

FRA Categorical Exclusion Worksheet

Expiration date: 01/31/2028

OMB No. 2130-0615

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Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION WORKSHEET

For Agency Use: Categorical Exclusion Signature Approval

Date Class of Action was Determined by FRA:

Date Completed Document was Received by FRA:

Reviewed By:

Date:

Concurrence by Approving Official:

Date:

For Agency Use: Section 4(f) Evaluation

Will the Project result in the use of a resource protected by 49 U.S.C. §303 [Section 4(f)] of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966?

If answer is 'YES,' please include Section 4(f) documentation and coordination letters.

☐ YES

☐ NO

For Agency Use: FRA Required Mitigation

Does FRA require additional mitigation for this Project?

If answer is 'YES,' please indicate additional mitigation in Section T below.

☐ YES

☐ NO

For Agency Use: Unusual Circumstances

Did FRA find that the Project falls within § 771.116 (b) Any action that normally would be classified as a CE but could involve unusual circumstances?

If answer is 'YES,' please indicate under Project Description below, what FRA coordination and appropriate environmental studies were conducted to determine if the CE classification is proper.

☐ YES

☐ NO

Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION WORKSHEET

The purpose of this worksheet is to assist Project Sponsors in gathering and organizing materials for environmental analysis required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), particularly for projects that may qualify as Categorical Exclusions (CE). CEs are categories of actions (i.e. types of projects) that the FRA has determined, based on its experience, normally do not have a significant effect on the human environment and which generally do not require the preparation of either an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA). Decisions to prepare EAs and EISs are made by FRA.

The Project Sponsor is responsible for providing FRA with a sufficient level of documentation and analysis to help inform FRA's determination that a CE is the appropriate NEPA class of action. Documentation and analysis may include background research, results of record searches, field investigations, field surveys, and any past planning or studies.

Note: Submission of this worksheet by itself does not meet FRA's NEPA requirements. FRA must make a final determination that a CE is appropriate. This worksheet also does not demonstrate compliance with other Federal laws that may be applicable to the Project. For questions regarding FRA's NEPA requirements, please contact FRAenvironment@dot.gov.

Instructions for completing this CE worksheet are available on the FRA website at:
<https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P0550>.

Submit the following documents along with this worksheet:

1. Map(s) or diagram(s) of the Project area that identify locations of critical resource areas, wetlands, potential historic sites, or sensitive noise receptors such as schools, hospitals, and residences.
2. Map(s) or diagram(s) of the proposed modifications to existing railways, roadways, and parking facilities.
3. Copies of all agency correspondence particularly with permitting agencies.
4. Representative photographs of the Project area.
5. Any technical memoranda or report(s) developed to support this CE worksheet.

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Sponsor Name	Date Submitted to FRA	FRA Funding Program or other FRA Action Triggering NEPA (Unfunded)
Project Sponsor Contact	Project Sponsor Phone	Project Sponsor E-mail address
Proposed Project Title (verify with FRA Regional Manager if part of a grant award and list grant award number)		
Location (Include Street Address, City or Township, County, and State)		
FRA NEPA Contact	FRA NEPA Contact	FRA NEPA Contact E-mail address

Description of Project:

Fully describe the Project. The description should focus on Project elements that may be of environmental concern, such as: *widening an embankment to stabilize roadbed; repairing or replacing bridge pier foundations, extending culverts, adding rip-rap in a waterway; earthwork and altering natural (existing) drainage patterns and creating a new water discharge; contaminated water needing treatment; building a new or adding on to a shop building; fueling or collection of fuel or oil and contaminated water; building or extending a siding; and building or adding on to a yard. Also, identify the proposed construction schedule if known. Where applicable, fully describe the operational characteristics of the facility to be improved by the Project and any anticipated operational changes that may result.*

Property Acquisition:

Describe the need to acquire property for the project, such as temporary easements for construction or permanent easements or right-of-way. Also, discuss outreach to the property owners and any concerns or possible opposition.

Note: A Project Sponsor must obtain authorization from FRA before acquiring property prior to completing the NEPA process and receiving written FRA concurrence in the NEPA recommendation or Federal financial participation in the Project may be jeopardized.

II. FRA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

Please identify below the CE category or categories that best fits the Project:

☐ Project uses FRA CE found at 23 CFR § 771.116:

[\[list CE number and description\]](#)

Note: If it is not clear if a CE category applies, [contact FRA](#). The Project may require an EA or EIS.

III. DISCUSSION OF EFFECTS

Analyze and identify potential impacts from both construction and changes to operations (where applicable) for each resource type below. Effects or impacts are reasonably foreseeable changes to the human environment, including those effects that occur at the same time and place and effects that are later in time or farther removed in distance from the proposed action or alternatives. Effects may be beneficial or detrimental.

Where appropriate, the Project sponsor may commit to mitigation measures to avoid, reduce, or minimize impacts, including the use of Best Management Practices (BMP). Identify any mitigation measures necessary to comply with other laws or regulations in each section (e.g. Clean Water Act Section 404) and consider the impacts from mitigation.

Include reference to any technical reports, data collection methods (surveys, agency coordination), and compliance with applicable laws. Avoid noting specific location information about sensitive resources, which may include archaeological sites or threatened/endangered species.

Identify any resource topics that would not be affected by the proposed Project because the resource is not present in the Affected Environment. These topics do not require further discussion, except as noted in the corresponding section below:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Land Use (B) | ☐ Waters of the US (J) |
| ☐ Cultural Resources (C) | ☐ Floodplains (K) |
| ☐ Parks and Recreational Facilities (D) | ☐ Water Quality (L) |
| ☐ Transportation (E) | ☐ Navigable Waterways (M) |
| ☐ Noise and Vibration (F) | ☐ Coastal Zones (N) |
| ☐ Air Quality (G) | ☐ Important Farmlands (O) |
| ☐ Hazardous Materials and Waste (H) | ☐ Listed Species (P) |
| ☐ Communities (I) | ☐ Public Safety (Q) |

A.	Affected Environment: Define the limits of the Project or analysis area and briefly describe the environmental conditions in and surrounding the area (defined as broadly as necessary to evaluate potential impacts and include maps as appropriate).
B.	Land Use: Briefly describe the existing land use of the Project area and surrounding properties and resources and identify and discuss any potential inconsistencies the Project might have with local land use plans and policies.
C.	Cultural Resources: Does the project include activities that have the potential to impact cultural resources (such as ground disturbing activities, building or landscape alterations, or the introduction of visual, audible or atmospheric elements)? ☐ Yes, explain how the Project is the type of activity that has the potential to impact cultural resources. ☐ No, explain how the Project is not the type of activity that has the potential to impact cultural resources. (Continue to D) Is a Federal agency program alternative, established under Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regulations (36 CFR 800.14), applicable to the Project (either fully or partially)? ☐ Yes, a program alternative applies. Choose an item. Explain applicability of the program alternative (Continue to D) ☐ No, there is no applicable program alternative. Note: Describe the: 1) Area of Potential Effects (APE); 2) identification of any cultural resources in the APE; 3) impact of the Project on cultural resources in the APE, if present; and 4) consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office. Attach relevant maps, correspondence, and reports. What efforts have been made to determine if resources of interest to Federally-Recognized Indian Tribes are present in the Project area (e.g. archaeological sites, cultural landscapes, sacred places, or traditional use areas?)

D.	Parks and Recreational Facilities: <i>Are any parks, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, or recreational areas in or directly adjacent to the Project area?</i> ☐ No, include a short statement describing efforts to identify parks, wildlife refuges, and recreational facilities in or adjacent to the Project area. ☐ Yes, include a detailed description of the property, including map or drawing, describe the recreational uses of the property, any unique characteristics of the property, identify if the property or resource may be protected under Section 4f of the Department of Transportation Act, and discuss any coordination with the entity with legal jurisdiction over the property. <i>If Yes:</i> Would the Project result in “use” of a 4f property or resource per Section 4f? ☐ No, explain why ☐ Yes, describe the potential use(s) and coordinate further with FRA on additional documentation requirements. <i>Would the Project result in other recreational impacts?</i> ☐ No ☐ Yes, describe the potential impacts
E.	Transportation: <i>Would the Project have any effect (beneficial or adverse) on transportation including but not limited to other railway operations, road traffic, pedestrian, or increase the demand for parking?</i> ☐ No, explain why the Project would have no effect (beneficial or adverse) on transportation. ☐ Yes, describe potential transportation, traffic, and parking impacts, and address capacity constraints and potential impacts to existing railroad and highway operations. Also, summarize any coordination that has occurred with other railroads or highway authorities whose operations this Project would be impacted.

F.	Noise and Vibration: <i>Are any sensitive receptors in or near the Project area?</i> ☐ No, identify the steps taken to confirm no sensitive receptors (residences, parks, schools, hospitals, public gathering spaces) are in or near the Project area. (Continue to G) ☐ Yes, will the Project change the noise and/or vibration exposure of the sensitive receptors when applying the screening distances for noise and vibration assessment found in FRA's and the Federal Transit Administration's most recent noise impacts assessment guidance manuals. Such changes in exposure might include changes in noise emissions and/or noise events, or changes in vibration emissions and/or vibration events. Note: <i>If the Project is anticipated to change the noise or vibration exposure of sensitive receptors, complete and attach a General Noise and/or Vibration Assessment. Describe the results of the Assessment and any mitigation that will address potential impacts.</i>
G.	Air Quality: <i>Is the Project located in a National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) Non-Attainment or Maintenance area?</i> ☐ No, identify any air emissions increases or benefits that the project will create. (Continue to H) ☐ Yes, for which of the following pollutants: ☐ Carbon Monoxide (CO) ☐ Ozone (O₃) ☐ Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) or ☐ PM_{2.5} ☐ Nitrogen Oxide (NO_x) ☐ Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂) ☐ Lead (Pb) ☐ Emissions from volatile organic compounds (VOC) Will the Project, during construction and/or operation, result in new emissions from: Carbon Monoxide (CO), Ozone (O₃), Particulate Matter (PM₁₀ or PM_{2.5}), Nitrogen Oxide (NO_x), Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂) and Lead (Pb) or volatile organic compounds? ☐ No ☐ Yes, attach an analysis showing the emissions for the applicable pollutant that would result from construction and operation of the Project. Note: <i>In some cases, FRA will require additional information to comply with the Clean Air Act's General Conformity requirements.</i>

H.	Hazardous Materials and Waste: <i>Would the Project involve the use, handling, disposal, or disturbance of hazardous materials or waste?</i> ☐ No, describe the steps taken to determine that hazardous materials or waste would not be a concern (continue to I) ☐ Yes, describe the concerns and measures that will mitigate any potential for release and contamination. <i>If yes, is it likely that hazardous materials will be encountered as a result of the Project? (Prior to acquiring land or a facility with FRA funds, consult with FRA regarding the potential presence of hazardous materials)</i> ☐ No, explain why it is unlikely that hazardous materials will be encountered. ☐ Yes, complete a Phase I site assessment and attach. <i>If a Phase I survey was completed, is a Phase II site assessment recommended?</i> ☐ No ☐ Yes, provide a copy of the Phase II site assessment and describe mitigation and clean-up measures to remediate any hazardous materials present identified in the Phase II site assessment, and describe what steps will be taken to ensure that the local community is protected from contamination during construction and operation of the Project.
I.	Communities: <i>Is the Project likely to result in impacts to adjacent communities? Impacts might be both beneficial (e.g. economic benefits) or adverse (e.g. reduction in community cohesion).</i> ☐ No, describe the steps taken to determine whether the Project might result in impacts to adjacent communities. (Continue to J) <i>Describe any potential adverse effects to communities, including noise, visual and barrier effects.</i>

J.	Waters of the US.: <i>Would the Project temporarily or permanently impact wetlands or require alterations to streams or waterways?</i> ☐ No, describe the steps taken to determine that the Project is not likely to temporarily or permanently impact wetlands or require alterations to streams or waterways. (Continue to K) ☐ Yes, show wetlands and waters on the site map and classification. Describe the Project's potential impact to on-site and adjacent wetlands and waters and attach any correspondence with the US Army Corps of Engineers. <i>Is a Section 404 Permit necessary?</i> ☐ Yes, attach all permit related documentation ☐ No
K.	Floodplains: <i>Is any portion of the Project area located within a 100-year floodplain, a special flood hazard area, or regulated floodway?</i> ☐ No (Continue to L) ☐ Yes, describe the potential for impacts due to changes in floodplain capacity or water flow, if any, and how the Project will comply with Executive Order 11988. <i>If impacts are likely, attach scale maps describing potential impacts and describe any coordination with regulatory entities.</i>

L.	Water Quality: <i>Are waters of special quality or concern, or protected drinking water resources present at or adjacent to the Project area?</i> ☐ No, describe the proximity of the project area to surface waters and the steps taken to identify protected waters of special quality or concern, or protected drinking water resources present at or adjacent to the Project area. ☐ Yes, describe surface and/or ground water resources and the potential for impact from the Project. <i>Is a Section 402 Permit necessary?</i> ☐ Yes, attach all permit related documentation. ☐ No
M.	Navigable Waterways: <i>Would the Project cross or affect a navigable waterway?</i> ☐ No ☐ Yes, describe potential for impact and any coordination with US Coast Guard and/or US Army Corps of Engineers.
N.	Coastal Zones: <i>Is the Project in a designated coastal zone as defined in 16 U.S.C. 1453(1) or does it have the potential to affect coastal resources?</i> ☐ No ☐ Yes, describe coordination with the applicable coastal state(s) regarding consistency with the coastal zone management plan and attach the coastal state's finding if available.
O.	Important Farmlands: <i>Would the Project impact any prime or unique farmlands?</i> ☐ No, describe the steps taken to identify impacts to important farmlands. ☐ Yes, describe potential for impact and any coordination with the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the US Department of Agriculture.

P.	Listed Species: <i>Does designated critical habitat overlap the Project area?</i> ☐ No (continue to next question). ☐ Yes, identify species with critical habitat that overlaps and describe the steps taken to verify field conditions and the potential for impact. <i>Is habitat for any threatened, endangered, or other special-status species located in or adjacent to the Project area?</i> ☐ No, describe the steps taken to determine that no special-status species would be affected. ☐ Yes, describe the species and their habitat and the potential for impact. <i>Describe any coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, or State, as appropriate, about the impacts to critical habitat and to threatened and endangered species. If additional consultation is required, contact FRA to prepare a biological assessment and attach it and any applicable agency correspondence.</i>
Q.	Public Safety: <i>Will the Project result in any public safety impacts?</i> ☐ No, describe method used to determine whether the Project results in any safety or security impacts. ☐ Yes, describe the impacts to safety or security and any measures that would need to be taken to provide for the safe and secure operation of the Project during and after its construction.
R.	Mitigation: Describe all mitigation measure commitments as noted on CE worksheet, which address identified impacts that have been incorporated into the Project, if any.

	<i>What is the Project sponsor's plan to enforce and monitor the mitigation proposed?</i> <i>What are FRA's additional mitigation requirements (if any)?</i>
S.	<i>Public Notification:</i> Briefly describe any public outreach efforts undertaken on behalf of the Project, if any. Indicate opportunities the public has had to comment on the Project (e.g., Board meetings, open houses, special hearings). <i>Has the Project generated any public discussion or concern, even though it may be limited to a relatively small subset of the community? Indicate any concerns expressed by agencies or the public regarding the Project.</i>
T.	<i>Other Resource Area:</i> Use this section only if the project affects another resource area not otherwise listed.

U. Related Federal, State, or Local Actions: *Does the Project require any additional actions (e.g., permits) pursuant to another Federal environmental law? Attach copies of relevant correspondence with Federal permitting agency. It is not necessary to attach voluminous permit applications if a single cover agency transmittal will indicate that a permit has been granted. Describe permitting issues in the relevant resource discussion above.*

- ☐ **Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act** *Historic Properties*
- ☐ **Section 401/404 of the Clean Water Act** *Waters of the U.S.*
- ☐ **Section 402 of the Clean Water Act** *Water Quality*
- ☐ **Section 9 or 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act** *Navigable Waterways*
- ☐ **Migratory Bird Treaty Act**
- ☐ **Endangered Species Act** *Threatened and Endangered Species*
- ☐ **Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act** *Essential Fish Habitat*
- ☐ **Safe Drinking Water Act**
- ☐ **Section 4(f) Department of Transportation Act**
- ☐ **Section 6(f) Land and Conservation Act**
- ☐ **Other Federal Requirements** (Describe)

- ☐ **Other State or Local Requirements** (Describe)