



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

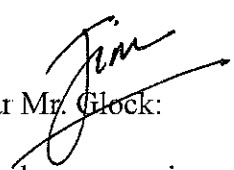
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JAN 22 2009

Mr. James W. Glock
Director
Tucson Department of Transportation
201 N. Stone, 6th floor
Tucson, AZ 85701

Re: Finding of No Significant Impact for
Tucson Modern Streetcar Project


Dear Mr. Glock:

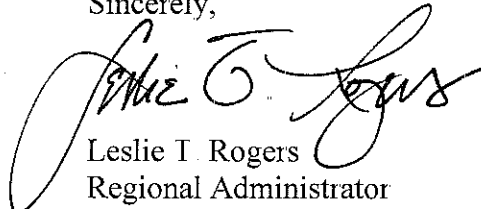
Based on our review of the Final Environmental Assessment dated January 2009, we have issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Tucson Modern Streetcar Project.

A copy of the FONSI is enclosed. Copies of the FONSI and any supporting assessment information should be made available to affected units of government and to the public. Notice of this availability should be published in local newspapers and provided directly by you to affected units of Federal, State and Local governments as well as the State intergovernmental review contact established under Executive Order 1272

Please note that if a grant is approved for this project, the standard terms and conditions of the grant contract will require the City of Tucson to undertake any mitigation actions as identified in the FONSI and the Environmental Assessment.

Thank you for your cooperation in meeting the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. If you have any questions, please contact your Transportation Representative, Mr. Alex Smith, at (415) 744-2599.

Sincerely,


Leslie T. Rogers
Regional Administrator

Enclosure

Finding of No Significant Impact

FTA Grant Number: Pending

Grant Applicant: City of Tucson Department of Transportation (TDOT)

Proposed Project: TUCSON URBAN CORRIDOR – TUCSON MODERN STREETCAR TUCSON, ARIZONA

The Final Environmental Assessment for this Project was prepared by the Grant Applicant in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, §102 (42 U.S.C. §4332); Federal Transit Laws (49 U.S.C. §5301[e], §5323[b], and §5324[b]); Title 49 U.S.C. §303 (formerly Department of Transportation Act of 1966, §4[f]); and Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice).

Description: The City of Tucson Modern Streetcar Project (Modern Streetcar Project) proposes construction of a 3.6 route-mile (7.2 track mile) modern streetcar line that will connect many of the City's major centers, including downtown Tucson, the Río Nuevo Master Plan redevelopment area, the 4th Avenue and Main Gate business districts, the University of Arizona (UA), and the Arizona Health Sciences Center (AHSC). The total capital cost of the Modern Streetcar Project is estimated to be \$150.06 million (in year of expenditure dollars), with a proposed New Starts share of \$24.99 million or 16.7 percent of the total capital cost.

The alignment connects the campus of UA with downtown Tucson. The Modern Streetcar Project includes two sets of tracks with trains operating at-grade in both directions. In most cases, the tracks are in shared travel lanes with automobiles where the system will operate in mixed traffic. Track placement will primarily be in the middle of the traffic lane, with stations located in the median or on the outside of the roadway. An exception to this scenario is on Granada Avenue where modern streetcar tracks will be located in semi-exclusive right-of-way on the east side of the roadway.

The Modern Streetcar Project stations include platforms that are level with the vehicle to facilitate boardings and alightings. The platforms include shelter canopies, benches, trash receptacles, bicycle storage, and real-time transit information. These stations offer consistent amenities throughout the alignment, although many stations will include site-specific design elements. The platforms are designed so they can be used by buses, when applicable. A total of 19 stations will be constructed.

The Modern Streetcar Project will require the purchase of seven new vehicles (similar to the Skoda vehicles used for the Portland Streetcar). The vehicles are electric rail cars approximately 66 feet long with a vehicle capacity of approximately 130 passengers (35 seated/95 standing). The vehicles operate in both directions, thereby eliminating the need to turn the train around at the end of the line. The streetcars are articulated to allow for tight turns in urban intersections, low-floor, and ADA compliant, allowing passengers to enter at the same height as the transit stop platform.

Alternatives Considered: IDOT initiated a study in 2004 to identify potential transit solutions connecting major activity centers in the central core, including downtown Tucson, the Rio Nuevo Master Plan Area, the 4th Avenue and Main Gate business districts, UA, and AHSC.

Work began on the Tucson Urban Corridor Alternatives Analysis (AA) in August 2004. The Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was published in the Federal Register in January 2005. The AA was completed in early 2006, and submitted to FTA for acceptance in May 2006. The AA examined a number of alternative technologies and alignment options and included an extensive public outreach program. Based on the results of the AA, the Tucson Mayor and City council adopted a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the Tucson Urban Corridor in January 2006. The LPA extends approximately 3.9 miles from the downtown area to the Arizona Health Sciences Center. IDOT estimates that the service will attract over 3,700 daily boardings in the opening year of service, with trains running every 10 minutes during the weekday peak and every 20 minutes during non-peak hours.

The LPA was adopted into the Pima Association of Governments' 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), the financially-constrained long-range transportation plan, June 29, 2006. The LPA was also included in the adopted 2009-2013 PAG Transportation Improvement Program.

Environmental Effects:

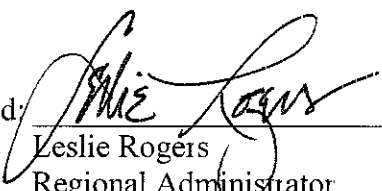
IDOT has adopted specific environmental commitments as part of the project description to address typical impacts that occur from construction. IDOT has incorporated mitigation measures into the project to reduce or eliminate potentially adverse environmental impacts, specifically pertaining to ambient noise levels, traffic, and public safety and security. IDOT will conduct additional noise and vibration testing during final design to evaluate the affects of design mitigations for noise and vibration impacts and will conduct noise and vibration monitoring during pre-revenue testing to evaluate the actual affects of the project at specific locations identified in the EA. There is a potential for site specific wheel squeal which will be mitigated with track lubricant as necessary. This start-up noise and vibration documentation will be delivered to FTA.

Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act has been completed. Correspondence from the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) notes the project will have "No Adverse Affect" on historic properties. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) has advised that the COI and FTA have met the applicable standards and satisfied the requirements and recommendations of 36 CFR 800.

IDOT has conducted public and agency scoping at the initiation of the project. Public involvement is documented in Section 5.0 of the Environmental Assessment. The Draft Environmental Assessment was made available for public and agency comment from January 18, 2008 to February 18, 2008. Hard copies were made available for viewing at the City of Tucson Public Works Building, Joel Valdez Main Library, Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) office, all Tucson City Council offices, University Services Annex, and University of Arizona Main Library. It was also available for download on the project website www.tucsontransitstudy.com, Tucson website at www.dot.tucsonaz.gov, and RTA website at

www.rtamobility.com A public meeting for the Draft Environmental Assessment was held February 4, 2008 at the Joel Valdez Main Library. A list of comments received during the public comment period is included as Appendix M to the document

Environmental Findings: Based on the analysis, mitigation measures, and the above discussion, it is the Federal Transit Administration's finding under 23 CFR 771.121 that there are no significant impacts on the environment associated with the construction and operation of the proposed project.

Approved:  _____ Date: JAN 22 2009

Leslie Rogers
Regional Administrator
FTA, Region IX

DATA/PD/FONSI/Tucson Streetcar FONSI Letter
AS 1/7/09