

PO Box 330310, Seattle, WA 98133-9710.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The FHWA, in cooperation with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on alternative solutions that can reduce the accident rate and provide capacity to meet current and future needs along a 7-mile stretch of the State Route 20 corridor near Anacortes. The SR EIS is a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) "pilot" project, intended to evaluate and improve the application of the NEPA process. The "pilot" process was developed cooperatively by Washington State and Federal agencies, and is jointly sponsored by FHWA and WSDOT.

This segment of SR 20 includes two designated "high accident corridors," due to the number and severity of accidents that have occurred at intersections. The predominant accident types are rear-end collisions and entering-at-angle accidents.

The accident rate is made worse by increasing traffic volumes. Travel demand forecasts indicate continued traffic growth over the next 20 years. Forecasts indicate that traffic growth may increase travel time along portions of this segment of SR 20.

Solutions are needed to reduce the rate of fatal accidents and to provide for the projected traffic demand. While alternative have not been identified, preliminary alternatives that could meet the need and may be considered in the EIS include: taking no action; traffic calming; transportation demand management; transportation system management; eliminating left turns; transit improvements and/or improved transit access; improvement of alternative modes of travel; improved freight movement by truck and/or rail; additional traffic signals; modified signage; grade separation at intersections; and/or added lanes or frontage roads. Combinations of these solutions are possible. The list of alternatives to be addressed in the EIS will be finalized after taking scoping comments into account.

### Scoping

Letters soliciting comments on the scope of the EIS and describing the purpose, need, and potential alternatives will be sent to appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal. Two meetings will be held to identify the scope of issues to be addressed, the significant issues, and the alternatives.

The meeting will be conducted on *October 6, 1999*, at *Anacortes City Hall Chambers* in Anacortes, Washington. The first meeting from 9 a.m. to noon will be conducted to focus on input from governmental agencies and tribes. The second, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., will be conducted primarily for the public. Written scoping comments may be submitted to the FHWA or WSDOT at the address provided above.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues are identified, comments, and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this action and the EIS should be directed to FHWA or WSDOT at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program)

Issued on: August 27, 1999.

**Donald A. Petersen,**

*Transportation and Environmental Engineer, Olympia, Washington.*

[FR Doc. 99-23249 Filed 9-7-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-M

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Transit Administration

#### **Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed Atlantic/Central Bus Base Expansion Project in Seattle, Washington**

**AGENCY:** Federal Transit Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of Intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

**SUMMARY:** The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the King County Metro Transit Division intend to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). King County will ensure that the EIS also satisfies the requirements of the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The FTA will be the NEPA lead agency. King County will be the SEPA lead agency.

King County Metro Transit, a division of the King County Department of Transportation, may expand the operating capacity of the existing Atlantic/Central bus base complex located in Seattle's North Duwamish Industrial District. The existing complex consists of the existing Atlantic Base, which supports electric trolley service

within the City of Seattle, and the Central Base, which supports a fleet of diesel buses that provide service within the City of Seattle and between the City and neighboring jurisdictions. In addition, all night owl service is dispatched from Central Base.

Metro Transit uses the existing 22-acre complex for maintenance and storage of approximately 340 buses. The agency's Operating Facilities Strategic Plan identified a need for central Seattle maintenance capacity for up to 185 additional buses within the next 10 years and an additional 200 buses within the next 25 years (for a total of 385 additional buses). Increased capacity will allow maintenance service for planned increases in transit service within the City of Seattle as well as some increases in service for routes between Seattle and other jurisdictions. Among other things, King County's system is slated to accommodate up to 85 of Sound Transit's Express Service buses.

The EIS will evaluate a no action alternative as well as feasible and prudent alternatives to expand the maintenance base. Study to date suggests that reasonable alternatives are limited to an upward structured expansion of employee parking combined with an expansion of the footprint of the base either westward or to the south. Expansion to the west might impact a group of buildings that could have historical significance. Expansion to the south might have an effect on a privately owned industrial business that handles approximately 10% of the Port of Seattle's export business. Expansion to non-contiguous property would not be prudent or meet project objectives because of the significantly higher operating costs, which would occur. This would reduce funds available for revenue (passenger carrying) service. Expansion to non-contiguous properties would also require acquisition of a larger amount of industrial property, which would be contrary to City policy directed toward maximum preservation of industrial property.

The existing base complex occupies land that is industrially zoned. Applicable zoning regulations allow expansion of the base facilities within the industrial zone subject to a showing that impacts on industrial property and activities have been minimized.

King County Transit and FTA will determine the scope of environmental review after receiving input from interested parties and organizations and from federal, state, regional, and local agencies. A similar scoping process was recently completed in accordance with

the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). A SEPA scoping meeting took place on August 12, 1999 in the Atlantic/Central base neighborhood, and comments were solicited from project stakeholders, interested parties, government agencies and property owners and tenants within the project area and vicinity.

**DATES:** *Comment Due Date:* Written comments on the scope of alternatives and impacts to be considered should be sent to King County Metro Transit by Thursday, October 7, 1999. See **ADDRESSES** below.

**ADDRESSES:** *Written comments on the project scope should be sent to:* Paul Leland, Senior Transit Environmental Planner, King County Metro Transit, Design and Construction Section, MS KSC-TR-0431, 201 S. Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104-3856; phone (206) 684-1168; fax (206) 684-1900.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Linda Gehrke, Federal Transit Administration, Region X, 915 Second Avenue, Room 3142, Seattle, WA 98174; phone (206) 220-7954.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

#### **I. Scoping**

The FTA and King County Transit invite interested individuals and organizations, and federal, state, regional, and local agencies to participate in defining the alternatives for expanding the capacity of the Atlantic/Central Base complex, and in identifying any significant social, economic, or environmental issues related to the alternatives. Scoping comments may be made by submitting in writing by letter or fax: See the **ADDRESSES** section above for the appropriate address and fax number. Scoping comments may also be submitted by E-mail using the electronic scoping form, which is available at <http://www6.metrokc.gov/kcdot/transit/sepacomm.cfm>. Scoping comments should focus on identifying specific social, economic, or environmental impacts to be evaluated and suggesting alternatives that are more cost-effective or have fewer environmental impacts while achieving similar transit objectives.

A project scoping document providing more detail on project alternatives, alternatives considered but deemed inappropriate for further refinement or consideration, potential project impacts, and required permits and approvals is being forwarded to all potentially interested parties and agencies and is also available on the internet at: <http://www.metrokc.gov/kcdot/basepgm/sepa/enviro.htm>. Copies

of the project scoping document can be requested by calling King County Metro Transit at (206) 684-6776. If you wish to be placed on the mailing list to receive further information as the project proceeds, please contact Barbara de Michele at Metro Transit; (206) 263-3792.

#### **II. Description of Study Area and Project Need**

The existing Atlantic Central base complex and the adjacent areas within which expansion might occur are within the North Duwamish industrial neighborhood situated a short way south of the Seattle central business district, south of the International District and east of the area occupied by Seattle's new Safeco baseball field and King County Transit's Ryerson transit base. King County's other existing transit bases include North Base north of Seattle in the City of Shoreline, Bellevue and East Bases east of Lake Washington in the City of Bellevue, and South Base south of Seattle in Tukwila. Bases are located throughout the metropolitan area to achieve operating efficiencies related to the maintenance, dispatch and storage of transit buses.

The Atlantic/Central Base Expansion project is expected to include the following improvements: increased bus parking space; additional repair and inspection bay capacity; expanded body repair, paint, upholstery and tire shop capacity; and other additional specialty bay capacity; expanded electronics shop; expanded driver and support area including (including transit police); additional employee parking to support expanded base (including consideration of structured parking to reduce use of industrial land); and possible provision of additional layover capacity adjacent to the base and within the base during peak hours to accommodate existing layover space that will be lost due to Sound Transit's conversion of the downtown bus tunnel and associated stations to light rail use, and other local transportation infrastructure projects; possible additional bus fueling and washing capacity; and possible joint use industrial space if it is determined to be economically feasible. If an on-site alternative is selected, functions that can operate efficiently from other locations (such as the information distribution warehouse, and work center for transit facilities maintenance) may be moved to another location to minimize the amount of additional land needed.

Expansion of base capacity using non-contiguous property will not meet King County Transit's project objectives and needs. Expanding on a non-contiguous

site would increase operating expenses by requiring significant duplication of overhead costs (staffing & equipment) totaling over one million dollars per year. Expansion on a non-contiguous industrial site would preclude potential operating and spatial efficiencies which could be achieved with a consolidated complex and would therefore utilize more industrial property than a consolidated facility. Expanding to a non-contiguous site outside of the Duwamish area would not meet King County Transit's objectives due to the increased non-revenue deadhead time which would be required for buses traveling between the maintenance base and transit service routes. The Transit Operating Facilities Strategic Plan provides more detail concerning project needs and is available through King County Transit at (206) 684-1846.

Contiguous expansion of the Atlantic/Central Bus Base complex to accommodate up to 385 additional buses is expected to require acquisition of approximately 13.3 to 13.6 acres of abutting industrial property. The location of the existing Atlantic/Central Bus Base complex limits potential contiguous expansion options to either westward or southward expansion. The complex is bounded on the north by Interstate 90/SR 519 ramps, and to the east by Airport Way South and Interstate 5.

Immediately contiguous to the west is an assemblage of buildings to either side of Sixth Avenue South, all of which were built in the late 1920's to early 1930's and have a similar appearance and functional relationship to now removed railroad spurs and 6th Avenue South. A previously completed historic resource assessment of Sixth Avenue South concluded that the buildings constitute a district that is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under the National Historic Preservation Act. However, the integrity of the district has been seriously compromised as a result of its having been bisected by a recent major elevated freeway ramp project, and the cumulative impact of extensive building upgrading and modernization projects undertaken by tenants over the years. Also, there are unresolved questions about the uniqueness of the district within the metropolitan Seattle area.

The size and configurations of the parcels and buildings in the historic district, as well as their structural condition relative to earthquake hazards and building seismic standards, tends to render them functionally obsolete for many modern industrial uses, including possible transit maintenance base operations. Therefore, westward

expansion of the base would have to eliminate a significant portion of the buildings within the southern half of the historic district.

Expansion of the base complex southward across Massachusetts Avenue would require the use of industrial property with existing rail spur access, and would displace one or more existing industrial businesses that supply a significant portion of the Port of Seattle's export business. The City of Seattle's land use code allows transit base facilities and expansion within industrially zoned property, subject to a demonstration that all reasonable measures have been taken to minimize impacts related to significant displacement of other viable industrial businesses, and that the use of land with access to industrial shorelines or major rail facilities has been minimized.

### III. Alternatives

Project alternatives include a No-Build Alternative and two build alternatives. Under Alternative A, the No-Build Alternative, expansion of the existing base complex would not occur. Without expanded base capacity within the City, King County Metro Transit could not operate new or expanded services. Implementation of the new Six-Year Transit Plan would be in jeopardy. And Metro could not implement the contract with Sound Transit for provision of regional express bus services.

Under Alternative B, the Atlantic Central Base complex would be expanded in 3 phases over the next 15 to 25 years to accommodate 385 additional buses, including the above mentioned project elements. The expansion of the complex would be westward, encompassing currently privately owned business properties on both sides of 6th Avenue South between Royal Brougham Way and South Massachusetts Street, and properties on the west side of 6th Avenue South between South Massachusetts Street and South Holgate Street. It is possible that this would affect historic properties.

Alternative C is premised on Sound Transit electing to proceed with a light-rail maintenance base south of the Atlantic/Central base between South Massachusetts Street and South Holgate Street. Alternative C would include all of the improvements proposed under Alternative B except that the proposed layover capacity on Sixth Avenue South would be entirely on site. Sound Transit's light rail maintenance facility would require vacation of Sixth Avenue South between South Massachusetts Street and South Holgate Street. Since Metro could not expand south of South

Massachusetts, accommodating Metro's base expansion needs would require vacating Sixth Avenue South from South Massachusetts Street north to South Royal Brougham Way. The Sound Transit light rail facility is a separate project being planned and analyzed in a separate NEPA/SEPA document by Sound Transit and the Federal Transit Administration. Alternative C could include some shared facilities on the Sound Transit site, such as employee parking, control center and fueling for general service vehicles.

The EIS will also document a range of project alternatives considered that might lessen or avoid taking out portions of the adjacent historic district. It is anticipated based on preliminary analysis of these alternatives that none of them are prudent or feasible.

### IV. Probable Effects/Potential Impacts for Analysis

King County plans to use a single EIS document to satisfy both SEPA and NEPA for the proposed project. Presently, the issue of principal concern related to NEPA is potential impacts on historic resources, which may be National Register eligible. Other NEPA concerns include environmental justice. King County may be preparing a Section 4(f) and Section 106 analysis of historic resources as a part of the NEPA EIS documentation. Issues principally of concern under SEPA include impacts on industrial land uses and business within the project area, including potential impacts on industrial traffic. Other impacts, which will be evaluated, include water quality; archaeological resources; hazardous materials; air quality (including air quality conformity); noise; consistency with local land-use and transportation plans and policies; business displacements and relocations; and economics. These impacts will be evaluated both for the construction phase and in relation to ongoing operations as appropriate. Reasonable measures to mitigate adverse impacts will be identified.

### V. FTA Procedures

The NEPA EIS process will address the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the Atlantic Central Base expansion alternatives. A draft EIS will be published and made available for public and agency review and comment, and a public comment meeting will be held to receive review comments pertaining to the draft EIS. On the basis of the draft EIS and the comments received, King County Metro Transit will complete the final EIS.

Issued on: September 1, 1999.

**Linda Gehrke,**

*Acting Regional Administrator.*

[FR Doc. 99-23334 Filed 9-7-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-57-P

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA-99-6161; Notice 1]

#### Mercedes-Benz U.S.A., Inc., Receipt of Application for Decision of Inconsequential Noncompliance

Mercedes-Benz U.S.A., Inc. (MBUSA) has determined that 1,482 of its 1999 model year vehicles were equipped with convex passenger-side mirrors that did not meet certain labeling requirements contained in Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 111, "Rearview Mirrors," and has filed an appropriate report pursuant to 49 CFR part 573, "Defect and Noncompliance Reports." MBUSA has also applied to be exempted from the notification and remedy requirements of 49 U.S.C. chapter 301—"Motor Vehicle Safety" on the basis that the noncompliance is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety.

We are publishing this notice of receipt of an application as required by 49 U.S.C. 30118 and 30120. This action does not represent any agency decision or other exercise of judgment concerning the merits of the application.

If a vehicle has a convex passenger-side mirror, paragraph S5.4.2 of FMVSS No. 111 requires that it have the words "Objects in Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear" permanently and indelibly marked at the lower edge of the mirror's reflective surface.

From April 5 through April 9, 1999, MBUSA sold and/or distributed 1,482 C-Class, E-Class, and E-Class Wagons that contain a typographical error in the text of the warning label required in paragraph S5.4.2. The text on the subject vehicles' mirrors reads "Objects in Mirror Closer Than They Appear." The word "Are" is not clearly printed or visible.

MBUSA supports its application for inconsequential noncompliance with the following statements:

MBUSA does not believe that the foregoing noncompliance will impact motor vehicle safety for the following reasons. FMVSS 111 sets forth requirements for the performance and location of rearview mirrors to reduce the number of deaths and injuries that occur when the driver of a motor vehicle does not have a clear and reasonably unobstructed view to the rear. Provisions regarding the use of a convex side view mirror were added by