U.S. Department of Transportation

Federal Railroad Administration

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Alton Regional Multimodal Transportation Center Project

Alton, Madison County, Illinois

May 2013

Introduction: The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) proposes to undertake construction of the Alton Regional Multimodal Transportation Center Project (Project) in cooperation with the City of Alton and Madison County Transit (MCT). The Project includes a completely new station facility with multi-use development that will replace the existing Amtrak station. The Alton Regional Multimodal Transportation Center is a component of the Chicago-St. Louis High-Speed Rail Corridor Project (Original Project) approved by FRA under the Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) dated January 2003 (Record of Decision, ROD, dated January 8, 2004). Because improvements and upgrades to the existing Alton Station or the potential for a new station at an alternative location were not considered in the 2003 FEIS or the 2004 ROD, they must be evaluated to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

IDOT has evaluated improvements to the Alton Amtrak Station, including a new station, in Alton, Madison County, Illinois in an Environmental Assessment (EA). This facility will create a new surface transportation hub at the High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) gateway immediately north of the St. Louis metropolitan area. The EA addresses the construction of a new train station, together with amenities, for single-track service with planned room for expansion when two-track service is implemented. The proposed improvements have independent utility in addressing issues for existing and expected near-term freight and Amtrak services, and do not preclude other options of High Speed Rail if further corridor studies are initiated or advanced under NEPA.

FRA must comply with NEPA as the Federal agency providing grant funding for the Project. IDOT prepared an EA in coordination with FRA to analyze and document whether the Project will have

significant effects on the environment. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is made based on the information in the EA prepared by IDOT to comply with NEPA, FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts (64 FR 28545, May 6, 1999), and other related laws.

Statement of Purpose and Need: The identification of the purpose and need is significant in determining the reasonable range of alternatives to consider for the Project. The need defines the key problems to be addressed and explains their underlying causes. The purpose states clearly why the Project is being proposed and identifies potential anticipated outcomes.

Purpose: The Alton Multimodal Transportation Center including a new Amtrak station supports the rail improvements necessary to complete and enhance the passenger transportation network in the Chicago-St. Louis Corridor. The Project is an important component of the overall Original Project. The current station is a one-story brick structure built in 1928 and located at 3400 College Avenue, approximately 2.3 miles east of downtown Alton. In order to implement the rail improvements needed to enable rail travel at higher speeds, a new station building and platform will be required as well as additional parking spaces to accommodate the anticipated increase in ridership, as well as benefit the existing medium and long-distance Amtrak service.

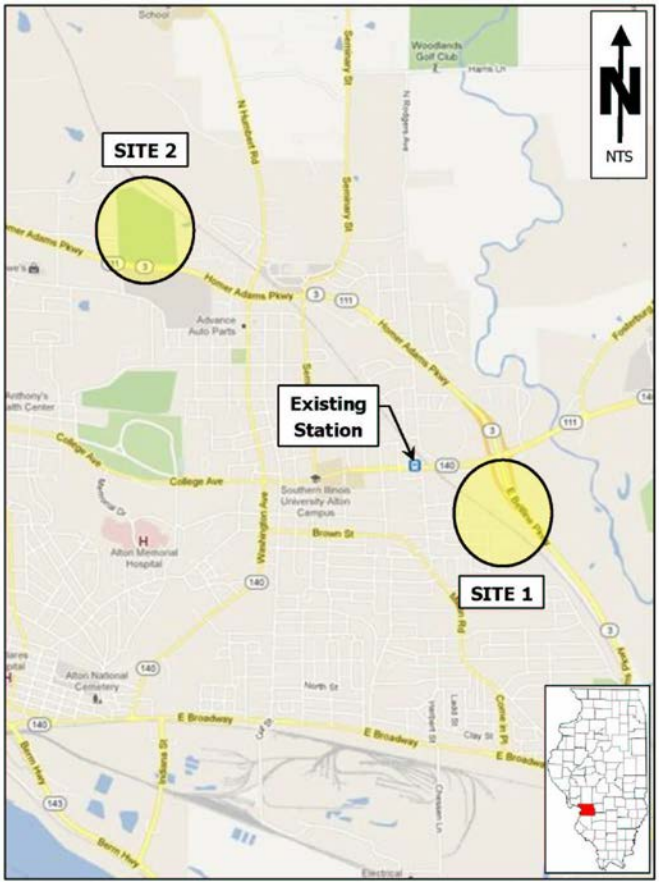
Need: The Project is needed specifically because of the deficiencies of the existing facilities at the Alton Amtrak Station. These include insufficient platform length, lack of connectivity between rail, bus and automobile travel, insufficient parking for passengers driving to the station, crowded and inadequate indoor waiting areas and limited access to amenities. The Project would address these needs and provide improved user access to and transfers between Amtrak and bus service in Alton, Illinois.

Study Area: The study area for the Project is the result of a comprehensive investigation encompassing approximately a nine mile stretch along the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) mainline through the municipalities of Godfrey, Alton, and East Alton, in southwest Illinois.

Alternatives: IDOT evaluated the existing Alton Amtrak station and found that the station had numerous deficiencies and would require upgrades to meet the needs and guidelines developed for facilities and amenities with respect to High Speed Rail service between Chicago and St. Louis. The City of Alton and MCT also began developing a proposal for construction of a transportation center integrating the existing Alton Amtrak rail station with a multimodal central hub for regional and local bus lines, as well as an adjacent multi-use, transit-oriented development (including commercial, residential and institutional components). The City of Alton and MCT received a U.S. Department of Transportation Investment

Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grant in 2011 to construct the Alton Regional Multimodal Transportation Center Project.

Improvements to the existing Alton Station were considered by IDOT, however, the site characteristics of the station and its inadequate acreage presented limitations in accommodating the City of Alton and MCT's proposed transportation center. From this conclusion, IDOT initiated a search for alternative sites that had the potential to accommodate construction of a new rail station, and a new transportation center.



IDOT identified eight potential site alternatives along a nine mile stretch adjacent to the UPRR mainline through the municipalities of Godfrey, Alton, and East Alton in an alternatives screening report. Of these eight locations, IDOT carried forward two Build Alternatives and a No-Build Alternative for further evaluation in the EA: Site 1 (approximately 6 acres) is located approximately 1,000 feet south of IL 140 (College Avenue) situated between the UPRR tracks on the west and IL 3 (Homer M. Adams Parkway) on the east; and Site 2 (approximately 21.5 acres) is located approximately 1,000 feet north of IL 3 (Homer M. Adams Parkway) situated between the UPRR tracks on the northeast and Golf Road on the west; and the existing station located in Alton (the No-Build Alternative) adjacent to the north side of IL 140 (College Avenue) and extending approximately 1,500 feet along the west side of the UPRR tracks.

Concept development and preliminary site planning for the new rail station and the associated transportation center included development of design and site criteria on which to evaluate the sites, preliminary site planning and a ranked, screening-level evaluation of the alternative sites to select one or more alternatives for further and more comprehensive evaluation as part of the environmental assessment. The alternatives evaluation process consisted of the following tasks: (1) Identifying the range of possible alternatives; (2) Screening the alternatives for their benefits and impacts; (3) Comparing the alternatives, and: (4) Recommending the reasonable alternatives for further evaluation.

The EA presents a summary of the considerations made as part of the station site alternatives screening for all of the sites and the findings of that screening leading to the identification of alternative(s) for further evaluation in the station planning and programming process.

The Project, as defined in the EA, is the construction of a new High Speed Rail passenger station composed of new platforms, canopies, a new stationhouse with restrooms, ticket office, baggage room, mechanical rooms, and all planned vending, concessions or retail space. The Project also includes improvements necessary for auto, bus, bike, and pedestrian access, surface parking for 230 automobiles, bicycle parking facilities, and bus parking for ten local and regional MCT buses. Although detailed bus schedules for the proposal have not yet been developed, a bus frequency of 2-3 buses per hour is reasonable given the exiting bus service currently being provided at the Alton Amtrak Station.

The alternatives evaluated in the EA include: (1) the No-Build Alternative (existing Amtrak station, with regular normal maintenance but no improvements) and (2) the Build Alternatives. Two build alternative sites (Sites 1 and 2) were identified because they best met the screening evaluation criteria.

Alternatives Eliminated from Further Consideration: Six alternatives sites were dismissed from further evaluation in the EA based on the screening criteria IDOT used to evaluate the alternatives in four main categories (location within the community, accessibility and parking, site assessment, and railroad characteristics) in considering the relative strengths (positive) and weaknesses (negative) of each site.

Site 3 is north of IL 3/111 (Homer Adams Parkway) and east of Washington Avenue in Alton, and is approximately 2.2 miles northeast of downtown Alton. The site is approximately one mile northwest of the existing Alton Amtrak station. This site was identified for its favorable track alignment and its proximity to existing retail development. Site 3 was dismissed from further evaluation in the EA by IDOT due to the extreme limitations of site shape; small site necessitating acquisition; and the demolition of existing structures required.

Site 4 is south of IL 3/111 (Homer Adams Parkway), east of Washington Avenue and west of Seminary Street in Alton, and is approximately 2.2 miles northeast of downtown Alton. The site is approximately one mile northwest of the existing Alton Amtrak station. Site 4 was identified for its visibility and access from IL 3/111 and its favorable track alignment. Site 4 was dismissed from further evaluation in the EA by IDOT due to undesirable track frontage; construction of station platform over adjacent roadways; and a horizontal curve making site development difficult.

Site 5 is 0.4 miles northwest of the existing Amtrak station, 0.4 miles northeast of the intersection of IL 140 and Seminary Street and 0.4 miles south of the intersection of IL 3 and Seminary Street in Alton. Site 5 is approximately 2.2 miles northeast of downtown Alton. This site was identified for the large acreage of undeveloped land that could accommodate the station, its associated facilities and parking. Site 5 was dismissed from further evaluation in the EA by IDOT due to poor accessibility and site visibility; the fact that it was a heavily wooded site; potential environmental impacts; and required utility extensions.

Site 6 is approximately 3.2 miles southeast of downtown Alton, and is located within the East Alton municipal limits. The site is on the east side of IL 3, 0.7 miles southeast of the intersection of IL 3 and West St. Louis Avenue. This location was identified for the large acreage of undeveloped land that could accommodate the station, its associated facilities and parking and for its favorable track alignment. Site 6 was dismissed from further evaluation in the EA by IDOT due to the fact that the double track configuration would require a grade-separated pedestrian crossing and platform off the property; no potential for future expansion and mixed-use development; no adjacent station support services; and that it lacked pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Site 7 is in the Village of Godfrey 0.1 miles southwest of the intersection of North Humber Road and North Alby Street, and is approximately 3.8 miles north of downtown Alton. This site was identified for its favorable site topography and the potential to develop a multimodal transportation center. Site 7 was dismissed from further evaluation in the EA by IDOT due to limitations of site shape; limited track tangent for station and platform construction; no adjacent station support services; poor site visibility; the location away from the urban center; and limited future expansion.

Site 8 is in the Village of Godfrey, less than 0.1 miles south of the intersection of Bethany Lane and IL 111/267 (Montclair Avenue), and is approximately 5.6 miles north of downtown Alton. This site was identified for the amount of vacant acreage available for development as a station site and its accessibility and visibility from IL 111/267 (Montclair Avenue). Site 8 was dismissed from further evaluation in the

EA by IDOT due to the fact that there were no adjacent station support services, its location away from urban center, and the fact that it had no potential for future expansion.

Alternatives Retained for Consideration: Three potential sites were retained for evaluation in the EA based on screening criteria used by IDOT: the existing Alton Amtrak Station site, Site 1, and Site 2. The existing Alton Amtrak Station site is surrounded and constrained by single-family residential land use and cannot be expanded to accommodate the multimodal transportation center concept proposed by the City of Alton and MCT without substantial land acquisition and displacement. This site does not meet the purpose and need and is not able to accommodate MCT buses, pedestrians, or bicycles. As continued use of the existing station site represents the baseline No-Build Alternative, this site was advanced for further analysis in the EA.

Site 1 is adjacent to established hotels, restaurants, businesses, and office buildings, providing excellent support services for the station. Though single-family residential land use adjoins the tracks on the west, no access connection from the station to the residential neighborhood would be made. Development of this site has the potential to enhance the attractiveness of existing businesses and spur development of additional support services for the station. This site also has excellent visibility from arterial streets and has good access from IL 140 (College Avenue). MCT has expressed its support for Site 1 development as a multimodal station that integrates high-speed rail, buses, bicycles, parking, pedestrians and passenger vehicles. Site 1 is likely to require shorter utility extensions to serve a potential station than all other sites, and there are no at-grade highway-rail crossings within the proximity of the site. Site 1 is located on privately owned land and would require additional right-of-way (ROW) to be purchased.

Site 2 is located on former golf course land owned by the City of Alton and has superior internal site circulation, bicycle access and closer proximity to off-site car rental services, and has more land available for initial development of the Project. Site 2 has more potential for future expansion of the station and its facilities as ridership increases. The City of Alton has offered to contribute the land for Site 2 and, therefore, no ROW would need to be acquired.

FRA concurs with the preference of IDOT based on the environmental evaluation in the EA, and finds that Site 2 is best able to achieve the Project purpose and need without significant environmental impacts and by minimizing Project costs.

Benefits of the Selected Alternative: Site 2 is the Selected Alternative for the Project, and addresses the deficiencies of the existing facilities at the Alton Amtrak Station. Site 2 meets the purpose and need, and once implemented will provide sufficient platform length, connectivity between rail, bus and automobile travel, sufficient parking, adequate waiting areas and amenities, as well as improve user access to and transfers between Amtrak and bus service in Alton, Illinois and potentially foster future regional growth.

Environmental Consequences: Based upon the EA, included by reference with its appendixes in this FONSI in its entirety, FRA has concluded that the Selected Alternative Site 2, including the proposed mitigation measures for unavoidable impacts, would have no foreseeable significant impact on the quality of the natural and human environments.

This FONSI focuses only on those resources that have a reasonable likelihood to be affected by the Project. The following potential impact areas are not located within the Project's study area or would otherwise not be affected by the Project, and therefore are not affected by the retained alternatives: air quality; energy; floodplains; noise and vibration; agriculture; tree resources; threatened and endangered species; special lands; transportation; socioeconomics and land use; environmental justice and Title VI; public health and safety. Thus, these resource areas are not discussed in this FONSI and can be referenced in the EA.

Wetlands and Waters of the U.S.: Executive Order 11990, "Protection of Wetlands", requires federal agencies to avoid, to the extent practicable, short and long-term impacts associated with the destruction or modification of wetlands. More specifically, it directs federal agencies to avoid new construction in wetlands unless there is no practical alternative. In addition, it states that where wetlands cannot be avoided, the Project must include all practical measures to minimize harm to the wetlands.

The Selected Alternative has four wetlands that could potentially be impacted by the Project. Detailed site planning would determine the exact location of project elements in relation to the wetlands. The potential impacts to wetlands, assuming total development of the station property, would be 0.828 acres. Impact to these wetland areas would be minimized to the extent practicable as part of the site planning, with measures taken during construction to protect those where impact is avoidable. Additionally, the proposal requires action in regard to EO 11990 – Protection of Wetlands, which covers wetland coordination, including any mitigation and permit requirements for Federal agencies. IDOT, UPRR, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) have established agreements for the corresponding replacement ratios for wetlands. Any permits required by the USACE or Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Office of Water Resources will be secured prior to the start of construction.

FRA finds that no significant impacts to wetlands will occur considering the mitigation of the wetlands in coordination with the USACE and Illinois state agencies.

Water Quality and Water Resources: The Project is located entirely within the Peruque-Piasa watershed of the Upper Mississippi River Basin. The nearest major water body is the West Fork of the Wood River, with two local streams designated as Coal Branch Creek and Black Creek, both of which drain into the Wood River. The confluence of the Wood River and the Mississippi River is several miles to the south. As described in the EA, the Project will not have a measureable impact on the Mississippi River water quality. The increase of stormwater entering the system along the Homer Adams roadway due to the Project will be negligible, detained in the proposed storm sewer, and restricted as to not exceed the existing rate entering the Mississippi River.

A review of data from the Illinois State Geological Survey Wells and Borings Database determined no well or boing locations were within 200 feet of the project study limits. The Project will not have any impact on wells, borings or groundwater resources.

Under the Project, surface waters will be protected during construction through the use and enforcement of the Erosion and Sediment Control Policy, and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. These permits employ Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as silt fences, check dams, and appropriately sized sediment basins. Following construction, permanent BMPs will be installed to further reduce impacts such as permanent seeding and the use of native vegetation incorporated into the final landscape design.

FRA finds the construction and operation of the Project will not adversely impact Water Quality and Water Resources based on the lack of resources and use of BMPs as well as permitting by Illinois state agencies.

4(f) Properties: IDOT conducted an inventory of 4(f) properties within 1,000 feet of the Project's study area. Section 4(f) properties include publicly owned public parks, recreation areas, and wildlife or waterfowl refuges, or any publicly or privately owned historic site listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Site 2 is located on the site of a former golf course owned by the City of Alton. The City of Alton closed the golf course when the private operator, contracted by the City of Alton, became insolvent. Following this closure, the City of Alton and the HeartLands Conservancy completed a citywide parks

plan which recommended removing the golf course site from the park system. After a public meeting on this proposal, the City Council of the City of Alton, through ordinance in October 2012, removed the site from the park system and reclassified the land from a conservation district to that of a mixed-use transportation zoning district. As a result of this council action, the land comprising and surrounding the site is not considered an area of 4(f) concern.

As described in the EA, the Selected Alternative has an archaeological site that was identified as Early Farming period (1830-1850) with a minor Modern Farming period component, and may qualify for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility. Based on the results of the testing program, the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concluded that further analysis would be necessary to determine historic eligibility. IDOT than revised the design plans for the Project to relocate the proposed access road alignment in order to avoid this archaeological site.

FRA finds that the Project at Site 2 will not use or affect Section 4(f) property; therefore, the Project will not use lands subject to the requirements of Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966.

Aesthetic Environment and Scenic Resources: The viewshed for the Project contains a mix of mostly open green space and some tree canopies. The property is a planned landscape with numerous old-growth trees bordered by a road with commercial land use and a residential neighborhood. The construction of the station and platform could potentially negatively impact the visual resources, as the site is currently open green space with numerous mature trees. The neighborhood adjoining the property could potentially also have their visual resources affected by a reduction in tree canopy, the station and platform construction, and installation of lighting.

FRA finds that those aesthetic and scenic resources at Site 2 will not be adversely affected because the Project can be constructed to incorporate appropriate landscape design, and structural and railway design, in such a manner as to limit the potential for any significant or adverse long term impacts to the existing visual qualities at the site.

Hazardous Materials: As described in the EA, a regulatory database search was performed for the site in advance of the completion of a Preliminary Environmental Site Assessment (PESA) prior to construction. This included an electronic search of local, state, and federal environmental databases.

As described in the EA, a separate Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was performed for the Selected Alternative site. The database search report dated October 21, 2011, identified three RCRA

(Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976) Conditionally Exempt generator sites west and down-gradient from the former golf course on Homer Adams Parkway. The Phase I ESA revealed no evidence of these sites in connection with Site 2.

The evaluation of potential adverse environmental impacts contained in the PESA includes observations, historical records research and review of database information.

FRA finds that the Project at Site 2 will not be affected by Hazardous Materials since known or potential contaminated sites will be identified prior to construction activities that could involve the release or transport of contaminated materials, and appropriate measures will be implemented, in accordance with State and Federal requirements.

Cultural Resources: As described in the EA, consideration of the potential eligibility for listing of the existing Alton Amtrak Station on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) occurred between 2010 and 2012. SHPO determined in a December 2012 letter that the station may qualify under Criterion A, for its significant role in the transportation history of Alton. SHPO stated concern for potential impact to the station or possible demolition due to its decommissioning as a railroad passenger station. A memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the FRA, IDOT, SHPO, the City of Alton, and the UPRR has been developed and executed to assure compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

FRA finds the Project at Site 2 will have no adverse effects on cultural resources and therefore, the Project will not impact cultural resources based on the preservation and documentation measures within the attached and signed MOA for the existing Alton Amtrak Station.

As mentioned in the 4(f) Properties section above, IDOT conducted a Phase I Archaeological Survey for the Selected Alternative site due to the historical use of the property. The archaeological and historical survey report (October 2011) identified an area along the western boundary of the former golf course and Golf Road (access driveway) as possibly meeting the eligibility requirements for listing on the NRHP. Based upon the results of the study, the SHPO concluded in March 2012, that this site may be eligible for listing on the NRHP under Criterion D. Criterion D applies to sites that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. A Phase II invasive study performed in June 2012 determined that the relics and materials buried at this location reflect “a major Early Farming period component and a minor Modern Farming period component. The study also recommended that if these deposits cannot be avoided by the Project, data recovery investigations should be performed prior to

construction or earth-moving activities." As part of the planning for the Transportation Center, the access road off of IL 3 (Homer Adams Parkway) has been redesigned to avoid impacting this potentially significant archaeological site and historic preservation area.

FRA finds that with the signed MOA attached and the avoidance measures for the archaeological site of interest in place, the Project at Site 2 will have no adverse effects on cultural resources and therefore, the Project will not impact cultural resources.

Construction Impacts: Impacts associated with construction of the improvements would be local and temporary. The most noticeable impacts would likely be noise, vibration, dust, and traffic disruptions. Trucks and machinery used for construction produce noise which may affect some land uses and activities during the construction period. These temporary impacts would occur from operation of equipment for the construction of the new stationhouse and platform. Residents adjacent to the project study area would at some time experience perceptible construction noise from implementation of the Project. Vibration during construction is generally limited to annoyance effects and not to building damage effects.

Construction of the new station and platform will require subgrade preparation and earthwork. Construction of these facilities will not require the purchase of additional ROW. Construction will require indirect consumption of energy for processing materials, construction activities, and maintenance of the Transportation Center. Energy consumption by vehicles in the vicinity of the proposed improvements may increase during construction due to possible traffic delays.

Reduction in the operating speed of trains that pass through construction zones may be required. Adjustment to the schedule of rail operations may also needed if activities require temporary shutdown of selected track sections because a potential safety risk is presented by proximity of moving trains and construction activities that are incompatible with ongoing train traffic. Such delays or disruptions may be similar to normal maintenance activities under existing conditions.

To minimize or eliminate the effect of construction noise on these receptors, time restrictions will be used to limit the period of exposure to construction noise to the period beginning at 7 a.m. and ending at 10 p.m. Adequate mufflers for all engines and engine driven construction equipment will also be required. Vibration impacts can be mitigated by restricting the procedures and time permitted for vibration-intensive activities, such as pile-driving, and by requiring vibration monitoring to certify compliance with vibration limits.

BMPs for dust and noise suppression will be followed. Debris and spoil disposal, if generated, will be removed according to state and local regulations. Normal traffic on local streets may be flagged at various times to allow entry and exit of construction equipment to the project site and would be restored after construction has been completed.

FRA finds that based on the evaluation the construction traffic will cease following completion of the Project, and the construction or operation of the Alton Multimodal Transportation Center will not adversely impact rail or motor vehicle transportation.

Indirect and Cumulative Impacts: The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations define indirect (secondary) impacts as those that are "…caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include growth inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural system, including ecosystems" (40 CFR § 1508.8b). The Project could result in indirect impacts as the new station may result in a change in the current land use as a result of redevelopment of neighbor businesses in the vicinity of the UPRR tracks. Local review boards will be responsible for investigating the impacts to water, sewer, traffic, and other environmental factors from future development.

Under CEQ regulations, cumulative effects are defined as "…the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or nonfederal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time" (40 CFR § 1508.7). The Project may generate cumulative impacts with potential new residential and commercial construction activities on the adjacent land to the planned High Speed Rail improvements. However, these construction activities are an undertaking of the City of Alton and may have occurred at this site regardless of the proposed station location.

Public Comments on the Environmental Assessment: Coordination efforts began in the early stages of the Project and were designed to maintain consistent communication with residents, public officials, businesses, property owners, stakeholders, and regulatory agencies during the environmental process. On April 5, 2013 the EA was released for 30-day public review and comment period. The document was on display at the Alton City Hall, IDOT and FRA websites. On April 25, 2013 an open house was held at the Alton City Hall, where the public were welcome to attend the meeting to review the document, provide comment and ask questions of the Project team.

One comment was received from the public on the EA during the 30-day circulation of the document. That comment is attached to the FONSI, and discusses the following topics. FRA's response is included.

Alternatives Analysis: The comment stated that the Alternatives Analysis was not made available. However, the Alternatives Analysis was included as an appendix to the EA and is available on the IDOT website. The alternatives evaluation process consisted of the following tasks: (1) Identifying the range of possible alternatives; (2) Screening the alternatives for their benefits and impacts; (3) Comparing the alternatives; and, (4) Recommending the reasonable alternatives for further evaluation within the EA.

TIGER Grant: The comment contests the TIGER grant funding the Project. The City of Alton and MCT received a U.S. DOT TIGER Discretionary Grant on December 12, 2011 for this Project. IDOT is the Project Sponsor, and is managing the Project for the City of Alton and MCT. The TIGER grant funding will not be obligated, nor will a grant agreement be executed, until the appropriate NEPA documentation is completed. The EA, including the Alternatives Analysis and FONSI, is part of the NEPA process.

Section 4(f): The comment contends that the EA did not comply with Section 4(f). However, the Selected Alternative in the EA and this FONSI is not a designated Section 4(f) property under the DOT Act of 1966. The Alton City Council removed the former golf course land from the Alton Park & Recreation system and rezoned the area to a mixed-use transportation zoning district.

Single Action: The comment states that the EA does not address the entire Project. However, the EA does evaluate the Project that includes a completely new train station facility with multi-use development that will replace the existing Alton Amtrak station.

Railroad Corridor Transportation Plans: A Guidance Manual (FRA , 2005): The comment contests the EA's interpretation of the FRA's *Railroad Corridor Transportation Plans: A Guidance Manual*. IDOT used this guidance document to develop the criteria for the Project's Alternatives Analysis and to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Platforms are built as long as the longest anticipated train to avoid time-consuming double stop at the station and to allow maximum flexibility in train makeup. It is not desirable to build platforms on vertical (up and down) or horizontal (across) curves, and the guidance recommends a straight track for speed, safety, and crew visibility. Building platforms over bridges is expensive and not desirable during site planning.

Mitigation Measures: The Project will incorporate green space to preserve an archaeological site in place, as well as incorporate a planned landscape design with numerous old-growth trees appropriate to the area in such a manner to limit adverse visual qualities at the Project site.

Commitments and Mitigation Measures: IDOT will be required to comply with all applicable Federal, state, and local permitting requirements during the implementation of the Project; which will include:

- Public Law 95-217, Clean Water Act of 1977, 33 USC § 1251-1376
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, 16 USC § 470
- Section 404 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (CWA), 33 USC § 1344
- Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, 42 USC § 4601 et. seq
- Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, 42 FR 26961, signed May 24, 1977
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC Chapter 126, and 47 USC Chapter 5)

The following commitments and mitigation measures have been identified to further reduce impacts of the Project. Additional measures may also be implemented as necessary and as identified.

- Water Quality and Water Resources: Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, Water Quality Certification from the IEPA is required. Since the Project has the potential to disturb more than one acre, it may be subject to the requirement for a NPDES permit for stormwater discharges from the construction site. Permit coverage will be obtained, should it be necessary, under the IEPA General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Site Activities (NPDES Permit No. ILR10) under Section 402 of the Clean Water Act. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan will be prepared and implemented, if necessary, in accordance with requirements under the NPDES permit(s). BMPs such as silt fences, check dams, and appropriately sized sediment basins will be utilized during construction. Following construction, permanent BMPs will be installed to further reduce impacts such as permanent seeding and the use of native vegetation incorporated into the final landscape design.
- Wetlands: Impact to wetland areas would be minimized to the extent practicable as part of the site planning, with measures taken during construction to protect those where impact is avoidable. Additionally, the proposal requires action in regard to EO 11990, which covers wetland coordination, including any mitigation and permit requirements for Federal agencies. IDOT, UPRR, and USACE

have established agreements for the corresponding replacement ratios for wetlands. Any permits required by the USACE or IDNR will be secured prior to the start of construction.

- Threatened and Endangered Species: Appropriate state or federal permits will be sought if previously unidentified endangered species are identified during construction of the Project. In addition, all activity in the immediate area will cease if previously unidentified endangered species are identified during construction.
- Noise: To minimize or eliminate the effect of construction noise on these receptors, time restrictions will be used to limit the period of exposure to construction noise, with construction activity only occurring from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Adequate mufflers for all engines and engine driven construction equipment will also be required.
- Vibration: Measures will be taken to mitigate vibration impacts by restricting the procedures and time permitted for vibration-intensive activities, such as pile-driving, and by requiring vibration monitoring to certify compliance with vibration limits.
- Public Health and Safety: Measures will be taken during the construction phase to coordinate with emergency service providers in order to mitigate any potential impacts due to construction activity conflicts.
- Hazardous Materials: Known or potential contaminated sites will be identified prior to construction activities that could involve the release or transport of contaminated materials, and appropriate measures will be implemented, in accordance with State and Federal requirements.
- Cultural Resources: A MOA has been developed and executed between the FRA, IDOT, SHPO, the City of Alton, and the UPRR to assure that the existing Alton Amtrak Station will be preserved. The MOA is attached to this FONSI.
- Construction Impacts: Prior to construction, erosion control fencing will be placed at the limits of construction. Zones of fill, grading, compaction, or equipment movement will be restricted to areas outside the protective fencing. Impacts from silt and sedimentation will be minimized through adherence to erosion control measures outlined in IDOT's Standard Specification's for Road and Bridge Construction, January 1, 2012. As mentioned in water quality and water resources mitigation, NPDES and Section 404 permits will be required as well as a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). BMPs for dust and noise suppression will be followed. Debris and spoil disposal, if generated, will be removed according to state and local regulations.

Conclusion: FRA finds that the Alton Regional Multimodal Transportation Center Project, as presented and assessed in the attached Environmental Assessment (EA), satisfies the requirements of FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts (64 FR 28545, May 26, 1999) and NEPA (42 USC § 4321), and the Project would have no foreseeable significant impact on the quality of the human or natural environment provided it is implemented in accordance with the commitments identified in this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). As the Project sponsor, IDOT is responsible for ensuring all environmental commitments identified in this FONSI are fully implemented. The EA provides sufficient evidence and analysis for FRA to determine that an environmental impact statement is not required for the Project as presented.

Joseph C. Szabo
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration

MAY 2 1 2013
Date

This document has been prepared in accordance with FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts and NEPA by the FRA's Office of Railroad Policy and Development, with assistance from the Office of Chief Counsel. This document was prepared in May 2013. For further information regarding this document contact:

Andréa E. Martin
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590
Phone: (202) 493-6201

The following organization assisted the Program Office in the preparation of the attached Environmental Assessment:

IDOT Bureau of High Speed and Passenger Rail
James R. Thompson Center
100 West Randolph Street, Suite 6-600
Chicago, IL 60601

Attachments:
Environmental Assessment
Memorandum of Agreement
Comment Letter