

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT FOR SITE IMPROVEMENTS AT
MORGAN COUNTY CENTER BUSINESS PARK, MORGAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

An integral part of the Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA's) mission is to promote the economic development of its service area. TVA provides financial assistance to communities to help them bring new improved sites and facilities to market and to position communities to compete successfully for new jobs and investment. While future prospects for the development of the Morgan Center Business Park (Business Park) are not known at this time, the primary purpose of this project is to enhance the marketability and facilitate development of the Business Park. TVA needs to make a decision about providing a grant to the Morgan County Economic Development Association (MCEDA) for improvements to the existing zoned Business Park. The MCEDA is also expected to provide funding for these improvements. TVA funding would be used to prepare the approximately 44 acre "Lot 1" within the Business Park including clearing trees, mitigating wetland impacts, and relocating a stream.

Alternatives

The proposal is the subject of an Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared by TVA, which is incorporated herein by reference. The EA addresses potential impacts of the proposed project as well as the alternative of taking no action. Under the No Action Alternative, TVA would not provide funding. In this event, MCEDA could seek alternative funding or not complete the project. If the project were not completed the eventual development of the site would likely be delayed and the Business Park could lose prospective developers interested in a prepared site. The likely eventual development of the site would result in environmental consequences similar to the Action Alternative.

Under the Action Alternative, TVA would provide funding for the project. The Business Park would be prepared as shown in Figure 2, and would then be available for light industrial and/or commercial development. Project related actions would include: clearing and grubbing of approximately 36 acres of trees on Lot 1; wetland delineation and permitting; wetland mitigation and associated mitigation fees; and stream relocation and associated permitting fees.

Impacts Assessment

TVA has determined that the proposed actions would have no or negligible impacts on land use, floodplains, threatened and endangered vegetation, socioeconomics and environmental justice, transportation, navigation, natural areas, and cultural and historic resources. Additionally, TVA determined there would be no significant impacts on wildlife, vegetation, and threatened and endangered species of wildlife and aquatic ecology. The proposed clearing activities would result in minor impacts to aquatic ecology, prime farmland, air quality, noise, and waste materials.

TVA conducted an onsite survey of the proposed project area in June 2017 to identify sensitive environmental resources. One wetland was identified within the project area. Wetland impacts will be regulated under U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Section 404 and mitigation will be required to offset project impacts to an insignificant level. There is "no practicable alternative" to avoiding impacts to the wetlands. Mitigation will be achieved via purchase of credits at a wetland mitigation bank within the vicinity of the Morgan Center Business Park. The requirements of EO 11990 have been met.

Foraging habitat for gray bat exists over wetlands and streams within the project footprint. Suitable summer roosting habitat for Indiana and northern long-eared bats exists within the forested areas of the site. These bat habitats would not be affected as a result of the buffer protections established to retain those habitats.

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was performed during initial investigations for the Business Park. The Site Assessment identified no outstanding environmental concerns regarding the release of hazardous wastes on the site. The site has been vacant and/or agricultural land for most of its history.

A Phase I Cultural-Resources Survey of the Business Park site identified no cultural resources. The Alabama State Historic Preservation Office concurred there would be no effects to cultural resources from TVA's proposed action. TVA received no objections from federally recognized tribes for this undertaking

Mitigation

To minimize or reduce the environmental effects of the project, MCEDA or its contractors would ensure all earth-disturbing activities are in compliance with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and applicable storm water, waste, and air permitting requirements and would use applicable Best Management Practices (BMP) to minimize and control erosion and fugitive dust during the actions.

TVA would include the commitments prescribed below in its financial assistance grant to MCEDA in order to reduce or mitigate environmental impacts associated with the future construction activities:

- Wetland impacts will be regulated under USACE Section 404 program and mitigation will be required to offset project impacts to an insignificant level. Mitigation will be achieved via purchase of credits at a wetland mitigation bank within the vicinity of the Morgan Center Business Park.
- No trees identified as suitable bat habitat, including habitat for the gray bat, Indiana bat and the Northern long-eared bat, will be removed. A vegetated buffer will be maintained around the boundaries of the site preserving the identified suitable bat habitat.

Conclusion and Findings

Based on the findings listed above and the analysis in the EA, we conclude that the proposed action of TVA providing funding to the MCEDA for improvements to the Morgan Center Business Park would not be a major federal action significantly affecting the environment. Accordingly, an environmental impact statement is not required.



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Date Signed