Tukwila Station Project
King County, Washington

Federal Railroad
Administration
FINDING OF NO SIGNFICANT IMPACT
September 2011

In April 2010, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued a Notice of Funding Availability for certain funds made available under the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) Program. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) submitted an application seeking funding to construct a new train station in the City of Tukwila to service both Amtrak Cascades intercity passenger rail trans as well as Sound Transit Commuter trains (FRA Project). The FRA Project is located at 7301 South Longacres Way in the city of Tukwila Washington, Milepost 10.8 on the BNSF Railway's Seattle Subdivision. In October 2010, the FRA selected WSDOT to receive a total of $31 million in federal grant funds from the HSIPR Program–funded under the DOT Appropriations Act 2009 including funding for the FRA Project. WSDOT and FRA intend to enter into a Cooperative Agreement for approximately $7.9 million to fund the construction and related activities to complete the FRA Project. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) covers the FRA Project and has been prepared consistent with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts.

The existing Tukwila Commuter Rail Station was built as a temporary station in order to serve the area while planning and implementation for a permanent station could proceed. The new station constructed as part of the FRA Project would replace the temporary station, which currently includes minimal rail amenities and is located adjacent to the north and east of the FRA Project site. Parking for up to 222 vehicles is provided at the temporary station. The temporary station is nearing the end of its anticipated lifespan, and was not built to accommodate future ridership levels. As described further below, the activities comprising the FRA Project is a portion of the larger Federal Transit Administration (FTA)/Sound Transit (ST) Tacoma-to-Seattle Commuter Rail Project, which covers the complete replacement of the temporary facility with a new rail station servicing both intercity passenger and commuter rail needs.

The FRA Project consists of two general activities described with more specificity below: 1) the construction of a new, permanent train station at Tukwila, WA that will be used by Amtrak *Cascades* intercity passenger trains and Sound Transit (ST) commuter trains (Sounder), and 2) the placement of a real-time passenger information system at Sea-Tac Airport displaying train arrivals and departures for Amtrak *Cascades* trains as well as providing information to passengers on how to use ground transportation to reach Tukwila Station.

Once constructed, the new train station at Tukwila will be used by Amtrak *Cascades* intercity passenger trains and Sounder service. The major components of the FRA funded Project will include two 700-foot-long platforms with passenger shelters to provide wind and weather protection, an improved pedestrian undercrossing to connect the two platforms, a bus transit area, approximately 390 parking stalls which will include dedicated long-term parking for Amtrak customers, up to 68 bicycle parking spaces, and drainage improvements, including underground water detention/retention that will be constructed beneath the parking area. Additionally, a real-time passenger information system will be installed at Sea-Tac Airport as discussed in the previous paragraph.

The improvements will allow improved access to the Amtrak *Cascades* and improved Sounder service with dedicated long term parking, improved pedestrian and bus connections, enhanced passenger

amenities including shelters and the installation of real-time passenger information system at Sea-Tac Airport that will give airline travelers real time Amtrak Cascades arrival and departure information for Tukwila Station, as well as information on how to use ground transportation to reach Tukwila Station as well as other stations in the Sounder commuter rail network. The display of this information will enable passengers transferring between air transport and rail to be informed about the intercity passenger rail options. This will help passengers choose the most desirable method of transportation to suit their needs and stimulate greater intercity passenger rail ridership.

The new station is anticipated to accommodate higher ridership levels and integrate regional/intercity rail and bus services. The station is expected to attract new riders and increase current ridership because of the convenient links to other rail and transit services (commuter rail, light rail, intercity, bus) and bicycle and pedestrian connections.

In January 2009, FTA completed a NEPA Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Tukwila Commuter Rail Station Project (FTA Station Project) for which the FRA was a Cooperating Agency (Attachment A). On March 27, 2009, FTA issued a FONSI for the Station Project. (Attachment B). In March 2011, due to design changes proposed by ST, FTA completed a Reevaluation of the EA (Attachment C). The design changes shift the FTA Station Project elements eastward by approximately 100 feet and northward approximately 700 feet. The proposed FTA Station Project changes have substantially the same impacts as those evaluated in the 2009 EA and the corresponding FONSI and will actually reduce the potential impacts on wetland resources in the Project area. All changes occur within the footprint of the 2009 EA and FTA FONSI. A table, which was relied on by FTA when determining that the design modification did not change the validity of the 2009 EA/FONSI, is attached and identifies environmental impacts specific to resources for both the 2008 design and 2010 design of the station (Attachment D). Mitigation measures are also outlined in this table and incorporated herein by reference.

The 2009 FTA EA/FONSI and 2011 Reevaluation analyzed the potential impacts of the FTA Station Project which is the larger build out of the Tacoma-to-Seattle Commuter Rail Project which includes a permanent station with platforms, new parking, bus, ticketing and other facilities and other amenities, to be constructed on the west side of the BNSF tracks, west and south of the temporary station. As described above, the FRA Project covers only a portion of the larger FTA Station Project which was analyzed in the FTA EA/FONSI. As a consequence, the potential impacts of the FRA Project are fully covered and analyzed in the FTA EA/FONSI and 2011 Reevaluation.

FRA has reviewed FTA's March 2009 FONSI and the March 2011 Revaluation and has determined that the FRA Project is an element of the FTA Station Project analyzed therein and therefore incorporates the analysis, conclusions and mitigation commitments from those documents by reference into this FRA FONSI. FRA finds that the FRA Project elements as presented and assessed in the FTA EA and Reevaluation, including the mitigation measures outlined within, will have no foreseeable significant adverse impact on the quality of the human and natural environment. FRA adopts those identified mitigation measures that relate to the implementation of the FRA Project.

Joseph C. Szabo
Administrator

9/30/11
Date

Attachment A – EA
Attachment B – FTA FONSI
Attachment C – Reevaluation
Attachment D – Comparison Table

This document has been prepared in accordance with FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts by the Office of Railroad Policy and Development, with assistance from the Office of Chief Counsel. For further information regarding this document, contact:

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