



April 5, 2011

Maryland Department of the Environment
Wetlands and Waterways Program
Deputy Program Administrator
Attn: Mr. Elder A. Ghigiarelli
1800 Washington Boulevard
Baltimore, Maryland 21230

**SUBJECT: FEDERAL COASTAL ZONE CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION FOR
CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW BUS OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE
FACILITY, WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT
AUTHORITY, PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Dear Mr. Ghigiarelli,

This Federal Coastal Zone Management Program Consistency Determination request is submitted pursuant to Section 307(c)(1) of the Coastal Zone Management Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1456, as amended, and Title 15 Code of Federal Regulations Part 930, sub-part C.

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is proposing to construct a new bus operations and maintenance facility in Prince George's County, Maryland. The purpose of the proposed action is to replace the existing Southern Avenue Bus Garage. The replacement of the Southern Avenue Bus Garage will enable the continuation and improvement of bus service to communities throughout the District of Columbia and the southern portion of Prince George's County, Maryland, by accommodating modern Metrobuses and providing for recent and future increases in system capacity. This action would further the vision and existing plans adopted by WMATA by supporting Metrobus ridership growth and network expansion.

Project Description

WMATA is considering three alternatives, two new facility sites and a rebuild-in-place option, for this proposed action. A preferred site has not been chosen.

Alternative A would be built on a 36-acre parcel, just south of Suitland Parkway and west of its intersection with Forestville Road in District Heights, Prince George's County, Maryland (see Figure 1). The facility would include 21.7 acres of impervious surface and include the following elements: (1) a bus parking lot, (2) a staff parking lot, and (3) a 118,000-square foot maintenance and operations facility building.

Alternative B would be built at a 52.5-acre vacant industrial site just south of Westphalia Road and east of its intersection with Pennsylvania Avenue in Upper Marlboro, Prince George's County, Maryland (see Figure 2). The facility would include 18.9 acres of impervious surface and include the following elements: (1) a bus parking lot, (2) a staff parking lot, and (3) a 157,000-square foot maintenance and operations facility building.

Alternative C would involve modifying and expanding the existing facility at its present location from approximately 6 acres to 8.2 acres. The site is located just south of the

**Washington
Metropolitan Area
Transit Authority**

600 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001
202/962-1234

intersection of Southern Avenue and Marlboro Pike in Prince George's County, Maryland (see Figure 3). The facility would include the following elements: (1) a parking structure for buses and staff, (2) a 59,000-square foot maintenance facility building, and (3) a 34,000-square-foot commercial retail and operations facility building.

Impacts to Coastal Zone Resources

As discussed below, implementation of any of the alternatives is not anticipated to result in any impact to coastal zone resources.

Critical Area Program

All three alternatives are located within Prince George's County, a designated Coastal Zone county; however, no alternative involves conducting work within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area and related buffers. Therefore, direct impact to the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area is not anticipated.

Other Impacts

a) Land Use

All alternatives involve a change to the existing land use. Alternative A would change the site from an undeveloped, treed lot to a built, developed property. Alternative B is a developed parcel, but the proposed facility would expand parking into areas that are currently undeveloped. Alternative C involves redeveloping several developed properties into an expanded facility and would result in some changes to landscaped areas.

b) Floodplains

None of the alternatives would involve constructing facilities in a floodplain. Review of Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) 245208 0040C and 245208 0060C shows that the sites of Alternatives B and C are outside the 100-year floodplain. Review of FIRM 245208 0060C shows that the site of Alternative A contains 607 square feet of floodplain. However, a site specific floodplain study (FPS) by Prince George's County Government, Department of Environmental Resources (FPS-200904) for the Alternative A site determined that the site is completely outside the 100-year floodplain.

c) Water Quality

Potential indirect impacts to water quality could occur due to erosion during construction operations. However, these impacts would be minimized through the implementation of standard best management practices. In the long term, implementation of any of the three alternatives would result in an increase in impervious surface, with the greatest increase under Alternative A and the smallest increase under Alternative C. An increase in impervious surface would lead to a

substantial increase in both the volume and peak discharge of stormwater generated by the sites.

Specific stormwater management features would be developed as the design process moves forward and incorporated into a stormwater management plan to be review and approved by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). Maryland requires the preparation of such a plan for all projects that disturb more than 5,000 square feet of land. Stormwater management plans must be consistent with the 2000 Maryland Stormwater Design Manual and the Stormwater Management Guidelines for State and Federal Projects issued by MDE in April 2010. Preparation and implementation of an approved stormwater management plan would ensure that long-term stormwater impacts are minimized to the maximum extent practicable.

As with any transportation facility, spills or leaks involving petroleum or chemicals could release pollutants into the environment. Precautions would be taken to avoid spills and leaks and, if they do occur, to contain them.

d) Threatened and Endangered Species

One federally-listed species has been documented at sites in Prince George's County: the sensitive joint-vetch (*Aeschynomene virginica*), a threatened species. However, none of the sites considered contains the type of wet habitat favored by this plant. In response to a Section 7 consultation letter, dated February 1, 2011, the USFWS service found that "*Except for occasional transient individuals, no federally proposed or listed endangered or threatened species are known to exist within the project impact area*" (See attachment). Therefore, the proposed action is not expected to affect threatened or endangered species.

e) Wetlands and Waters of the U.S.

Wetlands have been delineated for the Alternatives A and B sites. The Alternative C site is contains no wetlands. The Alternative B site has non-tidal wetlands within its boundary. Three palustrine non-tidal wetlands, totaling 64,258 square feet (1.48 acres), are located within the boundary of the Alternative B site. No construction would take place within these wetland areas or immediately adjacent to them. During construction activities, precautions would be taken to avoid disturbing the wetland area (for instance, by not storing equipment or parking vehicles in them). Therefore, no impact to these wetlands is anticipated.

Additionally, approximately 1,506 linear feet of Waters of the U.S., in the form of freshwater streams, are located on the Alternative B site. Under current concept plans, approximately 127 linear feet of Waters of the U.S. and associated buffers, could be impacted by the implementation of Alternative B by the construction of the new bus parking spaces. However, as plans are developed further, the project footprint could be redesigned to avoid all impacts to Waters of the U.S., including

Mr. Elder A. Ghigiarelli

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wetlands and, therefore, no impacts are anticipated. If impacts cannot be avoided, then those impacts would need to be mitigated through compliance with Sections 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act. All unavoidable impacts would require filing a Joint Federal/State Application for the Alteration of any Floodplain, Waterway, Tidal or Nontidal Wetlands, to be approved by the Maryland Department of Environment. Measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate the expected impacts would be developed as part of the permitting process. Confirmation of this status is pending review with the USACE and MDE. No streams exist on the sites of Alternative A and C.

f) Forest and Vegetative Cover

Of the three alternative sites, only those of Alternatives A and B have significant forest cover. The Alternative A site has 36 acres of existing forest, of which 24 acres would be cleared during the development process. The Alternative B site has 26.6 acres of existing forest, of which 6.4 acres would be cleared during the development process. All sites are subject to the provisions of the Maryland Forest Conservation Act. Consistent with the Act's requirements, a Forest Conservation Plan would be developed. This plan would account for all clearing of forested land and define the applicable requirements for reforestation, either on or offsite, to mitigate the impact from clearing.

Pursuant to 15 CFR 930.41, the Maryland Department of the Environmental – Wetland & Waterways Program has 60 days from receipt of this letter to concur with, or object to this Federal Consistency Determination, or to request an extension in writing under 15 CFR 930.41 (b). Concurrence will be assumed if no response is received after 60 days from receipt of this letter.

The state's response should be sent to:

James A. Ashe, PE, CPG
Manager, Environmental Planning and Compliance
Office of Chief Engineer, Infrastructure
Transit Infrastructure and Engineering Services
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 5th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Mr. Elder A. Ghigiarelli

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WMATA is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed action in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The lead federal agency is the Federal Transit Administration. When complete, the EA will be submitted to your office for comments.

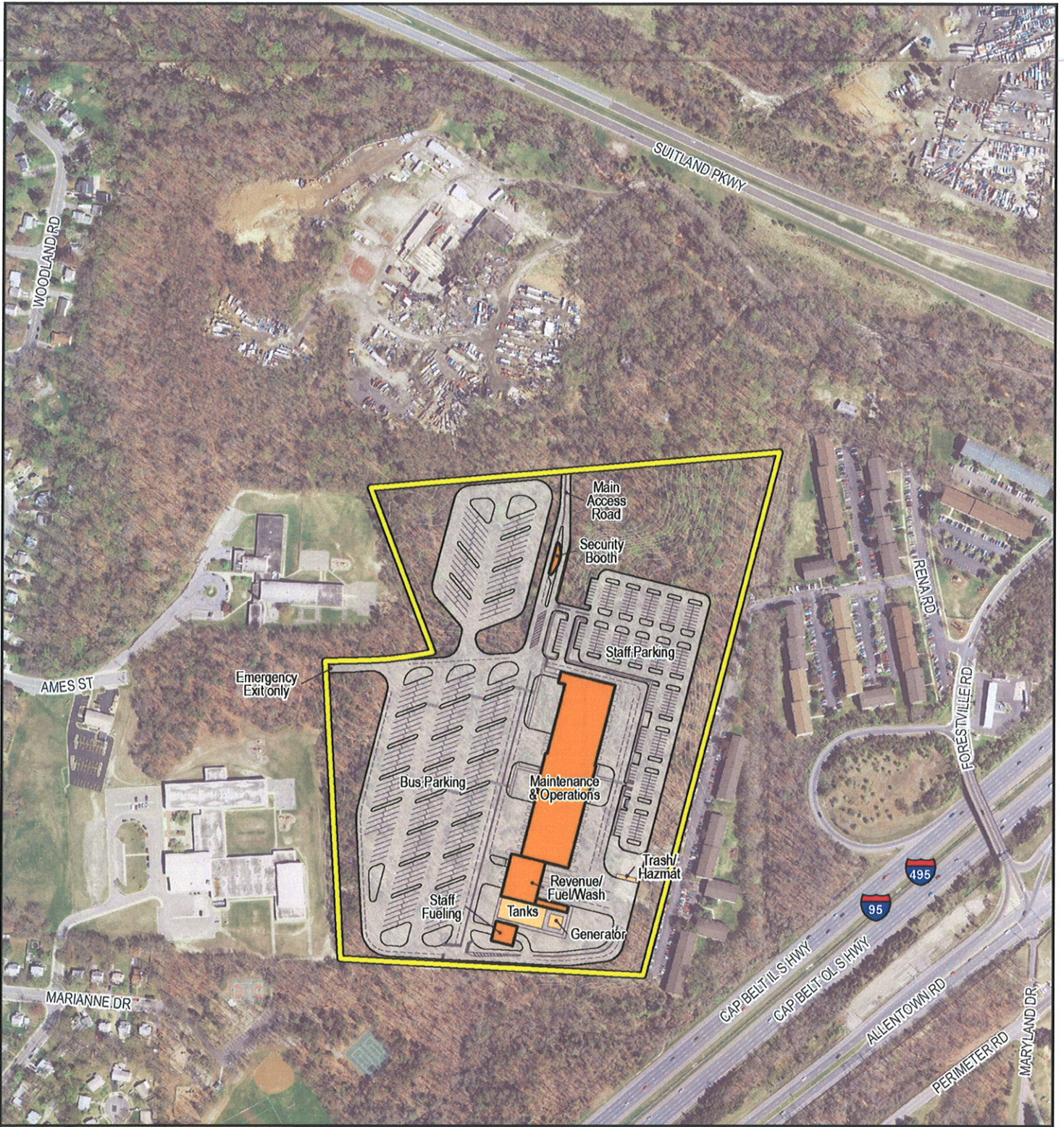
If you have questions please feel free to contact me at (202) 962-1745.

Sincerely,

James A. Ashe, PE, CPG
Manager, Environmental Planning and Compliance
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Enclosures:

1. Figure 1: Build Alternative A Proposed Concept Plan
2. Figure 2: Build Alternative B Proposed Concept Plan
3. Figure 3: Build Alternative C Proposed Concept Plan
4. USFWS Section 7 consultation letter



LEGEND

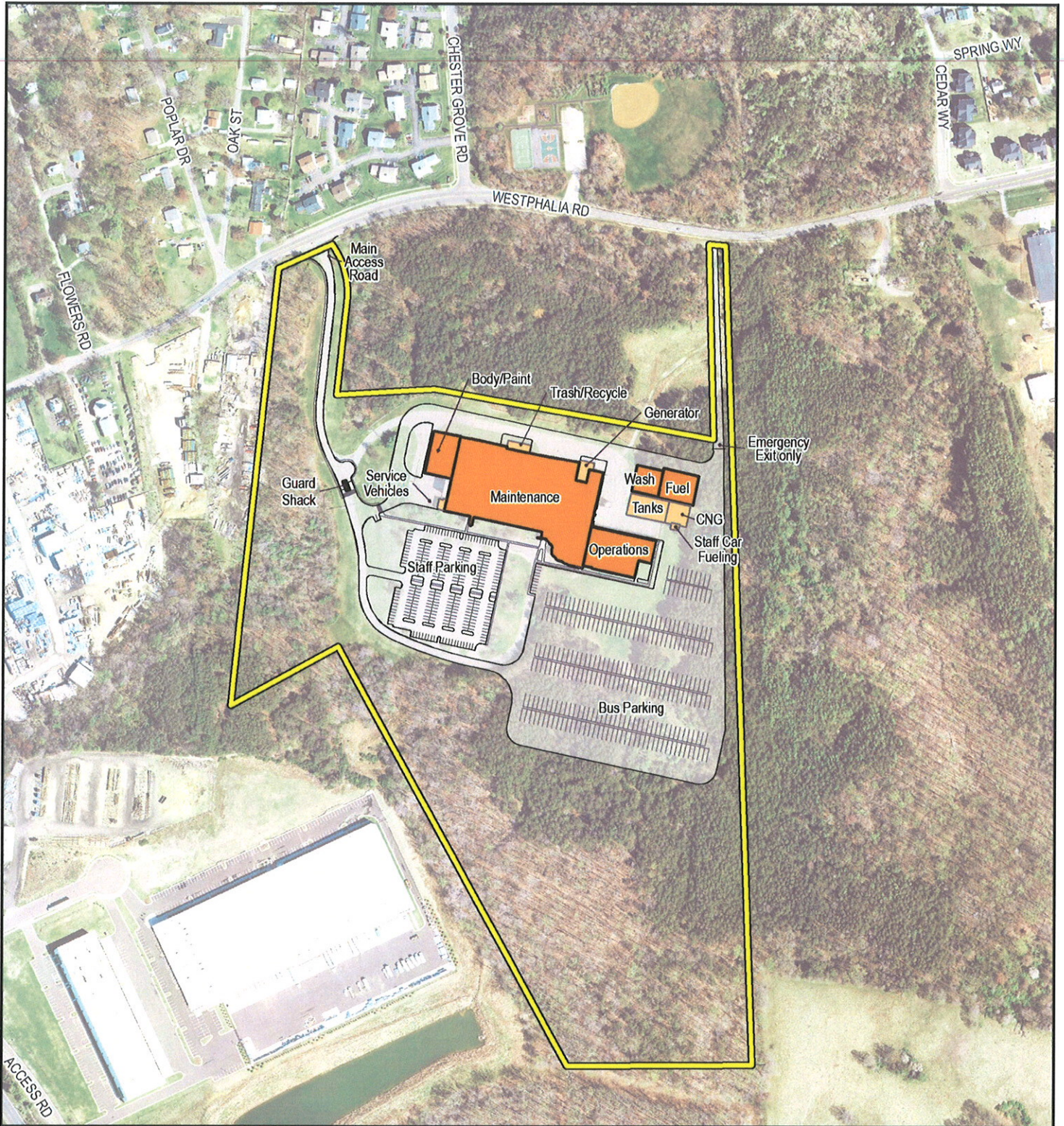
- Proposed Alternative
- ★ Alternative A - Site Location
- ☆ Alternatives B and C - Site Location

Figure 1:




**Build Alternative A
Proposed Concept Plan**

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Feet

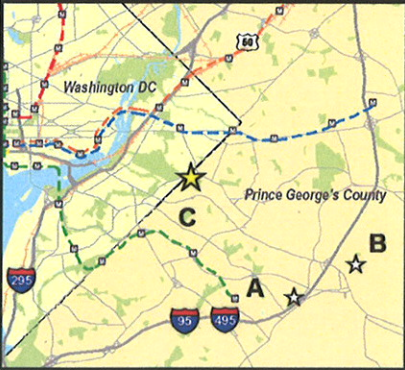


LEGEND

-  Proposed Alternative
-  Alternative B - Site Location
-  Alternatives A and C - Site Location

**Figure 2:
Build Alternative B
Proposed Concept Plan**





- LEGEND**
- Proposed Alternative
 - District of Columbia Boundary
 - ★ Alternative C - Site Location
 - ★ Alternatives A and B - Site Location

Figure 3:

**Build Alternative C
Proposed Concept Plan**

0 100 200

Feet



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Chesapeake Bay Field Office
177 Admiral Cochrane Drive
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
<http://www.fws.gov/chesapeakebay>

February 1, 2011

United States Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration
1760 Market Street
Suite 500
Philadelphia, PA 19103-4124

*RE: WMATA Project Review Request, Southern Avenue Bus Garage Replacement
Environmental Assessment*

Dear Letitia A. Thompson:

This responds to your letter, received, December 28, 2010, requesting information on the presence of species which are federally listed or proposed for listing as endangered or threatened within the vicinity of the above reference project area. We have reviewed the information you enclosed and are providing comments in accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Except for occasional transient individuals, no federally proposed or listed endangered or threatened species are known to exist within the project impact area. Therefore, no Biological Assessment or further section 7 Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is required. Should project plans change, or if additional information on the distribution of listed or proposed species becomes available, this determination may be reconsidered.

This response relates only to federally protected threatened or endangered species under our jurisdiction. For information on the presence of other rare species, you should contact Lori Byrne of the Maryland Wildlife and Heritage Division at (410) 260-8573.

Effective August 8, 2007, under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) removed (delist) the bald eagle in the lower 48 States of the United States from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife. However, the bald eagle will still be protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, Lacey Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. As a result, starting on August 8, 2007, if your project may cause "disturbance" to the bald eagle, please consult the "National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines" dated May 2007.

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If any planned or ongoing activities cannot be conducted in compliance with the National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines (Eagle Management Guidelines), please contact the Chesapeake Bay Ecological Services Field Office at 410-573-4573 for technical assistance. The Eagle Management Guidelines can be found at:

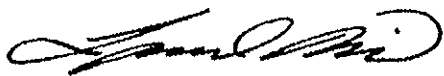
<http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/issues/BaldEagle/NationalBaldEagleManagementGuidelines.pdf>.

In the future, if your project can not avoid disturbance to the bald eagle by complying with the Eagle Management Guidelines, you will be able to apply for a permit that authorizes the take of bald and golden eagles under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, generally where the take to be authorized is associated with otherwise lawful activities. This proposed permit process will not be available until the Service issues a final rule for the issuance of these take permits under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

An additional concern of the Service is wetlands protection. Federal and state partners of the Chesapeake Bay Program have adopted an interim goal of no overall net loss of the Basin's remaining wetlands, and the long term goal of increasing the quality and quantity of the Basin's wetlands resource base. Because of this policy and the functions and values wetlands perform, the Service recommends avoiding wetland impacts. All wetlands within the project area should be identified, and if construction in wetlands is proposed, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, should be contacted for permit requirements. They can be reached at (410) 962-3670.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide information relative to fish and wildlife issues, and thank you for your interests in these resources. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact Devin Ray at (410) 573-4531.

Sincerely,



Leopoldo Miranda
Supervisor



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Transit
Administration**

REGION III
Delaware, District of
Columbia, Maryland,
Pennsylvania, Virginia,
West Virginia

1760 Market Street
Suite 500
Philadelphia, PA 19103-4124
215-656-7100
215-656-7260 (fax)

December 23, 2010

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Region 5
177 Admiral Cochrane Drive
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: WMATA Project Review Request, Southern Avenue Bus Garage Replacement
Environmental Assessment**

Dear Sir or Madam,

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is preparing an environmental study of a proposed replacement of the Southern Avenue Bus Garage located at the intersection of Southern Avenue and Marlboro Pike in Prince George's County, Maryland. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is the lead federal agency for the project and has determined that the appropriate class of action for this project is an Environmental Assessment (EA). The project team is preparing the EA to meet federal requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA).

The replacement of the Southern Avenue Bus Garage is necessary for the continuation and improvement of bus service to communities throughout the District of Columbia and the southern portion of Prince George's County, MD. The existing facility, built in 1922, houses only standard diesel buses and exceeds its efficient capacity by nearly 25%. A new bus facility would be able to accommodate modern Metrobuses as well as provide for recent and future increases in system capacity. Program requirements for a new bus facility include the following:

- Capacity to accommodate a fleet of up to 250 Metrobuses, including up to 20 articulated buses;
- Parking and storage for Metrobuses;
- Maintenance and administrative building;
- Employee parking;
- Service lane facility where fueling, washing and fare box collections are conducted;
- CNG fueling facility;
- Perimeter and other landscaping;
- Security fencing or other security measures; and
- Storm water management measures.

Letter to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 5
Re: WMATA Project Review Request, Southern Avenue Bus Garage Replacement
Environmental Assessment
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The EA for the replacement of the Southern Avenue Bus Garage will evaluate a No-Build Alternative in addition to three Build Alternatives. This includes two private sector developer proposals to develop a new bus operations and maintenance facility at two alternative site locations in Prince George's County, located within 5 miles of the existing facility, as well as a third option of rebuilding the facilities at the existing site. The three Build Alternative locations under consideration are described below. See Figures 1 and 2 for location and study area maps of the three sites and Figure 3 for the USGS Quadrangle Maps.

Alternative A

Alternative A is approximately up to 36 acres in size, located northwest of the Joint Base Andrews Naval Air Facility and southwest of the intersection of Suitland Parkway and the Capital Beltway (I-95/I-495). It is currently an undeveloped site, heavily wooded and abuts a multi-family residential site (Upper Marlboro Quadrangle).

Alternative B

Alternative B is approximately up to 69 acres in size, located northeast of the intersection of Suitland Parkway and the Capital Beltway (I-95/I-495). The site was originally used as a Pepco Production and Training Facility, and consists of a 100,000 square-foot shop and warehouse space; a 50,000 square-foot two-story office space; a two-lane access road and 295 parking spaces (Upper Marlboro Quadrangle).

Alternative C

Alternative C would rebuild the existing facilities at Southern Avenue on up to approximately 8.5 acres. During construction, the existing facility would be closed and all functions would be relocated to the planned D.C. Village garage (Anacostia Quadrangle).

Through a query of the Chesapeake Bay Field Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website, the federally listed threatened species, sensitive Joint-vetch (*Aeschynomene virginica*) is listed for Prince George's County, Maryland. No other federal threatened or endangered species were noted to be listed for Prince George's County, Maryland. Also noted during the query, the Upper Marlboro quadrangle has been cleared for not having any federally listed species. However, the Anacostia Quadrangle was not identified as having been "cleared".

Habitat requirements for the sensitive Joint-vetch includes the intertidal zones of fresh to brackish tidal river segments that experience twice daily flooding, typically in areas where sediments accumulate and extensive marshes are formed. These habitats occur only along stretches of river close enough to the coast to be influenced by tides, yet far enough upstream where the water is fresh to slightly brackish.

Letter to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 5
Re: WMATA Project Review Request, Southern Avenue Bus Garage Replacement
Environmental Assessment
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No such habitat is located on or in the vicinity of the listed Alternative C, which is located on the existing site of the current Southern Avenue Bus Garage. This site is entirely developed, with no natural water features on or adjacent to the site.


As such, it is FTA's opinion that the required habitat for the sensitive Joint-vetch does not have the potential to be affected by the proposed project.

FTA is requesting U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurrence, under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, that the project is not likely to adversely affect federally listed threatened or endangered species.

If you have any further questions, please contact Ms. Melissa Barlow by telephone at (202) 219-3565 or by email at melissa.barlow@dot.gov.

Sincerely,



 Letitia A. Thompson
Regional Administrator

Enclosures:

Figure 1: Location Map

Figure 2: Study Area Maps

Figure 3: USGS Quadrangles (Upper Marlboro and Anacostia)

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cc: Melissa Barlow, FTA-DC Metro Office
Katie Grasty, FTA Office of Planning and Environment
Jim Ashe, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Figure 1

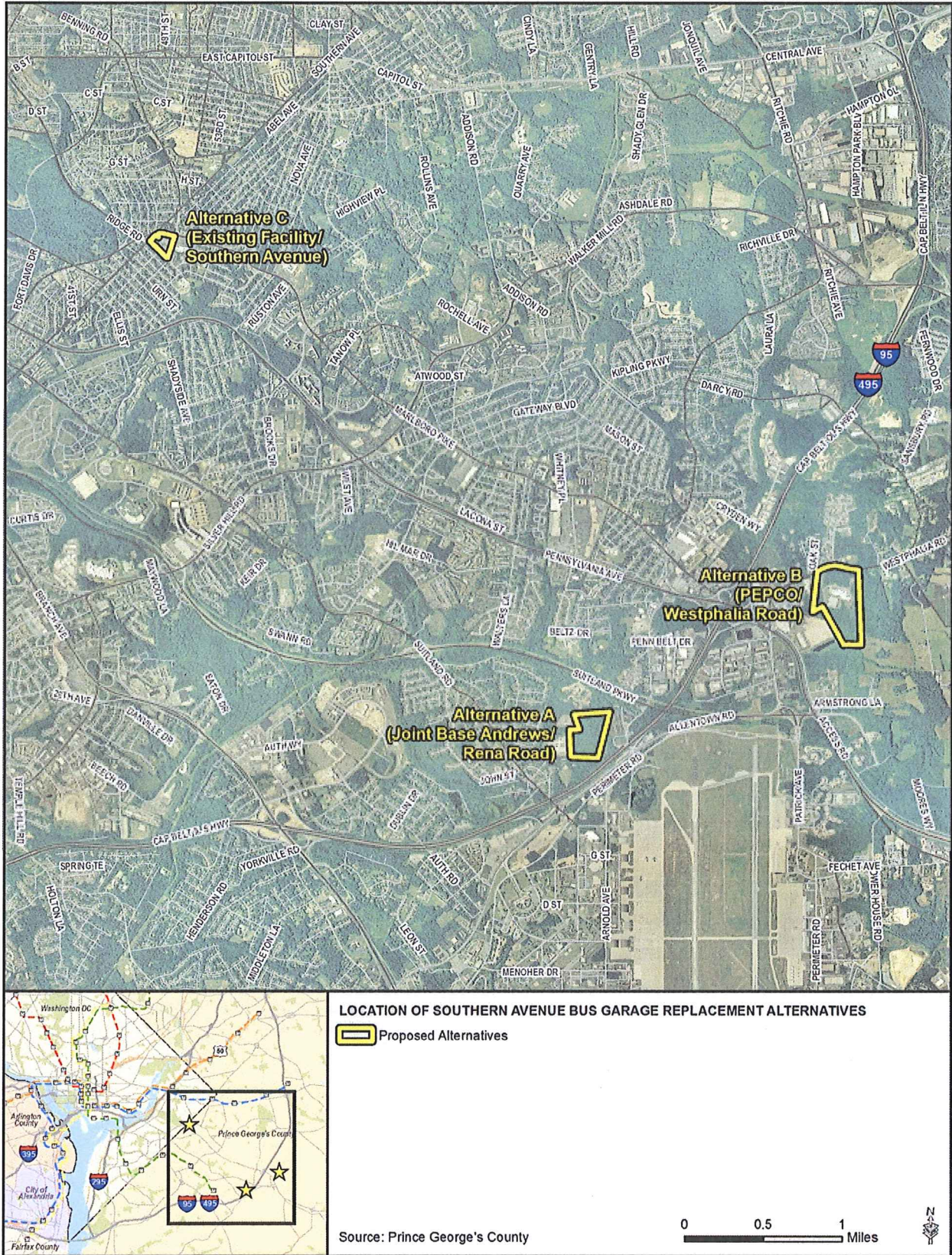


Figure 2

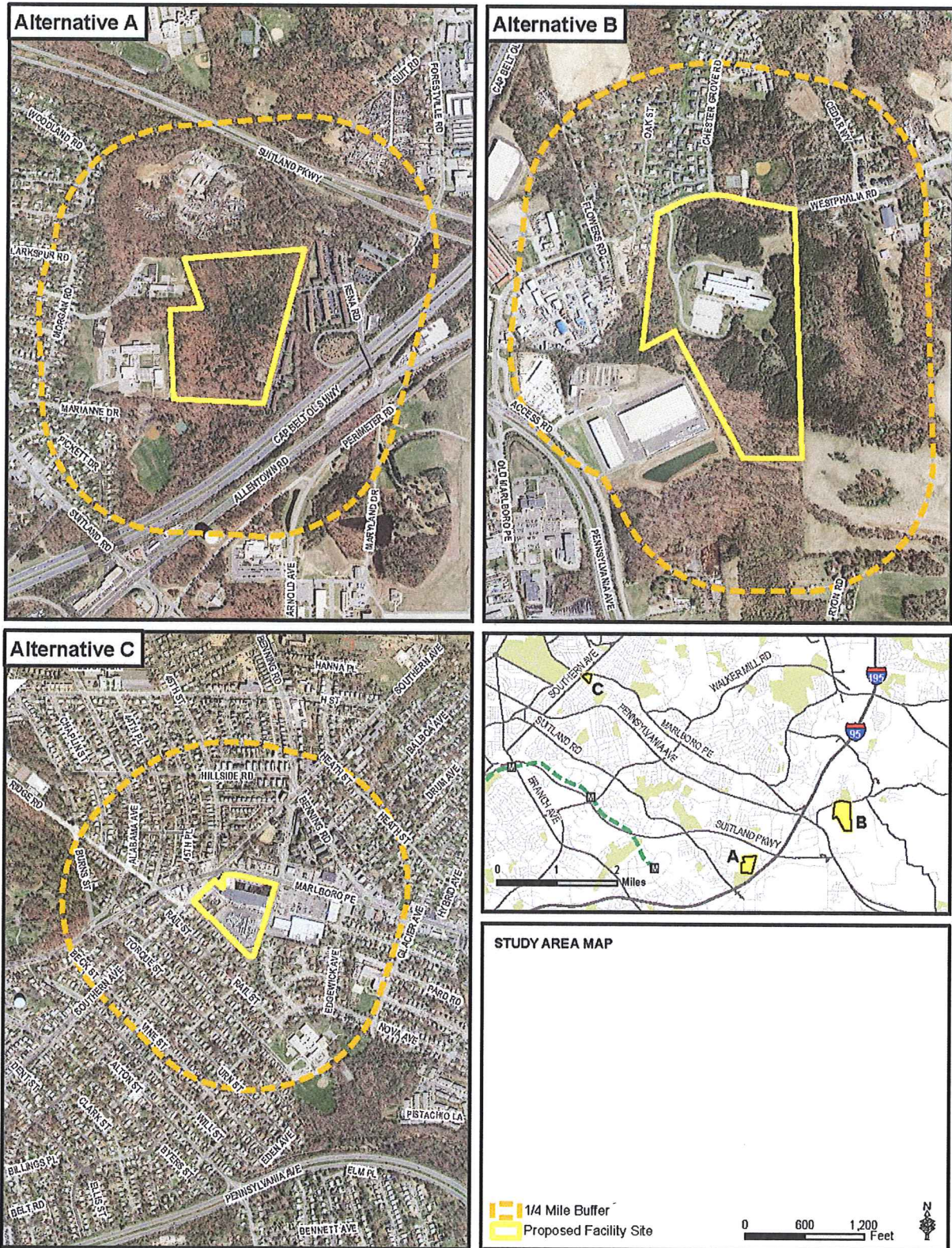


Figure 3

