III. Alternatives

Alternatives have been considered to address transportation issues in the study corridor, connecting major activity centers in the central core, including downtown Tucson, the Rio Nuevo Master Plan area, the 4th Avenue/Main Gate retail corridors, the University of Arizona, and the Arizona Health Sciences Center (AHSC).

The Tucson Urban Corridor Study will be consistent with Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Alternatives Analysis and Section 5309 New Start Program requirements for determining future federal funding in recommended programs and be consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The alternatives being considered will analyze mobility needs and identify and compare the costs, benefits, and impacts of a range of transit alignment and technology alternatives. At a minimum, the following alternatives will be considered:

- No-Build.
- Transportation System Management (TSM).
- Rubber Tired Rapid Bus Circulator.
- Heritage Trolley.
- Modern Streetcar.

Specific alignment alternatives include, but are not limited to: (1) 2nd Street through the University of Arizona, University Boulevard, Fourth Avenue, Congress and Pennington streets in the downtown area, and Church Avenue to Granada to serve the emerging Rio Nuevo area. These alternatives will be developed further during the preparation of the AA/DEIS. Additional reasonable Build Alternatives suggested during the scoping process, including those involving other modes, may be considered.

IV. Probable Effects

The purpose of the EIS is to fully disclose the environmental consequences of building and operating a major capital investment in the Tucson Urban Corridor in advance of any decisions to commit substantial financial or other resources towards its implementation. sThe EIS will explore the extent to which study alternatives and alignment options result in environmental impacts and will discuss actions to reduce or eliminate such impacts.

Environmental issues to be examined in the EIS include: Potential changes to the physical environment (natural resources, air quality, noise, water quality, geology, visual); changes in the social environment (land use, development, business and neighborhood disruptions); changes in bicycle traffic, and pedestrian circulation; changes in transit service and patronage; associated changes in traffic congestion; and impacts on parklands and historic sites. Impacts will be identified both for the construction period and for the long-term operation of the alternatives. The proposed evaluation criteria include transportation, social, economic, and financial measures, as required by current federal (NEPA) environmental laws and the implementing regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality and of FTA.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action will be addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the City of Tucson, Department of Transportation, Manager as noted in the **ADDRESSES** section above.

V. FTA Procedures

To streamline the NEPA process and to avoid duplication of effort, the agencies involved in the scoping process will consider the results of any previous planning studies or financial feasibility studies prepared in support of a decision by the Pima Association of Governments (PAG) to include a particular alternative in the RTP for metropolitan Tucson. Prior transportation planning studies may be pertinent to establishing the purpose and need for the proposed action and the range of alternatives to be evaluated in detail in the AA/EIS. Depending on the outcome of the scoping process and the analysis of a wide range of transit alternatives, a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) will be selected and evaluated in the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS will be prepared simultaneously with conceptual engineering for the alternatives, including station and alignment options. The Draft EIS process will address the potential use of federal funds for the proposed action, as well as assess the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the station and alignment alternatives. Station designs and any alignment options will be refined to minimize and mitigate any adverse impacts.

After publication, the Draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment, and a public hearing will be held. Based on the Draft EIS and comments received, the LPA may be refined, and the City of Tucson will further assess the LPA in the Final EIS and will apply for FTA approval to initiate Preliminary Engineering of the LPA.

Issued on: January 11, 2005.

Leslie Rogers,

Regional Administrator.

[FR Doc. 05–959 Filed 1–18–05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–57–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34635]

Watco Companies, Inc.—Continuance in Control Exemption—Mission Mountain Railroad, Inc.

Watco Companies, Inc. (Watco) has filed a verified notice of exemption to continue in control of Mission Mountain Railroad, Inc. (MMT), upon MMT's becoming a Class III rail carrier.

The transaction was expected to be consummated on or shortly after December 28, 2004.

This transaction is related to a concurrently filed verified notice of exemption in STB Finance Docket No. 34634, *Mission Mountain Railroad, Inc.—Acquisition Exemption—The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company*, wherein MMT seeks to acquire by purchase and lease from The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF) rail lines in the State of Montana. The line being purchased is between milepost 1249.35, near Stryker, and milepost 1272.22, near Eureka, in Lincoln County, MT, a distance of approximately 22.87 miles. The rail line being leased is between milepost 1211.86, near Columbia Falls, and milepost 1227.58, near Kalispell, in Flathead County, MT, a distance of approximately 15.72 miles.[1] MMT will operate both lines.

Watco, a Kansas corporation, is a noncarrier that currently controls nine Class III rail carriers: South Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad Company (SKO), Palouse River & Coulee City Railroad, Inc. (PRCC), Timber Rock Railroad, Inc. (TIBR), Stillwater Central Railroad (SLWC), Eastern Idaho Railroad, Inc. (EIRR), Kansas & Oklahoma Railroad, Inc. (K&O), Pennsylvania Southwestern Railroad, Inc. (PSWR), Great Northwest Railroad, Inc. (GNR), and Kaw River Railroad, Inc. (KRR).

Applicant states that: (1) The rail lines operated by SKO, PRCC, TIBR, SLWC, EIRR, K&O, PSWR, GNR, and KRR do not connect with the rail lines being purchased or leased by MMT; (2) the

[1] BNSF is retaining the right to use the wye tracks at Columbia Falls.

continuance in control is not part of a series of anticipated transactions that would connect the rail lines being acquired by MMT with any railroad in the Watco corporate family; and (3) neither MMT nor any of the carriers controlled by Watco are Class I rail carriers. Therefore, the transaction is exempt from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. 11323. *See* 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(2). The purpose of the transaction is to reduce overhead expenses, coordinate billing, maintenance, mechanical and personnel policies and practices of its rail carrier subsidiaries and thereby improve the overall efficiency of rail service provided by the ten railroads.

Under 49 U.S.C. 10502(g), the Board may not use its exemption authority to relieve a rail carrier of its statutory obligation to protect the interests of its employees. Section 11326(c), however, does not provide for labor protection for transactions under sections 11324 and 11325 that involve only Class III rail carriers. Accordingly, the Board may not impose labor protective conditions here, because all of the carriers involved are Class III carriers.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio.* Petitions to revoke the exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke will not automatically stay the transaction.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 34635, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423–0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Karl Morell, Of Counsel, Ball Janik LLP, 1455 F Street, NW., Suite 225, Washington, DC 20005.

Board decisions and notices are available on our Web site at *http://www.stb.dot.gov.*

Decided: January 12, 2005.

By the Board,

David M. Konschnik,

Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 05–1005 Filed 1–18–05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34634]

Mission Mountain Railroad, Inc.—Acquisition Exemption—The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company

Mission Mountain Railroad, Inc. (MMT), a noncarrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31 to acquire by purchase and lease from The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF) rail lines in the State of Montana. The rail line being purchased is between milepost 1249.35, near Stryker, and milepost 1272.22, near Eureka, in Lincoln County, MT, a distance of approximately 22.87 miles. The rail line being leased is between milepost 1211.86, near Columbia Falls, and milepost 1227.58, near Kalispell, in Flathead County, MT, a distance of approximately 15.72 miles.[1] MMT will operate both lines.

The transaction is related to STB Finance Docket No. 34635, *Watco Companies, Inc.—Continuance in Control Exemption—Mission Mountain Railroad, Inc.,* wherein Watco Companies, Inc., has concurrently filed a verified notice of exemption to continue in control of MMT upon MMT's becoming a Class III rail carrier.

MMT certifies that its projected revenues as a result of this transaction will not result in MMT's becoming a Class II or Class I rail carrier, and further certifies that its projected annual revenues will not exceed $5 million.

The transaction was expected to be consummated on or shortly after December 28, 2004.

If the notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void ab initio. Petitions to revoke the exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke will not automatically stay the transaction.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 34634, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423–0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Karl Morell, Of Counsel, Ball Janik LLP, 1455 F Street, NW., Suite 225, Washington, DC 20005.

Board decisions and notices are available on our Web site at *http://www.stb.dot.gov.*

[1] BNSF is retaining the right to use the wye tracks at Columbia Falls.

Decided: January 12, 2005.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik, Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 05–1006 Filed 1–18–05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34610]

Stillwater Central Railroad, Inc.—Lease Exemption—The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company

The Stillwater Central Railroad, Inc. (SLWC), a Class III rail carrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.41 *et seq.* to acquire by lease and to operate approximately 12.6 miles of rail line owned by The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF), between: (1) Milepost 549.01 at Wheatland, OK, and milepost 542.0 at Oklahoma City, OK, including the Dayton Lead in Wheatland; (2) milepost 540.0 west of the BNSF North Yard, in Oklahoma City, and milepost 536.4 in Oklahoma City, including the North Yard; and (3) milepost 0.0 on the Packing Town Lead, and a point 500 feet west of the wye connecting the Packing Town Lead with BNSF's Red Rock Subdivision, in Oklahoma City.[1] SLWC will also acquire approximately 5.5 miles of incidental overhead trackage rights between: (1) milepost 384.6 and milepost 390.0, on the Red Rock Subdivision, in Oklahoma City; and (2) a point 500 feet west of the wye connecting the Packing Town Lead and the point of connection between the Packing Town Lead and BNSF's Red Rock Subdivision.

SLWC certifies that its projected annual revenues as a result of this transaction will not result in the creation of a Class II or Class I rail carrier. But, because SLWC's projected annual revenues will exceed $5 million, SLWC has certified to the Board on October 29, 2004, that it sent the required notice of the transaction to the national offices of all labor unions representing employees on the affected lines and posted a copy of the notice at the workplace of the employees on the affected lines on the same date. *See* 49 CFR 1150.42(e).

The transaction was scheduled to be consummated on or after December 28, 2004 (which is 60 days or more after SLWC's certification to the Board that it

[1] BNSF will retain overhead trackage rights over the leased rail lines.