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Project Name: Economic Development Grant
Proposal for the Florence-Lauderdale
Industrial Park (Lot D) Lauderdale
County, Alabama
Project Number: 2024-2

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROPOSAL FOR
THE FLORENCE - LAUDERDALE INDUSTRIAL PARK (LOT D)
LAUDERDALE COUNTY, ALABAMA (FLORENCE)

An integral part of Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) mission is to promote economic development within the TVA service area. TVA provides financial assistance to help bring to market new/improved sites and facilities within the TVA service area and position communities to compete successfully for new jobs and capital investment. TVA proposes to provide an economic development grant through InvestPrep funds to the Shoals Economic Development Authority (SEDA) to assist with the development of the Florence-Lauderdale Industrial Park (FLIP), Lot D. The area of TVA's Proposed Action (herein referred to as the Project Area) comprises 33.5 acres of the FLIP located about four miles north of the City of Florence, Alabama in Lauderdale County.

The proposal is the subject of an Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared by TVA, which is incorporated herein by reference. In the EA, TVA evaluated potential impacts of the Proposed Action (i.e., the Action Alternative) as well as the alternative of not implementing the action (i.e., the No Action Alternative). Under the No Action Alternative, TVA would not provide InvestPrep funds to the SEDA. TVA would not be furthering its mission of promoting economic development by assisting the local community to compete successfully for new jobs and capital investment through the Proposed Action. The SEDA may seek alternate funding (if available) to combine with non-TVA funds to develop the site. Success in obtaining alternate funding would result in similar impacts and benefits as the Action Alternative. If the SEDA were not able to secure the funding for the Proposed Action, the land use at the site would likely remain unchanged, no environmental impacts would be anticipated, and the economic benefits associated with the Action Alternative would not be accomplished.

Under the Action Alternative, TVA would provide InvestPrep funds to the SEDA, to be used in combination with non-TVA funds, to facilitate the improvement of the Project Area within the FLIP. TVA funds would be used for tree clearing of approximately 33 acres with associated removal and burning of trees and stumps on site, grading of the entire 33.5-acre Project Area, creation of a 300,000 square foot dirt building pad with associated parking and truck court areas, a temporary sediment basin, construction of a gravel access road from the intersection of Gerrard Drive and Rushton Street to the proposed dirt building pad, and site stabilization after grading is completed. No off-site borrow would be needed for the grading. Erosion prevention, sediment control, and stabilization would be implemented after grading activities are completed. The Proposed Action is expected to require a seven-month duration and would require a small workforce that would most likely be assigned by a local contractor.

TVA's preferred alternative is the Proposed Action Alternative. This alternative would meet the purpose of the Project and would further promote TVA's mission to promote economic development in the TVA service area.

The potential impacts of the Action Alternative are described in detail in the EA. Implementation of the Action Alternative would have no impact on solid and hazardous wastes, floodplains, surface waters, wetlands, aquatic zoology, land use, prime farmland, natural areas, recreation, or historic structures.

Minor adverse impacts related to air quality and climate change, groundwater, soils, terrestrial zoology, and botany would occur as a result of the tree clearing and site grading. Implementation of the Action Alternative could create potential minor adverse impacts to the human environment, including visual effects, noise, and transportation issues. Implementation of the Action Alternative could create potential minor positive impacts on socioeconomics and would have no effects on environmental justice communities.

Construction-related activities would result in minor and short-term impacts to air quality and climate change. With the use of best management practices (BMPs) impacts would be minimal, temporary, and localized; and would not be anticipated to result in any violation of applicable ambient air quality standards or impact regional air quality.

Near-surface grading activities would not intersect with the principal water supply aquifer in the area (Tuscumbia Limestone) and effects to groundwater would be minor. Soils disturbed by grading would be stabilized after construction, thereby preventing erosion and sedimentation.

Impacts to common plant species removed and wildlife species removed or disturbed would be minor and insignificant. No habitat for uncommon or rare plant communities are present within the Project Area or would be affected by the Proposed Action. No plants protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), or habitat suitable for listed plant species, are present in the Project Area nor would potential habitat be disturbed; therefore, the requirements under Section 7 of that Act have been met. No state-listed protected species would be significantly affected.

No suitable winter roosting habitat exists in the Project Area for Indiana bat, tricolored bat, or northern long-eared bat. No waterbodies or wetlands are available for aquatic foraging habitat. Suitable summer roosting and forested foraging habitat for these species is present throughout the entire forested acreage of Project Area. A number of activities associated with the Action Alternative were addressed in TVA's programmatic consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on routine actions and federally listed bats in accordance with ESA Section 7(a)(2), which was completed in April 2018 and updated in May 2023. For those activities with potential to affect bats, TVA committed to implementing specific conservation measures. These activities and associated conservation measures are identified in the TVA Bat Strategy Project Screening Form (Attachment 2 of EA) and must be reviewed/implemented as part of the Action Alternative. With implementation of these conservation measures, no significant impacts are expected to affect federally listed or proposed listed bats.

Construction vehicles and equipment visible during grading activities would have a minor visual impact over the temporary construction period. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Action would result in only a minor overall change in visual quality.

Noise would be localized and temporary, and no receptor would be exposed to significant noise levels for an extended period. Further, construction activities would be expected to be conducted during daylight hours when ambient noise levels are often higher, and most individuals are less sensitive to noise. Thus, noise-related impacts resulting from implementation of the Action Alternative are anticipated to be temporary and minor.

Minor beneficial socioeconomic impacts during construction and operation would occur. No long-term impacts to community services are anticipated and there would be no disproportionate impacts to low-income or minority communities in the area.

Additional traffic would be generated during construction activities. However, the amount of additional traffic generated would be minor and have a negligible impact on overall traffic volumes.

Mitigation

To minimize or reduce the environmental effects of site activities associated with the Action Alternative, the SEDA, or its contractors, would ensure all grading activities conducted comply with construction stormwater permitting requirements and utilize applicable BMPs to minimize and control erosion and fugitive dust during these actions. These practices include, but are not limited to, installation of sediment and erosion controls (silt fences, sediment traps, etc.); management of fugitive dust; and a restriction allowing work during daytime work hours.

Operations involving chemical or fuel storage or resupply and vehicle servicing would be handled outside of riparian areas and in such a manner as to prevent these items from reaching a watercourse. Earthen berms or other effective means would be installed to protect nearby surface waters from direct surface runoff. Servicing of equipment and vehicles would be done with care to avoid leakage, spillage, and subsequent surface or ground water contamination. Oil waste, filters, and other litter would be collected and disposed of properly.

Specific avoidance and conservation measures would be implemented as a part of the Action Alternative to reduce effects to Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, and tricolored bat. These measures are identified in the TVA Bat Strategy Project Screening Form (Attachment 2 of EA).

Conclusion and Findings

Based on the findings listed above and the analyses in the EA, we conclude that the Proposed Action of TVA funding in part the improvement of the Project Area within the FLIP site would not be a major federal action significantly affecting the environment. This finding is dependent on implementation of the mitigation measures described above. Accordingly, an environmental impact statement is not required.



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April 15, 2024

Date Signed