

6.0 ALTERNATIVES CARRIED FORWARD IN THE FINAL EIS

This chapter provides brief introductions to the alternatives to be examined in the Final EIS: the No Build Alternative and the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA).

6.1 NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE

For the Final EIS, the No Build Alternative is an updated version of the Baseline Alternative evaluated in the Draft EIS. In the Draft EIS, all Build Alternatives for the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project were evaluated against the Baseline Alternative. This alternative represented the no-build condition for the corridor, and included all existing highway and transit infrastructure and services within the corridor, plus any that were committed to be implemented by 2025, aside from the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project. For consistency purposes in terms of the need for a comparative evaluation, the Build Alternatives evaluated in the Supplemental Draft EIS were also evaluated against the No Build Alternative included in the Draft EIS.

For the Final EIS, the No Build Alternative reflects changes in the existing highway and transit networks and changes in future plans for infrastructure and services. Several of the planned projects in the Draft EIS Baseline Alternative were completed and some transit services have been modified. In addition, plans for future improvements have been amended due to recent events, budget concerns, and changes in priorities.

- In November 2002, a transportation sales tax referendum put to the Northern Virginia voters failed to pass, making funding questionable for some of the projects previously included in long-range plans. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the counties were forced to rethink their long-range plans, and some of the projects included in the Draft EIS Baseline are no longer expected to be implemented by 2025.
- Also in November 2002, the WMATA Board approved the transit agency's 10-Year Capital Improvement Program. This program integrated the recommendations of the Infrastructure Renewal Program, the Metrorail Core Capacity Study, the WMATA Regional Bus Study, and the Transit Service Expansion Plan. While many of these studies and plans reflected the scope of needed improvements under unconstrained financial conditions, this CIP reflects the anticipated funding capacities of WMATA Compact member jurisdictions. As a result, some of the operational improvements assumed for regional Metrorail in the Draft EIS Baseline (per the Core Capacity recommendations) are no longer expected to be implemented.
- The Washington metropolitan region is currently in the process of developing the 2003 update to its Financially Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP). The Draft EIS Baseline was based on the projects included in the 2000 CLRP, which was the last comprehensive update of the CLRP (including financial analysis). Federal planning regulations require that the long range plan be updated every three years to reflect changes in funding capacities and anticipated needs.

For the current update cycle, the list of projects submitted for inclusion (or deletion) in the 2003 Update was approved by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) in May 2003. The Final EIS No Build Alternative reflects these proposed updates. The technical analysis of the financial element of the CLRP was completed in July 2003, and the CLRP is currently being reviewed for conformity with the region's air quality plans. It is anticipated that the 2003 CLRP will be approved in November 2004.

The table in Appendix E presents a detailed comparison of the Draft EIS Baseline and Final EIS No Build alternatives. Some of the major changes for the Final EIS are summarized in the following sections.

6.1.1 CHANGES FOR TRANSIT NETWORK

In the Draft EIS Baseline, the transit network reflected the existing services in 2001 and planned improvements to transit services. Planned improvements included those in the 2000 CLRP, those in local transit plans, and several improvements to the Metrorail system needed to meet forecast travel demand, which were expected to be included in WMATA's capital improvement program. Since publication of the Draft EIS, both existing services and planned improvements have been modified.

Fairfax County

During preparation of the Draft EIS, Fairfax County had extensive plans in place for expanding their transit service. As outlined in the Draft EIS Baseline description, planned enhancements included improved peak and midday headways for Reston circulator services and an increase in peak-period service from Reston to Tysons Corner Center and the West Falls Church Metrorail Station. Since the publication of the Draft EIS, these planned improvements have been implemented, and are included in the Final EIS No Build as part of the existing transit network.

Planned improvements included in the Final EIS No Build Alternative include construction of a transit center at Reston Town Center, and slight modification of routes to connect to the transit center when complete. Minor improvements in service frequencies are also included for some routes.

Loudoun County

Since publication of the Draft EIS, Loudoun County has modified their existing transit services by increasing the number of express trips, implementing reverse commute trips between West Falls Church Metrorail Station and the Dulles North Transit Center (DNTC) and the AOL and MCI campuses, and by implementing local services in the Sterling area and along Route 7. These changes were not part of the planned improvements reflected in the Draft EIS Baseline.

The Final EIS No Build Alternative includes these new existing services and reflects future plans for two new local routes—one providing circulation between the DNTC and Dulles Town Center, the other between the DNTC and Dulles Airport. The No Build also includes slight increases in trip frequencies for express routes and the County's reverse commute route.

WMATA

In June 2003, WMATA implemented a fare increase for both Metrobus and Metrorail. The base boarding fare for both bus and Metrorail increased from \$1.10 to \$1.20. Increases in maximum fares varied for the two modes. Parking rates were also increased across the board by \$0.75.

Metrobus. Some of the Metrobus routes in Tysons Corner have been modified slightly. These changes do not reflect improvements that were included in the Draft EIS Baseline. The Final EIS No Build Alternative incorporates the route modifications, and the planned improvements that were included in the Draft EIS Baseline have been changed to reflect this change in existing services.

Metrorail. WMATA has recently modified the supplemental peak hour service that operates on the Orange Line between West Falls Church and New Carrollton stations. Some of the supplemental trains now operate between Vienna and New Carrollton. Like the West Falls Church supplemental service, the Vienna supplemental service only operates in the peak direction in the peak hour (a.m. and p.m.).

The Draft EIS Baseline included several recommendations from the Metrorail Core Capacity Study that would be required to meet forecast increases in transit demand. These improvements included the expansion of peak-period train consists on the Orange and Blue lines from six to eight cars, the associated upgrade of traction power systems, and two major upgrades of the train control system—one to allow for precise stopping of eight-car trains at stations, and the other to allow trains to run closer together along the mainline tracks in the system's core. These improvements were expected to be included in the capital improvement program (CIP) being drafted by WMATA at the time the Draft EIS was published.

The 10-Year CIP approved in November 2002 included many of the Core Capacity recommendations assumed in the Draft EIS baseline, but did not include the train control upgrades that would be required to operate trains with closer spacing in the core. As a result, WMATA adjusted their planned future operating plans for the Metrorail system. Peak-period service frequencies on the Orange and Blue lines will be reduced from 6-minute headways (10 trains per hour) to approximately 7 minutes (8 to 9 trains per hour), and half of the peak-period Blue Line trains will be diverted from the Rosslyn tunnel to the Yellow Line. Additional service will be added to the Orange Line, which will operate between Vienna and Largo (on the Blue Line). Supplemental Orange Line service will continue to operate from Vienna and West Falls Church. The Final EIS No Build Alternative reflects this change in operations.

6.1.2 CHANGES FOR HIGHWAY NETWORK

Several of the planned improvements included in the Draft EIS Baseline for regional highways and other major roadways have been removed from the Final EIS No Build Alternative, and some new improvements have been added. Below, differences between the Draft EIS Baseline and the Final EIS No Build Alternative highway networks are summarized. Note that the dates by which the projects are expected to be complete correspond to the analysis years for the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project (2009, anticipated opening year for the first phase; 2015, anticipated opening year for the full LPA; 2025, forecast horizon year). Projects may be completed prior to the years indicated.

- **I-495.** In addition to the improvements included in the Draft EIS Baseline, the Final EIS No Build Alternative includes the widening of westbound and eastbound ramps at the I-495/Dulles Toll Road interchange. The ramp from the outer loop to the westbound Toll Road will be widened to two lanes. The exit from the eastbound Toll Road to I-495 will be widened to two lanes. These improvements are expected to be complete by 2009.
- **Dulles Greenway.** The Final EIS No Build Alternative includes proposed new interchanges at Route 653 and Route 654, in addition to the widening of the Greenway to six lanes between Route 901 and the Routes 7/15 Bypass. The interchanges are expected to be in place by 2009,

- while the widening is expected to be complete by 2025. Note: the planned widening of the Greenway between Route 901 and the mainline toll plaza is now complete.
- **Route 7.** The Final EIS No Build Alternative does not include proposed grade-separated interchanges at Route 7/International Drive or Route 7/Westpark Drive. The No Build also does not include proposed improvements at the Route 7/Route 123 interchange.
 - **Route 123.** The Final EIS No Build Alternative does not include the proposed grade-separated interchange at Route 123/International Drive. Note: the planned widening of Route 123 between I-495 and the Dulles Connector Road is now complete.
 - **Route 28.** The proposed improvements included in the Draft EIS Baseline are more clearly defined in the Final EIS No Build Alternative. By 2015, the road is expected to be widened to eight lanes and upgraded to a freeway between Route 7 and I-66. The segments between Sterling Boulevard and Route 606, and between McLearen Road and Route 50, are expected to be complete by 2009. New grade-separated interchanges at Sterling Boulevard, Route 606, the National Air and Space Museum, McLearen Road, and Westfields Boulevard are expected to be complete by 2009.
 - **Route 50.** The Final EIS No Build Alternative does not include the proposed widening of Route 50 between the Fairfax/Loudoun county boundary and Old Lee Road.
 - **Loudoun County Parkway.** In addition to the improvements included in the Draft EIS Baseline, the Final EIS No Build Alternative includes the construction of Loudoun County Parkway between the Dulles Greenway and Route 234. The proposed construction segments are expected to be complete as follows: Braddock Road to the Greenway by 2009, I-66 to Braddock Road by 2025, Route 234 to I-66 by 2015.
 - **Spring Hill Road.** The Final EIS No Build Alternative includes the planned widening of Spring Hill Road only between Route 7 and International Drive. The widening is expected to be complete by 2009.
 - **Monroe Street.** The Final EIS No Build Alternative does not include the proposed widening of Monroe Street through the area of analysis for the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project.
 - **Centreville Road/Elden Street.** In addition to the improvements included in the Draft EIS Baseline, the Final EIS No Build Alternative includes the widening of Elden Street to six lanes between Fairfax County Parkway and Herndon Parkway (East). This widening is expected to be complete by 2015.
 - **Route 789.** The Final EIS No Build Alternative does not include the proposed widening or extension of Route 789 to Waxpool Road.

6.2 LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

It is anticipated that the LPA for the Final EIS will be very similar to the LPA evaluated in the Supplemental Draft EIS and presented in Section 4.3. The design of the LPA may be further modified based on the results of the public review and comment period for the Supplemental Draft EIS and additional agency coordination.

In addition, the operating plan for the LPA would be modified to be consistent with the Metrorail and local bus operating changes identified for the No Build Alternative in Section 5.1. The Final EIS LPA would include 8-car trains operating at headways of approximately 7 minutes during the peak period (8 to 9 trains per hour), and 4-car trains operating at 12-minute headways in the off-peak period.

The evaluation presented in the Final EIS will address the effects of the full LPA and the Wiehle Avenue Extension in its opening year. The analysis will also consider the effects of the Wiehle Avenue Extension in 2025, if the full LPA is not implemented in its entirety.