



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Transit
Administration**

REGION VI
Arkansas, Louisiana,
New Mexico, Oklahoma,
Texas

819 Taylor St. Suite 14A02
Fort Worth, TX 76102
(817) 978-0550
(817) 978-0575 (fax)

April 28, 2020

The Honorable Sharon Weston Broome
Mayor-President of the City of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish
222 Saint Louis Street
Post Office Box 1471
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

Re: Plank-Nicholson Bus Rapid Transit, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Dear Mayor-President Broome:

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has reviewed the documentation you and your team provided us in support of the proposed Plank-Nicholson Bus Rapid Transit Project (the Project) located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. FTA finds the Project meets the criteria for a National Environmental Policy (NEPA) categorical exclusion in accordance with FTA's regulations implementing NEPA.

On November 13, 2019, the U.S. Department of Transportation selected the Project for award under the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grants program. The City of Baton Rouge-Parish of East Baton Rouge (City-Parish) received the BUILD grant and would oversee the planning, design, and construction of the Project. The City-Parish would then transfer it to the Capital Area Transit System (CATS), the region's transit provider, at the start of revenue operations in early 2023. The Project would develop a nine-mile, high-capacity bus service connecting North Baton Rouge, downtown, and the Louisiana State University campus. It would connect regional medical facilities, governmental centers, the downtown Central Business District, and residents along the Plank Road, Florida Street, and Nicholson Drive urban arterials. In addition, it would feature enhanced transit stations with real-time information including bus arrival times and level boarding, unique branded vehicles and other enhancements designed to make the transit line attractive to riders.

On March 4, 2020, FTA determined that the Project would have no adverse effect on historic properties per the National Historic Preservation Act and supporting regulations (36 CFR 800). On April 27, 2020, the Louisiana Office of Cultural Development concurred with this finding. FTA has further determined that there would be no use of Section 4(f) resources by the Project, per the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 and supporting regulations (23 CFR 774).

FTA finds that the project meets the criteria of a categorical exclusion under 23 CFR 771.118(d). We find that the project elements do not, either individually or cumulatively, have any

significant environmental impact, and the Project is therefore excluded from a detailed environmental analysis.

This determination applies only to the proposed project as described in this correspondence and supporting materials. Any changes to the Project which would result in significant environmental impacts, including disclosure of new information or previously unidentified concerns, would require a re-evaluation.

If you have any questions, please contact Terence Plaskon at (817) 978-0573 or via email at terence.plaskon@dot.gov. FTA looks forward to continuing to work with you on this project

Sincerely,



Donald R. Koski, AICP
Director of Planning and Program Development

DRK/tp

cc: Bill Deville, CATS
Melissa Glascock, City/Parish of Baton Rouge
Lynn Hayes, FTA