

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**ALL ABOARD FLORIDA PASSENGER RAIL PROJECT
WEST PALM BEACH TO MIAMI, FLORIDA**

West Palm Beach Vehicle Maintenance Facility

**Submitted Pursuant to the
National Environmental Policy Act
42 U.S.C 4332 (2)(c)**

**Prepared in accordance with the FRA's Environmental Procedures
(64 Fed. Reg. 28545 (May 26, 1999))**

JANUARY 2015

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1 Background Information

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) previously evaluated the potential environmental and related impacts of constructing and operating an intercity passenger rail service proposed by All Aboard Florida - Operations LLC (AAF) between West Palm Beach and Miami, FL. FRA conducted an environmental review in 2012/2013, including preparing and issuing an Environmental Assessment (EA) (*Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation for the All Aboard Florida Passenger Rail Project West Palm Beach to Miami, Florida, October 31, 2012*) and then a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on January 30, 2013.

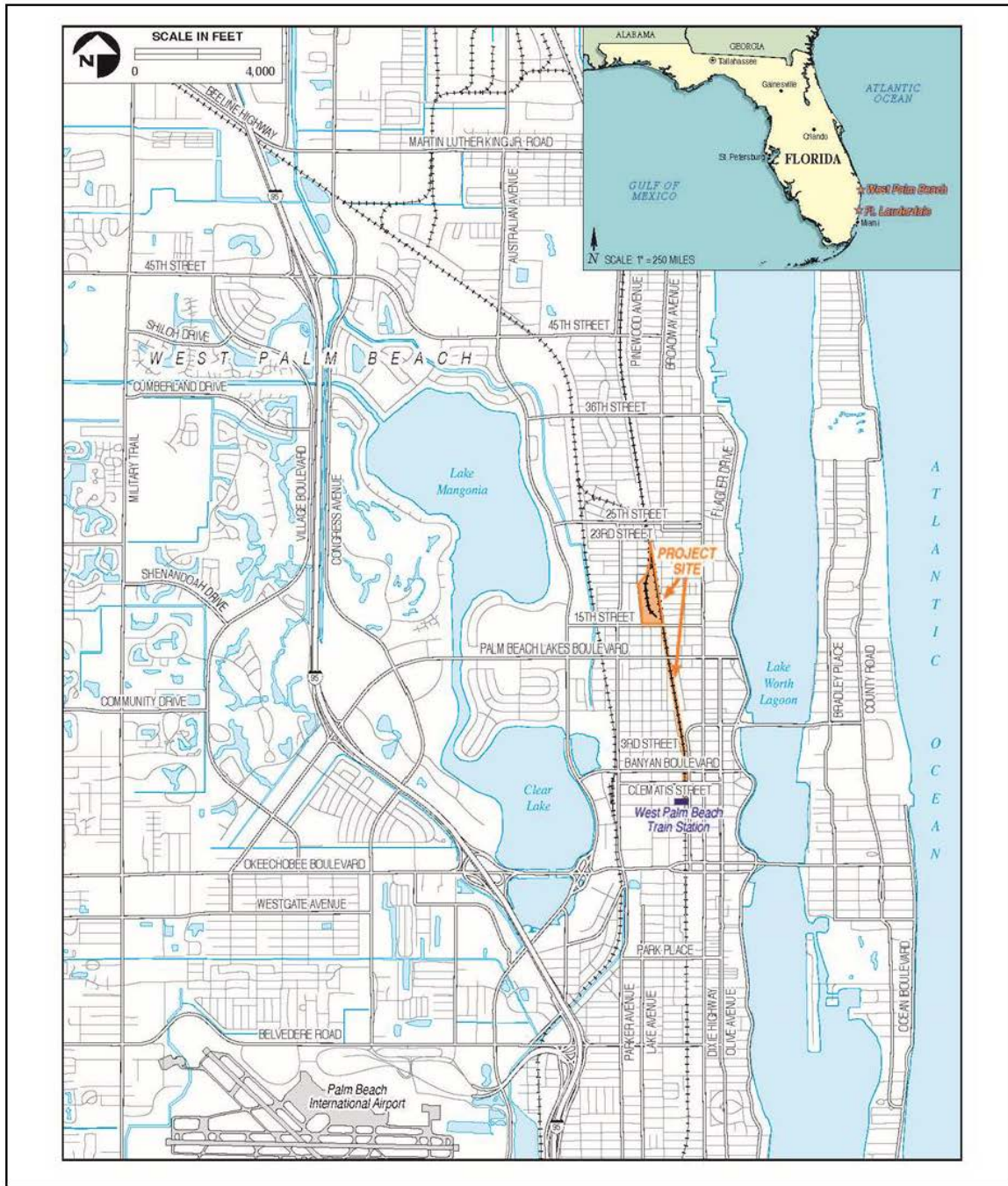
AAF is proposing to implement the intercity passenger rail service through a phased approach. Phase I would provide rail service from West Palm Beach to Miami while Phase II would extend service to Orlando. Phase I would provide passenger rail service along the 66.5 miles of the Florida East Coast Railway, L.L.C. (FECR) Corridor connecting West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale, and Miami. AAF has obtained private financing and is proceeding to implement Phase I. Phase I of the passenger rail project, as described in the 2012 EA, includes constructing three new stations (West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale and Miami), purchasing five train sets, adding a second track along most of the 66.5-mile corridor, and adding 16 new round-trip intercity passenger train trips (32 one-way trips) on the West Palm Beach to Miami section of the FECR Corridor.

Evaluation of environmental impacts for the 2012 EA and 2013 FONSI included a Vehicle Maintenance Facility (VMF) to support AAF passenger service at an existing rail maintenance yard in Fort Lauderdale (Andrews Yard), which FECR owns and operates. However, AAF subsequently determined that the Andrews Yard location was unavailable in a configuration necessary for AAF's use and identified an alternative location. In October 2014, FRA issued a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) documenting the environmental impacts of an alternate VMF located at the West Palm Beach (WPB) Rail Yard.

The WPB Rail Yard is an approximately 27-acre site located in WPB, east of Division Avenue, between 15th Street and 23rd Street (Figure 1-1). The WPB Rail Yard is an active FECR freight yard currently used for staging and building freight trains, which includes assembling freight rail cars to be picked up when a locomotive goes to the WPB Rail Yard to drop off empty rail cars.

FRA approved the SEA for the proposed WPB VMF location on October 22, 2014 and made it available for public review at local libraries. Copies were distributed to state and federal environmental resource agencies and local governments and the document was published to the FRA website at <https://www.fra.dot.gov/eLib/Details/L16031>. The comment period for the SEA closed on November 24, 2014. There were no requests for a public hearing and no public comments were received.

All Aboard Florida Passenger Rail Project – West Palm Beach to Miami
Finding of No Significant Impact – West Palm Beach Vehicle Maintenance Facility



Project Vicinity	
All Aboard Florida Intercity Passenger Rail Project	
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2 Statement of Purpose and Need

The purpose for Phase I of the passenger rail project from West Palm Beach to Miami, Florida, as described in the 2012 EA, is to address South Florida’s current and future needs by enhancing its transportation system, improving safety and air quality, creating jobs, providing a transportation alternative for millions of Floridians and tourists, and supporting economic development by:

- Returning the existing FECR corridor to a dual-track system to allow for the restoration of fast, dependable, and efficient passenger service in Southeast Florida; and
- Implementing a privately owned, operated, and maintained intercity passenger rail service that will connect downtown West Palm Beach to downtown Miami, with one stop in downtown Fort Lauderdale.

Through Phase I, the passenger rail project will enhance mobility and improve safety in the region, particularly along the Interstate 95 corridor (I-95), by reintroducing passenger rail service between West Palm Beach and Miami, which ceased in 1968.

The purpose of the proposed VMF is to accommodate the storage and maintenance needs of the passenger trains associated with the passenger rail project. Necessary services at the VMF include fueling, routine maintenance, overnight train storage, vehicle washing, and daily cleaning and stocking.

The WPB Rail Yard is needed to provide a suitable location for a VMF to support the passenger rail service. The proposed location would place the layover facility (overnight train storage) at one end of the passenger rail line in order to reduce or eliminate non-revenue trips. Utilizing FECR’s existing WPB Rail Yard would eliminate the need to acquire parcels or change land uses. The maintenance activities planned to be conducted at the VMF would be performed within the existing footprint of the WPB Rail Yard.

3 Alternatives Considered

Initial evaluation of environmental impacts for the 2012 EA and 2013 FONSI included a VMF to support AAF passenger service at an existing rail maintenance yard in Fort Lauderdale (Andrews Yard), which FECR owns and operates. Since the publication of the 2012 EA, FECR has committed a substantial portion of the Andrews Yard's property to a transload freight facility. The available excess land will not sustain the needs for a VMF on the property. The configuration of the property would require AAF to construct duplicate buildings at two locations in the yard to service trains, increasing the cost of the facility. Additionally, no more than seven-car trains could be stored at any time. The AAF trainsets will eventually have 8 ten-car trains, with two locomotives,¹ causing a physical constraint on the mainline of Andrews Yard. Because of the configuration constraints, the train washing station would need to be built within the mainline right-of-way located outside of the Andrews Yard property, requiring additional moves to wash trains. AAF would also require the use of at least 30 feet of the mainline right-of-way for access tracks and storage tracks. This use of the mainline would interfere with freight operations at the Andrews Yard. Because the Andrews Yard location is unavailable in a configuration necessary for AAF's use at this time, this site was eliminated from consideration.

AAF has identified an alternative location. The new location of the WPB Rail Yard is a 27-acre FECR freight layover yard currently used for staging and assembling freight trains. Project construction would occur entirely within the footprint of the existing FECR Corridor and existing WPB Rail Yard, and would not require any property acquisition.

The principal difference between the two locations is the proximity of the proposed VMF to the WPB Station (the nearest train station for both sites). The VMF at Andrews Yard would have been located approximately 30 miles from the WPB Rail Station, requiring approximately 60 miles of rail travel (round trip) in order to reach the VMF. The existing WPB Rail Yard is 0.9 miles from the WPB Station. This proximity reduces the number of at-grade crossings required during travel from the train station to the VMF. Travel to and from Andrews Yard would have involved 63 crossings, while the WPB Rail Yard will require only four at-grade crossings in each direction.

3.1 Proposed Vehicle Maintenance Facility

The proposed location for the VMF is the WPB Rail Yard, which is an approximately 27-acre site located in West Palm Beach, east of Division Avenue, between 15th Street and 23rd Street. At this location, there are currently nine tracks within the FECR freight yard (two main line tracks and seven storage tracks), a row of maintenance and staff buildings, and 2 storage tracks within the central portion of the site. The western portion of the site is used to stage containers and trucks. Access to the site is from 15th Street. The proposed changes at this facility would expand capacity for staging and maintaining passenger trains. In order to perform these necessary services, physical changes to the WPB Rail Yard would

¹ Initially, Phase I will only include five cars; Phase II would include eight cars. Train sets will also include two locomotives.

include new facilities and buildings, four additional tracks, and moving the existing mid-yard tracks. Together, these proposed changes comprise the Project evaluated in the SEA.

The Project at the WPB Rail Yard would modify the existing WPB Rail Yard to accommodate storage and maintenance services for passenger trains by:

- Adding four tracks within the existing WPB Rail Yard for train refueling, storage, crew change-out, train cleaning, washing, and light repairs, which would include two storage tracks and two light repair tracks.
- Constructing facilities for electrical and mechanical rooms, parts storage, repair equipment, wastewater treatment, and waste storage.
- Providing men’s and women’s restrooms, showers, and locker room trailers.
- Installing a security fence to separate passenger operations from freight movements and operations.
- Expanding parking for approximately 30 worker/visitor vehicles as well as one to two commercial vehicles.
- Shifting two FECR intermodal tracks and one stub track to the northwest in order to accommodate the AAF storage and maintenance tracks.

All Project improvements, including the new buildings, will occur within the existing footprint of the WPB Rail Yard. Existing FECR yard buildings are aligned parallel to the FECR tracks. The AAF buildings and facilities, housed in the Shop Canopy, would be built between the first and second FECR building. The Shop Canopy would include electrical and mechanical rooms; a fire pump room; electronic parts, storage, and repair room; industrial waste treatment; storage; and sand, grease, motor oil, and other oil storage. The proposed VMF at the WPB Rail Yard would not include passenger loading or unloading, which would only occur at passenger rail stations.

AAF expects that the number of light poles illuminating the WPB Rail Yard would not change, but light poles may be relocated within the WPB Rail Yard. Utility poles may need to be relocated within the WPB Rail Yard and along the corridor between the WPB Rail Yard and the WPB Station.

3.2 Train Operations and Track Improvements

Under existing operations, four freight trains stop daily at this facility: two during the day (from 7:01 AM to 10:00 PM) and two at night (from 10:01 PM to 7:00 AM). Each train idles for approximately 45 minutes, which includes the time the train remains stationary, the staging and time required for building the freight.

With the passenger rail service, eight round-trip daily AAF train sets would require servicing at the VMF. Maintenance operations would occur between 10:00 PM and 5:00 AM, with the train sets entering the VMF between 8:00 PM and 10:00 PM. Outbound train sets would exit between 5:00 AM and 7:00 AM. The train sets would consist of two locomotives and eight cars and would operate at a maximum speed of 20 miles per hour (mph) along the majority of the track, but would slow to approximately 5 mph when approaching or leaving the WPB Rail Yard. During the day, crew changes would idle for a total of

10 minutes while at the WPB Rail Yard. Passenger trains are expected to idle for approximately 30 minutes for routine activities conducted at the VMF, which are conducted in both the daytime and nighttime.

The WPB Rail Yard, the location of the proposed VMF, is 0.9 miles north of the WPB Station. Approximately 16 passenger train trips would occur between the WPB Station and the WPB Rail Yard daily (eight trips northbound and eight trips southbound). Passenger trains will be moving at an average speed of 25 mph on this segment. In order to prevent severe noise impacts, locomotive warning horns would be replaced with stationary wayside horns at the 15th Street intersection just south of the Yard, in accordance with the commitments established under the prior FONSI.

The Project would enhance public safety with respect to local vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The Project would upgrade crossing signal equipment at the four at-grade crossings within the Project Study Area (15th Street, 3rd Street, Banyan Boulevard [1st Street], and Clematis Street). An FRA Diagnostic Team reviewed the safety of FECR grade crossings along the passenger rail project corridor to determine whether grade crossing equipment and warning devices are needed for each at-grade crossing². There were no safety concerns identified in the Diagnostic Team report for any of the four at-grade crossings within the Project Study Area, due to the slow speeds trains enter and exit the WPB Rail Yard. General safety recommendations for the passenger rail project corridor include equipping sidewalks with a visual and gated barrier for safe pedestrian passage. The Project would also implement electronic warning systems, which would monitor and communicate train locations and speeds, and would stop trains if a crossing were not clear. Upgrades to road crossings would be coordinated with and/or communicated to local emergency responders, as activations at the road crossings would be more frequent with the increased frequency of train traffic.

² Federal Railroad Administration Office of Safety, Highway Rail Crossing and Trespasser Program Division. March 20, 2014. On-Site Engineering Field Report – Part 1. All Aboard Florida.

4 Summary of Environmental Impacts

The FRA’s Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts (64 FR 28545, May 26, 1999) (FRA procedures) provides a list of potential environmental impact categories that should be considered in the environmental assessment process. The SEA addressed resources that the VMF is reasonably likely to impact. Categories not evaluated and the rationale for not including them are detailed in Section 4.1 of the SEA. A summary of impacts associated with the Project are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Summary of Project Impacts

Category	SEA Section	Summary of Impact	Proposed Mitigation
Air Quality	Section 4.2 and Section 4.11.1	<p>No Long Term Impact: WPB Rail Yard would require only 0.9 miles of travel before AAF trains go into revenue service. Reduced travel time associated with the WPM Rail Yard would result in significantly lower pollutant emissions. Although the Project would result in increased pollutant emissions near the WPM Rail Yard, the Project would result in less pollutant emissions overall compared to the 2012 EA conditions. Tailpipe emissions would be exceptionally small when considered relative to current tailpipe emissions from other vehicles in the area.</p> <p>As the Project is located in an attainment area for all criteria pollutants (EPA 2012b), pursuant to the CAA Amendments, a determination of conformity with the State Implementation Plan or plan to maintain the National Ambient Air Quality Standards is not required. Pursuant to this exclusion, a development or select analysis of emissions inventories of criteria pollutants of the Project is not necessary for General Conformity determination purposes.</p> <p>Construction Impacts: Due to the relatively small area of construction, impacts from upgrading the WPB Rail Yard would be negligible.</p>	<p>Construction Mitigation: Contractors will control fugitive dust emissions through watering or other palliative measures.</p>
Noise and Vibration	Section 4.3 and Section 4.11.2	<p>Noise Impacts: The noise assessment reported that FTA impact criteria were exceeded at several locations, mainly associated with FRA-mandated train horn activation at nearby intersections on the mainline track.</p> <p>No Long Term Vibration Impacts: No parcels will experience additional vibration events that exceed the Occasional Events criteria.</p>	<p>Noise Mitigation: Stationary wayside horns will replace locomotive warning horns at the 15th Street intersection just south of the WPB Rail Yard. Using stationary wayside warning horns will reduce the impacts from Severe Impact, for eight Category 2 parcels, to Moderate.</p>

Table 1 Summary of Project Impacts (Continued)

Category	SEA Section	Summary of Impact	Proposed Mitigation
Cultural Resources	Section 4.4	<p>No Long Term Impact: The Project would have no effect on structures located along the existing FECR Corridor as a result of increased train traffic or noise. There would be no effect on the visual setting of these properties, and no change in the FECR historic corridor itself. State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concurrence received Oct. 30, 2014 (see Appendix A).</p> <p>Construction Impacts: None.</p>	Not applicable
Hazardous Materials and Solid Waste	Section 4.5 and Section 4.11.3	<p>No Long Term Impact: The majority of potentially contaminated sites identified by this evaluation are within developed areas adjacent to the existing FECR Corridor. The proposed rail infrastructure upgrades associated with the Project would not impact existing contaminated areas. The Project is not expected to encounter impacted soil or groundwater.</p> <p>Planned operations at this facility would also include the use of hazardous materials. The Project would not include the use or storage of hazardous materials outside the WPB Rail Yard property. Typical materials that AAF would store and use include diesel fuel, motor oils, lubricants, and degreasers.</p> <p>Passenger trains traveling between the WPB Station and the WPB Rail Yard would not be carrying, storing, or using hazardous materials with the exception of on-board fuel, lubricants, and relatively small quantities of materials required for the operation of passenger trains.</p> <p>Construction Impacts: The Project should not encounter contaminated soil or groundwater. The Project would generate construction and demolition waste such as used railroad ties, steel rail, excess soil, rock, organic material, asphalt, concrete, and wood.</p>	<p>Construction Mitigation: Contractors will handle, transport, and dispose all construction and demolition waste according to federal, state, and local regulations as well as industry best management practices. Contractors will recycle materials to the extent practicable.</p>

Table 1 Summary of Project Impacts (Continued)

Category	SEA Section	Summary of Impact	Proposed Mitigation
Transportation	Section 4.6	<p>No Long Term Impact: The Project would increase average daily traffic volume on 15th Street by approximately 25 to 30 employee vehicles and one to two delivery vehicles. This increase would have a minimal impact on local roadways and traffic patterns.</p> <p>The Project includes a total of 16 daily train trips between the WPB VMF and the WPB Station. The Project is completely within an existing area of the FECR Corridor that crosses four roadways at signalized and/or gated crossings within the 0.9-mile section between the WPB Rail Yard and the WPB Station. The addition of 16 passenger trains would result in additional closures of 18.6 to 20.3 minutes per day.</p>	<p>Transportation Improvements: The Project will enhance public transportation safety through crossing improvements at each of the four at-grade crossings within the Project Study Area. This includes upgraded warning devices such as flashing lights, signage, pavement markings, median barriers, and four-quadrant gates. The Project will also implement electronic warning systems, which monitor and communicate train locations and speeds, and stops trains if a crossing were not clear. Upgrades to road-crossings will be coordinated with and/or communicated to local emergency responders, as activations at the road crossings will be more frequent with the increased frequency of train traffic.</p>
Social and Economic Environment	Section 4.7 and Section 4.11.4	<p>No Long Term Impact: The Project would not require property acquisition, and no property conversions from private ownership to transportation use would take place. Therefore, the Project would not result in any residential or commercial relocations, the loss of revenues generated by business enterprises, or the loss of assessed land taxes.</p> <p>The Project would establish 20 to 30 new jobs, resulting in direct socioeconomic benefits in the form of increased local labor income. The implementation of the VMF is anticipated to increase the tax valuation of the WPB Rail Yard, thereby increasing municipal property tax collections.</p> <p>Construction Impacts: The Project would result in construction jobs, which would produce short-term socioeconomic benefits in the form of additional jobs and labor income.</p>	Not applicable
Environmental Justice	Section 4.8	<p>No Long Term Impact: While there are several census tracts that have minority and low-income populations greater than 50 percent and/or are meaningfully greater than the Community of Comparison, there would be no disproportionate adverse impacts to environmental justice communities. As there would be no negative environmental consequences associated with any resource area, there would be no negative impact to communities within the Project Study Area.</p>	Not applicable
Safety	Section 4.9	<p>No Long Term Impact: The Project would enhance public safety with respect to local vehicular and pedestrian traffic.</p> <p>Construction Impacts: Contractors should</p>	<p>Safety Improvements: The Project will elevate pedestrian safety by upgrading crossing signal equipment at the four at-grade crossings within the Project Study</p>

Table 1 Summary of Project Impacts (Continued)

Category	SEA Section	Summary of Impact	Proposed Mitigation
		not encounter petroleum contaminated soil or groundwater during construction activities.	<p>Area.</p> <p>The Project will comply with all relevant health and safety regulations and will include a security fence to separate passenger operations from freight movements and operations.</p> <p>Construction Mitigation: During construction, all contractors will be subject to the contractor's site health and safety plan. Site security measures will include fencing, gates, and proper signage.</p>
Energy	Section 4.10	<p>No Long Term Impact: The Project would require an increase in electricity to service the new buildings and power equipment; however, the additional amount of electricity anticipated for the Project would be minimal, and would not create an adverse impact or disproportionate demand on the existing or planning electrical grid.</p> <p>Construction Impacts: Impacts to aerial electric lines would be temporary and would likely be limited to relocating utility poles within the WPB Rail Yard and potentially between the WPB Rail Yard and the WPB Station, if tracks require shifting.</p>	None

5 Environmental Commitments

During the NEPA process, commitments are made to avoid, minimize and mitigate project impacts. Commitments are developed through public comments, requirements and agreements with regulatory agencies, and through industry best practices. The following project commitments (Table 2) have been agreed to by FRA and AAF and will be implemented for this Project.

Table 2 Summary of Project Commitments

Resource	Commitment	Project Phase
Air Quality	All contractors will be required to control fugitive dust emissions through watering or other palliative measures.	Construction
Noise	Replace locomotive warning horns at the 15th Street intersection just south of the WPB Rail Yard with stationary wayside horns.	Operations
Noise	Passenger train idling will not exceed 30 minutes for crew changes or routine maintenance.	Operations
Noise	All contractors will be required to implement the following noise control measures, as required by the Palm Beach Code: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid nighttime construction in residential neighborhoods; • Locate stationary construction equipment as far as possible from noise sensitive sites; • Route construction-related truck traffic along roadways that cause the least disturbance to residents; • Monitor and maintain equipment to meet noise limits; • Minimize using generators to power equipment; • Limit using public address systems; and • Limit or avoid certain noisy activities during nighttime hours such as aboveground jackhammering and impact pile driving. 	Construction
Vibration	All contractors will be required to operate earth-moving equipment on the construction lot as far away from vibration-sensitive sites as possible. All contractors will be required to phase demolition, earth-moving, and ground-impacting operations so as not to occur in the same time period.	Construction
Solid Waste	All contractors will be required to handle, transport, and dispose all construction and demolition waste according to federal, state, and local regulations as well as industry best management practices. All contractors will be required to recycle materials to the extent practicable.	Construction
Safety	Improve each of the four at-grade crossings within the Project Study Area in accordance with the FRA Diagnostic Team report, which reviewed the safety of FECR grade crossings along the passenger rail project corridor. The report provides safety recommendations for the entire passenger rail project. In accordance with the report, AAF will install pedestrian sidewalks and crossing gates if none currently exist.	Operations

6 Coordination and Consultation


FRA sent a coordination letter to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on August 18, 2014, seeking concurrence that the WPB VMF would not impact federal- or state-listed threatened or endangered species. USFWS concurred with these findings in a letter dated August 27, 2014. FRA also contacted the SHPO on August 18, 2014, seeking concurrence that the WPB VMF location would not impact any historic resources or archaeological sites. SHPO issued a letter of concurrence with the finding of no effect on October 30, 2014. Agency coordination letters are provided in Appendix A of the SEA.

7 Conclusion

FRA is the lead agency for National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) review for the Project. AAF, if approved, will secure financing and will own the system and be responsible for the Project's design, construction, operation, and maintenance. Pursuant to NEPA,³ Council on Environmental Quality NEPA regulations,⁴ and FRA's procedures (FRA 1999), FRA has evaluated the potential human and natural environmental impacts of relocating the Fort Lauderdale Vehicle Maintenance Facility to the WPB Rail Yard as described in the SEA and this FONSI.

FRA has consulted with the State Historic Preservation Officer and received concurrence on October 30, 2014 with FRA's finding of no adverse effect to historic properties. No other federal or state agency permits or approvals are required for this Project.

FRA finds that the impacts of the Project, as assessed in the SEA and summarized in this FONSI, satisfy the requirements of FRA's procedures and that the Project will not have a significant impact on the quality of the human or natural environment following the implementation of identified mitigation measures.



Sarah Feinberg
Acting Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration

1/29/2015
Date

³ 42 U.S.C. §4321 *et seq.*

⁴ 40 CFR parts 1500-1508