



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

Urban Mass  
Transportation  
Administration

Headquarters

400 7th Street S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

### Finding of No Significant Impact

Project Name: Greenbelt Service and Inspection Yard  
Project Location: Greenbelt, Prince George's County, Maryland  
Grant Applicant: Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

#### Project Description and History

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) plans to construct a rail yard and shops for storage, service and inspection of transit vehicles at the north end of the Metrorail Green Line in Greenbelt, Prince George's County, Maryland. The yard will include storage tracks for 280 transit cars, loop tracks for yard leads and for moving and reversing transit cars, a service and inspection shop with positions for 18 vehicles, transit car cleaning and washing facilities, transit car painting and fiberglass repair facilities, a maintenance field base, support buildings necessary for yard operations, and a traction power substation and tie-breaker station.

As originally proposed, the yard was south of the Capital Beltway and east of the CSXT Railroad tracks in Greenbelt. This configuration was evaluated in the Metrorail Systemwide Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in 1975. Subsequently, the Greenbelt station was moved closer to the Beltway to improve auto access. To accommodate this change, the yard was moved to the north side of the Beltway onto the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) owned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. A 1982 Environmental Assessment (EA) of this change resulted in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) by UMTA, referring to impacts beyond those covered in the 1975 EIS.

In 1985, a re-assessment of Metrorail yard needs by WMATA led to a resolution to enlarge the Greenbelt yard and add certain facilities not previously planned. These changes necessitated a further Environmental Assessment initiated in 1987. Notices of the availability of the EA soliciting comments were published in local newspapers in August, 1988. At about the same time, WMATA

sought a section 404 permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers to fill 20 acres of wetlands on the site. The EA and the permit application elicited considerable comments from conservation groups and government resource agencies including the US EPA and the US Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of Interior. WMATA was convinced to reconsider its plans and look at alternative sites and designs to the proposed yard.

### Alternatives Considered

WMATA conducted a section 404 Alternatives Analysis which considered eight alternative yard sites. Wetlands were delineated and surveyed at all sites. Consistency with local plans and zoning, section 4(f) requirements, and other environmental impacts were taken into account. Operational constraints based on experience at existing yards were compiled. The analysis concluded that the alternative sites available were either impractical operationally or had substantial wetland impacts themselves. After extensive coordination with the resource agencies regarding design alternatives on the BARC site, WMATA agreed to re-orient the yard and scale back the track loop from a 400-foot to a 300-foot radius. The yard access road was moved to the Beltway underpass, and yard facilities were reconfigured. These measures reduced the size of the yard from 70 to 65 acres and the wetland impacts from 20 to 7 acres.

### Environmental Effects

No significant environmental impacts beyond those evaluated in the 1975 EIS have been found. WMATA will construct the facility in accordance with the design elements and mitigation measures presented in the Greenbelt Yard Environmental Assessment dated December 1990, which is incorporated by reference into this FONSI. Especially noteworthy are the following mitigation provisions:

Wetlands filled or substantially degraded will be replaced at a 2:1 ratio by the creation of forested wetlands off-site on BARC property and within the same watershed.

WMATA will maintain frequent coordination with BARC on the construction of the yard and the creation of wetlands elsewhere on BARC property.

All service and inspection yard facilities will be built on existing high ground or on fill above the base floodplain. The yard will not increase the water surface elevation of the 100-year flood by more than 0.1 foot.

The Maryland State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) found that archaeological resources associated with early American Indian habitation at the yard site was potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Accordingly, WMATA's archaeological consultants conducted a phased data recovery program in consultation with, and approved by SHPO and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The field work portion of the recovery program has been completed. SHPO concurred in May, 1989 that sufficient field work had been accomplished to achieve the goals set for the recovery effort and that construction could commence. The archaeological materials collected will be curated in a suitable repository approved by SHPO. A final technical report on findings of the research will be prepared and made available to appropriate educational institutions. All other requirements of the conditional determination of no adverse effect dated July 12, 1988 will be performed.

Stormwater runoff and sediments from the yard will drain into a detention pond within the north track loop, or into a wet retention pond east of the yard, before reaching Indian Creek. Runoff from paved areas will pass through oil and grit separators before outflow into the stormwater management ponds.

The paint shop will have a closed-cycle contaminant containment system.

WMATA will employ a number of operation practices in handling and storing oils, fuels, solvents and hydraulic fluids to prevent spills and to keep these contaminants from reaching natural waterways should a spill occur. Yard personnel will be trained in these practices, which are listed in the EA.

A secondary containment system for spills will be included in the design with capacity at least equal to the volume of the largest storage tank. Yard personnel will be trained in spill containment and clean-up procedures listed in the EA.

### Environmental Findings

In accordance with 23 CFR Part 771, sections 119 and 121, and paragraph 130(c), the finding of the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) on the basis of the "Greenbelt Yard Environmental Assessment" (December 1990) is that there are no significant impacts on the environment associated with the yard which were not envisioned in the 1975 Metrorail Systemwide EIS.

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, UMTA has determined, with the concurrence of the Maryland State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, that this project will have no adverse effect on properties on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

In accordance with DOT Order 5660.1A, UMTA finds that (1) there is no practicable alternative to construction of the yard in wetlands, and (2) that all practicable measures to minimize harm have been included in the project.

In accordance with DOT Order 5650.2, UMTA finds that there is no practicable alternative to the proposed encroachment of yard facilities into the 100-year floodplain.

In accordance with paragraph 135(g)(2) of 23 CFR Part 771, Section 4(f) of the DOT Act does not apply to the archaeological resources affected by the project.

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Dec. 18, 1990  
Date