

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROPOSAL FOR THE
REEVES SITE
HENDERSON COUNTY, TENNESSEE (LEXINGTON)

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 City of Lexington Industrial Development Board (Lexington – IDB) to assist with the development of a portion of the Reeves Site in Henderson County, Tennessee. The area of TVA’s Proposed Action (herein referred to as the Project Area) encompasses 54 acres of a combination of both forested and open grassy lands located immediately adjacent to and east of Highway 22 North, about four miles south of Interstate 40 (I-40) and about five miles north of the City of Lexington, Tennessee.

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 Lexington–IDB. 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 Lexington–IDB may seek alternate funding (if available) to combine with their existing funds to develop the site. Success in obtaining alternate funding would result in similar impacts and benefits as the Action Alternative. If the Lexington–IDB 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 Lexington–IDB, to be matched with non-TVA funds to facilitate development of a portion of the Reeves Site. TVA funds for the approximately 54-acre Project Area would be used to assist with purchase of 11 acres providing site access; tree clearing of approximately 22.17 acres with stumps and trees burned on-site; geotechnical borings; construction of a 24-foot-wide gravel access road connecting Highway 22 to the Reeves site; grading to expand the dirt building pad (no borrow needed); relocation of existing water and sewer lines to better align with the proposed access road; and site stabilization. Erosion prevention, sediment control, and stabilization would be implemented after grading activities are completed. The Proposed Action is expected to require an 18-month duration and would require a small workforce that would most likely be assigned from a local contractor.

TVA’s preferred alternative is the Proposed Action Alternative. This alternative would meet the purpose of the Project and would further 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, prime farmland, land use, historic structures and sites, natural areas, or recreation.

Resources that could potentially be impacted (negatively or positively) by implementing the Action Alternative include air quality and climate change, groundwater, soils, surface waters, wetlands, aquatic zoology, terrestrial zoology, botany, and archaeology. Implementation of the Action Alternative could also 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 effect 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 and effects to groundwater would be minor. Soils disturbed by grading would be stabilized after construction, thereby preventing erosion and sedimentation.

The Action Alternative would avoid two presumed jurisdictional streams (one perennial stream and one intermittent stream) and two presumed jurisdictional wetlands. One other presumed jurisdictional wetland, W001, would be impacted. Wetland W001 is 0.02 acre in size and is classified as palustrine emergent. Erosion control measures would be implemented, in accordance with a project specific construction general permit/stormwater pollution prevention plan and BMPs, to sufficiently reduce sedimentation. Direct impacts to W001 would be coordinated with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and permit approval and any associated compensatory mitigation would ensure impacts are not significant. This would ensure that this TVA-funded Proposed Action would be compliant with the Clean Water Act (CWA) Sections 401 and 404 and EO 11990. Impacts to the common aquatic species found in the perennial waterbody would not be significant and no rare, threatened, or endangered aquatic species occur in the Project Area.

Impacts to common plant species removed and wildlife species removed or disturbed would be minor and insignificant. Approximately 22.17 acres of trees would be cleared in the Project Area. No habitat for uncommon or rare plant communities is present within the Project Area and would not 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. No state-listed protected species would be significantly affected.

Neither migration nor overwinter habitat for the whooping crane exists within the Project Area. The whooping crane is listed as Endangered in the Southwest (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] Region 2). Outside of this region, the whooping crane is categorized as a non-essential experimental population, but federal agencies must not jeopardize their existence.

No suitable winter roosting habitat exists in the Project Area for tricolored bat or northern long-eared bat. One perennial waterbody may provide summer foraging habitat for listed bat species. Approximately 4.28 acres of suitable summer roosting habitat for northern long-eared bat and 12.7 acres for tricolored bat would be removed as part of proposed activities. To avoid direct, adverse impacts to tricolored bat while they are birthing and rearing pups, tree removal must occur outside of pup season (May 15 – July 31) when these species would be mobile and able to fly if disturbed.

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 bats. Therefore, the requirements under Section 7 of the ESA have been met.

No archaeology resources were identified during the field survey. Under the Action Alternative, there would be no impacts on archaeological resources because no sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places are present in the Project Area.

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 Lexington-IDB, 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.

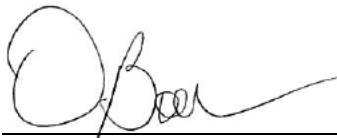
Operations involving chemical or fuel storage or resupply and vehicle servicing would be handled outside of riparian areas and in such a manner as to prevent these items from reaching a watercourse. Earthen berms or other effective means would be installed to protect nearby surface waters from direct 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.

Direct impacts to wetland W001 would be coordinated with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and permit approval and any associated compensatory mitigation would ensure impacts are not significant.

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

Conclusion and Findings

Based on the findings listed above and the analyses in the EA, we conclude that the Proposed Action of TVA funding to assist with the development of a portion of the Reeves 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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Date Signed