

SUP 19-0002 Application Narrative (Revised)

CUP 91-17 Amendment

Tax Parcels 37-A-41A (part) and 37-A-41E

GENERALIZED LAND DEVELOPMENT NARRATIVE

Virginia Railway Express (VRE), on behalf of its owners, the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation District Commission (PRTC) and the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC), requests an amendment to CUP 91-17 for a proposed expansion of the VRE Crossroads Storage and Maintenance facility (Crossroads MSF). The existing VRE Crossroads MSF is located on Parcel 37-A-41E at 9400 Crossroads Parkway. The existing CUP was issued for construction of the Maintenance and Storage Facility (MSF) on a total land area of 10.756 acres. The existing and proposed land use is a railroad station/depot/terminal according to County Zoning. The MSF has been operating at that site for about twenty years. As part of a proposed expansion, the MSF would expand beyond the 10.756 acres onto a portion of adjacent Tax Parcel 37-A-41A, which is currently owned by Crossroads Associates, LLC. PRTC and NVTC are negotiating with Crossroads Associates, LLC to purchase 19.514 acres of Tax Parcel 37-A-41A from Crossroads Associates, LLC for the proposed expansion. The real estate closing for the property acquisition is expected to occur in June 2019.

The property proposed for the expansion currently is zoned I-1, MU-5 and RU. The GDP (Sheets 1-22) show the 19.514 acre-portion of Tax Parcel 37-A-41A that is proposed to be acquired and shows the proposed expansion of the VRE Maintenance and Storage Facility. In the Generalized Development Plan submitted with this application, proposed facilities/improvements are highlighted in yellow (Sheet C-201 and 202). The proposed MSF expansion is needed to accommodate longer VRE trains and the need to add storage tracks to relocate two existing storage tracks required for the construction of the proposed Lifecycle Overhaul and Upgrade (LOU) facility. The LOU facility will be equipped with heavy-duty cranes, two large pieces of equipment and other specialized equipment enabling VRE to conduct heavy equipment maintenance and overhaul efficiently on-site. Therefore, VRE proposes to add the LOU facility at the existing Crossroads MSF and acquire about 19.5 acres of adjacent property for the expansion.

The Crossroads MSF currently consists of a warehouse building, a crew building, a train wash, and a service and inspection building. There are currently eight train storage tracks for VRE trains. The proposed LOU building would be a one-story metal building of 33,252 square feet (gross floor area) and would be constructed within the existing MSF. The LOU building would allow VRE to perform maintenance and repair work inside the building for both locomotives and passenger trains, with a capacity of four units at a time. New storage tracks, a small pervious parking area, a stormwater BMP, and an upgraded gravel access road would be constructed on Parcel 37-A-41A as part of the expansion. The existing dirt road on Parcel 37-A-41A would be improved to provide a construction access and secondary access to the south side of the facility, thereby improving fire safety and emergency response. The proposed expansion would not increase the number of staff at the facility and therefore, would not increase the traffic generated by the facility. The existing wooden/earthen noise barrier and chain link fence along the southern and southeastern sides of the existing facility would be maintained or, where it is displaced by construction, new wooden noise barrier would be erected to the east of the expanded MSF footprint. A locked gate (with key box) would be constructed at the gravel entrance road

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to reduce the potential for trespassers onto the property. In addition, a forested buffer (Transitional Screen Type 3) along the south side of the Parcel 37-A-41A and the existing MSF property would be preserved, as per the zoning case R17-0009 that was approved by Board Action (see Sheet C-0003)).

Proposed Enhancements/Benefits

The proposed VRE Crossroads MSF expansion offers the County several enhancements and benefits, which would ensure the Crossroads MSF continues to operate as a good neighbor and as a valuable asset in the County:

1. The Crossroads MSF is a critical component of VRE operations and the continued operation of the VRE Spotsylvania Station, located to the north of the MSF. Both MSF and Spotsylvania Station provide an invaluable benefit to the citizens of Spotsylvania County and the commuting public of the region. The proposed construction for the expansion is expected to cost about \$36 Million, which would create a substantial demand for construction workers and for goods and construction materials, as well as services support, during the 1½ year expected construction period.
2. The proposed LOU building would bring heavy train maintenance and overhaul activities to the Crossroads Yard instead of having to send train parts out of state for service and overhaul. The large wheels, called train trucks, currently must be sent out to have the wheels rounded on a large lathe. One of the new pieces of equipment to be installed at the LOU facility will be a metal lathe enabling VRE to perform the work in-house and on a schedule which VRE can control.
3. The proposed MSF expansion includes improvements to the dirt road on the portion of Parcel 37-A-41A to be acquired. These improvements would be built early in the construction period to be utilized by the construction contractor so that vehicles would not be using the main yard entrance and co-mingling with daily operations. In addition, this upgraded gravel road will permanently ensure that emergency vehicles have a second access route to the facility, which would increase safety and enhance emergency response. VRE would also install a locked gate at the entrance to the access road, thereby reducing the potential for trespassers/four wheelers to use the property.
4. The proposed MSF expansion includes a Transitional Screening Area of about 7.5 acres along the south side of the property. The Screening Area was approved by the County as part of case R17-0009. The screening area would be a minimum of 181-feet wide and approximately 1,157-feet long (see GDP Sheet C-203)). The Transitional Screening Area is a mature forest and would provide an effective visual and noise buffer for the residences on the south side of the of the Parcel 37-A-41A. In addition, the proposed expansion would preserve the existing berm and wooden noise barrier along the south side of the facility and would add a wooden noise barrier along the eastern boundary of the proposed expansion (See GDP Sheets C-201, C-202, and C-705).
5. The Crossroads MSF would continue to operate at the terminus of Crossroads Parkway, adjacent to an undeveloped property (residual of 37-A-41A) that is zoned for mixed use (I-1, MU-5 and RU), the CSX railroad (parallel to the Crossroads MSF), and residences to the south. This location is well suited for a rail yard and ensures that operations would have minimal impact on

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surrounding roads or surrounding land uses. The VRE facility has been a good neighbor for about 20 years and VRE has developed an expansion plan that would ensure the Crossroads MSF continues to be a good neighbor.

As part of the SUP amendment process, VRE sent certified letters to 80 surrounding property owners, which included an information package about the proposed MSF expansion and a request for their comments on the proposed action. VRE received no written concerns or comments and only one phone call about the proposed expansion. The phone caller mentioned no concerns about the proposed VRE expansion.

Generalized Development Plan

The Generalized Development Plan (GDP) (Exhibit C, Sheets 1-22)) depict the existing facilities and proposed facilities (highlighted in yellow on Sheets C-201 and C202) as well as the subject parcels and adjacent parcels. The requested SUP would apply to a total of 30.270 acres, which includes the existing 10.770-acre CUP and the proposed expansion onto 19.514 acres of Parcel 37-A-41A (part) (See GDP Sheet C-003). The GDP includes detailed plans about the proposed stormwater BMPs, utility extensions, the proposed Limits of Disturbance, location of wetlands and streams, the secondary access road improvements, the proposed LOU Building, tracks, proposed and existing wooden noise barrier, and proposed and existing fencing. A detailed Site Plan was submitted to the County in 2015 (Case ST15-0053) and has been revised and conditionally approved pending the approval of the SUP amendment and based on comments received from the County.

Illustrative/Concept Plan and/or Architectural Renderings

An architectural rendering/concept drawing of the proposed LOU building is included (Exhibit A), which also shows the proposed new tracks that will be relocated from the existing MSF. The proposed expansion on Tax Parcel 37-A-41A (part) does not include any buildings. The proposed LOU building at the existing Crossroads MSF will be a one-story metal building (height of 55' 9") that has similar height and look to the existing metal building, used for on-site Service and Inspection that is already at the facility (See GDP Sheets 203 and A-201-206).

Traffic Impact Study

The Crossroads MSF has an existing paved entrance road off Crossroads Parkway. The proposed expansion would add a secondary gravel access road onto Crossroads Parkway, just to the east of the existing paved entrance road (See GDP Sheet C-203). Based on discussions with VDOT, the entrance would be located beyond the end of VDOT maintenance and therefore would not require a Land Use Permit from VDOT.

The proposed MSF expansion would not increase the staffing level at the facility; therefore, there would be no permanent change in the level of traffic generated by the expansion. A short-term increase in traffic would occur from construction vehicles during the 1 ½ year construction period, but this would not cause any adverse effect. The original Crossroads MSF was designed and then constructed in accordance with prevailing codes and design regulations as well as the approved CUP. From a traffic

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perspective, all of the current-day site activity is attributable to staff and visitors/contractors. The total staff numbers around 30-40 people per day, and they are divided among 3 shifts. The majority of the staff (20-25 people) work the 4pm – Midnight shift, meaning they are arriving in the mid-afternoon “off-peak” before the typical ramp-up of afternoon PM peak hour traffic. The rest of the site’s traffic is in the form of visitors (deliveries) and contractors. For traffic calculation purposes, the VRE maintenance facility translates to the Light Industrial Land Use category as defined by the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation (9th Edition). Site traffic using the ITE Trip Generation data can be estimated using either approximate square footage (SF) or number of employees as the independent variable. The existing office buildings onsite total approximately 8,300 SF. Using the ITE rates for Light Industrial Land Use with SF as the independent variable, the site is estimated to generate approximately 55-60 vehicle-trips per day (VPD). Using the number of employees as the independent variable, the site is estimated to generate approximately 100-115 vehicle-trips per day (VPD). Both sets of ITE calculations consider the typical employee and visitor/delivery traffic. In both cases, these trips would be divided across the three shifts, with the majority falling on the afternoon “off-peak,” which would not impact the local PM peak hour. Relatively speaking, these are low trip generation numbers.

The proposed LOU expansion will not add any additional office square footage (which means there is no theoretical increase to the site’s trip generation potential); rather, it will instead put a roof over existing outdoor workspace. After construction of the LOU building and MSF expansion, VRE will self-perform the maintenance work, thereby reducing the number of contractors that currently travel to and from the facility for shipping of equipment to other locations for the heavy maintenance work. Therefore, from a traffic impact perspective, the net effect of the LOU expansion is anticipated to be a slight reduction in overall site traffic numbers stated above. This reduction will have a positive overall effect on parking and all related traffic on the public and private access road network in the vicinity of the site. The proposed expansion includes a new pervious parking lot that would add 10 parking spaces (See GDP Sheet C-305)

General Landscaping Plan

The General Landscaping Plan includes a Transitional Screening Area (Type 3) that was approved by the County as part of case R17-0009. The Transitional Screening Area is located outside the proposed Limits of Disturbance and would be preserved as open space/buffer/screening. The screening area is about 7.5-acres and is a minimum of 181-feet wide and approximately 1,157-feet long (see GDP Sheet C-203). The Transitional Screening Area is a mature forest and would provide an effective visual and noise buffer and screening for the residences on the south side of the of the Parcel 37-A-41A.

Conceptual Stormwater Management Plan

VRE has submitted a detailed GDP Plan and Site Plan for the proposed expansion, which is consistent with the County’s Ordinance (Chapter 19A) on Stormwater Management. The stormwater management plan (ST15-0053) was reviewed and revised based on County comments and therefore should be consistent with the County’s Ordinance. The stormwater management plan would ensure that there is no adverse effect from stormwater runoff as a result of the proposed MSF expansion. In fact,

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stormwater runoff should improve because the proposed LOU building will bring maintenance activities inside a building. The proposed expansion would result in land disturbance of about 4.67 acres and an increase of about 2.8 acres in impervious area. The GDP shows the installation of permeable pavement for the proposed parking area within the proposed expansion and a dry swale BMP with check dams to capture stormwater runoff from the proposed expansion (See GDP Sheet C-305). The existing facility has a stormwater BMP in the northwest corner of the property (See GDP Sheet C-101). VRE would secure a VPDES General Permit for construction of the proposed expansion.