waters for their best usages
- Residue from oil and floating substances, visible oil film, or globules of grease

The two primary elements of the SPDES regulations for post-construction stormwater management are peak flow mitigation and water quality treatment. In order to comply with SPDES, projects must address the above criteria using an acceptable stormwater management practice (SMP) as outlined in the New York State Stormwater Design Manual (August 2003).

The results of the peak flow and water quality analyses were used to determine the required storage capacity to meet water quality treatment requirements. The computed volumes were based on the additional impervious area associated with the proposed project. The SMP proposed for this project includes micropool extended detention basins. Infiltration basins, instead of micropool extended detention basins, should be evaluated for feasibility north of milepost 144.4 where the soils are generally sandy and may allow stormwater to infiltrate into the soil. The exact location and number of basins required will be finalized as part of the permitting process.

In addition, a system of open drainage ditches located along the Thruway shoulders will provide collection, conveyance, and pre-treatment of runoff. As designed, runoff from the roadway pavement will be collected by either the drainage ditches or drainage structures in the median and conveyed to a stormwater basin before being discharged into tributaries of the Krum Kill or Normans Kill. When constructed in accordance with the performance criteria and properly maintained, the selected practices will collect the runoff from an approximately 417,000-square-meter (103-acre) area, which represents approximately 70% of the total drainage area for the project.

Soil erosion plans and details will be developed during final design in accordance with the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). These plans and details will include both temporary and permanent measures to prevent soil erosion and provide stormwater treatment. Specific measures could include vegetated swales, check dams, silt fences, seeding and/or mulching, and stabilized construction access points. Temporary disturbance areas will be re-seeded and stabilized following construction.

Overall, through the SPDES permitting process and implementation of a SWPPP that meets NYSDEC standards, no significant soil erosion or sedimentation impacts are anticipated.

Aquifers

Based on review of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) mapping, the project area is not located above a Sole Source Aquifer (SSA).¹ Based on review of NYSDEC watershed mapping, the project area is not located above a Primary Aquifer.² Based on a review of NYSDEC *Technical and Operational Guidance Series (2.1.3.) Primary and Principal Aquifer Determinations*, the project area, north of Western Avenue, is located above the Pine Bush Principal Aquifer.³ However, the project will not change the existing number of travel lanes, change the existing topography, or include significant excavation or the placement of any deep foundations in this area because north of Western Avenue the project includes reconstruction of the existing three travel lanes in each direction and minor grading.

Surface water treatment measures to avoid and / or minimize impacts to the aquifer will be incorporated into the SMP. In addition, soil erosion plans and details developed in accordance with the SWPPP will incorporate erosion and sediment control, stormwater management, and construction chemical storage and handling best management practices into the project. Water quality above the aquifer is anticipated to improve since the SMP includes water treatment for runoff from the Thruway.

No public and / or private water supply wells have been identified within 200 meters of the project area; therefore, a Toler Analysis is not required to assess potential chloride contamination to the aquifer.

Floodplains

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) publishes maps that depict 100-year floodplains in many areas throughout the country. A 100-year floodplain is an area that has a 1% chance of being flooded in any given year.

¹ Defined by the EPA as an aquifer that supplies at least 50% of the drinking water consumed in the overlying area.

² Defined by the NYSDEC as a highly productive aquifer that is presently being utilized as a source of water supply by a major municipal water supply system.

³ Defined by the NYSDEC as an aquifer known to be highly productive or whose geology suggests abundant potential water supply, but which are not intensively used as sources of water supply by major municipal systems at the present time.

Based on review of FEMA mapping, the 100-year floodplain associated with the Krum Kill is located on both sides of the project corridor between Russell Road and Krumkill Road. The municipal boundary between the Town of Bethlehem and City of Albany is located at the Krum Kill. Thus, the floodplain mapping for the Krum Kill is split between the two municipalities. Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for both municipalities were reviewed to determine the boundaries and base flood elevations of the floodplain.

The base flood elevation for the Krum Kill measures 48.2 meters (158 feet) to the east of the project corridor and 44.8 meters (147 feet) to the west of the corridor. The proposed project involves filling and re-grading activities. The proposed fill slope to the west of the project corridor extends from an elevation of approximately 56 meters (184 feet) at the Thruway to an elevation of 52.5 meters (172 feet), and will not reach down to the floodplain elevation. The proposed fill slope to the east of the project corridor extends from an elevation of approximately 56 meters (184 feet) at the Thruway to an elevation of 54.8 meters (180 feet), and will also not reach down to the floodplain elevation. Thus, it is concluded that no filling will occur within the Krum Kill floodplain.

The 100-year floodplain associated with the Normans Kill crosses the project corridor near Interchange 23. The proposed project will not involve any filling within the Normans Kill floodplain boundaries. No impacts to the floodplain are anticipated as a result of this project.

D. General Ecology and Wildlife

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission (APBPC) identified several protected and/or important species as potentially occurring within the project area. Based on this information, detailed surveys were conducted in the spring, summer, and fall of 2005 to determine the ability of the project area to support each of the identified species. No threatened or endangered species were identified or are known to occur within the project area. No additional species surveys are proposed.

The project area was also evaluated for the presence of plant species that are known to be nectar (food) sources for the Karner Blue Butterfly and Frosted Elfin. Several nectar plant populations were identified within the project area. However, no Blue Lupine or New Jersey Tea Plants were found. To mitigate the loss of the nectar plant populations, comparable nectar species will be included in the landscaping plan for the project. No impacts to Karner Blue Butterflies or Frosted Elfin are anticipated to occur as a result of the project.

The project area is not located within the Albany Pine Bush Preserve. The proposed project includes removal of approximately 16,670 square meters (4.1 acres) of remnant overgrown pine bush habitat, which has not been identified for protection under the Pine Bush Commission's 2002 Management Plan. As an enhancement measure, the Authority will use local plant species native to the Pine Bush and nectar species in the project's landscaping plan, as practicable, to replace the loss of existing remnant, overgrown Pine Bush habitat and nectar populations that will be disturbed due to the project. Additional enhancement measures could also include the installation of interpretative signage.

E. Historical and Cultural Resources

A certified archaeologist conducted a cultural resource overview survey to assess the potential for precontact and historic archaeological deposits within the project area. Based on the findings of the overview survey, a Phase IB Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey was subsequently performed.

Based on the lack of significant archaeological deposits of research value within the right-of-way of the project area, no further archaeological investigation is recommended for this project. The Phase IB report was submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for concurrence; the SHPO subsequently issued a Letter of No Effect for the project.

F. Visual Resources

The proposed project does not involve a change in land use; the project area will continue to be used for transportation purposes. However, the proposed roadway widening requires the conversion of the grass median to pavement throughout the majority of the project area. The loss of the grass median and the addition of roadway lanes will change the appearance of the project corridor.

The proposed project involves the removal of approximately 20,500 square meters (five acres) of trees and scrub-shrub vegetation within the right-of-way to provide a standard clear zone. Vegetation removal could increase headlight glare at residences on the outside of curves in the roadway.

The proposed project will include vegetation removal adjacent to Woodlake Apartments and McKown Road West. Thus, the residences could experience increased headlight glare. However, the construction of a noise barrier is recommended between the project corridor and Woodlake Apartments. The noise barrier will shield the apartment units from headlight glare.

The Authority has committed to landscape planting within the project right-of-way to minimize visual impacts. To minimize the potential for headlight glare, vegetation will be planted between the Thruway and the residence on McKown Road West. Plantings in other areas will be identified during detailed design.

G. Air Quality Analysis

According to the U.S. EPA Green Book, the Albany-Schenectady-Troy area in Region II, which includes Albany county and the Thruway mainline between Interchanges 23 and 24, is classified as a marginal ozone non-attainment area.

Microscale Analysis

Two common pollutants associated with motor vehicle use are carbon monoxide (CO) and ozone (O₃). Carbon monoxide is a colorless and odorless byproduct of the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels. Ozone is the primary constituent of smog, and occurs when nitrogen oxides and volatile compounds react when catalyzed by high temperatures and ultraviolet light.

The NYSDOT Environmental Procedures Manual (EPM) (Revised January 2001) outlines a screening process to determine if a microscale air quality analysis is necessary. Since the design hour traffic volumes do not exceed allowable volume thresholds for the roadway, no further screening of the project corridor is necessary. A microscale air quality analysis is not necessary since the project will not significantly increase traffic volumes, reduce source-receptor distances, or change other existing conditions to such a degree as to jeopardize attainment of National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

Mesoscale Analysis

A mesoscale analysis was conducted to estimate the potential area-wide increase in emissions levels associated with the proposed project. Mesoscale analyses generate emissions levels for CO, NO_x, and VOC. The emissions were calculated for the No-Build and Build Alternatives using projected traffic volume levels. The following table presents the results of the analysis.

Mesoscale Air Quality Results

Pollutant	Emissions (per day)	
	No-Build	Build
ETC (Year 2008)		
CO	20,577 kg (45,364 lb)	21,191 kg (46,718 lb)
NOx	1,317 kg (2,903 lb)	1,382 kg (3,047 lb)
VOC	626 kg (1,380 lb)	632 kg (1,393 lb)
ETC+10 (Year 2018)		
CO	14,393 kg (31,731 lb)	14,901 kg (32,851 lb)
NOx	490 kg (1,080 lb)	525 kg (1,157 lb)
VOC	322 kg (710 lb)	320 kg (705 lb)
ETC+20 (Year 2028)		
CO	14,139 kg (31,171 lb)	14,739 kg (32,494 lb)
NOx	258 kg (569 lb)	282 kg (622 lb)
VOC	236 kg (520 lb)	227 kg (500 lb)

As shown, higher area-wide emissions levels are anticipated under the Build Alternative as compared to the No-Build Alternative (with the exception of VOC emissions in years 2018 and 2028). The higher emissions levels are due to an anticipated minor increase in traffic volumes, as well as an increase in vehicle speeds. The findings of the mesoscale analysis are provided to document the change in emissions levels due to the project. Mitigation is not required.

Conformity Considerations

The proposed project is included in the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Based on a regional air quality analysis, the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) has determined that the projects included in the TIP would conform to the requirements of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 and the State Implementation Plan (SIP). The conformity findings were submitted to the FHWA, and subsequently approved on September 30, 2005. Thus, it has been determined that the proposed project meets conformity requirements.

H. Noise Assessment

A noise analysis was performed pursuant to the New York State Department of Transportation's Noise Analysis Policy (NAP), which follows the Federal-Aid Policy Guide, Subchapter H, Part 772 (23 CFR 772), "Procedures for the Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise."

The analysis assessed the potential traffic and construction noise impacts associated with the proposed project. Noise measurements were collected at 12 noise-sensitive sites in the vicinity of the project area to determine existing noise levels. Measurements were taken during the morning and afternoon peak traffic periods at each of the sites. The design year (2028) noise levels were predicted using the FHWA Traffic Noise Model (TNM) at 35 noise receptor locations (including the measurement sites).

The No-Build Alternative traffic noise levels represent the future worst-case traffic noise levels that may occur by 2028 if the project were not constructed. In general, traffic noise levels are expected to increase by one decibel over existing traffic noise levels due to an increase in traffic volumes.

The predicted noise levels under the Build Alternative are all within one or two decibels of the predicted noise levels under the No-Build Alternative. In fact, in several areas, the predicted noise levels under the Build Alternative are equal to or lower than the predicted noise levels under the No-Build Alternative. This is due to the fact that the additional lane under the Build Alternative would be primarily located in the existing median, which would move some traffic further away from certain receptors.

A noise barrier analysis was conducted using the TNM program for all areas that are anticipated to experience a noise impact. Barriers that are recommended for construction must be both feasible and reasonable. Feasibility involves engineering considerations and the potential for the barrier to achieve a substantial noise reduction. Reasonableness involves the potential for the overall noise benefits to outweigh the adverse social, economic, and environmental effects and the cost of the noise abatement measures.

Of sixteen barriers that were evaluated to mitigate impacts due to the predicted noise levels under the Build Alternative, ten were determined to be feasible and reasonable and are recommended for construction. Based on the analysis, the remaining six barriers will not provide a substantial noise level reduction and/or will involve a cost-per-unit benefited that greatly exceeds the \$50,000 cost-benefit threshold in accordance with the New York State Noise Analysis Policy; thus, these barriers were eliminated from consideration.

The type(s) of proposed noise barriers have not been finalized yet, but the property owners benefited by the proposed noise barriers will be contacted during detailed design to discuss and provide input on the final options for the noise barrier designs.

I. Contaminated Materials Assessment

A review of State and Federal regulatory databases identified one spill incident within the project corridor on January 26, 2005. The release occurred at milepost 147.7 south as a result of a traffic accident. The database indicates that clean-up has been completed. The NYSDEC closed the file on April 6, 2005, with no further action required. The review also identified the Interchange 23 and 24 toll collection areas as potential environmental concerns; however, the proposed project does not involve any work within the toll collection areas.

Based on the findings of the database review, it is not expected that the spill incident will impact the proposed project. It is concluded that no further investigation is warranted at this time.

J. Construction Impacts

Construction activities may produce temporary environmental disturbances, such as noise from equipment, air quality impacts from dust, visual impacts, erosion and sedimentation, and disruptions to traffic.

During construction, two lanes of traffic will be maintained in each direction during the peak hours. A construction zone will be established and the posted speed will be lowered through the project area. The traffic disruptions will be temporary, and minimized to the extent practicable.

The project requires the preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP will identify measures to avoid or minimize impacts to surface waters and groundwater at the project site both during and after construction activities. The goal of the SWPPP is to minimize runoff and replicate pre-construction hydrology. Temporary disturbance areas will be re-seeded and stabilized following construction.

During construction, re-fueling of construction vehicles could result in fuel spills. Although the size of the spill dictates the specific response actions required, the following measures will be incorporated into the contract documents to minimize the impacts of fuel and other types of spills:

- An appropriate absorbent will be kept in a staging area and spread on all areas where fuel has been spilled.

- The NYSDEC will be contacted immediately. All clean-up procedures will strictly adhere to requirements.
- Contaminated material will be excavated and temporarily stockpiled on impermeable plastic.
- All fuel/chemical storage areas will be over impermeable ground.

Contaminated materials will be removed from the site and disposed of in accordance with NYSDEC regulations.

The construction activities for this project will not change the current accessibility to adjacent businesses and residences. Although construction noise is unavoidable in its entirety, it can be mitigated and controlled. Mitigation measures should be incorporated into the contract documents to reduce construction noise and perceived impacts in the project area. To address air quality impacts related to construction, dust control measures and requirements for mufflers on equipment exhaust systems will be included in the construction specifications.

Overall, no significant long-term construction impacts are anticipated.

K. Vibration

Multiple residences are located adjacent to the project corridor. The closest residence to the roadway is located approximately 20 meters (66 feet) from the existing pavement edge. The residence is located on Holmes Court. In general, the residences directly adjacent to the Thruway are located approximately 33 meters (108 feet) from the existing pavement edge. The proposed project will decrease the distance between the pavement edge and closest residence from approximately 20 meters (66 feet) to approximately 15 meters (49 feet). After project construction, the residences directly adjacent to the Thruway will be located approximately 31 meters (102 feet) from the new pavement edge.

The existing pavement within the project area is deteriorating, and is in need of full-depth reconstruction. The pavement surface contains cracks and ruts, which may increase the vibration currently experienced by adjacent residents. The proposed project will provide a smoother pavement surface for Thruway users. Thus, the vibration associated with the existing pavement deficiencies will be reduced.

The existing Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) on the Thruway mainline between Interchange 23 and 24 is approximately 48,100 vehicles. Existing directional design hour volumes (DDHV) are approximately 3,500 vehicles in the northbound direction and 2,800 vehicles in the southbound direction. The proposed project is projected to result in approximately 50 additional vehicles per direction during design hour. This relatively small increase in traffic volume is not anticipated to result in a significant increase in vibration experienced at adjacent residences.

Construction activities such as earthwork, removal of pavement, and compaction of subbase could cause vibration. However, the vibration will be temporary and is not anticipated to have any lasting effect on adjacent residents. Blasting and the use of a jackhammer during construction are not anticipated.

Overall, it is anticipated that the vibration experienced by adjacent residents after the roadway widening and reconstruction will be generally similar to current conditions. No significant impacts related to vibration are anticipated.

L. Adverse Environmental Effects That Cannot Be Avoided or Adequately Mitigated

Implementation of the proposed project will result in adverse environmental impacts that cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated. Although not considered to be significant, these impacts consist of the following:

- Loss of vegetation/habitat


- Minor increase in traffic volume
- Temporary traffic delays during construction
- Noise impacts to some sensitive areas (the majority of the potential noise impacts will be mitigated through the construction of barrier walls)

CERTIFICATION

The New York State Thruway Authority, as Lead Agency, is issuing this Statement of Findings pursuant to 6 NYCRR Part 617.11 of SEQRA. Specifically, the New York State Thruway Authority hereby finds:

- a. The requirements of 6 NYCRR 617 have been met.
- b. Consistent with social, economic and other essential considerations from among the reasonable alternatives available, the action is one that avoids or minimizes adverse environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable.
- c. Adverse environmental impacts will be avoided or minimized to the maximum extent practicable by incorporating as conditions to the decision those mitigation measures that were identified as practicable.
- d. The EIS is comprehensive and contains the facts and conclusions relied upon to support the New York State Thruway Authority's Statement of Findings and indicates the social, economic and other factors, which formed the basis of its findings.

Pursuant to 6 NYCRR Part 617.10, the Interchange 23 to 24 Reconstruction and Mobility Improvements EIS assessed the environmental impacts that may occur as a result of reconstruction and pavement widening along the New York State Thruway between Interchanges 23 and 24. This Statement of Findings lists the specific conditions or criteria under which the proposed project may be undertaken or approved, including requirements for any subsequent SEQRA compliance. No further SEQRA compliance is required if the proposed action will be carried out in conformance with the conditions and thresholds established in the EIS and its Findings Statement.

 Christopher Waite, P.E., Chief Engineer	<u>11/2/06</u> Date
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Appendix A
Project Area Location

