BLM

Sierra Front Field Office, Nevada

V&T Railway Reconstruction Project Right of Way

NVN 060566

draft
Finding of No Significant Impact

DOI-BLM-NV-C020-2011-0519-EA

October 2011

NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS

Background

The *V&T Railway Reconstruction Project Supplemental Environmental Assessment* (EA) (DOI-BLM-NV-C020-2011-0519-EA) considers the direct, indirect and cumulative effects from the construction of new elements of the V&T Historic Railway Reconstruction Project through to Carson City Nevada. The project area is located entirely with Carson City County, Nevada. The EA addresses changes to what was originally approved in 2003, and evaluated new elements proposed.

In 2003 the Federal Highway Administration (FWHA) and the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) issued an EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). At that time, two locations for a new interim depot site were proposed: one described as "Terminal A" at the intersection of US Highway 50 and Detroit Lane, and the second described as "Terminal B" at the intersection of Deer Run Road and Carson River Road. Neither of the interim depot sites are being considered any further due to development and public safety constraints. Instead, a new depot site is proposed for an area adjacent to the intersection of US Highway 50 and Drako Way. To connect to this new proposed site, a new 9,000 foot long segment of new track alignment would be constructed. In addition, a new optional segment of balloon track may be constructed to allow for use of an alternative interim depot site off of Flint Drive. An Interim Eastgate Station facility on BLM-managed land is also under consideration along with a utility corridor for sewer and other utilities to serve the Interim Eastgate Station.

The BLM has participated in the development of the EA and upon the conclusion of this process would determine whether to issue a right-of-way (ROW) under Title V, Section 501(A)(5) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. The FHWA is the federal lead for the project. The Nevada Commission for the Reconstruction of the V & T Railway has submitted a ROW application to BLM for this project that includes approximately 61 acres for the Interim Eastgate Station and associated utilities on portions of the following BLM-managed lands:

Mount Diablo Meridian
T. 15 N., R 20 E.,
sec. 1, Lots 1 and 2 of the NE¼.
T. 16 N., R 20 E.,
sec. 36, SE¼ SE¼.

Not all aspects of the proposal would occur on BLM-managed lands. The consideration of effects and decision-making process for the BLM is limited to the lands within its authority.

Land Use Plan Conformance

The project is in conformance with the Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan (2001). Sections that specifically apply to BLM's action include:

- LND-7, Administrative Actions #6. "Exchanges and minor non-Bureau initiated realty proposals will be considered where the analysis indicates they are beneficial to the public."

- ROW-4, Administrative Actions #3. "…applicants of right-of-way grants…are subject to standard approval procedures outlined in the right-of-way applications (43 CFR 2800)…"

Finding

The BLM has participated in the development of the *V&T Railway Reconstruction Project Supplemental Environmental Assessment* (EA) (DOI-BLM-NV-C020-2011-0519-EA) and proposes to adopt the EA. The BLM has preliminarily determined that the EA satisfies NEPA regulations and is consistent with the BLM NEPA Handbook (H-17901).

Based on the analysis in the EA, I have preliminarily determined that this action will not have a significant effect on the human environment and an environmental impact statement (EIS) will not be prepared. This finding and conclusion is based on the consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the *context* and the *intensity* of impacts described in the EA.

Context:

The project area on BLM-managed lands certain BLM lands as described in the Supplemental EA. The lands in the project area are highly fragmented, with scattered commercial development in the area.

Intensity:

1) *Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.*

The proposal would have beneficial impacts on the local economy through the expansion and improvements to the V&T Railway. The proposal to construct a new interim depot on BLM-managed lands would result in the loss of some vegetative resources, however these resources are regionally common and in the project area is highly fragmented, consisting of mixed development and open space. The project area is low quality wildlife habitat.

2) *The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.*

Consideration of public health and safety has been considered by the V&T Railway and NDOT during site selection and no significant concerns have been raised.

3) *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.*

There are no park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers or Areas of Environmental Concern on BLM-managed lands. Historic and cultural resources which may be present on BLM-managed lands would be addressed through a Programmatic Agreement (PA) the FWHA has with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO).

4) *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.*

No highly controversial issues have been identified for this project.

5) *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.*
There are no highly uncertain effects, or unique or unknown risks with the Proposed Action.

6) *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.*
Any future action would be evaluated on a project-specific basis; approving this proposal would not set a precedent for future actions.

7) *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.*
The Proposed Action is not related to other actions with individually significant but cumulatively significant impacts.

8) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.*
Historic and cultural resources which may be present on BLM-managed lands are addressed through a PA that the FWHA has with the SHPO.

9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the ESA of 1973.*
The Proposed Action would have no effect to endangered or threatened species or their critical habitat.

10) *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.*
The Proposed Action will not violate or threaten to violate any federal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

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James W. Schroeder
Acting Field Manager
Sierra Front Field Office

Date