

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: T-Mobile SeaTac Mall Anchor Upgrade

Project No.: W0819

Project Manager: Nathan Mullen, TELP-TPP-3

Location: King County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological and radio towers; B1.3 Routine maintenance; B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow T-Mobile to upgrade their wireless network antennas and equipment and to upgrade structure footings at structure 7/2 on the Tacoma Raver No. 1 transmission line in King County, Washington. The work would consist of removing, installing, and/or replacing antennas mounted on the BPA lattice-steel transmission structure. The quantity and/or configuration of antennas on the structure could change from the current installation. In addition, remote radio units (RRUs), tower mounted amplifiers (TMAs), coaxial cables and/or additional equipment and could be removed, installed, and/or replaced. T-Mobile could also remove, install, and/or replace ground-level telecommunications equipment and equipment cabinets within their equipment compound located underneath the transmission structure.

Structural analysis identified a footing capacity deficiency that requires adding select backfill on all four footings at structure 7/2. T-Mobile would add approximately 570 square feet of rock centered on each of the four structure footings.

Findings: In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) of the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, Jul. 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- 1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- 2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- 3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Walker Stinnette
Walker Stinnette
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel July 13, 2023
Sarah T. Biegel Date
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

Proposed Action: T-Mobile SeaTac Mall Anchor Upgrade

Project Site Description

The project site is an existing T-Mobile telecommunications facility collocated on the BPA-owned 500-kilovolt (kV) lattice steel transmission structure 7/2 on the Tacoma-Raver No. 1 transmission line in King County, WA (Section 9, Township 21 North, Range 4 East). T-Mobile telecommunications equipment is mounted near the top of the approximately 100-foot-tall transmission structure. T-Mobile maintains additional equipment mounted on a concrete pad underneath the transmission structure on privately-owned land. Ground disturbance would occur at the base of the transmission structure in an area that was previously disturbed when the structure was constructed and is currently graveled with some common, low-growing grasses, forbs, and weeds. No wetlands or water bodies are present within or near the project site. The project site is immediately surrounded by a maintained electrical transmission right-of-way (ROW). Outside of the ROW, land use is primarily characterized by urban commercial development interspersed with isolated patches of forested land.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No previously recorded historic or cultural resources are recorded within the area of potential effects (APE), and the APE was previously disturbed during construction of the lattice steel transmission structure. Therefore, on July 5, 2023, BPA determined that the proposed undertaking would have no potential to cause effects to historic properties (BPA CR Project No.: WA 2023 126).

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would permanently cover approximately 2,268 square feet (0.05 acre) of land with gravel in an area that has been previously-disturbed and is currently graveled or characterized by common, low-growing grasses, forbs, and weeds. Therefore, the proposed action would not significantly impact geology and soils.

3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would permanently cover approximately 2,268 square feet (0.05 acre) of land with gravel in an area that has been previously-disturbed and is currently graveled or characterized by common, low-growing grasses, forbs, and weeds. The proposed action would have no effect on special-status plant species or habitats.

4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action could temporarily impact wildlife through minor construction noise and visual disturbance. However, the project site is previously disturbed with limited wildlife habitat. Most wildlife species are likely accustomed to this level of disturbance given surrounding land uses and would likely be able to avoid the project site. If any active nests are found on the structure prior to construction, the construction would be delayed until the nests are unoccupied. The proposed action would have no effect on special-status wildlife species or habitats.

5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No water bodies or floodplains are located within or near the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not impact water bodies or floodplains and would have no effect on special-status fish or fish habitats.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are located within or near the project site. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would not include any ground excavation, and no new wells or other uses of groundwater or aquifers are proposed. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no change in land use at the project site. No specially-designated areas are in the project vicinity.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The final configuration of structure-mounted and ground level equipment could change slightly from the current installation and adding approximately 570 square feet of rock centered on each of the four structure footings would constitute a permanent visual change. However, these changes would be consistent with the existing visual quality of the project site and would not be overtly noticeable.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would cause a minor and temporary increase in dust and vehicle emissions in the local area. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the proposed action.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action could temporarily generate noise from the use of vehicles and equipment at levels above current ambient conditions. Noise would occur during daylight hours (approximately 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM), and there are no noise-sensitive properties near the project site. There would be no long-term change in ambient noise following completion of the proposed action.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would be completed by professionals trained in proper techniques and equipment use. The project would not generate or use hazardous materials and would not create conditions that would increase risk to human health and safety. Therefore, no impacts to human health and safety are expected as a result of the proposed action.

Evaluation of Other Integral Elements

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.

Explanation: N/A

Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation: N/A

Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases.

Explanation: N/A

Involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

Explanation: N/A

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: BPA would notify the underlying landowner. No other landowner notification, involvement, or coordination would be required.

Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts to any environmentally sensitive resource.

Signed: /s/ Walker Stinnette July 13, 2023
Walker Stinnette Date
Environmental Protection Specialist