



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

REGION V  
Illinois, Indiana,  
Michigan, Minnesota,  
Ohio, Wisconsin

200 West Adams Street  
Suite 320  
Chicago, IL 60606-5253  
312-353-2789  
312-886-0351 (fax)

May 16, 2022

Justin Stuehrenberg  
General Manager  
City of Madison/Metro Transit  
1245 E. Washington Avenue, Suite 201  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Re: City of Madison, East-West Bus Rapid Transit Project, Madison, Wisconsin -  
Environmental Review Approval

Dear Mr. Stuehrenberg:

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has evaluated environmental review documents submitted by the City of Madison for the proposed East-West Bus Rapid Transit Project (the “Project”) in Madison, Wisconsin. FTA finds that the proposed Project meets the criteria for a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) categorical exclusion in accordance with Section 23 CFR § 771.118 (c)(9), *Assembly or construction of facilities that is consistent with existing land use and zoning requirements (including floodplain regulations), and uses primarily land disturbed for transportation use, such as: buildings and associated structures; bus transfer stations or intermodal centers; busways and streetcar lines or other transit investments within areas of the right-of-way occupied by the physical footprint of the existing facility or otherwise maintained or used for transportation operations; and parking facilities.*

The East-West Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project is a 15-mile route serving east-west travel needs in central Madison, Wisconsin. The project will connect the east and west sides of Madison, running through the isthmus, downtown, and the University of Wisconsin (UW) campus. The East-West BRT route will operate in a combination of exclusive, semi-exclusive, and mixed traffic lanes on Junction Road, Mineral Point Road, Whitney Way, Sheboygan Avenue, Segoe Road, University Avenue, Campus Drive, Johnson Street, State Street, the Capitol Square, East Washington Avenue, Wright Street, Anderson Street, Mendota Street, and East Washington Avenue. The route will operate in center-running lanes on University Avenue. The western terminal is planned at a City of Madison-owned parcel at Junction Road south of Mineral Point Road, where a new 170-space park-and-ride would be constructed. The eastern terminal station is located on East Washington Avenue at East Springs Drive. The Project consists of the following elements:

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- Construction of 32 BRT station locations.
- Construction of an approximately 170-space park-and-ride lot at Junction Road south of Mineral Point Road to serve as the west terminal station and include local bus bays to facilitate transfers between local and BRT service.
- Purchase of 43 sixty-foot articulated buses (combination of battery electric and diesel).
- Traffic signal priority.
- Electric bus charging stations and other infrastructure.

This environmental review also includes a Fiscal Year 2020 Section 5339(b) discretionary Bus and Bus Facility Program project titled “*Expansion to Meet Transit Demand in Madison, Wisconsin, with Three New 60-Foot Articulated Buses, Upgraded Maintenance Facilities, and Dedicated Running Ways*” that will be incorporated into the East-West BRT Project. The elements of this project include the following:

- Purchase of three sixty-foot buses.
- Upgrades to the Metro Satellite Maintenance Facility to service these buses.
- Installation of dedicated runningway along 1.2 miles of East Washington Avenue.
- Installation of dedicated runningway along 0.75 miles of Whitney Way.
- Installation of red pavement on existing Mineral Point Road bus lanes to increase driver compliance.
- Implementation of spot geometric improvements at the East Transfer Point (this will not be incorporated into the project).

Although this work is incorporated into the East-West BRT Project, it has independent utility. If the East-West BRT Project is not constructed, the City of Madison will evaluate these improvements as a separate project prior to its implementation.

On May 6, 2021, in accordance with 36 C.F.R. § 800 – Protection of Historic Properties and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), FTA provided the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office (WiSHPO) with a Section 106 area of potential effects (APE) for the Project. The APE for architectural/historic resources encompasses parcels within approximately 100 feet of proposed station locations where the installation of BRT shelters and amenities may cause impacts to the character or use of historic properties and parcels with adjacency to other project elements where impacts may occur. For archaeological resources, the APE is limited to all areas of potential ground disturbance for the Project. The WiSHPO concurred with this determination on May 24, 2021. On January 24, 2022, FTA provided WiSHPO with a Phase I Archaeology Survey Report, an Architecture/History Report, and a Determination of No Adverse Effects Report with the following determinations: there are 14 historic properties within the APE, and the Project will result in no adverse effects to those historic properties. On February 17, 2022, WiSHPO requested additional information regarding project elements near historic properties. FTA responded to WiSHPO’s request on February 22, 2022. WiSHPO concurred with FTA’s no adverse effects finding on March 3, 2022. FTA finds, in accordance

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with 36 C.F.R. § 800, that the Section 106 coordination and consultation requirements for the proposed Project have been fulfilled.

The proposed Project includes 9 publicly owned parks and recreational resources within the study area. Based on coordination with the officials with jurisdiction, the following determinations were made regarding the impacts to each of the 9 parks and recreational resources:

Direct use (*de minimis*)

- Garner Park and Path

Temporary occupancy with no use

- Ice Age Junction Path
- Nautilus Point Park

No use

- Mineral Point Greenway/West Towne Soccer Fields
- Breese Stevens Field
- Yahara Parkway and Path
- Burr Jones Field
- Starkweather Creek Bike Path
- Reindahl (Amund) Park

On January 13, 2022, the City of Madison Parks Division recommended FTA determine the impacts at Nautilus Point Park be a temporary occupancy with no 4(f) use, and the impacts at Garner Park be a *de minimis* use. FTA received letters from the City of Madison Engineering Division on November 17, 2021, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison on January 13, 2022, recommending FTA determine the impacts to the Ice Age Junction Path be temporary occupancy with no 4(f) use. Therefore, based on coordination and letters from officials with jurisdiction, FTA has determined that the Section 4(f) use of Garner Park and Path is *de minimis* pursuant to 23 C.F.R. § 774.3(b).

The environmental records reviewed by FTA also consisted of a Categorical Exclusion checklist (with supporting attachments) that was updated pursuant to FTA comments and finalized on May 10, 2022. After reviewing this documentation, FTA finds, pursuant to 23 C.F.R. § 771.118(c)(9) 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.

This determination applies only to the proposed Project as described in the aforementioned correspondence and supporting materials. Any changes to the proposed Project which would result in significant environmental impacts not outlined in this documentation, including the disclosure of new information or previously unidentified environmental concerns, will require re-evaluation of this action.

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-

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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 Bill Wheeler, Community Planner, at (312) 353-2639 or [william.wheeler@dot.gov](mailto:william.wheeler@dot.gov). Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jay M. Ciavarella  
Director, Office of Planning and Program Development

cc: Elizabeth Breiseth, FTA  
Bill Wheeler, FTA  
Graham Carey, City of Madison  
Michael Cechvala, City of Madison  
Thomas Lynch, City of Madison