February 6, 2020

Ms. Tina Cote
Administrator
Franklin Regional Transit Authority
John W. Olver Transit Center
12 Olive Street, Greenfield, MA 01301

Re: FRTA Bus Maintenance and Operations Facility – Documented Categorical Exclusion NEPA Determination

Dear Ms. Cote:

After reviewing documentation received on June 7, 2019 and the supplemental information received on June 24, 2019 in support of the Franklin Regional Transit Authority’s (FRTA) proposed Bus Maintenance and Operations Facility, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has determined pursuant to 23 C.F.R. §771.118(e) that the specific conditions or criteria for a Categorical Exclusion in accordance with 23 C.F.R. §771.117(d)(8) are satisfied and that significant environmental impacts will not result:

771.117(d)(8) Construction of new bus storage and maintenance facilities in areas used predominantly for industrial or transportation purposes where such construction is not inconsistent with existing zoning and located on or near a street with adequate capacity to handle anticipated bus and support vehicle traffic.

Additionally, in accordance with 36 C.F.R. §800.4(d)(1) and in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (“Section 106”), the FTA, in consultation with the Narragansett Indian Tribe, the Stockbridge Community Band of Mohican Indians, and the Massachusetts Historical Commission, has determined that there are no historic properties affected by the project.

The scope of this project involves the construction of a Bus Maintenance and Operations Facility at a location on Sandy Lane, in the Village of Turners Falls, Montague, MA consisting of maintenance and administrative building; at-grade parking and navigation lanes; landscaping; and associated utility infrastructure.

FTA has consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in accordance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 for purposes of compliance with ESA Section 7(a)(2). The project may affect the threatened Northern Long-Eared Bat (Myotis septentrionalis), but through consultation FTA has determined that under the FWS’s January 5, 2016 Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO) any take that may occur as a result of the project is not prohibited under the ESA Section 4(d) rule adopted for this species at 50 CFR §17.40(o). The PBO
addresses activities excepted from "take" prohibitions applicable to the northern long-eared bat under the ESA. FWS issued a verification letter in support of this determination on July 3, 2019 (attached) which determined that the proposed FRTA Bus Maintenance and Operations Facility (the “Action”) is consistent with activities analyzed in the PBO.

**Annual Reporting Requirement**

Per the terms of the July 3, 2019 FWS verification letter, to maintain compliance with and coverage under the Programmatic Biological Opinion, FTA must update and resubmit project information annually to FWS until the project is completed. In order to meet this recurring annual July 3 deadline, MassDOT and FRTA must notify FTA Region 1’s Environmental Protection Specialist of the project status annually by June 19 until construction is completed. This annual notification shall include the status of construction and any significant changes in the project. Additionally, MassDOT and FRTA must immediately notify FTA if any dead, injured, or sick northern long-eared bats are found during project implementation and the results of any bat surveys conducted in the project area.

The FTA looks forward to working with the FRTA and MassDOT on this project. Please contact Leah Sirmin at Leah.Sirmin@dot.gov or (617) 494-2459 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Peter Butler
Regional Administrator

Enclosure

cc: Astrid Glynn, Massachusetts Department of Transportation
In Reply Refer To: Consultation Code: 05E1NE00-2019-SLI-2192
Event Code: 05E1NE00-2019-E-05548
Project Name: Franklin Regional Transit Authority Vehicle Maintenance & Operations Facility

Subject: List of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location, and/or may be affected by your proposed project

To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed species list identifies threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species, as well as proposed and final designated critical habitat, that may occur within the boundary of your proposed project and/or may be affected by your proposed project. The species list fulfills the requirements of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

New information based on updated surveys, changes in the abundance and distribution of species, changed habitat conditions, or other factors could change this list. Please feel free to contact us if you need more current information or assistance regarding the potential impacts to federally proposed, listed, and candidate species and federally designated and proposed critical habitat. Please note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the accuracy of this species list should be verified after 90 days. This verification can be completed formally or informally as desired. The Service recommends that verification be completed by visiting the ECOS-IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species lists and information. An updated list may be requested through the ECOS-IPaC system by completing the same process used to receive the enclosed list.

The purpose of the Act is to provide a means whereby threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems upon which they depend may be conserved. Under sections 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(2) of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 402 et seq.), Federal agencies are required to utilize their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and to determine whether projects may affect threatened and endangered species and/or designated critical habitat.
A Biological Assessment is required for construction projects (or other undertakings having similar physical impacts) that are major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)). For projects other than major construction activities, the Service suggests that a biological evaluation similar to a Biological Assessment be prepared to determine whether the project may affect listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat. Recommended contents of a Biological Assessment are described at 50 CFR 402.12.

If a Federal agency determines, based on the Biological Assessment or biological evaluation, that listed species and/or designated critical habitat may be affected by the proposed project, the agency is required to consult with the Service pursuant to 50 CFR 402. In addition, the Service recommends that candidate species, proposed species and proposed critical habitat be addressed within the consultation. More information on the regulations and procedures for section 7 consultation, including the role of permit or license applicants, can be found in the "Endangered Species Consultation Handbook" at:

http://www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/pdf/TOC-GLOS.PDF

Please be aware that bald and golden eagles are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668 et seq.), and projects affecting these species may require development of an eagle conservation plan (http://www.fws.gov/windenergy/eagle_guidance.html). Additionally, wind energy projects should follow the wind energy guidelines (http://www.fws.gov/windenergy/) for minimizing impacts to migratory birds and bats.

Guidance for minimizing impacts to migratory birds for projects including communications towers (e.g., cellular, digital television, radio, and emergency broadcast) can be found at: http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/CurrentBirdIssues/Hazards/towers/towers.htm; http://www.towerkill.com; and http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/CurrentBirdIssues/Hazards/towers/comtow.html.

We appreciate your concern for threatened and endangered species. The Service encourages Federal agencies to include conservation of threatened and endangered species into their project planning to further the purposes of the Act. Please include the Consultation Tracking Number in the header of this letter with any request for consultation or correspondence about your project that you submit to our office.

Attachment(s):

▪ Official Species List
Official Species List

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

New England Ecological Services Field Office
70 Commercial Street, Suite 300
Concord, NH 03301-5094
(603) 223-2541
**Project Summary**

Consultation Code: 05E1NE00-2019-SLI-2192

Event Code: 05E1NE00-2019-E-05548

Project Name: Franklin Regional Transit Authority Vehicle Maintenance & Operations Facility

Project Type: TRANSPORTATION

Project Description: The Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) proposes to construct and operate a Bus Maintenance and Operations Facility at a location on Sandy Lane, in the Village of Turners Falls, Montague, MA consisting of:

1) A maintenance and administrative building;
2) At-grade parking and navigation lanes;
3) Landscaping; and
4) Associated utility infrastructure.

The proposed project site is a currently vacant parcel totaling approximately 24 acres, of which just over 5 total acres are proposed to be developed. The proposed facility will have a total footprint of approximately 224,994 SF including the building footprint (Administrative space, Maintenance Space, and Service Space) of approximately 20,989 SF, impervious parking surfaces that will be approximately 109,425 SF, and approximately 94,580 SF of landscaped/pervious surfaces.

Project Location:

Approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: [https://www.google.com/maps/place/42.58687795528833N72.56025826178411W](https://www.google.com/maps/place/42.58687795528833N72.56025826178411W)
Counties: Franklin, MA
Endangered Species Act Species

There is a total of 2 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on this species list.

Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species.

IPaC does not display listed species or critical habitats under the sole jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries, as USFWS does not have the authority to speak on behalf of NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

1. NOAA Fisheries, also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce.

Mammals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern Long-eared Bat Myotis septentrionalis</td>
<td>Threatened</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No critical habitat has been designated for this species.
Species profile: [https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9045](https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9045)

Flowering Plants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeastern Bulrush Scirpus ancistrochaetus</td>
<td>Endangered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No critical habitat has been designated for this species.
Species profile: [https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6715](https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6715)

Critical habitats

THERE ARE NO CRITICAL HABITATS WITHIN YOUR PROJECT AREA UNDER THIS OFFICE'S JURISDICTION.
Subject: Verification letter for the 'Franklin Regional Transit Authority Vehicle Maintenance & Operations Facility' project under the January 5, 2016, Programmatic Biological Opinion on Final 4(d) Rule for the Northern Long-eared Bat and Activities Excepted from Take Prohibitions.

Dear Leah Sirmin:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) received on July 03, 2019 your effects determination for the 'Franklin Regional Transit Authority Vehicle Maintenance & Operations Facility' (the Action) using the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) key within the Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) system. This IPaC key assists users in determining whether a Federal action is consistent with the activities analyzed in the Service’s January 5, 2016, Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO). The PBO addresses activities excepted from "take"[1] prohibitions applicable to the northern long-eared bat under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

Based upon your IPaC submission, the Action is consistent with activities analyzed in the PBO. The Action may affect the northern long-eared bat; however, any take that may occur as a result of the Action is not prohibited under the ESA Section 4(d) rule adopted for this species at 50 CFR §17.40(o). Unless the Service advises you within 30 days of the date of this letter that your IPaC-assisted determination was incorrect, this letter verifies that the PBO satisfies and concludes your responsibilities for this Action under ESA Section 7(a)(2) with respect to the northern long-eared bat.

Please report to our office any changes to the information about the Action that you submitted in IPaC, the results of any bat surveys conducted in the Action area, and any dead, injured, or sick northern long-eared bats that are found during Action implementation. If the Action is not completed within one year of the date of this letter, you must update and resubmit the information required in the IPaC key.
This IPaC-assisted determination allows you to rely on the PBO for compliance with ESA Section 7(a)(2) only for the northern long-eared bat. It **does not** apply to the following ESA-protected species that also may occur in the Action area:

- Northeastern Bulrush, *Scirpus ancistrochaetus* (Endangered)

If the Action may affect other federally listed species besides the northern long-eared bat, a proposed species, and/or designated critical habitat, additional consultation between you and this Service office is required. If the Action may disturb bald or golden eagles, additional coordination with the Service under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act is recommended.

[1]Take means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct [ESA Section 3(19)].
Action Description
You provided to IPaC the following name and description for the subject Action.

1. Name
Franklin Regional Transit Authority Vehicle Maintenance & Operations Facility

2. Description

The following description was provided for the project 'Franklin Regional Transit Authority Vehicle Maintenance & Operations Facility':

The Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) proposes to construct and operate a Bus Maintenance and Operations Facility at a location on Sandy Lane, in the Village of Turners Falls, Montague, MA consisting of:
1) A maintenance and administrative building;
2) At-grade parking and navigation lanes;
3) Landscaping; and
4) Associated utility infrastructure.

The proposed project site is a currently vacant parcel totaling approximately 24 acres, of which just over 5 total acres are proposed to be developed. The proposed facility will have a total footprint of approximately 224,994 SF including the building footprint (Administrative space, Maintenance Space, and Service Space) of approximately 20,989 SF, impervious parking surfaces that will be approximately 109,425 SF, and approximately 94,580 SF of landscaped/pervious surfaces.

Approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: https://www.google.com/maps/place/42.58687795528833N72.56025826178411W
**Determination Key Result**

This Federal Action may affect the northern long-eared bat in a manner consistent with the description of activities addressed by the Service’s PBO dated January 5, 2016. Any taking that may occur incidental to this Action is not prohibited under the final 4(d) rule at 50 CFR §17.40(o). Therefore, the PBO satisfies your responsibilities for this Action under ESA Section 7(a)(2) relative to the northern long-eared bat.

**Determination Key Description: Northern Long-eared Bat 4(d) Rule**

This key was last updated in IPaC on May 15, 2017. Keys are subject to periodic revision.

This key is intended for actions that may affect the threatened northern long-eared bat.

The purpose of the key for Federal actions is to assist determinations as to whether proposed actions are consistent with those analyzed in the Service’s PBO dated January 5, 2016.

Federal actions that may cause prohibited take of northern long-eared bats, affect ESA-listed species other than the northern long-eared bat, or affect any designated critical habitat, require ESA Section 7(a)(2) consultation in addition to the use of this key. Federal actions that may affect species proposed for listing or critical habitat proposed for designation may require a conference under ESA Section 7(a)(4).
Determination Key Result

This project may affect the threatened Northern long-eared bat; therefore, consultation with the Service pursuant to Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat.884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) is required. However, based on the information you provided, this project may rely on the Service’s January 5, 2016, Programmatic Biological Opinion on Final 4(d) Rule for the Northern Long-Eared Bat and Activities Excepted from Take Prohibitions to fulfill its Section 7(a)(2) consultation obligation.

Qualification Interview

1. Is the action authorized, funded, or being carried out by a Federal agency?
   Yes

2. Have you determined that the proposed action will have “no effect” on the northern long-eared bat? (If you are unsure select "No")
   No

3. Will your activity purposefully Take northern long-eared bats?
   No

4. Is the project action area located wholly outside the White-nose Syndrome Zone?
   Automatically answered
   No

5. Have you contacted the appropriate agency to determine if your project is near a known hibernaculum or maternity roost tree?

   Location information for northern long-eared bat hibernacula is generally kept in state Natural Heritage Inventory databases – the availability of this data varies state-by-state. Many states provide online access to their data, either directly by providing maps or by providing the opportunity to make a data request. In some cases, to protect those resources, access to the information may be limited. A web page with links to state Natural Heritage Inventory databases is available at www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/nleb/nhisites.html.
   Yes

6. Will the action affect a cave or mine where northern long-eared bats are known to hibernate (i.e., hibernaculum) or could it alter the entrance or the environment (physical or other alteration) of a hibernaculum?
   No
7. Will the action involve Tree Removal?
   Yes

8. Will the action only remove hazardous trees for the protection of human life or property?
   No

9. Will the action remove trees within 0.25 miles of a known northern long-eared bat hibernaculum at any time of year?
   No

10. Will the action remove a known occupied northern long-eared bat maternity roost tree or any trees within 150 feet of a known occupied maternity roost tree from June 1 through July 31?
    No
Project Questionnaire

If the project includes forest conversion, report the appropriate acreages below. Otherwise, type ‘0’ in questions 1-3.

1. Estimated total acres of forest conversion: 2

2. If known, estimated acres of forest conversion from April 1 to October 31 0

3. If known, estimated acres of forest conversion from June 1 to July 31 0

If the project includes timber harvest, report the appropriate acreages below. Otherwise, type ‘0’ in questions 4-6.

4. Estimated total acres of timber harvest 0

5. If known, estimated acres of timber harvest from April 1 to October 31 0

6. If known, estimated acres of timber harvest from June 1 to July 31 0

If the project includes prescribed fire, report the appropriate acreages below. Otherwise, type ‘0’ in questions 7-9.

7. Estimated total acres of prescribed fire 0

8. If known, estimated acres of prescribed fire from April 1 to October 31 0

9. If known, estimated acres of prescribed fire from June 1 to July 31 0

If the project includes new wind turbines, report the megawatts of wind capacity below. Otherwise, type ‘0’ in question 10.
10. What is the estimated wind capacity (in megawatts) of the new turbine(s)?

0
Date: 06 June 2019

Grant Applicant: Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA)

Project: Proposed FRTA Bus Maintenance and Operations Facility
Sandy Lane, Village of Turners Falls, Montague, MA

INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR PROBABLE CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

A. DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) proposes to construct and operate a Bus Maintenance and Operations Facility at a location on Sandy Lane, in the Village of Turners Falls, Montague, MA consisting of:

1) A maintenance and administrative building;
2) At-grade parking and navigation lanes;
3) Landscaping; and
4) Associated utility infrastructure.

The proposed project site is a currently vacant parcel totaling approximately 24 acres, of which just over 5 total acres are proposed to be developed (please see Figure 1-Site Locus).

The FRTA provides public transit services in 41 communities throughout Franklin, Hamden, Hampshire, and Worcester counties. It serves a population of over 100,000, including services for the elderly and individuals with disabilities.

Access to the proposed project site will be from Sandy Lane, which is a public way providing access to several existing commercial facilities located on parcels abutting the project site. The existing land use pattern in the site vicinity is generally mixed commercial and residential. There is a ground mounted solar generation facility to the immediate west, the Town of Montague’s Animal Shelter and Transfer Station to the immediate south, and loading dock facilities for Judd Wire, a private manufacturing facility, to the east. Access to all these facilities is via Sandy Lane. There are several residences located to the north of the project site on Turnpike Road (please see Figure 2-Aerial Map.)

The proposed facility will have a total footprint of approximately 224,994 SF including the building footprint (Administrative space, Maintenance Space, and Service Space) of approximately 20,989 SF, impervious parking surfaces that will be approximately 109,425 SF, and approximately 94,580 SF of landscaped/pervious surfaces (please see attached Figure 3-FRTA Architectural Plans and Renderings.)

The FRTA’s routes cover the largest and most rural geographical areas of any transit authority in Massachusetts. The proposed Bus Maintenance and Operations facility will address FRTA’s current and future operational needs.
The FRTA’s existing vehicle operations and maintenance facility and administrative office building is leased from a private party, is limited in size and configuration, and is inadequate. It is located at 382 Deerfield Street in Greenfield, Massachusetts. Considerable renovations and upgrades would be needed at the existing facility to accommodate both current and future transit vehicles used by FRTA, and such renovations are not feasible or economical. Continued use of the existing facility would also restrict sustainability options for the FRTA going forward.

___B. LOCATION (INCLUDING ADDRESS): Attach a site map or diagram, which identifies the land uses and resources on the site and the adjacent or nearby land uses and resources. This is used to determine the probability of impact on sensitive receptors (such as schools, hospitals, residences) and on protected resources.

Review of existing land use within .25 miles of the project site confirms that there are no sensitive land uses or sensitive community resources present that would be negatively impacted by the project. There are no wetlands, nor rare, threatened, or endangered (RTE) habitat present on the site (please see Figure 4-Environmental Resources Map.) An isolated wetland and vernal pool have been identified on the parcel of land abutting the project site to the south. Project design is being advanced to include structural stormwater management BMPs that will prevent concentration and/or increase in the volume of release of Stormwater in the direction of this wetland resource area.

___C. METROPOLITAN PLANNING AND AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY: Is the proposed project “included” in the current adopted MPO plan, either explicitly or in a grouping of projects or activities? What is the conformity status of that plan? Is the proposed project, or are appropriate phases of the project included in the TIP? What is the conformity status of the TIP?

Funding for design and construction of the facility has been included in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and was approved by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

Emission levels from the Central Massachusetts MPO, part of the Eastern Massachusetts Nonattainment Area, are in conformity with the Massachusetts State Implementation Plan (SIP). Further, the Central Massachusetts Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is in conformity with the SIP where required and in accordance with EPA’s final conformity regulations.

___D. ZONING: Description of zoning, if applicable, and consistency with proposed use.

The town of Montague has provided a formal opinion (dated April 9, 2019) “that the proposed FRTA maintenance facility to be constructed on Sandy Lane qualifies as a governmental facility under the Montague Zoning Bylaws section 5.(a)iii. As such, Montague has determined that the project is a permitted use in all zoning districts. Site Plan Review will be required from the Planning Board under Zoning Bylaws Section 9.1.2(a) for construction exceeding 3,000 square feet. The final site plan should be reviewed for conformance with other sections of the zoning bylaws pertaining to dimensional setbacks, parking and signage.” (Please see attached Town of Montague Opinion Letter).
E. TRAFFIC IMPACTS: Describe potential traffic impacts; including whether the existing roadways have adequate capacity to handle increased bus and other vehicular traffic.

The proposed FRTA Maintenance and Operations facility will be located approximately 3.9 miles from the existing John W. Olver ("JWO") Transit Center in the commercial center of downtown Greenfield. FRTA anticipates that revenue vehicle traffic between the proposed Maintenance and Operations facility and JWO will generally head west along Turnpike Road then proceed southwesterly along Montague City Road and Cheapside St. FRTA revenue vehicle traffic will then proceed northerly along Route 5 (Deerfield St. to Bank Row) to Olive St. and then to the JWO Transit Center.

Twenty-three (23) revenue vehicles will be stored and thirty-five (35) revenue vehicles will be serviced at the proposed Maintenance and Operations Facility. FRTA operations, which take place only on weekdays, will begin when the first revenue vehicle departs the proposed facility at 4:20 am. FRTA vehicles will then depart the facility at approximately 30- to 60-minute intervals throughout the morning. FRTA revenue vehicles will return to the proposed facility in the afternoon and early evening hours, with the last vehicle returning by 7:45pm. These additional vehicles will only have minor impacts to the streets and intersections between Turnpike St. and Cheapside St.

It is not anticipated that revenue vehicle traffic will increase along Rt. 5 near Deerfield St. and intersections north of the Cheapside St. intersection relative to existing conditions, since there is already FRTA bus traffic in that area associated with the existing FRTA O&M facility located at 382 Deerfield St.

It is similarly not anticipated that revenue vehicle traffic to and from the proposed facility will negatively impact other Deerfield St. intersections or the intersection at Bank Row and Olive St. in the downtown Greenfield Area.

As noted above, FRTA anticipates there will be only small changes in the number of vehicles added to Turnpike Street and surrounding roadways (estimated at 284 total vehicles per day or slightly greater than 7.1% of anticipated total traffic volume on Turnpike Rd. and 1.8% of revenue generating vehicles on Cheapside St. Furthermore, there will be a positive net effect to traffic impacts along Rte. 5 (Deerfield St.) which is gained by replacing the FRTA O&M Facility with the proposed new facility at Sandy Lane. The proposed Maintenance and Operations facility relocation will eliminate the FRTA turning movements across the 2-lane Rte. 5 (Deerfield St.) to access/egress the existing facility at 382 Deerfield St. Based on the above information, STV has determined that there will be only minor shifts in the travel patterns because of the project, which the existing roadways can accommodate. Only minimal impacts to local roadways or intersections are anticipated during non-peak hours as a result of the proposed project.

F. CO HOT SPOTS: If there are serious traffic impacts at any affected intersection, and if the area is nonattainment for CO, demonstrate that CO hot spots will not result.

The proposed project is in the village of Turners Falls in the town of Montague, which is located approximately 45 miles north of Springfield, MA. The City of Springfield is the closest metropolitan area which is identified in the EPA Greenbook for CO Designated Area/State Information. The City of Springfield is designated as a Maintenance Area for CO that is Not Classified (www.epa.gov).
In 2017 MassDEP discontinued the PAMS-related trace CO monitoring at Chicopee (25-013-0008). FRTA revenue vehicles will depart the proposed facility for weekday service intermittently, starting at 4:20am and will the return intermittently ending at 7:45pm. FRTA revenue vehicles will add only slightly to traffic volumes on Turnpike Road and intersections to the east and west of the proposed facility, resulting in only minor changes in bus, mini-bus and paratransit van traffic levels at affected intersections. Most of the subject intersections are not signalized, and FRTA's engineer STV has determined that no CO hot spots will occur because of this project.

___ G. HISTORIC RESOURCES: Describe any cultural, historic, or archaeological resource that is located in the immediate vicinity of the proposed project and the impact of the project on the resource.

Review of available data has confirmed that there are no previously identified cultural, historic, or archeological resource areas in the immediate vicinity of the proposed project site, (Please see Figure 5-Historical Resources.)

___ H. NOISE: Compare the distance between the center of the proposed project and the nearest noise receptor to the screening distance for this type of project in FTA’s guidelines. If the screening distance is not achieved, attach a “General Noise Assessment” with conclusions.

FTA guidelines for this project type contained in the FTA Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment guide (FTA-VA-90-1003-06) indicate that the screening distance between the center of the proposed project (project type Bus Facilities-Storage and Maintenance) is 350’ (unobstructed) and 225’ (intervening buildings.) Review of the project site and the closest noise receptors in the vicinity (residences to the north of the project site on Turnpike Road—Please see Figure 4-Environmental Resources Map) shows that these residences are located at a distance greater than the screening distance. The FRTA’s proposed building is further than the required screening distance.

___ I. VIBRATION: If the proposed project involves new or relocated steel tracks, compare the distance between the center of the proposed project and the nearest vibration receptor to the screening distance for this type of project in FTA’s guidelines. If the screening distance is not achieved, attach a “General Vibration Assessment” with conclusions.

The proposed project does not involve new or relocated steel tracks.

___ J. ACQUISITIONS & RELOCATIONS REQUIRED: Describe land acquisitions and displacements of residences and business.

The FRTA proposes to acquire the project site from the Town of Montague. The site is currently vacant and no displacements of residences of businesses will occur.

___ K. HAZARDOUS MATERIALS: If real property is to be acquired, has a Phase I site assessment for contaminated soil and groundwater been performed? If a Phase II site assessment is recommended, has it been performed? What steps will be taken to ensure that the community in which the project is located is protected from contamination during construction and operation of the project? State the
results of consultation with the cognizant State agency regarding the proposed remediation?

Multiple soil samples were collected at the project site and analyzed at a properly credentialled laboratory to determine whether subsurface contamination exceeding reportable quantities is present at the site. Initial analysis of one of the samples collected showed a low level of petroleum hydrocarbon present at a depth of 5-10 feet. Based on this result, additional testing was recommended by FRTA’s environmental consultant TRC at the subject sample location and at three additional sample locations on the project site to confirm whether reportable concentrations of petroleum compounds are present in the soil. Additional samples were collected and analyzed from each of the four locations at 5, 10, and 15 feet below ground surface (bgs). None of the additional samples exceeded reportable concentrations.

L. COMMUNITY DISRUPTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE: Provide a socio-economic profile of the affected community. Describe the impacts of the proposed project on the community. Identify any community resources that would be affected and the nature of the effect.

a. A description of the low-income and minority population within the study area affected by the project, and a discussion of the method used to identify this population (e.g., analysis of Census data, minority business directories, direct observation, or a public involvement process).

The proposed project site is located within Montague, MA Census Tract 407.02 Block Group 2. While there are several Census Tracts/Blocks within the Village of Turners Falls that meet the Environmental Justice Criteria based on household income, 2017 US Census Data obtained from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (MassGIS) shows that Tract 407.02, Block Group 2 does not meet criteria for consideration as an Environmental Justice community (please see Figure 6-Environmental Justice Areas.)

b. A discussion of all adverse effects of the project both during and after construction that would affect the identified minority and low-income population.

No adverse effects to any minority or low-income populations are anticipated to result from project construction or operation.

c. A discussion of all positive effects that would affect the identified minority and low-income population, such as an improvement in transit service, mobility, or accessibility.

FRTA’s intent with the proposed project is to effectively support its current and future bus operations so that it may continue to serve the 41 communities throughout Franklin, Hamden, Hampshire, and Worcester counties where it operates. FRTA serves a population of over 100,000, including services for the elderly and individuals with disabilities. The project will have significant benefit for these groups by supporting continuing availability of bus transportation in the region.

d. A description of all mitigation and environmental enhancement actions incorporated into the project to address the adverse effects, including,
but not limited to, any special features of the relocation program that go beyond the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Act and address adverse community effects such as separation or cohesion issues; and the replacement of the community resources destroyed by the project.

No mitigation or environmental enhancement actions have been incorporated into the project, since no adverse community effects have been identified.

e. A discussion of the remaining effects, if any, and why further mitigation is not proposed.

No mitigation or environmental enhancement actions have been incorporated into the project, since no relevant adverse community effects have been identified.

f. For projects that traverse predominantly minority and low-income and predominantly non-minority and non-low-income areas, a comparison of mitigation and environmental enhancement actions that affect predominantly low-income and minority areas with mitigation implemented in predominantly non-minority or non-low-income areas. Recipients and subrecipients that determine there is no basis for such a comparison should describe why that is so.

The project is a fixed facility located on a discrete parcel of land in Turners Falls. For this reason, the project will not “traverse” any of the types of areas described, and thus will not have a negative impact in the way contemplated by this question.

M. USE OF PUBLIC PARKLAND AND RECREATION AREAS: Indicate parks and recreational areas on the site map. If the activities and purposes of these resources will be affected by the proposed project, state how.

The proposed project is not located within .5 miles of any public parkland and will not affect any public parkland or recreational areas (please see Figure 4-Environmental Resources Map.)

N. IMPACTS ON WETLANDS: Show potential wetlands on the site map. Describe the project’s impact on on-site and adjacent wetlands.

While there are no wetlands on the proposed project site, an isolated wetland is present on the abutting parcel adjacent to the site to the immediate south. The potential for construction phase impacts to this wetland will be mitigated through use of appropriate erosion Best Management Practices. Stormwater from the completed facility during operations will be managed with structural Stormwater management facilities that will be included in project design in compliance with both the Massachusetts Stormwater Standards and with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements.

O. FLOODPLAIN IMPACTS: Is the proposed project located within the 100-year floodplain? If so, address possible flooding of the proposed project site and flooding induced by proposed project due to its taking of floodplain capacity.

The project site is not located within 100-year floodplain.
P. IMPACTS ON WATER QUALITY, NAVIGABLE WATERWAYS, & COASTAL ZONES:
If any of these are implicated, provide detailed analysis.

The project has been designed by FRTA’s engineer, STV, to meet all requirements of the Massachusetts Stormwater Policy and it will thus have no negative impact on water quality (please see attached Stormwater Management Report.)

The site is not located within or adjacent to any navigable waterway and is not located within the Coastal Zone.

Q. IMPACTS ON ECOLOGICALLY–SENSITIVE AREAS AND ENDANGERED SPECIES:
Describe any natural areas (woodlands, prairies, wetlands, rivers, lakes, streams, designated wildlife or waterfowl refuges, and geological formations) on or near the proposed project area. If present, state the results of consultation with the state department of natural resources on the impacts to these natural areas and on threatened and endangered fauna and flora that may be affected.

The project site is not located within any state or federally designated ecologically sensitive areas or designated rare or endangered species habitat areas (please see Figure 4-Environmental Resources Map.)

R. IMPACTS ON SAFETY AND SECURITY: Describe the measures that would need to be taken to provide for the safe and secure operation of the project after its construction.

The proposed facility will be enclosed by a 6’-0” tall chain-link fence, where access is restricted to the main driveway. Pedestrian access will be controlled and will be monitored by security cameras. Vehicular access will be via the main entry where parking gates restrict public access to the site and parking area. An electronic access control system will be implemented that will include parking gates. Electronic access control will also be provided to the building along with a site monitoring video surveillance system.

S. IMPACTS CAUSED BY CONSTRUCTION: Describe the construction plan and identify impacts due to construction noise, utility disruption, debris and spoil disposal, air and water quality, safety and security, and disruptions of traffic and access to property.

The FRTA’s proposed maintenance facility will be built using standard construction practices. Noise producing operations will be limited to the use of construction vehicles and tools. The building will be constructed with standard spread footings, and there will be no pile driving utilized for the building foundations.

Construction activities will be limited to weekday and daytime hours to limit noise and light pollution.

Utility disruptions are anticipated to be minimal for water and sewer connections and the selected construction contractor will adhere to a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan, which will prevent sediment run-off, erosion, dust production and tracking of mud and debris from construction vehicle tires into the public roadways.
The construction contractor will be required to perform all work in accordance with OSHA construction and workplace standards to prevent accidents and promote workplace safety.

Applicant’s Environmental Reviewer

Date
Date: 24 June 2019

Grant Applicant: Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA)

Project Name: Proposed FRTA Bus Maintenance and Operations Facility
Sandy Lane, Village of Turners Falls, Montague, MA

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION REQUIRED
FOR PROBABLE CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

A. DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Please add a description of the site selection process that describes alternative locations that were considered.

In SFY15, MassDOT hired STV, Incorporated (STV) to work with FRTA and provided a Site Selection Analysis Report. The report provided an evaluation and assessment on four (4) potential sites for a new FRTA Vehicles Maintenance and Operations Facility. STV focused on evaluating various constraints and impacts at all of the four sites, conducted analysis and developed conceptual layouts to define the necessary area required for the new facility. STV analyzed ridership, zoning, noise impacts and various physical and environmental aspects of each site. The conclusion of the report recommended a site in Greenfield, MA owned by the Town of Greenfield, despite the fact the site had a history of environmental contamination. The entire Site Selection Analysis Report can be viewed online at: http://www.frta.org/wp-content/uploads/20150710-FRTA-Final-Site-Selection-Report.pdf). Upon further investigation into the ongoing site environmental monitoring and testing it was determined to discontinue pursuit of this specific site for FRTA’s project and re-start the search for a different site location. In late SFY16 the Town of Montague contacted FRTA with a potential site for FRTA’s project on town-owned land on Sandy Lane in the Village of Turners Falls in Montague, MA.

B. LOCATION (INCLUDING ADDRESS): Has this site been previously developed? If so, what was it used for? Will the project involve cutting down trees?

According to the Town Planner this site is a former gravel pit that has been filled in with clean soil from a previous Town project and has not had any other development. Trees were previously cut down and removed from the site by another contractor to stage equipment and gain access to the newly constructed solar project to the west of FRTA’s project site. There are some remaining trees that will need to be cut down and removed for this project.
B. **TRAFFIC IMPACTS:** “Twenty-three (23) revenue vehicles will be stored and thirty-five (35) revenue vehicles will be serviced at the proposed Maintenance and Operations Facility.” Where will the twelve (12) other revenue vehicles be stored?

The remaining twelve (12) other revenue vehicles are stored off-site with other transportation providers, primarily Councils on Aging, that are in the outer reaches of our service area. Those vehicles will come into the Bus Maintenance and Operations Facility periodically for routine maintenance and other vehicle repairs.

E. **TRAFFIC IMPACTS:** “Only minimal impacts to local roadways or intersections are anticipated during non-peak hours as a result of the proposed project.” What are the impacts during peak hours?

On average, there is 1-4 buses entering and exiting the site per hour. Here is a list of the current driver runs to give a better indication of traffic impacts on and off of the project site:

- Run 1: Pull out at 4:20am; Pull in at 12:20pm
- Run 2: Pull out at 4:45am; Pull in at 12:45pm
- Run 3: Pull out at 6:10am; Pull in at 2:10pm
- Run 4: Pull out at 6:45am; Pull in at 2:45pm
- Run 5: Pull out at 8:45am; Pull in at 4:45pm
- Run 6: Pull out at 10:45am; Pull in at 6:45pm
- Run 7: Pull out at 10:45am; Pull in at 6:45pm
- Run 8: Pull out at 11:30am; Pull in at 7:30pm
- Run 9: Pull out at 6:00am; Pull in at 10:05am
- Run 10: Pull out at 6:30am; Pull in at 10:35am
- Run 11: Pull out at 7:45am; Pull in at 10:55am
- Run 12: Pull out at 8:00am; Pull in at 2:00pm
- Run 13: Pull out at 10:30am; Pull in at 2:35pm
- Run 14: Pull out at 12:55pm; Pull in at 6:50pm
- Run 15: Pull out at 2:30pm; Pull in at 7:40pm
- Run 16: Pull out at 2:55pm; Pull in at 7:45pm

G. **HISTORIC RESOURCES:** Please describe the process that was used to determine that there are no cultural, historic, or archaeological resources in the immediate vicinity.

Cultural resources within the project area were identified through archival research and review of online databases.
For above ground resources: a file review was completed via the Massachusetts Historical Commission’s (MHC) cultural resources information system (MACRIS). This review included the identification of any inventoried historic resource within 0.25 miles of the project area that have been listed, or are eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). In addition, a review of the NRHP online database was also completed. The results of this review indicated that there are no NRHP eligible or NRHP listed properties within the project area or within 0.25 miles of the project area. Based on this review, it was determined that the project will have no impact on documented historic resources.

For archaeological resources: a review was performed of documented historic and precontact archaeological resources as well as previous archaeological surveys within 1 mile of the project area using a restricted-access layer on MACRIS that is available to TRC’s archeologist. The results of this review identified 13 precontact sites and 1 historic site within a 1 mile search radius, the closest site being documented 0.20 miles from the project area. No archaeological surveying has been conducted in the immediate vicinity of the project site, and there are no documented archaeological sites on, or adjacent to, the project area. Based on the findings of this review, it was determined the project will have no direct impact on known archaeological resources.

---

**J. ACQUISITIONS & RELOCATIONS REQUIRED:** “The site is currently vacant and no displacements of residences of businesses will occur.” However, the maps provided appear to show the presence of a parking lot, a building, equipment, and dirt roads within the parcel to be acquired.

The maps referenced in the comment identify the boundary of the parcel upon which the project site is located, rather than the boundary of the project site. The project site occupies only a portion of the complete parcel to be acquired (please see the renderings and design drawings provided in Figure 3 of the CatX document), and the site does not include the parking lot, building, and equipment identified in the comment. Please see the attached figure which was provided in the CatX within the stormwater report and shows the boundaries of the project site.

---

**Q. IMPACTS ON ECOLOGICALLY-SENSITIVE AREAS AND ENDANGERED SPECIES:** Please provide details related to potential impact on the Northern Long-eared Bat and the Northeastern Bulrush, both of which are protected under the Endangered Species Act and may be present in this area.

According to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service’s (USFWS) 4d Rule protecting the threatened northern long-eared bat (NLEB) (*Myotis septentrionalis*),
incidental “take” of NLEB outside of hibernacula resulting from activities other than tree removal is not prohibited. Incidental “take” resulting from tree removal is prohibited if it occurs within a 0.25 mile radius of known NLEB hibernacula, cuts or destroys known occupied maternity roost trees, or cuts or destroys any other trees within a 150-foot radius from the known maternity tree, during the pup season (June 1 through July 31). According to the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) there are no known hibernacula or maternity roost trees within 0.25 miles of the project area (https://mass-eoeea.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Viewer/index.html?appid=de59364ebbb348a9b0de55f6febdf52).

Northeastern bulrush (Scirpus ancistrochaetus) is an endangered plant species known to occur in only two locations in Massachusetts. One of these two locations is the Town of Montague. Northeastern bulrush is an obligate wetland species that requires fluctuating water levels, full sun, and mesotrophic or oligotrophic water chemistry (medium to low productivity). It is threatened by permanent changes in water level such as filling or draining, as well as competition with dense vegetation such as invasive common reed (Phragmites australis) and purple loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria). No wetland habitat, of any kind, occurs within the project site or the parcel to be acquired (see Figure 4 in the CatX document), therefore northeastern bulrush is not present on the project site and would not be impacted by project activities. There is an intermittent stream which is located (at its nearest point) approximately 400 feet east of the project site boundary, which does not provide suitable habitat for northeastern bulrush. In addition, a potential and a certified vernal pool, with some surrounding non-jurisdictional isolated wetland, are present approximately 400 feet south of the project site boundary. Neither of these vernal pools, nor the associated wetlands, will be impacted by construction activity or site runoff. All stormwater will be contained on site and in the event of a 100-year flood event, any overflow will be diverted northeast and away from the stream and vernal pools.
January 2, 2020

Ms. Brona Simon  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, MA  02125

Re: Proposed FRTA Bus Maintenance and Operations Facility, Montague, MA  
No Historic Properties Affected

Dear Ms. Simon:

The Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) is proposing to utilize Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds to construct and operate a new Bus Maintenance and Operations Facility (the Project) at an undeveloped parcel located on Sandy Lane, in the Village of Turners Falls, Montague, MA.

The scope of this project consists of the construction of a maintenance and administrative building, at-grade parking and navigation lanes, landscaping, and associated utility infrastructure. The proposed project site is located on a currently vacant parcel and is approximately 5 acres in size. The parcel was formerly part of a gravel pit and has been previously disturbed. The Area of Potential Effects (APE) is defined as the entire project site.

A review of MHC’s cultural resources information system (MACRIS) identified no known historic or archaeological resources within the APE, although there are several known archaeological sites within a one-mile radius of the project. FTA consulted with the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians and the Narragansett Indian Tribe to seek their assistance in identifying the potential presence of any historic or archaeological resources that may be impacted by the proposed project. No input was received and no additional resources were identified during this consultation.

In accordance with 36 C.F.R. § 800.4(d)(1) of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation’s (ACHP) regulations, “Protection of Historic Properties”, FTA has determined that there are no historic properties affected by the FRTA Bus Maintenance and Operations Facility project. The FTA is requesting your concurrence with this determination. The following information is provided to support this determination:

- Site Locus Map  
- Aerial Image of Project Site and APE  
- Draft Images of Proposed Facility
In keeping with 36 C.F.R. § 800.4(d)(1)(i), if a response from the Massachusetts Historical Commission is not received within 30 days, the FTA will consider its responsibilities under Section 106 fulfilled. The FTA looks forward to receiving your input regarding the proposed project location. Please contact Leah Sirmin at Leah.Sirmin@dot.gov or (617) 494-2459 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Peter S. Butler

Peter Butler
Regional Administrator

Enclosure

cc: Tina Cote, Franklin Regional Transit Authority
Figure 1-Site Locus Map
Figure 2-Aerial Map
Figure 3-Architectural Plans and Renderings
AERIAL VIEW - OVERALL SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA
GROUND LEVEL VIEW - NORTHEAST CORNER OF SITE
Figure 4-Environmental Resources Map
Figure 5-Historical Resources Map
Montague Zoning Opinion Letter
4/4/2019

Michael Perreault, CCTM
Franklin Regional Transit Authority
John W. Olver Transit Center
12 Olive Street
Greenfield, MA 01301

Subject Property: Sandy lane, Montague, MA

Re: Special Permit

Mr. Perreault,

It is my opinion that the proposed FRTA maintenance facility to be constructed on Sandy Lane qualifies as a governmental facility under the Montague Zoning Bylaws section 5.2(a)iii. As such, it is a permitted use in all zoning districts. Site Plan Review will be required from the Planning Board under Zoning Bylaws Section 9.1.2(a) for construction exceeding 3,000 square feet. The final site plan should be reviewed for conformance with other sections of the zoning bylaws pertaining to dimensional setbacks, parking, and signage.

Sincerely,

Christopher Rice

Building Commissioner

Cc: Town Administrator
    Town Planner
Figure 6-Environmental Justice Areas
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AREAS
FRANKLIN COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
BUS MAINTENANCE AND STORAGE FACILITY
WORCESTER, MA

Census Tract 407.01 Block Group 1
Census Tract 407.02 Block Group 2
Census Tract 407.01 Block Group 3
Census Tract 407.01 Block Group 4
Census Tract 411 Block Group 3
Census Tract 411 Block Group 4
Census Tract 409 Block Group 1
Census Tract 402 Block Group 3

Project Parcel
Block Group Boundary
Environmental Justice 2010 Populations
EJ Criteria, by Block Group
Income

MASSACHUSETTS

Figure 6
December 2018

US Census Bureau, 2017
Base map: USGS/The National Map, 2018

Environmental Justice 2010 Populations
EJ Criteria, by Block Group
Income

TRC
Wannalancit Mills
650 Suffolk Street
Lowell, MA 01854
(978) 970-5600
Figure 7-Aerial Image of Project Site and APE
Figure 2: Aerial Image of Project Site and APE