

**REQUEST FOR SECTION 26a APPROVAL TO REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 328
ON STATE ROUTE 1001 OVER THE FRENCH BROAD RIVER
MADISON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA - FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Purpose and Need

North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to replace the bridge along State Route (SR) 1001, over the French Broad River, in the town of Marshall with two new bridges, both requiring Section 26a approval. The existing bridge is considered functionally obsolete and structurally deficient for vehicular traffic; but, because of a citizen's group request, NCDOT may allow the bridge to remain in-place for pedestrian traffic only. The replacement of or rerouting of vehicle traffic from this bridge to two new bridges would result in improved access, traffic flow, and public safety.

Alternatives

In its final FHWA/North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) environmental analysis, four alternatives were considered. Alternatives included replacement of the single structure on a new alignment and replacement of the T-intersection in its current location (Alternative 1); replacement of the single existing structure with two separate structures at another location (with the first bridge being constructed east of the existing structure) (Alternative 2); replacement of the single existing structure with two separate structures as previously described (with the first bridge being constructed just west of the existing structure) (Alternative 3 and preferred); and phased construction of a single replacement bridge on a new alignment (Alternative 4). Alternative 3 was recommended as the preferred alternative because it minimizes impacts on the Marshall Commercial Historic District and maintains access to the school and other public facilities on Blannerhassett Island throughout construction.

Affected Environment and Impacts

TVA conducted a preliminary review and evaluation of the proposed project and determined that impacts on sensitive environmental resources or natural features would be minor and insignificant. The project would not result in an increase or decrease in traffic volumes and, other than temporarily during construction, noise levels would not increase. No air or land emissions of pollutants, hazardous waste or waste requiring special handling and disposal, or negative social or socioeconomic impacts are anticipated. Final bridge designs would ensure that backwater elevation would not be encroached upon beyond the current 100-year floodplain limit and there would be minor and temporary stream impacts from increased sediment loads from causeway/workpad construction to facilitate construction equipment access. Under the preferred alternative (Alternative 3), regardless of the decision to remove the existing bridge or allow it to remain, anticipated impacts on local flooding and floodplain values would be insignificant.

FHWA and NCDOT, in consultation with the SHPO and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, determined that replacement of the existing Bridge No. 328 would have an adverse effect on the Marshall Commercial Historic District and the (former) Marshall High School, both properties eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Because the project would adversely impact historic properties, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and North Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer

(SHPO) signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act on June 6, 2002. The MOA specifies measures to mitigate these adverse impacts. TVA signed a concurring party MOA on October, 19, 2004 (see Affected Environment and Evaluation of Impacts in the attached EA).

Public Review

Public input was obtained during meetings held at the Marshall Town Hall among local officials in April and October 1999. A small group meeting was held in February 2002 to present the project's preferred alternative. Comments received from the public and government and non-government organization are adequately addressed in the FHWA/NCDOT environmental analysis document (see Attachment 1 in the attached EA).

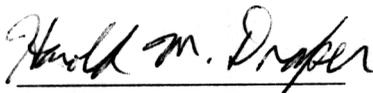
Mitigation

NCDOT, in cooperation with the SHPO and town of Marshall, developed mitigation measures to compensate for visual and demolition impacts to historic properties. These measures, incorporated in the MOA, stipulate how historic property impacts would be mitigated. Pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800, a final MOA was executed between FHWA and the SHPO in 2002. The town of Marshall and Madison County Board of Education signed the MOA as concurring parties. As an agency issuing permits for this project under Section 26a of the TVA Act, TVA indicated its agreement with the MOA by signing a concurring party MOA on October 19, 2004 (see Attachment 4 in the attached EA).

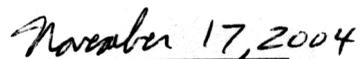
NCDOT will design the project to meet the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program and all local floodplain ordinances. NCDOT will also strictly adhere to all conditions of the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Division of Water Quality water quality certification.

Conclusion and Findings

Based on the attached EA prepared by TVA, the analysis in the FHWA/NCDOT environmental document and the mitigation measures stipulated in the MOA, TVA concludes that approval of this bridge replacement proposal would not be a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the environment. Accordingly, an environmental impact statement is not required.



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Date