AMENDED
RECORD OF DECISION

by the Federal Transit Administration

Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project
Fairfax and Loudoun Counties, Virginia

DECISION

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), in accordance with 23 CFR part 771, the regulation that governs the Federal environmental review process for transportation projects funded by the FTA, has decided that the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, have been satisfied for the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project. The Project, a planned extension of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) regional Metrorail system in Fairfax and Loudoun Counties, Virginia, will include 23.1 miles of electrically-powered rapid rail transit operating in an exclusive right-of-way with at-grade, aerial, and subway sections, 11 new stations, parking facilities, new and improved yard and shop facilities, rail vehicles, fare collection equipment, communications and train control systems, and ancillary facilities for the distribution of electrical power and stormwater management.

This FTA Record of Decision (ROD) applies to the Locally Preferred Alternative ("the Project"), as described in the Project’s December 2004 Final Environmental Impact Statement and Section 4(f) Evaluation (Final EIS) and modified in the February 2006 Preliminary Engineering Design Refinements Environmental Assessment. This Amended ROD replaces the FTA Record of Decision previously issued in March 2005. The Project sponsor, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), seeks financial assistance from FTA for the first phase of the Project (the Extension to Wiehle Avenue), which will extend from the existing Metrorail Orange Line near the West Falls Church Station and terminate at Wiehle Avenue in Reston. The second phase of the project (the Extension to Dulles Airport/Route 772) will extend west from Wiehle Avenue to Dulles International Airport and eastern Loudoun County. Once constructed and accepted by WMATA, each phase of the Project will be operated as part of the regional Metrorail system.

In addition to FTA, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) participated in the Project’s NEPA review as a cooperating agency because construction of the Project requires the use of airport property and FAA’s approval of the change in the Airport Layout Plan.

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1 Up to now, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) has been the sponsoring agency and the presumed recipient of any grant provided by FTA. However, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) is working with DRPT and FTA to take over as the Project sponsor, and if this change occurs, MWAA will become the recipient of any FTA grant already in place or awarded after such a transition. As a condition of any grant, FTA will require that the Project sponsor construct the Project in accordance with the environmental record referenced herein. (The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is not a Project sponsor, but is serving as technical manager to the Project since WMATA will assume ownership and operation of the Project after it is constructed.)

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BACKGROUND

The Dulles Corridor, located in Northern Virginia, west of the nation's capital, is home to several of the Washington metropolitan region's most dynamic and rapidly growing activity centers. Extending from the vicinity of West Falls Church Metrorail Station in Fairfax County, Virginia, to Route 772 in Loudoun County, Virginia, the 23.1-mile corridor includes the high-density office buildings and regional shopping centers of Tysons Corner; the residences, shopping centers, and suburban office complexes of the Reston-Herndon area; the rapidly growing Washington Dulles International Airport (Dulles Airport); and an emerging residential and employment center in eastern Loudoun County.

With the Dulles Corridor's increasing attractiveness as a place to live and work, travel in the corridor has been steadily growing over the past 15 years. This increasing travel demand has strained the capacity of the existing transportation network, causing delays and increasing travel times between activity centers within the corridor and the region. The central and eastern portions of the corridor currently experience some of the region's worst traffic congestion.

Over the next 25 years, continued development of the corridor as a regional employment destination and the maturation of residential communities and commercial areas within the corridor are expected to far outpace the growth of the region as a whole. Parallel increases in travel demand are projected to exceed the capacity of the corridor's already overburdened transportation system, resulting in severely congested conditions on numerous routes, further degradation of air quality, and a threat to the valued quality of life in the Dulles Corridor.

Planned roadway enhancements in the corridor are not expected to relieve the current levels of congestion and the ability to further expand roadway capacity beyond currently planned improvements is constrained by right-of-way limitations and federal air quality standards. For these reasons, alternative transportation improvements in the Dulles Corridor that would increase capacity and improve mobility without further expanding roadways, such as a high-quality, high-capacity rapid transit line, have long been the focus of public and private sector studies.

Rapid transit in the Dulles Corridor was initially explored in the 1950s as part of the planning of Dulles Airport. At that time, it was decided to reserve the median of the Dulles International Airport Access Highway (DIAAH), previously known as the Dulles Airport Access Road, for future transit access to the airport. In the late 1960s the need for transit in the corridor was evaluated during the planning of the regional Metrorail system. While Metrorail's original Adopted Regional System did not include a connection to Dulles Airport, extending rapid transit service to the airport has remained a local and regional goal.

In the 1990s, providing a rapid transit connection to Dulles Airport was evaluated in the Dulles Corridor Transportation Study (1997) and the Supplement to the Dulles Corridor Transportation Study (1999). The former, a Major Investment Study (MIS), recommended developing a rail line between the Metrorail Orange Line and Route 772 primarily using the median of the DIAAH.
The MIS Supplement in 1999 recommended developing this rail line through a phased implementation program that would begin with enhanced express bus services, then use bus rapid transit (BRT) technology to institute rapid transit service in the Dulles Corridor as quickly as possible. BRT is an emerging transit mode in which buses are used to provide high-quality service akin to a rapid rail system. The BRT line would then be converted to rail use over time.

The recommended transit alternatives for the Dulles Corridor were evaluated in the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Section 4(f) Evaluation (Draft EIS) published in June 2002. The results of the evaluation assisted the Commonwealth of Virginia, MWAA, WMATA, FTA, FAA, local and regional decision-makers, and the public in understanding the potential effects of the alternatives under consideration for the project. Based on the analysis contained in the Draft EIS, public comments received on the document, and agency coordination, in late 2002 an extension of the WMATA Metrorail from the existing Orange Line to Route 772 in Loudoun County was selected as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the project by both the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) and the WMATA Board of Directors. Like the alternative recommended in the 1997 MIS, the rail line would primarily use the median of the DIAAH, leaving the highway to directly serve Tysons Corner and Dulles Airport. However, unlike the recommendations of the MIS Supplement, the selected LPA was not proposed to be developed through a phased implementation program that included BRT as an interim step to rail.

Following the publication of the Draft EIS and selection of the Metrorail Alternative as the LPA, additional agency and public coordination resulted in revisions to the selected LPA. The potential effects of these changes—which included design modifications to the preferred alignment and facilities, adjustment of opening years, and scheduling construction of the project in two phases—were documented in the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Section 4(f) Evaluation (Supplemental Draft EIS) published in October 2003. Although many of the merits and potential impacts of the proposed LPA were similar to those presented in the Draft EIS, the Supplemental Draft EIS allowed decision makers to fully and explicitly examine the effects of the revised LPA compared to the Metrorail Alternative evaluated in the Draft EIS and a No Build Alternative. Based on the analysis contained in the Supplemental Draft EIS, public comments received on the document, and agency coordination, in March 2004 the CTB approved the revision of the LPA to incorporate the elements required for phased construction and the design refinements outlined in the Supplemental Draft EIS and recommended in its Public Hearings Report. In April 2004, the WMATA Board of Directors approved the revision of the LPA. The Transportation Planning Board of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments included the LPA in the 2005 Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan for metropolitan Washington, D.C.

The Final EIS was developed to respond to comments and issues raised during the circulation of the Draft EIS and the Supplemental Draft EIS and to provide more detailed information on the design of proposed mitigation measures for unavoidable adverse impacts associated with the Project. The Final EIS was published in December 2004.
In February 2006, an Environmental Assessment (the 2006 EA) was prepared to assess the environmental impacts of modifications that were made to the design of the Project’s initial construction phase during preliminary engineering (PE). These design refinements came about after the publication of the Final EIS and issuance of the original FTA Record of Decision in March 2005.

BASIS FOR DECISION

FTA’s decision is based on information contained in the Draft EIS (June 2002), the Supplemental Draft EIS (October 2003), the Final EIS (December 2004), and the Preliminary Engineering Design Refinements Environmental Assessment (February 2006), which together constitute the detailed statement on environmental impacts required by NEPA and the Federal transit statutes (49 USC 5324(b)). The statement identifies the Preferred Alternative and includes a review of the purpose and need for the Project, its goals and objectives, consideration of alternatives, environmental impacts, and measures to minimize harm. FTA has reviewed this statement and notes that the Metrorail Alternative was selected over other alternatives considered because it:

- provided better access to corridor activity centers;
- provided better access to other regional activity centers
- did not require a mode transfer to access the regional Metrorail system;
- provided shorter travel times for trips within the corridor;
- provided the greatest increase in person throughput capacity in the corridor;
- attracted the highest number of total riders and new riders;
- better supported the comprehensive planning efforts of Fairfax and Loudoun counties;
- allowed for more transit-oriented development to be focused in station areas;
- increased the overall mobility within the corridor, the counties, and the region;
- conformed with regional air quality plans; and
- had the highest level of public and agency support.

The FAA has determined that the use of airport property for the Project is consistent with the terms of Section VII.G of FAA’s Policy and Procedures Concerning the Use of Airport Revenue (64 FR 7696-7723). Public transit access to Dulles International Airport was envisioned in the airport’s original Master Plan, and the Project will not affect airport operations. The median of the airport access highway was initially reserved for a future rail line when the airport was constructed in the early 1960s. In 1985, when the Master Plan was updated, FAA recommended that the median of airport access highway continue to be reserved for a future transit line and anticipated that this would likely be an expansion of the region’s Metrorail system. On airport property, the rail line will be located either underground or along existing roadways; the station at the main terminal will be located underground. Other related facilities will be located in an airport buffer zone on land that would not otherwise be used for airport
development. The improved mobility and access provided by the Project will benefit the airport’s operator, tenants, and air passengers.

**ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

Numerous alternatives were evaluated throughout the various stages of the environmental review phase of the Project. Consistent with the Project’s evaluation methodology, the effectiveness of each alternative was assessed based on social, environmental, economic, and transportation factors. The evaluation process applied increasingly detailed and comprehensive measures of effectiveness to a decreasing number of alternatives. This process allowed decision-makers to identify similarities, differences, and trade-offs between each alternative, and to carry forward those alternatives that were determined to best achieve the following:

- Improve transportation service;
- Increase transit ridership;
- Support future development;
- Support environmental quality;
- Provide cost-effective, achievable transportation choices; and
- Serve diverse populations.

The formal NEPA review process began with the Notice of Intent, which was published on June 26, 2000, and a series of scoping meetings, which were held July 25-27, 2000. The initial set of alternatives considered for the Project included various rapid transit modes, alignments, station locations, and ancillary facilities. These alternatives were based on recommendations from the *Dulles Corridor Transportation Study* (1997), the *Supplement to the Dulles Corridor Transportation Study* (1999), and the comments received during the scoping meetings. These initial alternatives were then subjected to a two-phase screening process to determine which should be advanced for more detailed evaluation in the Draft EIS. For the initial screening process, most measures were qualitative. Criteria included consistency with land use plans, order of magnitude capital costs, access to activity centers within the Dulles Corridor and the region, and compatibility with existing infrastructure, among others. Alternatives carried forward from initial screening were subjected to a more rigorous evaluation in intermediate screening. In this phase of evaluation, many of the criteria applied during initial screening were measured more quantitatively. Alternatives that performed well were advanced for more detailed evaluation in the Draft EIS. The results of the screening evaluation are documented in detail in the Project’s *Final Alternatives Analysis Report* (May 2001). Additional alternatives evaluated are documented in the *Final Alternatives Analysis Report Addendum* (December 2004.)

**Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

The Draft EIS evaluated the potential effects of several alternative transit improvements for the Dulles Corridor. In addition to a No Build Alternative, four Build Alternatives that primarily ran
along the Dulles Connector Road, the DIAAH, and the Dulles Greenway were evaluated. The alternatives included:

- **No Build (Baseline) Alternative.** The No Build Alternative represented the "no-action alternative" required by the Council of Environmental Quality's (CEQ's) regulations for implementing NEPA, and provided a baseline for comparison against which the other alternatives were evaluated in the Draft EIS. The No Build Alternative included existing highway and public transportation infrastructure in the Dulles Corridor, and transportation system improvements, aside from the Project, that were included in the Washington metropolitan region's constrained long-range transportation plan and planned for implementation by 2025.

- **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Alternative.** BRT is a bus-based transit system that operates like a rail system. Passengers on BRT are provided rail-like amenities such as off-board fare collection, level boarding, enhanced stations, and platforms. Because it often takes advantage of pre-existing roadway facilities, BRT is generally a lower-cost transit technology than rail. Three alignment options were considered for the BRT Alternative in the Draft EIS.

- **Metrorail Alternative.** Metrorail is the region's rapid rail system. It is powered by an electrified third rail and operates in exclusive rights-of-way. By using multiple-car trains, Metrorail is capable of moving high volumes of passengers. Key features of the Metrorail system include fixed stations, dedicated rights-of-way, advanced fare collection, relatively simple transfers between different lines, and multiple-door boarding from level platforms. For the Metrorail Alternative, four alignment options were considered in Tysons Corner, and three sites were considered for a Metrorail Service & Inspection (S&I) Yard in Loudoun County.

- **BRT/Metrorail Alternative.** This alternative combined the BRT and Metrorail alternatives. Metrorail would be constructed in the eastern part of the Dulles Corridor as far as Tysons Corner, and BRT would be constructed in the western part of the corridor to Route 772 in Loudoun County.

- **Phased Implementation Alternative.** This alternative combined the other three Build Alternatives into a program of rapid transit improvements that would be implemented in stages (BRT, then BRT/Metrorail, then Metrorail). This approach would allow decision-makers to begin to address the travel needs in the corridor with rapid transit in the near term, while allowing for future development of rail.

Each of the Build Alternatives included several stations located in the median of the DIAAH, which were similar to stations on the existing Metrorail system. The BRT stations were designed to allow future conversion to rail stations. The alternatives also included the development of station and ancillary facilities such as parking and bus transfer facilities, a bus maintenance and storage facility, a rail service and inspection yard (S&I Yard), rail traction power substations and tie-breaker stations, and stormwater management facilities.
Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Based on subsequent public and agency coordination after the completion of the Draft EIS and after an LPA was recommended and selected, the Project sponsor identified a series of modifications to the project to resolve outstanding design issues, reduce environmental and community impacts, and allow for construction of the project in two phases. The Supplemental Draft EIS was prepared to assist decision-makers and the public in understanding the effects of the proposed modifications to the selected LPA. A comparative evaluation was presented for the following alternatives:

- **No Build Alternative.** The No Build Alternative for the Supplemental Draft EIS was the same as the Baseline Alternative defined in the Draft EIS. The alternative included existing transportation infrastructure and services, as well as improvements included in the region’s constrained long-range plan and planned to be implemented by 2025. The No Build Alternative provided a baseline for comparison against which the other alternatives were evaluated.

- **Metrorail Alternative (T6/Y15).** This alternative was the Metrorail Alternative evaluated in the Draft EIS and originally selected as the LPA (with Alignment T6 through Tysons Corner and a new S&I Yard at Site 15). The alternative generally followed an alignment between the Metrorail Orange Line near West Falls Church Station and Route 772 in Loudoun County, using the median of the Dulles Connector Road, the DIAAH, and the Dulles Greenway. It included 11 new stations and ancillary facilities, such as a new Metrorail S&I Yard, traction power substations, tie-breaker stations, and stormwater management ponds. The Metrorail Alternative (T6/Y15) was included in the Supplemental Draft EIS to facilitate understanding of the changes in effects associated with the proposed modifications to the LPA.

- **Proposed LPA.** The proposed LPA was similar to the Metrorail Alternative (T6/Y15) in terms of alignment, stations, facilities, and operating characteristics. The primary difference between the two alternatives was that the LPA was to be implemented in two phases. For the Wiehle Avenue Extension, Metrorail would be constructed from the Metrorail Orange Line through Tysons Corner to Wiehle Avenue, with interim express bus service in the western portion of the corridor until rail service could be extended. The Wiehle Avenue Extension was anticipated to open in 2011 with the full LPA opening in 2015. The impacts associated with operating the Wiehle Avenue station temporarily as an end-of-line station were evaluated. Other differences between the proposed LPA and the Metrorail Alternative (T6/Y15) included additional improvements at West Falls Church S&I Yard to accommodate operation of the Wiehle Avenue Extension prior to construction of the remainder of the LPA; adjustments to alignment plans and profiles for a variety of purposes including to reduce potential noise impacts, visual impacts, costs, and to improve operational efficiency; and design modifications of station site plans and ancillary facilities to address operational changes and to respond to concerns of local jurisdictions and landowners.
Final Environmental Impact Statement

The Final EIS was developed to respond to comments and issues raised during the circulation of the Draft EIS and the Supplemental Draft EIS and to provide more detailed information on the design of proposed mitigation measures for unavoidable impacts associated with the Project. The Final EIS presented an evaluation of the following alternatives:

- **No Build Alternative.** The No Build Alternative for the Final EIS is similar to the No Build Alternative defined in the Supplemental Draft EIS, but updated to reflect current conditions. The alternative includes existing transportation infrastructure and services, as well as improvements included in the region's constrained long-range plan and planned to be implemented by 2025. The No Build Alternative provides a baseline for comparison against which the other alternatives were evaluated.

- **Wiehle Avenue Extension.** The initial construction phase of the LPA was evaluated as a stand-alone alternative in the Final EIS. This alternative includes the first 11.6 miles of the Project from the existing Metrorail Orange Line near West Falls Church through Tysons Corner to Wiehle Avenue. The Wiehle Avenue Extension follows the Dulles Connector Road, Routes 123 and 7 in Tysons Corner, and the Dulles International Airport Access Highway (DIAAH). It includes 5 new stations, additional commuter parking, improvements to the existing Metrorail Service and Inspection Yard at West Falls Church, and required ancillary facilities. Express bus service would be provided by local transit operators between Wiehle Avenue and the western portion of the corridor.

- **LPA.** The LPA in the Final EIS is the entire 23.1-mile Metrorail extension, which is the subject of this Record of Decision. The LPA extends along the Dulles Connector Road, Routes 123 and 7, the DIAAH, and the Dulles Greenway between the Metrorail Orange Line and Route 772 in Loudoun County. It includes direct Metrorail service to Tysons Corner and Dulles Airport. The LPA includes 11 new stations, additional commuter parking, a new Metrorail Service & Inspection Yard on Dulles Airport property, improvements to the existing West Falls Church Service and Inspection Yard, and required ancillary facilities such as traction power substations, tie-breaker stations, and stormwater management ponds. The LPA would be constructed in two phases, the first phase being the Wiehle Avenue Extension described above, and the second phase being the further extension from Wiehle Avenue through the Airport to the terminus at Route 772 on the Dulles Greenway. Express bus service would be provided by local transit operators between Wiehle Avenue and the western portion of the corridor until Metrorail is extended to Route 772. This alternative, as modified by the Preliminary Engineering Design Refinements Environmental Assessment (2006 EA), discussed below, is the subject of this Amended Record of Decision.

**Preliminary Engineering Design Refinements Environmental Assessment (2006 EA)**

In early 2006, an Environmental Assessment (2006 EA) was prepared to assess the environmental impacts of modifications that were made to the design of the Project's initial
construction phase during preliminary engineering (PE). These design refinements came about after the publication of the Final EIS and issuance of the original FTA Record of Decision in March 2005. The 2006 EA presented an evaluation of the following two alternatives of limited scope, with variations primarily in the Tysons Corner area:

- **Final EIS Wiehle Avenue Extension.** This alternative is identical to initial phase of the LPA evaluated in detail in the Final EIS.

- **PE Wiehle Avenue Extension.** This alternative reflects the design refinements made during preliminary engineering (PE), including: a shift of the alignment from the southern edge to the median of Route 7 and reconfiguration of the roadway travel lanes, narrower track centers (outside station areas), simplified aerial guideway structures and architectural treatments, alternative station designs, and a revised connection with the existing Metrorail Orange Line. The tunnel portion of the Route 7 alignment would be shortened in length from approximately 5,000 feet to 3,000 feet, and the underground Tysons Central 7 Station would be replaced with an at-grade station in the Route 7 median. In addition, the site of the Dulles Storage and Inspection (S&I) Yard that was originally envisioned as an element only of Phase 2 of the Project would be used for soil fill and disposal during construction of the Wiehle Avenue Extension (Phase 1).

Two changes proposed in the 2006 EA have not been incorporated into the Project. The 2006 EA proposed to store and maintain the Project’s additional rail vehicles at existing WMATA storage and maintenance facilities and to forgo the expansion of the West Falls Church Storage and Inspection (S&I) Yard. That change has not been accepted and the expansion of the West Falls Church S&I Yard, as described in the FEIS, will proceed and remains an element of the Project that is the subject of this Amended ROD. The 2006 EA also proposed to forgo some elevators at Phase 1 stations, especially in the Tyson's Corner area, to reduce the Project’s cost. Numerous public comments opposing this change (see Attachment B) were received during the comment period for the 2006 EA, and in response to those comments, FTA and the Project sponsor have decided to retain those elevators.

On the basis of the 2006 EA, FTA has found that the PE design refinements would result in no significant changes in impacts and no new significant impacts from those evaluated in the Final EIS.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM**

The Project’s effects on the existing social, environmental, economic, and transportation conditions in the Dulles Corridor were assessed in the Final EIS and the subsequent 2006 EA. Because most of the Metrorail extension would be built along existing roadways or within the medians of highways (e.g., the Dulles Connector Road, the DIAAH, and the Dulles Greenway), the anticipated environmental and community impacts are limited, in spite of the length and complexity of the Project.
FTA notes the following environmental impacts of the Project in reaching a decision:

- **Property Acquisition.** Construction of the Project and its facilities will require the acquisition of approximately 22 acres of privately-owned commercial property and 4 acres of privately owned residential property. One commercial business, an automotive repair facility, will be displaced to accommodate Project facilities. A portion of a self-storage business will also be acquired, but the business will be able to continue operations. There will be no residential displacements. Additional private property and business displacements will be required temporarily to accommodate construction activities or maintain traffic during construction. All property acquisitions and relocations will be conducted in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970, as amended, and its implementing regulation at 49 CFR part 24.

Another 159 acres of government-owned or controlled property will also be used for the Project's line and track, stations, rail yard, and ancillary facilities. This includes the acquisition of property interests in the median and other parts of the Dulles International Airport Access Highway and Dulles Connector Road, and in parts of the Dulles Airport property itself, including the site of the Service & Inspection Yard and portions of eight parcels that are currently leased to commercial entities. The U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) owns the Access Highway, the Connector Road and the Dulles Airport property. The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) leases the property from the U.S. DOT (the current lease extends through the year 2067) and has sublet certain commercial parcels to private businesses. If necessary, the Project sponsor will seek conveyance of property interests or easements on the Access Highway, Connector Road, and Airport needed for the Project's construction and operation from MWAA and the U.S. DOT. The acquired property interest will be adequate to ensure the Project sponsor's continuing control of the Project facilities throughout the useful life of the Project.

- **Land Use.** The Project is expected to have positive effects on commercial and residential properties located near transit stations, and contribute to more sustainable and transit-supportive economic development by focusing higher-density residential and commercial land uses around the station areas.

- **Historic and Archaeological Resources.** The effects of the Project on historic and archaeological resources have been assessed in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 USC §470f), and its implementing regulations (36 CFR 800). The Project will have an adverse effect on the Dulles Airport Historic District by altering the historic views of the main terminal for travelers approaching via the DIAAH. The Project will have no effects on known archaeological resources. The measures to be taken to avoid, minimize and mitigate the adverse effects on this historic resource and on any archaeological resources that may be encountered during construction activities are set forth in the Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among FTA, DRPT, and the Virginia Department of
Historic Resources. A copy of the signed MOA is included herein as Attachment C. FTA will require compliance with the MOA by the Project sponsor, even if the lead sponsoring agency changes.

- **Wetlands.** The Project will affect approximately 5 acres of wetlands, which are primarily located in the vicinity of the Service and Inspection Yard on Dulles Airport property. Practicable mitigation measures are described in the Final EIS and summarized herein in Attachment A.

- **Noise and Vibration.** Without noise mitigation, operation of the Project was predicted to exceed FTA noise impact criteria at many sensitive receptors along the alignment, primarily residences along the Dulles Connector Road. During preliminary engineering, additional noise analyses were conducted to confirm mitigation requirements. Track edge barriers (parapets) will be installed to reduce the noise levels from Metrorail train passbys along all aerial sections of the track. For at-grade locations where noise levels at sensitive receptors are predicted to exceed FTA criteria, track edge barriers will also be installed as described in Attachment A. During construction, noise and vibration levels from construction activities may temporarily impact nearby sensitive receptors.

- **Traffic and Transportation.** The Project will result in changes to traffic conditions as people change their travel patterns to access the new transit stations, affecting some of the neighborhoods that surround certain stations. Although they would experience such traffic-related effects, these neighborhoods would also directly benefit from the mobility and accessibility that the transit improvements would bring. The Project includes roadway improvements needed for vehicular access to stations or facilities and additional roadway improvements to address opening year traffic congestion in the vicinity of the new Metrorail stations.

Construction of the Project will impede access to residences or to building entrances or to the parking area of businesses. It may also necessitate temporary relocation of parking either for safety reasons or if property is needed for construction staging areas. Construction-related disruptions to access will generally be short-term and temporary.

Throughout the process of developing and evaluating alternatives and coordinating with the public and other stakeholders, the Project sponsor and FTA made considerable effort to incorporate measures to minimize the Project's potential social, environmental, economic and transportation impacts. The Final EIS and 2006 EA provide a description of the mitigation measures that are now incorporated into the Project to avoid and minimize adverse impacts. FTA will ensure that the Project sponsor designs and builds the Project in accordance with the mitigation measures contained in the Final EIS and 2006 EA and summarized in Attachment A. In addition, FTA will require that the Project sponsor establishes a mitigation-monitoring program to ensure adequate communication of mitigation and design commitments to the teams working on final design and construction, and to provide a means for the Project sponsor and FTA to track the progress in accomplishing the mitigation commitments. FTA will monitor
implementation of mitigation measures through quarterly reviews during design and construction or other appropriate means.

PUBLIC COORDINATION AND COMMENTS
During the preparation of the Draft EIS and the Supplemental Draft EIS, a comprehensive public involvement program was conducted to provide citizens, businesses, and organizations with an interest in the Project the opportunity to keep informed of project developments, to participate in project planning and to provide recommendations to decision-makers for the selection of the LPA. In order to facilitate public participation in project planning and design, several different outreach techniques were employed to reach a wide range of participants. These included a variety of information dissemination outlets and interactive techniques in addition to meetings and coordination and public hearings as described below.

Public Outreach
A number of different techniques and activities were conducted over the course of the environmental review process in order to ensure that the public remained informed of project developments and were provided the opportunity to comment throughout project planning and design. Major activities conducted for the project included a call-in line, mailing list, newsletter, update bulletins, comment forms, website, and email address, as well as the distribution of project materials through the project kiosk and information center, libraries and community centers. Other outreach techniques included representation at community fairs and festivals, and presentations to communities and businesses.

Public Coordination Meetings and Hearings
As required by Federal transit laws [49 USC §5332(b) and §5324(b)], public coordination meetings and public hearings were held. Notices of public hearings were also provided. Meetings were held with the general public and stakeholders on an as-needed basis to understand issues of concern to inform them on the development and evaluation of potential alternatives, and to discuss the selection of the LPA. Public meetings held to support the development of the project included public scoping meetings, public information meetings, stakeholder meetings, and public hearings on the Draft EIS and the Supplemental Draft EIS, as well as a post-hearing conference as detailed in Chapter 11 of the Final EIS. Additional meetings and a public hearing were held during preliminary engineering to review and seek comment on the proposed design refinements presented in the 2006 EA.

To maintain public and stakeholder support for the project, the Project sponsor will continue public outreach efforts throughout preliminary engineering, final design and construction. The focus of these outreach activities will be to keep the public, stakeholders, and affected property owners informed about the project's progress. Continuing outreach efforts will include participation in community outreach activities and public information meetings and events, circulation of project newsletters, brochures, and fact sheets, project website updates, and development of presentations or meeting materials for interested parties.
Comments on the Final EIS and 2006 EA

The Notice of Availability of the Final EIS was published in the Federal Register on December 23, 2004. During the Final EIS circulation period, comment letters were received from one Federal agency, the District of Columbia, and one interest group. Responses to the comments received on the Final EIS were provided in the original ROD of March 2005. Responses to comments received on the 2006 EA are contained in Attachment B of this Amended ROD.

DETERMINATIONS AND FINDINGS

On the basis of the determinations made in compliance with relevant portions of federal law, the FTA finds that the Project, as described as the Final EIS and 2006 EA, and including the mitigation measures identified in those documents and summarized in this ROD, satisfies the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 49 USC 5301(e) and 5324(b), the Clean Air Act of 1970, and the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (all as amended) and complies with Executive Orders 11988, 11990, and 12898, as specified below.

Environmental Protection (49 USC Section 5301(e) and 5324(b))

The environmental record for the Project includes the previously referenced Draft EIS (June 2002), the Supplemental Draft EIS (October 2003), the Final EIS (December 2004), and the PE Design Refinements EA (February 2006), and all attachments thereto. Cumulatively, these documents represent the detailed statement required by both NEPA and the Federal transit laws, 49 USC Sections 5301(e) and 5324(b), regarding:

- the environmental impacts of the proposed Project;
- adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided;
- alternatives to the proposed Project; and
- irreversible and irretrievable impacts on the environment.

On the basis of the evaluation of social, economic, and environmental impacts presented in the Final EIS and 2006 EA, and the written and oral comments offered by the public and other agencies, FTA has determined, in accordance with 49 USC 5324(b), that:

- An adequate opportunity was afforded for the presentation of views by all parties with a significant economic, social, or environmental interest in the Project;
- Fair consideration has been given to the preservation and enhancement of the environment and to the interest of the community in which the proposed Project is to be located; and
- All reasonable steps have been taken to minimize the adverse environmental effects of the Project, and where adverse environmental effects remain, no feasible and prudent alternative to the effects exist.
Conformity with Air Quality Plans

The Clean Air Act of 1970, as amended, requires that Federally-funded transportation projects in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas conform to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for eliminating or reducing the severity and number of violations of the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS). The regulation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency implementing this provision of the Clean Air Act (40 CFR Parts 51 and 93) establishes criteria for demonstrating that a transportation project is in conformity with the goals of the SIP. The Washington metropolitan area in which the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project is located is classified as an ozone non-attainment area. The Project is therefore subject to the conformity requirements of the EPA regulation. The primary project-level conformity requirements of the EPA regulation dictate that the project comes from a conforming regional transportation plan and program and that the project not cause or contribute to any localized violation of the NAAQS.

The Project is included in the 2005 Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP), a plan that has been duly adopted by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) Transportation Planning Board and has been found by MWCOG to conform to the relevant State Implementation Plans (SIPs) (i.e., those of Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia). FHWA and FTA have reviewed and concurred in that conformity determination for the CLRP. Near-term project activities are included in the FY 2005–2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) adopted by MWCOG. The TIP has also been found by MWCOG, FHWA, and FTA to conform with air quality plans for the area. In addition, micro-scale air quality analyses in the Final EIS indicate that no localized violations of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards will result from implementation of the Project. Therefore, FTA finds that the Project conforms to air quality plans for the area.

Section 4(f) Determination

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation (DOT) Act of 1966 (49 USC 303) affords special protection to parks, recreation areas, wildlife refuges, and historic sites, by prohibiting use of such properties for a transportation project unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative to such use and the project includes all possible planning to minimize the harm to the protected resource. Based on the evaluation conducted and coordination with the U.S. Department of the Interior, the Project would result in a permanent physical use of one section 4(f) resource, the Dulles International Airport Historic District and the potential permanent physical use of another section 4(f) resource, the Hunter Mill Road Proposed Historic District, depending on that district's final boundaries.

The Dulles International Airport Historic District will be affected by the placement of the Project alignment within the median of the DIAAH and by the addition of inbound and outbound portals within the district boundaries. This would result in a use of a contributing element to the district (the historic viewshed) and require the physical use of property within the historic district boundaries. The median of the DIAAH was historically reserved for a transit guideway to the
Airport. FTA has determined that there is no prudent and feasible alternative to the use of the Dulles International Airport Historic District that would serve the purpose of the project of providing high-capacity transit service to the Airport. FTA has further determined that the Project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the Dulles International Airport Historic District, as detailed in the Section 106 MOA and the Final EIS.

The rail alignment, stormwater management ponds, and traction power substations may fall within the Hunter Mill Road Proposed Historic District, whose exact boundaries have not been established. The Project facilities within the likely boundaries of the historic district would not use any contributing element of the historic district. Minor proximity impacts identified would not substantially impair the historic features of the protected resources. Construction activities will not result in additional permanent impacts to the Section 4(f) resource. FTA has determined that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the Hunter Mill Road Proposed Historic District and that the Project includes all possible planning to minimize harm, as detailed in the Section 106 MOA and the Final EIS.

**Floodplain Finding**

Executive Order 11988, “Floodplain Management and Protection,” and U.S. DOT Order 5620.2 state that FTA may not approve an alternative involving a significant floodplain encroachment unless FTA can make a finding that the proposed encroachment is the only practicable alternative. The major purposes of Executive Order 11988 are to avoid Federal support for floodplain development; to prevent uneconomic, hazardous, or incompatible use of floodplains; to restore and preserve the natural and beneficial floodplain values; and to be consistent with the standards and criteria of the National Flood Insurance Program.

Based on a review of the Federal Emergency Management Agency maps, the Project will cross portions of the 100-year base floodplains of several streams along the alignment, including Pimmit Run, Scotts Run, Difficult Run, Horsepen Run, and Broad Run. The Project will span these streams parallel to existing roadway structures, thereby minimizing impacts to floodplains. The placement of new piers to span these streams will not increase the surface elevation of the 100-year flood at any location by more than one foot, nor will the Project increase the risks of off-site flooding. All Project facilities located within floodplains will be designed to comply with Federal, State, and local regulations and the Project sponsor will comply with all applicable regulations or ordinances governing construction in floodplains.

FTA finds that the Project’s encroachment on floodplains has been minimized to the extent practicable and that the remaining encroachments represent the only practicable alternative. During final design and construction, the Project sponsor will continue to explore design measures to reduce floodplain encroachments even further.
Wetlands Finding

Executive Order 11990, "Protection of Wetlands," directs federal agencies to avoid to the extent possible the long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with the destruction or modification of wetlands and to avoid direct or indirect support of new construction in wetlands wherever there is a practicable alternative.

The Project will destroy approximately 5 acres of wetlands. The Project sponsor will provide compensatory mitigation for these unavoidable wetland impacts. A 1:1 replacement ratio for impacts to the approximately 1 acre of emergent wetlands, and a 2:1 replacement ratio for impacts to the approximately 4 acres of forested wetlands will be used. Because on-site mitigation is not allowable on airport property due to potential wildlife interference with airport operations, an off-site location for mitigation will be used. Permanent impacts will be mitigated through the purchase of credits at an existing regional wetland bank, if available. Otherwise, an appropriate wetlands mitigation site of a size consistent with the replacement ratios above will be found and developed into wetlands in accordance with conditions on a Section 404 permit expected to be issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE). The Section 404 Permit is required by the COE and a Virginia Water Protection Permit will also be required from the Virginia Department Environmental Quality (VDEQ).

Impacts to wetlands during construction activities will be minimized through the use of Best Management Practices recommended by state and regional agencies, such as pollution control devices, installation and maintenance of runoff diversion structures and secondary containment structures. All temporarily disturbed wetland areas will be restored to pre-construction conditions by re-vegetating these areas with the appropriate cover type, as required by applicable permits.

FTA finds that the wetland impacts of the Project have been minimized to the extent practicable, and that there is no practicable alternative to construction in the wetlands and that all practicable measures to minimize harm to the wetlands have been included in the Project. During final design, the Project sponsor will coordinate with COE and VDEQ to obtain the necessary permits and will continue to consider measures to reduce permanent and temporary wetland impacts even further.

Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, "Federal Action to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations"), provides, in relevant part, that FTA identify and address "disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects" of federally-funded mass transit projects on minority populations and low-income populations, and that FTA "conduct its programs, policies, and activities in a manner that ensures that such programs, policies, and activities do not have the effect of subjecting persons...to discrimination...because of their race, color, or national origin."
On the basis of the evaluation in the Final EIS and 2006 EA, FTA has determined that the adverse health and environmental effects of the Project will not be disproportionately borne by minority or low-income populations, and furthermore, that all persons within the study area will enjoy improved mobility as a result of the Project.

Susan Borinsky
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
Region III

Nov. 17, 2006
Date