

MANHATTAN

MTA Approves Westside Railyard Deal

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority unanimously approved a deal to sell 26 acres of vacant railyards to the highest-bidding developer in a partnership with the city, despite concerns that details of the deal involving a subway line expansion could be financially risky.

The MTA board voted a day after the transit agency agreed with the city to develop together land that had once been sought as a new home for the New York Jets, and then sought by the city for a new commercial and residential center along the Hudson River. The agreement still awaits City Council approval; a date for a vote was not immediately set.

The MTA has said the sale of the property and additional city revenue will help finance a planned \$2 billion extension of the No. 7 subway line, which starts in Queens and currently stops at Times Square.

But transit advocates have said the deal does not give the city enough responsibility for cost overruns in a city where construction costs have been rising two percent a month. A report issued this week by state Comptroller Alan Hevesi noted that a project to divert some Long Island Rail Road train routes to the city's east side is \$2.4 billion over budget and years behind schedule.

A state board last year blocked the Jets and the Bloomberg administration's plan to put a new football stadium on the land as part of a failed bid to host the 2012 Olympics.

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CONNECTICUT

Rell Calls for Transportation-Land Use Connection

Connecticut Governor Jodi Rell announced over Labor Day weekend that her administration was seeking a deputy transportation commissioner whose focus would be better mass transit and containing sprawl development. Rell's statement said that greater use of mass transit requires "walkable and bikeable neighborhoods" and business development near transit stations.

The governor's statement said that "in order for Connecticut to achieve long-term success, the state's economic development, environment, public health, energy and transportation policies need to be coordinated and



balanced in every way."

The *Hartford Courant* lauded the announcement, but complained that the state transportation commissioner, rather than a deputy, ought to be the expert on smart growth and mass transit.

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TRASH

NYC Says Trash Plan Cuts Truck Reliance

New York City's recently adopted solid waste plan has been widely applauded, not least because of its transportation features. The City says that the plan, when fully implemented in 2009, will reduce truck miles on city streets and highways by 3.5 million annually. Additionally, many more truck



miles outside the city stemming from long-haul truck export would be avoided—up to 55 million miles annually by "transfer trailers" according to city documents.

Public focus in the city has been on the siting of several marine transfer stations, which will take waste from trucks, put it in shipping containers and then move the containers by barge to sites where it will be loaded for long-range export. These transfer stations are slated for East 91st Street in Manhattan, Flushing Bay and Hamilton Avenue and Gravesend in Brooklyn.

However, the export strategy also relies on a variety of other facilities—it relies on delivery of containerized waste to several other truck-to-rail facilities. A Staten Island truck-to-rail station is under construction now near Howland Hook container terminal, where rail access to New Jersey is supposed to be restored shortly.

Such stations are also contemplated for The Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens, mostly by modifying or expanding existing commercial transfer stations to allow them to move a

portion of commercial waste onto trains and barges. A portion of Manhattan's garbage will continue to be trucked directly to an incinerator in Newark, though city Department of Sanitation documents say this will be less than current levels.

The plan attempts to strike a balance across the boroughs by limiting the waste handled by any one facility to 4,500 tons per day and requiring that garbage be exported within 48 hours of "arriving at a facility."

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NEW JERSEY

Governor Corzine unveils \$74 million Pedestrian Safety Initiative



New Jersey Governor Jon S. Corzine announced the creation of a five-year, \$74 million initiative to improve pedestrian safety throughout the state.

"This initiative is designed to improve New

Jersey's driving culture and enhance pedestrian education so we can increase the safety of our streets," said Governor Corzine. "Investing in engineering improvements, enforcing pedestrian safety laws, and changing the way we educate drivers will help ensure that our communities are a safe place to walk."

The initiative addresses pedestrian awareness, driver behavior and roadway conditions that amplify accident risk. The fund will be used for intersection and sidewalk safety improvement projects, traffic mitigation measures, education and enforcement efforts and planning and technical guidance. This initiative is funded from existing money in the Transportation Trust Fund.

The Tri-State Transportation Campaign had identified \$33 million in bicycle and pedestrian project funding in the NJ DOT fiscal 2007 capital program, exclusive of federal "transportation enhancements" funding.

The \$74 million Pedestrian Safety Initiative includes:

Pedestrian Safety Corridor Program: this program will designate Pedestrian Safe Corridors based on motor vehicle/pedestrian accident history and rates.

Safe Routes to School Program: the initiative will provide \$15 million to local governments for the creation of safer walkways, bikeways and street crossings near schools.

Safe Streets to Transit Program: this \$5 million program will provide mass transit riders safe pedestrian access to train and bus stations.

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