

## 1.0 Introduction

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), jointly with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), prepared this Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Section 4(f) Evaluation in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)<sup>1</sup> and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Implementing Regulations for NEPA,<sup>2</sup> the FRA *Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts*,<sup>3</sup> *Efficient Environmental Reviews for Project Decisionmaking*,<sup>4</sup> and Section 4(f) of the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Act of 1966 (Section 4[f]).<sup>5</sup>

Consistent with these regulations and procedures, this DEIS identifies the potential effects of the Long Bridge Project (the Project) on the human and natural environment. The DEIS also identifies measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential adverse impacts.

The DEIS documents FRA and DDOT's compliance with Federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations. These include, but are not limited to:

- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA),<sup>6</sup>
- Clean Air Act of 1970,<sup>7</sup>
- Clean Water Act of 1972 (CWA),<sup>8</sup>
- Endangered Species Act of 1973,<sup>9</sup>
- Executive Order (EO) 11988 on Floodplain Management of 1977,<sup>10</sup>
- USDOT Order 5650.2 on Floodplain Management of 1979,<sup>11</sup>
- EO 11990 on Protection of Wetlands of 1977,<sup>12</sup>
- Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972,<sup>13</sup> and
- EO 12898 on Environmental Justice (1994).<sup>14</sup>

The analysis in this DEIS and the Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation informed FRA and DDOT's consideration and decision-making regarding the Project's alternatives, including the identification of a Preferred

<sup>1</sup> 42 USC 4321

<sup>2</sup> 40 CFR Part 1500-1508

<sup>3</sup> 64 FR 28545

<sup>4</sup> 23 USC 139

<sup>5</sup> 49 USC 303

<sup>6</sup> 36 CFR 800

<sup>7</sup> 42 USC 7401

<sup>8</sup> 33 USC 1251

<sup>9</sup> 16 USC 1531

<sup>10</sup> EO 11988

<sup>11</sup> USDOT Order 5650.2

<sup>12</sup> EO 11990

<sup>13</sup> 16 USC 1461

<sup>14</sup> EO 12898

Alternative. Concurrent with publication of this DEIS for review, the public and other agencies will have the opportunity to provide comments at a public hearing and via written communication during a 45-day public comment period. Pursuant to the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act of 2015 (FAST Act), FRA and DDOT plan to issue a single document consisting of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), Final Section 4(f) Evaluation, and Record of Decision (ROD). FRA and DDOT plan to publish a combined document that considers all comments from the comment period unless statutory criteria or practicability considerations preclude issuing a combined document.<sup>15</sup>

## 1.1 Proposed Action

The Proposed Action (referred to as “the Project” in the DEIS) consists of potential improvements to Long Bridge Corridor and related railroad infrastructure located between RO Interlocking in Arlington, Virginia, and L’Enfant (LE) Interlocking near 10th Street SW in the District of Columbia (District).<sup>16</sup> The Project proposes to address planning year 2040 railroad service needs. The Project connects logical termini,<sup>17</sup> has independent utility,<sup>18</sup> and does not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation projects in the area.

Constructed in 1904, Long Bridge is the only railroad crossing over the Potomac River between the District and Virginia. CSX Transportation (CSXT), a Class I freight railroad, owns and operates the existing two-track railroad bridge. The Long Bridge Corridor (see **Section 1.2, Project Area and Setting**), currently serves freight (CSXT), intercity passenger (Amtrak), and commuter rail (Virginia Railway Express [VRE]). Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) rail, which currently terminates at Washington Union Station in the District, has plans to expand into the Corridor. Norfolk Southern, a Class I freight railroad, has trackage rights on Long Bridge, but does not currently exercise those rights.

## 1.2 Project Area and Setting

The Project Area, shown in **Figure 1-1**, encompasses the 1.8-mile Long Bridge Corridor. The Project Area is in the Washington Monumental Core, the symbolic and Federal center of the District. The Long Bridge Corridor is part of viewsheds to and from the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, and other prominent monuments, buildings, and lands. Long Bridge is also a contributing element to the East and West Potomac Parks Historic District and lies within the viewshed of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP). The National Park Service (NPS) administers the land on the District and Virginia sides of the bridge, as well as the riverbed.

The Project Area includes the full length of Long Bridge, which spans the Potomac River, as well as the north and south approaches to the bridge between RO and LE Interlockings. The Project Area includes these approaches because changes to Long Bridge will also require changes to railroad facilities and infrastructure between the interlockings.

<sup>15</sup> 23 USC 139(n)(2)

<sup>16</sup> An interlocking is a segment of railroad infrastructure comprised of track, turnouts, and signals linked (interlocked) in a way that allows trains to safely move from one track to another, or across tracks, preventing conflicting train movements. Note that the proper name of RO Interlocking is “RO.” It is not an acronym.

<sup>17</sup> Logical termini are rational endpoints for both a transportation improvement and a review of the environmental impacts.

<sup>18</sup> A project has independent utility if it is usable and a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made.

57 **Figure 1-1 | Long Bridge Project Area**



58

Long Bridge is comprised of 22 through-girder spans and a double-span swivel-swing truss for a total of 24 spans over the Potomac River, totaling 2,529 feet. The bridge spans a Federal navigational channel. In addition to Long Bridge, the Corridor includes four railroad bridges over roadways, the Metrorail Yellow Line, and a bridge across the Washington Channel.

### 1.3 Project Background

Passenger, commuter, and freight railroad services play an important part in supporting economic growth and vitality. Long Bridge is an essential component of the regional commuter railroad network, the national intercity passenger railroad system, and freight railroad service, linking the Northeast Corridor and Southeast High-Speed Rail Corridor. Projections indicate that passenger and freight growth will exceed capacity of the current two-track bridge across the Potomac River. Future demand will require expanded infrastructure to provide service to economic centers north and south of Long Bridge, including the new Amazon HQ2 headquarters in Crystal City, Virginia.<sup>19</sup> Expanding the Long Bridge Corridor infrastructure would enable efficient continuous movement of passengers and goods across the Potomac River and throughout the Eastern Seaboard.

In 2011, DDOT received a High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail grant from the FRA to complete a two-phase feasibility and planning study of the rehabilitation or replacement of Long Bridge. The Phase I study, completed in 2015 before initiation of the EIS for the Project, considered concepts to address the deficiencies of the Long Bridge Corridor. Phase II of the Long Bridge Study commenced in Fall 2015 and included development of a long-range service plan based on future demand in the Corridor, further refinement of engineering concepts, and development of draft evaluation criteria to identify and screen concepts carried forward for analysis in the EIS process.

In 2016, FRA awarded DDOT a Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant for Phase III, which includes the NEPA process. The grant funds the development of the EIS, Section 4(f) Evaluation, and ROD, including conceptual and preliminary engineering to support the analysis of alternatives, analysis of environmental impacts, and identification of a Preferred Alternative.

### 1.4 NEPA Process

NEPA requires Federal agencies assess environmental effects of Federal actions prior to decision-making. The NEPA process involves:

- Examination of a reasonable range of alternatives;
- Analysis of impacts to environmental resources;
- Coordination with Federal, state, and local agencies, the public, and other project stakeholders; and
- Identification of measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential environmental impacts.

<sup>19</sup> Arlington County. "Northern Virginia's National Landing Selected for Major New Amazon Headquarters." November 13, 2018. Accessed from <https://www.arlingtoneconomicdevelopment.com/resources/news/news-releases/northern-virginias-national-landing-selected-for-major-new-amazon-headquarters/>. Accessed December 20, 2018.



FRA and DDOT initiated the formal NEPA process for the Long Bridge Project with publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on August 26, 2016. The NOI announced FRA and DDOT's intent to prepare an EIS, provided background information on the Project, presented the draft Purpose and Need Statement, explained the alternatives development process, and provided an initial list of environmental resources to be analyzed. The NOI also announced the Public Scoping Meeting and invited the public and other interested parties to submit early coordination comments through September 26, 2016. FRA subsequently extended the 30-day Scoping period to October 14, 2016, in response to a public request to have 30 days to review the materials presented at the public meeting on September 14, 2016. FRA published an extension notice in the Federal Register on October 11, 2016. **Chapter 25.1, Scoping**, provides more information on the Scoping process. **Appendix A1, Scoping Report**, includes the Scoping Report with comments addressed, the NOI, and the Scoping comment period extension notice.

#### 1.4.1 Lead Agencies

FRA is the Lead Federal Agency preparing the Long Bridge Project DEIS. FRA is a modal administration with USDOT. DDOT, as the recipient of the TIGER grant, is a Joint Lead Agency. Lead Agencies are responsible for ensuring that the NEPA process is conducted properly and in accordance with all applicable environmental regulations. Lead Agencies have the authority and responsibility to take proper and necessary actions to facilitate the expeditious resolution of the NEPA process.<sup>20</sup> FRA and DDOT's future actions on behalf of the Project may include issuing approvals and providing funding for construction of the Project.

#### 1.4.2 Cooperating Agencies

FRA and DDOT invited agencies with jurisdiction by law or with other special expertise on resources for the Project to be Cooperating Agencies.<sup>21</sup> FRA and DDOT identified potential Cooperating Agencies in accordance with CEQ Implementing Regulations for NEPA and *Efficient Environmental Reviews for Project Decisionmaking*.<sup>22,23</sup> These agencies and their roles and jurisdiction on behalf of the Project include:

- **National Park Service (NPS)**, the Federal agency responsible for managing the National Park System. Actions that would require an NPS decision will require that NEPA compliance for this Project be easily adoptable by NPS.<sup>24</sup> The NEPA process should meet the policies set forth in

<sup>20</sup> 23 USC 139(c)(6)

<sup>21</sup> Cooperating Agency means any Federal agency other than a Lead Agency that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposal (or a reasonable alternative) for legislation or other major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. The selection and responsibilities of a cooperating agency are described in 40 CFR 1501.6. A state or local agency of similar qualifications or, when the effects are on a reservation, an Indian Tribe may by agreement with the Lead Agency become a Cooperating Agency.

<sup>22</sup> 40 CFR 1500-1508

<sup>23</sup> 23 USC 139

<sup>24</sup> 43 CFR 46.120

NPS’s Director’s Order 12: Conservation, Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-Making<sup>25</sup> and the NPS NEPA Handbook (2015).<sup>26</sup>

NPS has jurisdiction over Federal park property in the Project Area, including GWMP, National Mall and Memorial Parks, Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail, Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail, and the Potomac River bottom.

- **National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC)**, the Federal government’s central agency for planning and development in the National Capital Region. Through planning, policymaking, and project review, NCPC protects and advances the Federal government’s interest in the region’s development. NCPC has approval authority over Federal projects within the District. This includes all land transfers and physical alterations to Federal property. In addition, NCPC has review authority in the National Capital Region. This includes Arlington County, pursuant to the National Capital Planning Act of 1952.<sup>27</sup>
- **United States Coast Guard (USCG)**, the Federal agency responsible for permitting bridge projects in or over navigable waterways, pursuant to Section 9 of the River and Harbors Act.
- **United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) – Baltimore District and Norfolk District**, the Federal permitting agency responsible for impacts to rivers (including the Potomac River), streams, and wetlands under the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, Section 10, and the CWA Sections 401 and 404. The Norfolk District designated Baltimore District as the lead USACE District for the Project.
- **Federal Transit Administration (FTA)**, is a modal administration within the USDOT. FTA’s purview is in public transportation and transit systems. They provide expertise regarding commuter railroad facilities. FTA is a potential source of funding for project construction.
- **Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)**, the state agency that oversees railroad and transit planning and funding in Virginia. DRPT is a contributor of local funding for the preliminary engineering, NEPA, and final design phases. DRPT will be the project sponsor for final design and construction.
- **Virginia Railway Express (VRE)**, the commuter railroad agency that operates on the existing bridge. VRE is a contributor of local funding for the PE and NEPA phases.

<sup>25</sup> Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-Making. National Park Service Director’s Order 12. Accessed from [https://www.nps.gov/policy/dorders/do\\_12.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/policy/dorders/do_12.pdf). Accessed April 29, 2018.

<sup>26</sup> NPS. National Parks Service NEPA Handbook. 2015. Accessed from [https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nepa/upload/NPS\\_NEPAHandbook\\_Final\\_508.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nepa/upload/NPS_NEPAHandbook_Final_508.pdf). Accessed January 12, 2018.

<sup>27</sup> Pub. L. 592

### 1.4.3 Participating Agencies

FRA and DDOT invited Federal, District, state, and local agencies with an interest in the Project to be Participating Agencies.<sup>28</sup> FRA and DDOT identified potential Participating Agencies in accordance with *Efficient Environmental Reviews for Project Decisionmaking*.<sup>29</sup> **Chapter 25.4.2, Public Involvement and Agency Coordination, Participating Agencies** describes the role of a Participating Agency and **Table 25-2** lists the Participating Agencies for the Project.

### 1.4.4 Project Sponsor

DRPT will be the project sponsor for final design and construction, including implementation of any mitigation measures identified in this document, has not yet been identified. DRPT will be responsible for ensuring all commitments and mitigation measures in the ROD are implemented during construction and operation of the Project.

## 1.5 Bike-Pedestrian Crossing Opportunities

While not part of the Purpose and Need for the Long Bridge Project, FRA and DDOT explored the potential opportunity to accommodate connections to the pedestrian and bicycle network that follow the trajectory of the Long Bridge Corridor. Public comments received throughout the planning for the Project included requests for considering a bike-pedestrian crossing. As a result, FRA and DDOT assessed the feasibility of a bike-pedestrian crossing and considered whether a path could be designed to be consistent with railroad operator plans and pursuant to railroad safety practices.

NPS agreed that the bike-pedestrian crossing could serve as USDOT Act Section 4(f) mitigation for impacts to its parks. The crossing would provide a connection between the parks and the regional trail system and would therefore have a regional recreational benefit. **Chapter 22, Bike-Pedestrian Crossing**, provides detailed information on the bike-pedestrian crossing. With a ROD commitment for a bike-pedestrian crossing as mitigation for Section 4(f) impacts, DRPT would be obligated to construct the bike-pedestrian crossing with the Project.

<sup>28</sup> A Participating Agency as defined in 23 USC 139(d) is any Federal and non-Federal agency that may have an interest in the project. Any Federal agency that is invited by the Lead Agency to participate in the environmental review process for a project shall be designated as a Participating Agency by the Lead Agency unless the invited agency informs the Lead Agency, in writing, by the deadline specified in the invitation that the invited agency: (a) has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project; (b) has no expertise or information relevant to the project; and (c) does not intend to submit comments on the project.

<sup>29</sup> 23 USC 139