



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Transit
Administration**

REGION I
Connecticut, Maine,
Massachusetts,
New Hampshire,
Rhode Island, Vermont

Volpe Center
55 Broadway Suite 920
Cambridge, MA 02142-1093
617-494-2055
617-494-2865 (fax)

MAR 28 2011

Mr. Stephen O'Neil
Administrator
Worcester Regional Transit Authority
287 Grove Street
Worcester, MA 01605

**Re: WRTA Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility
Worcester, MA
Categorical Exclusion**

Dear Mr. O'Neil:

After reviewing the February 17, 2011 Checklist of Information required for Probable CE Section 771.117(d) in support of the Worcester Regional Transit Authority's (WRTA) proposed construction of a new bus operations and maintenance facility at 40 Quinsigamond Avenue in Worcester, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has determined that the specific conditions or criteria for a Categorical Exclusion under 23 CFR 771.117(d)(8) are satisfied and that significant environmental impacts will not result (attached). In addition, in accordance with 38 CFR Part 800 Protection of Historic Properties, Final Rule, the FTA has determined that the project will have no effect on historic properties.

It is our understanding that the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and WRTA are partnering to co-locate the WRTA facility with a new MassDOT Highway Division District 3 Office. WRTA will acquire the land and build first, following which MassDOT will construct the District 3 Office after completion of the WRTA maintenance facility. MassDOT will conduct a separate NEPA review at the appropriate time. The FTA looks forward to continuing to work with the WRTA on this transit improvement.

Sincerely,

For Mary Beth Mello
Regional Administrator

Attachment

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

Project: WRTA Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility

Project Location: 40 Quinsigamond Avenue, Worcester, MA

Project Applicant: Worcester Regional Transit Authority

The Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) will be requesting Federal Transit Administration (FTA) financial assistance for the land acquisition and construction of a new bus operations and maintenance facility at 40 Quinsigamond Avenue in Worcester, MA.

Scope: The WRTA proposes to acquire the real estate and construct a state-of-the-art bus operations and maintenance facility at 40 Quinsigamond Avenue in Worcester. The new facility would be used to store and maintain the WRTA's entire fleet of 53 fixed route buses and 16 vans. The proposed facility would consist of a two-story building with a total footprint of approximately 120,700 SF. The building will include approximately 9,700 SF of office/administrative space; 6,200 SF of operations/dispatching space; 35,300 SF for bus maintenance space; 8,200 SF for bus service lanes; and 61,300 SF for bus storage. The office/administrative and operations/dispatching spaces will be located on the building's second floor with remaining spaces located on the first floor. Approximately 140,000 SF of the site will be developed for bus circulation, parking, setbacks, stormwater management, landscaping and general hardscaping. The new facility is approximately one mile southwest of the WRTA's proposed Union Station bus transfer hub, which will allow for efficient operations with minimal need for deadheading. The proposed site was formerly occupied by a manufactured gas plant that operated between 1870 and 1969. WRTA plans to partner with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) to co-locate the WRTA facility with a new MassDOT Highway Division District 3 Office. WRTA will acquire the land and build first, following which MassDOT will construct the District 3 Office, after completion of the WRTA maintenance facility. MassDOT will conduct a separate NEPA review at the appropriate time.

Site Selection: MassDOT issued a Request for Responses (RFR) for the Purchase of Real Property on November 29, 2010 from qualified landowners or their designated representatives to acquire between ten (10) and twenty (20) acres of land for the joint construction of a new Highway Division District 3 office and a bus maintenance facility for the WRTA. The RFR identified the following requirements for selection: Must have at least 10 acres of contiguous buildable area; must include at least 100 feet of road frontage providing access to developable area; must be served by public sewer and water; must be within 2 miles of an interchange with a limited-access highway; and must be within 2 miles of the Union Station Intermodal Transportation Center located at 2 Washington Square. MassDOT received 2 responses, including the 40 Quinsigamond Avenue site and a site at 115-131 Southwest Cutoff in Worcester. The latter was rejected because the site was too big (21.2 acres) and too far from Union Station (3.6 miles).


Transportation Problem: WRTA buses and vans are currently stored and maintained in a functionally obsolete facility at 287 Grove Street in Worcester that was originally built at the beginning of the Twentieth Century to house electric streetcars. The current facility has failed to satisfy basic operational and security requirements, resulting in increased operating costs and compromised safety.

Environmental Determinations:

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has determined that the specific conditions or criteria for a Categorical Exclusion under 23 CFR 771.117(d) (8) are satisfied and that significant environmental impacts will not result.

Section 106: There are two properties within the area of potential effect (APW) for the proposed bus operations and maintenance facility that are included in the Inventory of Assets of the Commonwealth: (1) Worcester Gas and Light Company; and (2) Crompton Park. Neither of these properties are listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, on March 17, 2011 the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) concurred in FTA's determination that this project will have no effect on historic properties.

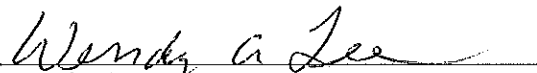
Section 4(f): Also, in accordance with 23 CFR 771.135, FTA has determined that Section 4(f) requirements do not apply since no 4(f) resources will be used as a result of this project.



for Mary Beth Mello
Regional Administrator, FTA, Region I

Date: 3/28/11

Concurrence:



Wendy A. Lee
Regional Counsel

Date: 3/28/11