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Inside the Fight to Fix New York's Tunnels

By Daniel C. Vock

One of the most expensive infrastructure projects in American history is also one of the most vital. But no one knows how to pay for it.

Superstorm Sandy roared into New York City in October 2012, pushing a wall of water ashore just half an hour after high tide. The combined fourteen-foot "storm tide" inundated the city, flooding fifty-one square miles, or about a sixth of its total land mass. It cut off power, knocked out natural gas lines, and overwhelmed streets, tunnels, and bridges.

In one place, between 30th and 34th streets in Midtown Manhattan, water from the swollen Hudson River spilled into the cavernous underbelly of Pennsylvania Station, arguably the most important transportation hub in North America. As the water approached, officials at Amtrak, which owns the station, confronted a gut-wrenching choice: Should they allow the seawater to flood the tunnels under the Hudson, each fragile and more than a century old, and potentially split the Northeast rail corridor in

half for years? Or should they force the seawater into Penn Station, where it would wreak severe damage on the railroad's busiest passenger facility? With little time for debate, Amtrak let its tunnels flood. As a consequence, one of the most crucial pieces of rail infrastructure in the country acted as a stormwater drain for Manhattan.

Ultimately, it took only five days to clear the tunnels of 3.5 million gallons of seawater and to reopen the route to traffic. But while the workers could pump out the water, they couldn't get rid of the salt that it left behind. Chlorides and sulfides had permeated the concrete walls and started irreversible chemical reactions with the concrete, cast iron, and steel inside the tunnel. Amtrak hired engineers to assess the damage. They concluded that the tunnels were safe for the time being, but that there was no way to stop the deterioration short of replacing the damaged walls and tracks.

The whole episode taught New York-area residents and politicians a lesson in how dire the consequences might be if one of the Hudson River tunnels failed permanently. It forced the governors



of New York and New Jersey into supporting a massive new proposal called the Gateway Program that would add tunnels, replace antiquated bridges, and expand the cramped Penn Station. The governors came to the White House recently to meet with

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IS SOLICITING COST PROPOSALS FROM DBE SUBCONTRACTORS AND VENDORS CERTIFIED WITH THE NEW YORK STATE UNIFIED CERTIFICATION PROGRAM Long Island City Yard Restoration and Resiliency Construction MTA LIRR Contract No. 6197 Bid Date: November 2017

Description of project:

The scope of work includes the reconstruction of Tracks 9-12 including the restoration of third rail systems; switch replacements; construction of car cleaning platforms; underground utility work (drainage, domestic water piping, and electrical traction duct banks); raise track profiles; traction and wayside power systems work; removal of petroleum contaminated soil. In addition, the work includes properly staging the work and minimizing impacts to operations. Early construction to support restoration and mitigation will also be part of the successful bidder's work, including the installation of third rail systems on tracks 7 and 8 (enhancing system resiliency) and including a fuel safety interlock.

Many bidding opportunities available.

If you are interested in bidding on this project, please contact Skanska's Outreach Coordinator: Matthew.DeGudicibus@skanska.com

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Harlem River Lift Span, and All Associated Work as Described in the Specifications, Drawings, and Solicitation Documents MTA Bridges and Tunnels Contract No: RK-07 Bid Date: November 8, 2017

Subcontracting opportunities include but are not limited to painting, electrical wires and controls, barges, safety boats, miscellaneous steel fabrication, survey, machinery and asbestos remediation. Engineering/architectural opportunities include MPT design, geotechnical, code compliance, BIM, utilities, environmental, and survey engineering. Please see contract documents for further opportunities.

> Interested firms please contact John Papagiannakis at Skanska Koch Inc., john.papagiannakis@skanska.com • EOE/M/F/Vet/Disabled



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Coney Island Yard Complex Long Term Flood Mitigation MTA NYCT Contract No. C-34836 Bid Date: December 7, 2017

Description of project:

Creation of a 12,000 LF flood protection wall (sheet piles, micropiles, jetgrout, and concrete), new drainage, upgraded pump stations, new drainage outfalls into Coney Island Creek, flood gates, vehicular gates, bridge hardening, and upgrades around the 100-acre NYCT Coney Island Yard Facilities in Brooklyn, New York; creation of a cable bridge across all three yards; communications, signal, and power work throughout all three yards, including new ductbanks and manholes; emergency alarm and telephone; trackwork in affected areas of construction; structural repairs to the historic Traction Motor Shop including upgrade to the exterior building wall.

Many bidding opportunities available.

If you are interested in bidding on this project, please contact Skanska's Outreach Coordinator: Matthew.DeGudicibus@skanska.com



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IS SOLICITING COST PROPOSALS FROM DBE SUBCONTRACTORS AND VENDORS CERTIFIED WITH THE NEW YORK STATE UNIFIED CERTIFICATION PROGRAM Flood Mitigation and Resiliency 148th Street Yard MTA NYCT Contract No. C-34839

Bid Date: October 2017

Description of project: The work consists of construction of perimeter flood protection wall, portal flood protection, and replacement of power cables and switches at the 148th Street Yard in the Borough of Manhattan. The work includes: extension of existing sheet pile wall along Harlem River, land side perimeter wall, replacement of track, providing stop log flood gate, new drainage and track work at portal, signal work, removal and disposal of power cables, third rail hand switches, duct banks, and installation of new power cables in new duct banks and new third rail hand switches.

Many bidding opportunities available.

If you are interested in bidding on this project, please contact Skanska's Outreach Coordinator: Matthew.DeGudicibus@skanska.com

NORTHEAST EVENTS FOR YOUR BUSINESS





Business Smart Workshops: Ready, Set, Go! Thursdays, November 2, 9, 2017, 11:00 am-12:30 pm Silas Bronson Library, 267 Grand Street, Waterbury, CT Main Sponsor(s): Western Connecticut SCORE Contact: 203-574-8225, westernctscore@ westernctscore.com

Fee: Free; registration required

This workshop series lays the groundwork for helping new and aspiring entrepreneurs launch a business idea and understand the steps to building a business that is credit ready. The information is laid out simply in three modules. Come to all three or attend the one that fits your needs. The three modules focus on: October 26-READY: Basics of Business Startup (covers what you need to consider and prepare for in the early stages); November 2–SET: Essentials of becoming credit-ready (where to get money, five C's of credit, how to prepare a business loan application); November 9-GO: How and where to find additional small business support and educational resources (SBA District Office, SCORE, SBDC, WBC, Veteran's Centers). SCORE is America's premier source of free and confidential small business advice for entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Business Reboot

Contact: Gregory Lindberg, 716-551-430, gregory.lindberg@sba.gov Fee: Free; registration required

Boots to Business Reboot is a two-step training program that provides participants an overview of business ownership as a career vocation, an outline and knowledge on the components of a business plan, a practical exercise in opportunity recognition, and an introduction to available public and private sector resources. Step one is the Introduction to Entrepreneurship course eligible to veterans of all eras, service members (including members of the National Guard and Reserve) and their spouses. Step two is the follow-on Foundations of Entrepreneurship course instructed by a consortium of professors and skilled business advisors from the SBA Network.

Boots to Business Reboot

Tuesday, November 7, 2017, 9:00 am-4:00 pm Worcester Library, 3 Salem Street, Worcester, MA Main Sponsor(s): Small Business Administration Contact: Oreste Varela, oreste.varela@sba.gov Fee: Free; registration required

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Tuesday, November 7, 2017, 8:30 am-4:30 pm SBA Niagara Center, 130 South Elmwood Avenue, Suite 540, Buffalo, NY Main Sponsor(s): Small Business Administration

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