

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY**  
**EXTENSION OF GILLESPIE ROAD FROM COUNTY LINE ROAD**  
**TO BALCH ROAD, MADISON COUNTY, ALABAMA**

The city of Madison has applied to TVA for approval under Section 26a of the TVA Act for activities in streams associated with the proposed extension of Gillespie Road from the County Line Road/Browns Ferry Road intersection to the Gillespie Road/Balch Road intersection in the city of Madison, Madison County, Alabama. Specific activities requiring a Section 26a permit are the permanent placement of 3.0 acres of wetland fill, the installation of multiple culverts, and the relocation of 200 linear feet of stream. The affected streams are Bradford Creek, a tributary to Wheeler Reservoir, and its unnamed tributaries.

The purpose of this project is to improve the existing street network in the city of Madison by providing an additional east-west corridor to carry existing and future traffic. The project will provide safer and more efficient link to the major east-west highways in Madison; US Highway 72 to the north and I-565 and State Highway 20 to the south. The extension would require construction of 1.1 miles of two-lane, rural roadway with additional turn lanes at intersections on a right-of-way 120 to 150 feet wide.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) prepared an environmental assessment (EA) in June 2003 and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) in December 2003 for the proposed road extension. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) was a cooperating agency in the preparation of this EA. The EA evaluates two alternatives; the Build Alternative and the No-Build Alternative. TVA has independently reviewed the FHWA/ALDOT EA and is supplementing it with additional analyses described below.

**Impact Assessment**

Gillespie Road currently extends due west from Madison and terminates at Balch Road. The proposed extension would provide a direct connection to the County Line Road/Browns Ferry Road intersection, eliminating a detour of at least 2.3 miles. The project area has changed from chiefly agricultural/rural to predominantly residential over the last 30 years. The proposed route is primarily forested with both upland and bottomland forests. Residential subdivisions occur in the immediate vicinity. No residences would be displaced and no prime farmland would be impacted. Impacts to wildlife and vegetation would be insignificant.

The proposed road would result in the filling of approximately 3.0 acres of a 10.3-acre forested wetland. The project involves fill and construction of culverts across three small tributary streams of Bradford Creek, the realignment of one of these tributaries, and the wetlands fill. The applicant proposes to compensate for the loss of this wetland

acreage through the purchase of 6.0 credits from the Robinson Spring Wetland Mitigation Bank in Jackson County, Alabama. With mitigation, wetland impacts would be insignificant.

Although land within the limits of the 100 year floodplain would be affected, the proposed action would not obstruct flood flows or significantly increase flood levels. The city of Madison issued an Engineering "No-Rise" Certification on November 5, 2007. TVA concurs with this determination and considers the proposed road to be a repetitive action with minimal impacts to floodplains. The proposed action is consistent with Executive Order 11988 on floodplain management.

No adverse impacts to groundwater, surface water, or aquatic ecology are anticipated. Appropriate best management practices would be implemented during construction and the Alabama Department of Environmental Management issued a Water Quality Certification for the project on December 17, 2007. No federally or state-listed endangered or threatened species or habitat to support these species are known from the project area. Consequently no impacts to endangered or threatened species are anticipated. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) concurred with this determination in letters dated March 19, 1999, and October 17, 2007.

No historic structures or landmarks occur in the project area. Archeological sites occur in the project area, but would be avoided during construction. One site, 1MA1245, would be further protected with temporary fencing. The EA concludes that there would be no effects to cultural resources and TVA has independently made this same determination. In letters dated August 21, 2002, and September 26, 2007, the Alabama State Historic Preservation Officer (AL SHPO) concurred with this determination.

The proposed road would result in a long-term increase in noise levels. Anticipated noise levels were compared to the FHWA noise abatement criteria and ALDOT's substantial increase criteria to determine noise impacts. Under the Build Alternative, one of the six sensitive receptors would meet or exceed the 66 dBA threshold level for considering the need for noise abatement measures. However, based on review of possible noise abatement criteria, existing site conditions, and proposed traffic conditions, noise abatement measures were not recommended.

The proposed road would not adversely affect air quality and no land emissions of pollutants, hazardous waste or waste requiring special handling and disposal, or significant negative social or socioeconomic impacts are anticipated. Social impacts are expected to be beneficial as the Build Alternative would increase access to US Highway 72, State Highway 20 (Madison Boulevard), and Interstate 565. It is expected to improve the existing street network, enhance social interaction patterns in the city of Madison, and to improve the response times for emergency vehicles.

### **Public and Intergovernmental Review**

ALDOT held public meetings during the development of the EA and during the subsequent highway design process. Comments received during these public meetings, as well as from the interagency review of the project, have been addressed in the EA and subsequent FHWA/ALDOT FONSI.

On August 31, 2007, TVA and USACE issued Joint Public Notice No. 07-77 to advertise the proposed work. Three agencies commented on the notice; no comments were

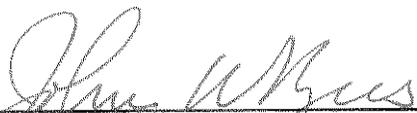
received from the general public. The agency comments included the correspondence from the USFWS and AL SHPO mentioned above. The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) agreed with the purchase of wetland credits from an approved mitigation bank and requested consideration of state-listed endangered and threatened species. As mentioned above, no state-listed species would be affected.

### **Mitigation and Special Permit Conditions**

TVA would require that the city of Madison adhere to general and standard conditions for water quality protection contained in the Section 26a permit, General Conditions 1, 9, and 10, and Standard Conditions 3c, and 6a, 6c through 6i. In-stream construction activities would be performed during lower water conditions. As described above, the applicant proposes to mitigate the loss of wetlands through the purchase of 6.0 credits from the Robinson Spring Wetland Mitigation Bank. The city of Madison would also protect archaeological site 1MA1245 by constructing temporary fencing around it and avoiding impacts to it and other nearby archaeological sites during road construction. TVA has not identified the need for other mitigation to further reduce potential impacts.

### **Conclusion and Findings**

TVA has independently reviewed the FHWA/ALDOT EA and found it to be adequate. TVA is therefore adopting this EA. TVA has determined that the issuance of the Section 26a permit for the proposed Gillespie Road extension project would not be a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the environment. Accordingly, an environmental impact statement is not required. This FONSI is contingent upon adherence to the permit conditions and completion of the mitigation measures described above.

  
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Date Signed