



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

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December 1, 2016

David F. Simmons
Director, Grant Administration
Metra
547 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60661

RECEIVED
DEC 07 2016
GRANT MANAGEMENT

RE: Environmental Review Approval for the Metra Union Pacific-West Line Third Mainline Eastern Section Track Project, Cook County, Illinois

Dear Mr. Simmons:

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has evaluated environmental review documents submitted by Metra for the proposed Union Pacific-West (UP-W) Line Third Mainline Eastern Section Track Project in Cook County, Illinois. FTA finds that the project meets the criteria for a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) categorical exclusion in accordance with 23 C.F.R. § 771.118(d), *Additional actions which meet the criteria for a CE in the CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1508.4) and paragraph (a) of this section may be designated as CEs only after FTA approval.*

The proposed Project consists of constructing a third mainline track from the Union Pacific's (UP) Vale Interlocking in River Forest, IL to 25th Avenue in Melrose Park, IL. The third mainline track would be added primarily on the north side of the existing tracks with the exception of an approximately 2,300-foot section from near the Melrose Park Station west to 25th Avenue, which would be located along the south side of the existing tracks. The third mainline track addition would occur within the UP's existing right-of-way along the entire length of the Project. The Project also includes improvements to the Des Plaines River Bridge structure, intersections (or grade crossings) along the corridor, and the Maywood and Melrose Park Metra Stations.

The environmental records reviewed by FTA consisted of a Documented Categorical Exclusion (DCE) checklist dated November 2016, and additional supporting information provided in Appendices A and B. After reviewing this documentation, FTA finds pursuant to 23 C.F.R. § 771.118(d) that the proposed Project will have no significant adverse impact on the environment. The record provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that a categorical exclusion classification is proper.

On March 4, 2016, in accordance with 36 C.F.R. Part 800 – Protection of Historic Properties and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), FTA provided the Illinois Historic

Preservation Agency (IHPA) with its determination for the Area of Potential Effect (APE). The IHPA provided its concurrence in correspondence dated March 15, 2016.

On August 16, 2016, FTA provided IHPA with the following determinations: historic districts and properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Properties (NRHP); and finding of no adverse effect. The IHPA provided its concurrence in correspondence dated August 30, 2016. FTA finds, in accordance with 36 C.F.R. § 800, that the Section 106 coordination and consultation requirements for the proposed Project have been fulfilled.

Coordination with the United States Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) resulted in a “no adverse effect” for all listed species. Coordination with Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) was terminated on June 29, 2016. No additional coordination with the USFWS and IDNR is required regarding ecologically-sensitive areas and endangered species.

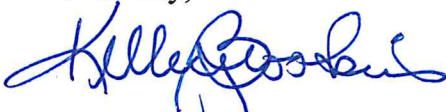
The use of any Federal funds for this project is contingent upon a Section 404 Permit application submitted to the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) on March 30, 2016. A floodway construction permit was submitted to the IDNR-Office of Water Resources (OWR) on June 10, 2016. Coordination with USACE and IDNR-OWR is on-going. Commitments and/or mitigation, if needed, will be determined through the Section 404 permit and floodway construction permit process.

This NEPA determination applies only to the proposed project as described in the DCE checklist and supporting materials. Any changes to the proposed project which could result in significant environmental impacts not outlined in the DCE checklist, including the disclosure of new information or previously unidentified environmental concerns, will require re-evaluation of this proposed project.

This confirmation of a categorical exclusion does not provide FTA commitment that future Federal funds will be approved for this proposed project. Any costs incurred under FTA pre-award authority must meet all Federal requirements prior to those costs being incurred in order to retain eligibility of those costs for future FTA grant assistance.

If you have further questions regarding this determination, please contact Tony Greep, Community Planner, at 312-353-1646 or anthony.greep@dot.gov.

Sincerely,



Kelley Brookins
Deputy Regional Administrator

cc: Tony Greep, FTA
Brian Stepp, Metra