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## FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

# **PROPOSED JOHNSON CITY CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTER AUCTION SALE**

**Washington County, Tennessee**

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

DECEMBER 2003

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## **1. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION**

### **1.1. The Proposed Action and Need**

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) proposes to sell its Johnson City, Tennessee, Customer Service Center (CSC) at public auction for fair market value. The CSC is approximately 40 years old and is now functionally obsolete. TVA currently houses its area transmission line maintenance crews and equipment at the site along with associated office space for customer service staff. The existing facility does not meet federal requirements under the Energy Policy Act of 1992 to reduce energy use. It does not meet TVA's current business needs, which include housing other TVA business units with offices in the Tri-Cities area at the same location with CSC staff. Also, since the facility was built in 1964, the area surrounding the CSC has become more developed and is no longer a suitable location for TVA's operations.

As a consequence of the sale, TVA would relocate several of its offices in the Tri-Cities area to one central facility in the area. TVA has previously considered constructing a new CSC at a greenfield site in the Johnson City area, but this is no longer a preferable course of action. TVA is now considering relocating to an existing facility at a more suitable location and renovating that existing facility as necessary to accommodate TVA's mixed office and quasi-industrial operations. At this time TVA has not determined where to locate the new CSC but is searching for suitable sites that would meet TVA's operational requirements and are cost-effective. As part of the proposal to sell its property, TVA would enter into a lease agreement with the successful purchaser that would allow TVA to remain on the site for up to five years until it relocates its operations. TVA would provide at least one year's notice of its intent to vacate the site. No alterations could be made to the property by the purchaser during the lease without TVA's permission.

TVA has prepared this Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with its procedures implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the NEPA regulations issued by the Council on Environmental Quality, 40 C.F.R. parts 1500-1508 (2003). The EA briefly describes TVA's analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives to it.

### **1.2. Environmental Reviews and Analyses**

TVA previously proposed to build a new CSC at a site which TVA bought at 2544 Boones Creek Road in Johnson City. The site is about 8.4 miles by road and about 4.7 miles in straight line distance northwest from the current CSC. An EA was prepared on the proposed development of the replacement CSC in July, 1999, and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was issued on July 28, 1999. The EA noted that construction at the Boones Creek Road site would have minor impacts on air quality, solid and hazardous waste, aquatic ecology, and visual quality. As explained in the FONSI, TVA determined that these impacts would be insignificant. This EA incorporates by reference the Boones Creek Road EA. Because that EA adequately covers the impacts associated with constructing a new greenfield CSC, this EA does not discuss those impacts further. A copy of the FONSI is contained in Appendix A.

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Because of constraints on capital expenditures and TVA's emphasis on reducing its debt, TVA no longer plans to proceed with constructing a new CSC at the Boones Creek Road site. Should TVA's plans change and it becomes financially feasible to construct a new facility at the Boones Creek Road site the earlier EA would cover that action.

Subsequently, TVA proposed to sell a permanent easement over the site of the present CSC to the Mountain States Health Alliance (MSHA). MSHA intended to develop the site as the middle anchor of the Med-Tech Corridor. The Med-Tech Corridor is an overall concept the city has for development along State of Franklin Road that concentrates on medical technology development, manufacturing, and medical services. An EA was prepared for that proposed sale in 2001, and a FONSI was issued on September 25, 2001. The EA noted that redevelopment and use of the site by MSHA for commercial and medical-service related uses were expected to result in minor impacts to air quality, ground water, and surface water, along with minor generation of hazardous and solid waste and wastewater. Beneficial impacts to land use were expected. TVA also expected there would be minor transportation, noise, and visual impacts. The EA concluded that although landscaping around the old CSC would likely be changed, including the possible removal of the five mature native American Beech trees on the site, the expected use of the site by the new occupant would probably overall be a visually harmonious development in keeping with the urban area. That EA and FONSI are incorporated by reference in this EA, and a copy of that FONSI is attached in Appendix B.

Under the terms of the TVA Board's approval in October 2001, the sale of the easement was contingent upon rezoning of the tract from its current zoning of R-4 (Medium-Density Residential) to MS-1 (Medical Services). Following the denial of the requested rezoning and subsequent unsuccessful litigation, MSHA informed TVA it was no longer interested in acquiring an easement under the terms approved in October 2001. During the rezoning process in 2002, some members of the public objected to any redevelopment of the property that would lead to the loss of the beech trees. A petition opposing the rezoning was circulated and signed by over 3,500 people. This petition was provided to TVA.

TVA is now proposing to sell the property at public auction on December 30, 2003 to any qualified bidder. Taylor Properties, BRMMC Investment Company, Incorporated (BRMMC), and the city of Johnson City have qualified to bid.

Taylor Properties, owned by Stewart Taylor, proposes to develop the site with approximately 80,000 square feet of retail stores. BRMMC, a subsidiary of Mountain States Health Alliance, has no immediate plans to develop the property. It contemplates construction of medical office and clinical space in a three-story building on the property, as well as a road network which would complement the recently completed update of the development plan for the middle anchor of the Med Tech Corridor. The city's plans for the property are less specific but it also anticipates that any development it undertakes or allows on the site would be consistent with the middle anchor of the Med Tech Corridor. The middle anchor concept is described in the 1993 document "A Strategic Development Plan for the Regional Med-Tech Center." That document mentions the possibility of a 60,000 square foot federally-funded research facility on the site of the CSC, but there are no plans or funding for this facility at this time.

TVA has no basis for determining which bidder would be successful and exactly what the ultimate development of the site would be. Although all three qualified bidders have expressed the intent to preserve the trees, none of them have committed in any binding way to do so. Therefore, for purposes of assessing potential impacts, TVA has assumed retail use of the site as a likely upper bound for the intensity of the development, and that development would result in the removal of the beech trees on the site. The EA also examines the potential effects of re-locating TVA's existing operations to an existing facility that is capable of accommodating those operations with minimal, if any, renovation. Finally, the EA examines the potential impact of the no-action alternative, staying on site and renovating the facility for TVA's current needs.

### **1.3. Public Review and Comment**

MSHA's earlier efforts to have the property rezoned generated a public dialogue about uses of the CSC site that TVA carefully followed. In addition, TVA accepted public comments on a draft of this EA from November 26 through December 15, 2003. TVA posted a copy of the draft EA on the TVA website on November 26 and sent a copy to the Johnson City Public Library. In addition, TVA held a public meeting at the Johnson City Doubletree Hotel on December 11 to enhance the public's opportunity to provide comments. Representatives of the three qualified bidders also attended to answer questions about their proposals and provided written statements as to their intentions for redevelopment of the site and. TVA posted notices in the Johnson City Press advertising the meeting on November 26, December 3, and December 9. Fifty-two people, including representatives of the bidders, attended the meeting. Attendees at the meeting had the option to make comments in writing on comment forms or orally to a court reporter. In addition, TVA accepted comments in writing, by facsimile, or electronically. Twenty-one people provided comments during the comment period.

TVA has evaluated and responded to all substantive comments. The summarized comments and responses to them appear in Appendix C.

## **2. ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION**

### **2.1. Alternative A – Auction the Property and Relocate TVA Operations to an Existing Facility**

Under Alternative A, TVA would auction the site to the highest qualified bidder and relocate its operations to a suitable existing facility in the Johnson City area, as well as consolidate operations into a regional "hub." The present group which would be relocated is the Upper Holston Watershed Team, now located in Kingsport, Tennessee. This team consists of 17 individuals and is responsible for managing TVA reservoir properties and natural resource activities in the upper Tennessee region. The Watershed Team occupies leased office space. Because this would best meet TVA's current plans and the purpose and need for this action and has less environmental impact than constructing a new CSC on a greenfield site, this is TVA's preferred alternative.

## **2.2. Alternative B – The No Action Alternative**

Under the No Action Alternative, TVA would not auction the property and would continue to use the existing CSC. If TVA stayed on the property, it would have to renovate the property to meet the requirements of the Energy Policy Act of 1992 to reduce energy use and to allow TVA to relocate the Upper Holston Watershed Team and possibly other TVA operations in the area to the CSC. This alternative is also described in the Boones Creek EA referenced earlier.

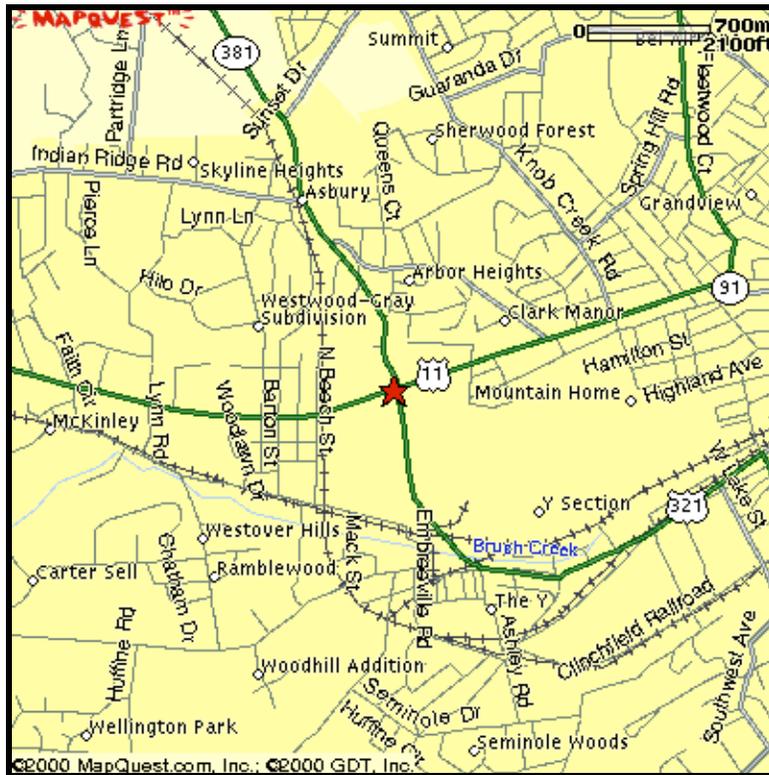
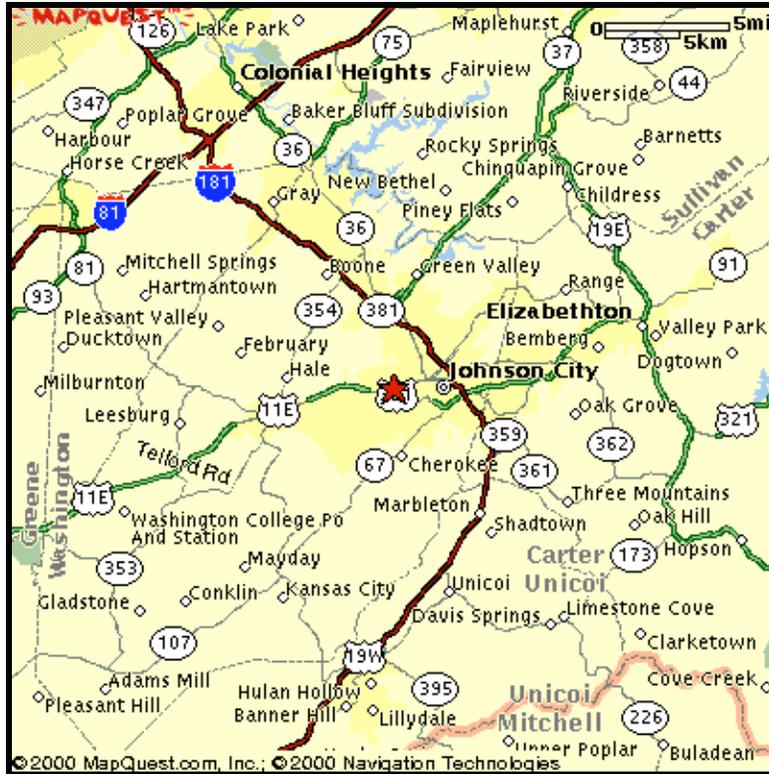
## **3. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

### **3.1. Current CSC Site and Surrounding Land Use**

As shown in Figures 1 and 2 below, the existing CSC is located in the western part of Johnson City at 2107 West Market Street (U.S. Highway 11E/State Route 34) , in the southwestern corner of the intersection of West Market Street and State of Franklin Road (U.S. 321/S.R. 381). As shown in Figure 3 below, the site is an elongated parallelogram, with the longer pair of sides (about 275 yards) running north-south along State of Franklin Road and the shorter pair (about 165 yards) running east-west along West Market Street. The tract is 11.04 acres in size. Johnson City holds an easement over a narrow strip of the property, 2.41 acres in size, primarily along the east side of the property for State of Franklin Road and also along part of the northern side for U.S. Highway 11E. The site contains an office building, four smaller buildings for parking and/or storage, an open area several acres in size for storage of utility poles, paved driveways and parking areas, and above-ground fuel tanks. An area of several acres along State of Franklin Road has been landscaped and is planted in grass, which is kept mowed. This area also contains the beech trees and a number of smaller ornamental trees along the building. A narrow area along West Market Street is also landscaped in grass and some ornamental trees, including some fairly large maple trees.

The arborist's report notes that the five beech trees have an average height of 75 feet and average crown spread of 110 feet. The individual trunks vary from 36 to 49 inches in diameter. American Beech has a wide-spreading shallow root system that is sensitive to soil compaction and drought. The root spread for these trees is estimated to be about 200 feet or more. The longevity of American Beech trees is 200-300 years, and TVA has estimated, based on partially coring one of the trees on the site, that the trees are about 115 years old. Without coring, the State Naturalist previously estimated that the trees could be 300 years old, and the Johnson City Forester has since estimated, also without coring, that the trees are probably 125-150 years old. TVA recognizes that partial coring means there is some uncertainty but considers that it still provides the best estimate of the age. Tree size and appearance are extremely variable based on growing conditions and thus are unreliable indicators. When TVA acquired the site it contained two additional beech trees which have since died.

The CSC is used by TVA for offices, indoor and outdoor storage of electrical equipment, and vehicle refueling and parking. Approximately 40 TVA employees work at the CSC. The current zoning of the site is R-4 (Medium-Density Residential) which allows up to 14 dwelling units per acre as well as limited institutional and commercial uses under certain conditions. TVA's use of the property predates this zoning. Adjacent to the site on the west are the East Tennessee Innovation Center, which is a business incubator



Figures 1 and 2 Location Maps



Figure 3 Aerial Photograph of CSC Site

Photograph taken March 16, 1997, used courtesy of U.S. Geological Survey

concentrating on biotechnology, and about 10 acres of open space. Adjacent to the south is the Washington County/Johnson City Health Department.

The area immediately across both streets contains a mix of urban institutional and commercial development, including a multi-story hospital, on parcels of various sizes. Most have substantial parking lots. Farther from the site there are additional commercial and institutional development and some residential areas. On the west and southwest, there is a substantial amount of undeveloped open space. A major Veteran's Administration complex is less than a mile to the east.

### **3.2. Environmental Consequences of Auctioning the Property and Relocating to an Existing Facility**

The environmental consequences of selling the existing CSC property at public auction and relocating TVA's operations to an existing facility, Alternative A, are addressed below.

Because of the current use of the property for TVA's operations, potential impacts on terrestrial and aquatic ecology are expected to be minimal if the property is sold and redeveloped. The terrestrial ecology of the current CSC site has been substantially altered from its original natural state. The only non-ornamental plants are common ones such as fescue grass and the beech trees. The resident species of wildlife are common birds, squirrels, and rabbits, which are typical of urban and suburban developments. Due to the small size of the tract and its openness, migratory birds are unlikely to rely on it. No rare species of plant or animal are present. Thus impacts on terrestrial ecology would be minimal and insignificant, and there would be no effect on rare species, including federally listed threatened and endangered species. The value of the beech trees from a terrestrial-ecology standpoint is minimal. The site has no wetlands or streams, and none are adjacent, so development would have no direct effects on wetlands or aquatic ecology. (Also see the section below on storm water and surface water quality.)

Because of the nature of the action, several other resources would not be affected by the proposed activities. These include: prime farmland, designated Wild and Scenic Rivers, streams on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory, and potable water supplies. Similarly, the proposed action would not contribute to the spread of exotic or invasive species, does not involve the interbasin transfer of water, would not generate unusual types or amounts of solid waste, would not generate or release hazardous wastes (other than asbestos), special wastes, toxic substances or radioactive materials, would not generate obnoxious odors, would not pose a threat to public health, and would not involve genetically engineered organisms or materials.

In conformance with the requirements of the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and the Community Environmental Response Facilitation Act, TVA searched agency files and collected soil samples from the CSC site to determine if hazardous materials had been stored on the premises or if there were any releases of hazardous materials. The site contains above-ground tanks for storing and dispensing gasoline and diesel fuel, and there was a spill of 7.01 gallons of gasoline in 1996 which was promptly cleaned up to meet regulatory requirements. There was also an underground gasoline tank which was removed in 1990 in accordance with state regulations. Wood poles treated with creosote and

pentachloroethane are known to have been stored on the site, but analysis of soil samples from the pole storage area revealed no detectable contamination. Equipment containing polychlorinated biphenyls has also been stored at the site. Samples of soils and other surfaces indicate the presence of PCBs in amounts less than 0.03 parts per million, and no cleanup action is required. TVA concludes that redevelopment of the property would not have hazardous waste environmental consequences.

Based on public input on the Draft EA and TVA's consideration of potential environmental impacts associated with expected use of the property, the impacts of primary concern are impacts on land use, visual and aesthetic quality, traffic, storm water and surface water quality, air quality, socioeconomics, and cultural resources. Each of these is addressed in more detail below.

### **3.2.1. Land Use**

TVA proposes to sell the existing CSC property at open public auction. As noted above, Taylor Properties, BRMMC, and Johnson City have qualified to bid.

Selling the CSC property is eventually expected to lead to demolition of the current structures and redevelopment of the site, with a change in the land use from TVA's quasi-industrial use to higher intensity commercial and business uses that are more consistent with surrounding land uses. The city's comprehensive plan is now being updated. As noted above, the city does have a strategic plan for the area containing the site that indicates the site should be part of the Med-Tech Corridor. However, in 2002 the city refused to rezone the site to MS-1 (Medical Services), which that would have been consistent with its strategic plan. In the event that the City Commission chooses to retain the current R-4 zoning designation for the property, any development of the property consistent with that designation is expected to result in environmental impacts that are similar to or less than those associated with a more intense commercial-business use.

As discussed above, this EA considers redevelopment of the CSC site for retail use because that is the most intense of the redevelopment proposals. This would be different from the Med Tech proposals but could be compatible with them in serving employees at the medical complex. It would also be generally compatible with the retail and commercial development across and farther east Market Street. In general, whatever redevelopment occurs, whether medical, retail, or residential, it would represent a general continuation of the urban growth of this part of the city and would have to meet the requirements of the city's zoning and other land development regulations. TVA has determined that land use impacts of the proposed action would be insignificant.

### **3.2.2. Visual and Aesthetic Quality**

The visual and aesthetic setting is an area of mixed development. Commercial and retail facilities including fast food restaurants, a hotel, and a shopping center are located along the north side of Market Street, as well as on the south side further east, and are urban in character. The TVA and other properties along the south side going west have a less urban appearance. Their visual character includes low profile structures set back several hundred feet from the street, relatively small parking areas, broad lawns, and occasional mature trees. Development southward along State of Franklin Road is similar to that along West Market west of the intersection. It is primarily small groups of

one and two story office facilities, lawns, and other open space. The most visually dominant structure in the surrounding area is the multi-story hospital facility located southeast of TVA's property across State of Franklin Road.

TVA's one-story facility sits on a small rise about 15 feet higher than the intersection, and the grounds slope away gently in all directions. The building is set back about 170 feet from Market Street and 240 feet from State of Franklin Road at the closest point. The parking and lawn areas slope east, while the service yard slopes to the south. Exterior lighting is minimal and vehicle traffic volume is very low. Developed features cover about 4 acres and the remaining 4.6 acres are lawn and trees. Although several other mature trees are growing on site, the prominent group of five large beech trees in the northeast section is the dominant visual feature in this setting. They provide a major focal point of scenic interest seen in foreground views of passersby, people on nearby properties, and TVA visitors. Beech trees of this size are uncommon in urban areas because their broad shallow root systems are very sensitive to earthwork activity. Overall, the site provides a pleasing visual contrast to the more congested commercial landscape nearby.

Single- or double-story commercial/retail development with required parking, buffers, landscaping, and detention ponds could largely cover the site and possibly require removal of the beech trees. With the removal of the trees, an attractive scenic feature and prominent focal point would be lost, which would reduce scenic integrity and adversely affect the sense of place. A commercial type area would not likely retain the pleasing scale of space and open area. It would generate higher traffic volume and flow that would result in greater visual congestion and discord, particularly along State of Franklin Road. There would also probably be impacts from more extensive night lighting.

However, the specific type of development on this site would be determined by city zoning review and approvals, which could affect the future of the trees and the landscaping of the property. New development would be subject to the landscape regulations (Article XII) of the city zoning code. The stated intent is to "make Johnson City a more beautiful, environmentally sound, and more memorable place through the requirement of new landscaping and preservation of existing landscaping." The regulations include a variety of requirements for tree planting and visual buffers. The regulations also provide incentives for preservation of existing trees. These landscaping requirements would soften the effect of the new development to a certain extent, as newly planted trees mature over time. New development would also be subject to lighting regulations in the city code (Article XIII) which would help minimize glare and additional brightness in the night sky.

Potential changes to the site's visual character were evaluated using a set of scenic value criteria for attractiveness, integrity, and visibility (presented in Appendix D). Further site alteration and tree removal would result in the locally-notable loss of a prominent natural feature and focal point, along with an incremental reduction in the scenic landscape heritage. However, the overall Scenic Value Class would be reduced one level from *Good* to *Fair*. TVA concludes that potential impacts to visual and aesthetic quality would be insignificant.

### **3.2.3. Traffic**

The site of the CSC has good road access. West Market Street and State of Franklin Road are good quality multi-lane divided highways which provide good access to the site via several access roads to the property. They also provide access to much of Johnson City and to other towns in the region. In addition, both highways have access at several points to Interstate Highway 26 (formerly known as Interstate 181), which is located approximately 2.5 miles east. I-26 provides direct access to Kingsport, Tennessee to the north and Erwin, Tennessee, Asheville, North Carolina, and more distant cities to the south. The site is served by one city bus line, with a second line nearby.

The latest available (2002) Average Daily Traffic (ADT) counts show approximately 23,010 vehicles per day (vpd) on State of Franklin Road north of the intersection and 30,660 vpd south of the intersection. There are approximately 28,130 vpd on West Market Street west of the intersection and 19,510 vehicles east of the intersection. TVA's use of the site contributes a minor amount of traffic from commuting employees, service trucks, and visitors. Probably fewer than 200 trips are generated each workday. When emergencies or normal transmission system construction and maintenance require it, there can be a number of trips by large trucks carrying oversize items such as poles, which temporarily interfere with other traffic.

The ability of a road to handle traffic is indicated by its "level of service" (LOS). Completely unconstrained free-flowing traffic is represented by LOS A, and completely constrained and unstable traffic close to gridlock is represented by LOS F. State of Franklin Road north of the intersection and West Market Street east of the intersection are rated LOS C. State of Franklin Road south of the intersection and West Market Street west of the intersection is LOS D. Both levels are typical of urban areas. LOS D represents more congestion than LOS C but is within the capacity of the roadway facility. Although there is little freedom to maneuver and operating speeds are subject to considerable and sudden variation, this condition only occurs during peak hour (usually in the evening commute) and can be tolerated by the driver for short periods of time.

Commercial retail development of the site would result in the generation of additional traffic on the adjacent roadway network. Increased traffic from construction would be temporary and relatively. Employees commuting to/from the site could generate several hundred trips per day depending on the number and type of retail businesses. There would also be deliveries and shipments of goods spread out over the day. The bulk of the increased trips would be made by customers. Using standard methods defined by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (1997), TVA estimates that up to approximately 4,000 vehicles per day could be added to the existing traffic on the local roadway network.

The additional traffic would result in a 10 to 15 percent increase in average daily traffic on the adjacent roadways. Peak hour traffic, on the other hand, would experience a 15 to 20 percent increase, based on the standard assumption that additional peak hour traffic is 10 percent of the daily trips generated due to the shopping center. Weekend traffic for a shopping center is typically higher; however, the weekday is analyzed due to the much larger existing peak hour traffic, which is assumed to be 12 percent of ADT.

The increase in traffic due to development of the site would not result in major changes to the existing service levels of the local roads. State of Franklin Road north of the intersection and West Market Street east of the intersection would continue to provide a

LOS C. State of Franklin Road south of the intersection and West Market Street west of the intersection would continue to provide a LOS D. The section of highway most affected by the site development would be State of Franklin Road south of the intersection where entrances and exits exist to the site. However, the signalized intersection at State of Franklin Road and West Market Street and the short distance to I-26 would minimize the impact to the surrounding roadway network. Because the area of impact would be limited and the level of service would not change, TVA has determined that impacts on traffic congestion would be minor and insignificant.

The intersection of State of Franklin and West Market has had about 50 accidents per year during the last three years, according to data provided by the City Engineer's staff. Five or six severe accidents have occurred each year. Accidents typically increase as traffic volume increases, but as congestion increases the severity of the accidents may decrease due to lower speeds. TVA expects that the increases in traffic if the site is redeveloped for retail use would result in a small increase in accidents. More specific estimates cannot be made due to the variability of accidents and because any required road improvements as noted below could also reduce accidents.

As noted by the Johnson City Planning Director, the city would closely review any development plan for the property. The city requires that new developments on streets with traffic levels as high as West Market Street and State of Franklin Road have traffic impact studies done before the development can be approved. In addition, the city limits new access to State of Franklin Road in the vicinity of the site. To minimize impacts, the city could require the developer to provide improvements such as new turn lanes, allowing no new access to the site, closing the entrance closest to the intersection of West Market Street and State of Franklin Road, and requiring use of the entrance to the East Tennessee Innovation Center. Because the increases in traffic are not expected to alter the level of service and cause only small increases in accidents, and the city has effective measures to further reduce impacts, TVA concludes that potential impacts of the sale and redevelopment of the property on traffic would be insignificant.

#### **3.2.4. Storm Water and Surface Water Quality**

The CSC property currently drains primarily to the south, along the west side of the site. Some of this drainage percolates into the ground on the site through the gravel parking lot. There is a detention basin at the southwest corner of the site and a culvert goes from this basin under a new driveway between the site and the Johnson City/Washington County Health Department. Beyond the culvert, drainage is by overland flow across undeveloped vegetated lots which also receive drainage from other developed lots along the west side of State of Franklin road. The nearest stream is Brush Creek, about 0.6 miles from the site, and this distance is too great for drainage from the CSC to reach the stream before percolating into the ground. The grassy area on the eastern part of the site drains to a low area along State of Franklin Road. Much of this drainage percolates through the grass into the ground. Storm water accumulating in the low area drains across the road through culverts toward King Creek east of the site.

Redevelopment of the CSC site would probably result in the addition of more impervious surface (e.g., pavement) which would increase storm water runoff. However, the city of Johnson City requires storm water detention with release rates no greater than the drainage before redevelopment from the 2-year through 10-year storms. The city also

has regulations to control erosion and sedimentation during construction for sites the size of the CSC property. Measures such as filter fabric barriers, mulching, and sediment basins would control pollution of construction storm water and prevent off-site erosion. Required buffer landscaping would also provide pervious areas for storm water to percolate directly into the ground. As noted by the City Engineer, no additional drainage into King Creek would be permitted, which could require maximum storm water control measures. No runoff from the site is expected to reach Brush Creek after redevelopment. TVA has determined that the sale of the CSC and subsequent redevelopment would have minor and insignificant impacts on storm water quality and quantity and no impacts on surface water quality.

### **3.2.5. Air Quality**

The Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 7401 to 7671q, and associated federal and state regulations control air pollution. Under the Clean Air Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has established six national standards, the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, to protect human health and the environment with an ample margin of safety. These standards include ozone, particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, and lead. Johnson City is currently classified as in attainment for all of these standards. However, Washington County is projected to be nonattainment for (exceed) EPA's new, more stringent eight-hour ozone standard. If the county is designated nonattainment, the State of Tennessee will have to establish additional requirements to reduce ozone-forming emissions (primarily nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds). The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation and county officials are currently assessing the feasibility of various measures. At this time, it appears that federal and statewide measures such as use of cleaner fuels, improved engines, and limitations on emissions from large industrial boilers, including TVA coal-fired power plants, may be sufficient for this area to attain the new standard. If they are not, statewide or county-wide measures such as motor vehicle inspection and maintenance programs could be required to further reduce emissions.

Except for vehicle fueling activities that emit small amounts of mostly hydrocarbons, the CSC has no processes which emit any air pollutants. Vehicles coming to and from the site individually and collectively emit minor amounts of hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and particulates. Travel across the gravel parking lot can generate minor amounts of fugitive dust (particulates) during dry weather.

Sale and redevelopment of the site could affect air quality in several ways. Demolition of the TVA facilities and redevelopment of the site would generate fugitive dust. This would be temporary, typical of construction projects, and not out of character with urban development occurring in the community. TVA expects that this renovation and demolition would not create significant amounts of dust, and the city could require measures such as watering if warranted. The CSC has asbestos-containing materials that would be removed prior to demolition, consistent with applicable Tennessee regulations for asbestos demolition activities.

New facilities on the site could generate air pollutants, but this would be unlikely because commercial and retail activities typically do not have manufacturing processes and would heat and cool with electricity or natural gas, which would not generate any significant amounts of onsite air pollutants. Traffic generated by the new development would emit minor amounts of air pollutants, and increased traffic congestion on the

nearby road system would slightly increase the pollution emitted by all traffic. Additional emissions from approximately 4,000 vehicles per day at this location are expected to result in only very localized impacts. The magnitude of the potential air quality changes, is small in comparison to existing emission patterns and unlikely to significantly influence attainment status for either ozone or fine particulate air pollution or affect the strategies that the state establishes to achieve and maintain attainment of these standards. TVA has determined that impacts of the sale and redevelopment of the CSC on air quality are expected to be insignificant.

### **3.2.6. Socioeconomics**

Approximately 40 TVA employees work at the CSC. Because TVA is an agency of the federal government, it pays no property taxes. TVA does make payments to the states in lieu of taxes, and the states in turn distribute these payments according to their own policies. Another 17 employees work in the Kingsport office of the Watershed Team.

According to the 2000 census and An Economic Profile of Johnson City, Tennessee (Johnson City Planning Department, 2003), Washington County had a population of over 107,000, and Johnson City had a population of over 55,000. Over 52,000 people were employed in the county in 2002, and county unemployment averaged 5.5 percent. In 2001 Washington County had a per capita personal income of \$25,068. This was 94 percent of the state average of \$26,808, and 82 percent of the national average of \$30,413. In 2001 Washington County had a total personal income of \$2,699,279,000.

Assuming retail would be the dominant use of the redeveloped property, TVA has estimated potential economic impacts based on factors such as possible square footage of the development, published data on typical retail sales and employees per square foot, and economic models. According to these calculations, up to about \$39,400,000 in retail sales (about 3.7 percent of the county total) could be generated,. This amount of sales would produce about \$2,800,000 in state sales taxes and \$1,000,000 in local state taxes. Direct employment at the development could be as many as 240 jobs, with payrolls as high as \$3,700,000. Indirect employment elsewhere could be as many as 79 jobs, with payrolls as high as \$2,100,000. Retail and service spending of all of these employees in the local economy could equal \$3,900,000, which would generate about an additional \$220,000 in state and local sales taxes. New residential property taxes from employees moving into the county could total over \$48,000 (assuming that approximately 64 percent of the new employees move from other counties). These economic impacts would be beneficial but insignificant in comparison to the size of the overall county economy. These calculations assume that all retail sales and jobs are new and that a certain number of employees would move into the county from elsewhere. To the extent that existing retail firms simply move to this site from elsewhere in the county and are not replaced by new development, and fewer employees are in-movers from other counties, the economic effects would not be new dollars but simply transfers.

Even if all 240 jobs were filled by in movers to the county, there would be no material or discernible impact on social services such as water supply, sewage treatment, utilities, or schools.

### **3.2.7. Cultural Resources**

The site was extensively graded for construction of the existing CSC and contains no archeological sites.

TVA has reviewed available data on historic structures and sites. The site of the CSC is located in an area which was the 600 acre land grant and farm of Robert Young, a soldier in the Revolutionary War credited with having killed Colonel Ferguson at the Battle of Kings Mountain, a turning point in the war. According to Rootsweb and Mr. Brad Jones of the Johnson City Parks and Recreation Department, Mr. Young's cabin was built in 1775 on the waters of Brush Creek, at least half a mile away from the site. The cabin was restored and marked in 1938 by the U.S. government and the John Sevier Chapter of the DAR. The cabin was moved across Market Street from the site to Optimist Park beside the Boys Club in 1976, which was still on the original land grant. A marker post is reportedly still at the original site of the cabin. In 1996, the cabin was moved from Optimist Park to Winged Deer Park at Boone Lake. It has been modernized, porches have been added, and it is now being used as offices. Mr. Young is buried in a cemetery located on the grounds of the National Guard Armory, at 2717 W. Market St., west of the TVA property.

The proposed auction and relocation has no potential to affect any properties on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The cabin site and cemetery are not located on the TVA property and would not be affected by the proposed sale and any redevelopment of the property. The amount of development in the area has so altered and fragmented the original Young farm and landscape that TVA has determined the CSC site has minimal remaining historic value.

### **3.2.8. Relocating Existing TVA Operations**

Sale of the existing CSC property would require TVA to relocate its operations at that site to another facility. TVA is currently evaluating several existing facilities. There are several commercial facilities in and near Johnson City that appear capable of accommodating the combined TVA operations from the existing CSC and the Kingsport Watershed Team (together, approximately 57 employees). TVA is considering facilities that are zoned for the type of operations TVA conducts, where TVA's operations would be compatible with surrounding uses, and which would require minimal, if any, renovation. The environmental consequences of relocating operations to such an existing facility are expected to be minimal and insignificant. TVA would also consider whether relocating its operations to an existing facility would impact sensitive resources such as wetlands and cultural resources and would avoid facilities with such concerns.

Any pre-existing facility may have to be renovated to some extent to accommodate TVA's operations. However, any construction activities would be temporary and have impacts similar to other development/renovation activities in the area. This would include temporary increase in fugitive dust and minor amounts of construction waste that would have to be disposed of in accordance with local and state solid waste regulations.

Impacts would arise from physically relocating TVA equipment, vehicles, and personnel to a different facility. Although this could temporarily disrupt traffic as vehicles and equipment leave the existing CSC property and enter the new property, all impacts associated with this would be temporary and insignificant. As discussed in the Traffic section above, the existing CSC site fronts roads that are already used by commercial

traffic and the new facility would be located in an area that already allows and consists of commercial uses similar to TVA's operations. The addition of 57 employees and associated traffic at an existing commercial facility in an area with similar uses is not expected to affect traffic significantly.

If TVA identifies an existing facility with unusual features and associated impacts inconsistent with those identified here, TVA would supplement this EA before deciding to relocate to that facility.

### **3.3. Environmental Consequences of the No-Action Alternative**

If the CSC site is retained and continues to be used by TVA, existing facilities would have to be renovated to better meet TVA's needs and the requirements of the Energy Policy Act. This renovation would generate some dust but less than redevelopment. Any asbestos would be properly removed, with no impact on air quality. Traffic would increase slightly due to the additional employees at the CSC.

Renovation of the existing facilities would change them and probably improve their appearance. Depending on the extent of the renovations, the footprint and perhaps height of the building would probably increase to provide additional office space. Except perhaps for the shrubbery and some of the grassed lawn adjacent to the existing building, TVA expects that the existing landscaping, including the beech trees, would remain. Therefore, TVA expects that the visual impacts of this alternative would be minor and insignificant.

Continuing TVA's quasi-industrial operations at the existing CSC would gradually become more inconsistent with surrounding land uses as local commercial development in the vicinity continues. Trucking oversized loads such as large transformers and utility poles would probably cause additional, though relatively infrequent, interference with increased traffic on neighboring streets due to ongoing development in the area.

Any increased building footprint and paved parking would create more impervious surface which would need to be offset with additional stormwater detention structures to control storm water runoff. With these effective measures, TVA has determined that there would be only minor and insignificant impacts on storm water quality and quantity and no impacts on surface water quality.

### **3.4. Cumulative Impacts**

Potential impacts associated with the proposed sale of the CSC property, redevelopment of the property and relocation of TVA's operations to an existing facility in the area are site-specific and localized in nature except for possible emissions associated with increased traffic in the vicinity of the site. However, any such resulting emissions would either not represent an increase in emissions in the county as a whole or only a minimal increase and would be insignificant. Consequently, TVA concludes that any cumulative impacts would also be insignificant.

**3.5. Relationship between Short- Term Uses and Long-Term Productivity and Unavoidable Impacts**

Selling the CSC site and relocating TVA's operations to an area in which they are more suitable would advance TVA's short- and long-term plans. It would also allow the CSC site to be converted to uses that are more consistent with those surrounding the site and enhance the long-term productivity of the site. The demolition and removal of existing CSC facilities and changes in traffic levels near the site probably would not be avoidable if the action proceeds.

**3.6. Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources**

Selling the CSC site and relocating TVA's operations would likely result in demolition of existing CSC facilities, construction of new facilities on the site, and renovation of the existing facility where TVA relocates its operations. This would irreversibly consume the energy and building materials required to do this. It would also likely involve devoting the CSC site to a new use for at least the life of the facilities constructed on the site.

**3.7. Summary of TVA Commitments and Proposed Mitigation Measures**

To minimize impacts of the sale of the current CSC related to hazardous materials and air quality, TVA would commit to notify the buyer of asbestos-containing materials which must be properly removed prior to demolition of the facility.

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