



NEW CENTER INTERMODAL FACILITY

PURPOSE AND NEED DRAFT

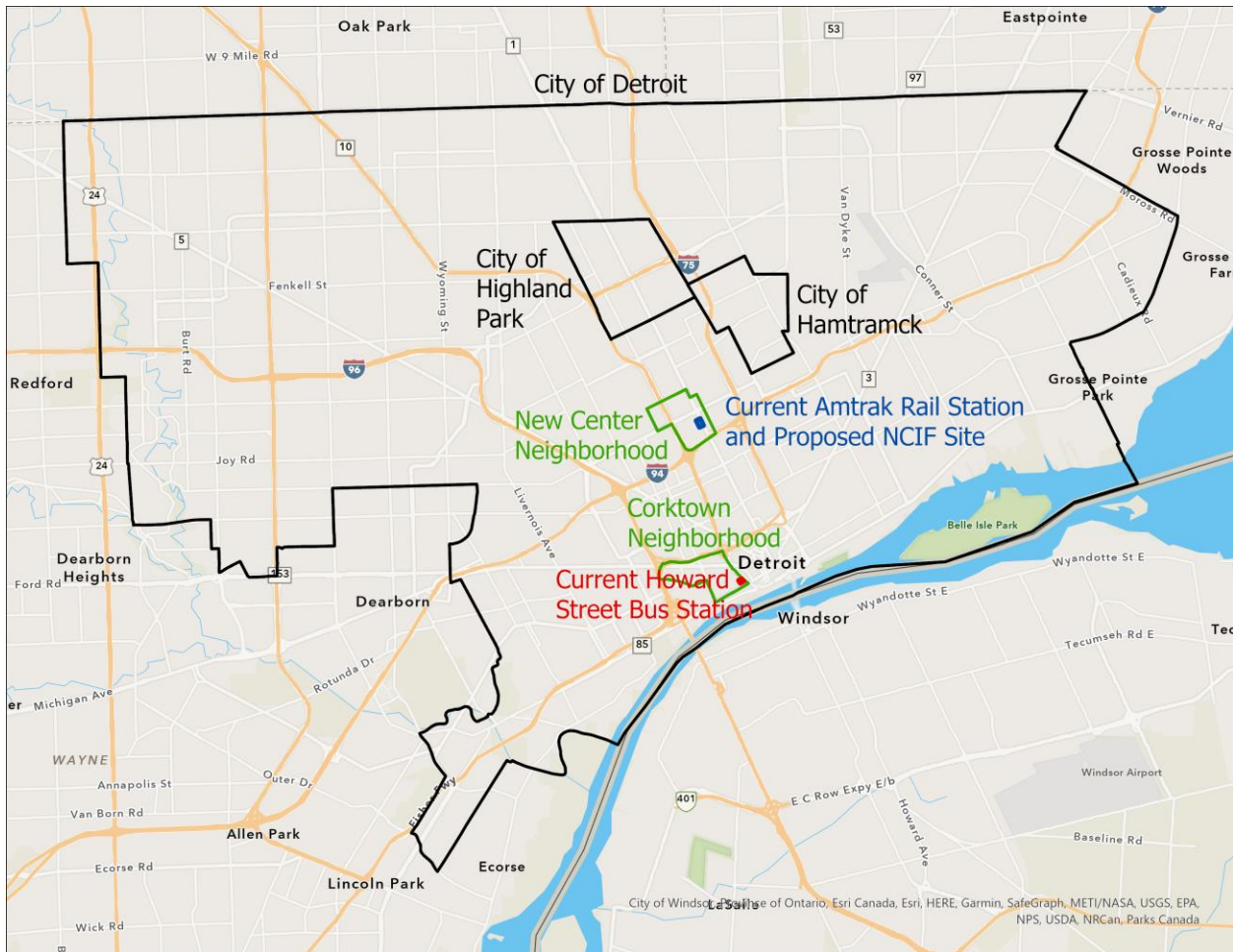


1. Introduction

1.1 Project Location

The City of Detroit, Michigan currently has an Amtrak rail station located in the New Center neighborhood on Woodward Avenue and an intercity bus station located about three miles away on Howard Street in the Corktown neighborhood (see Figure 1).

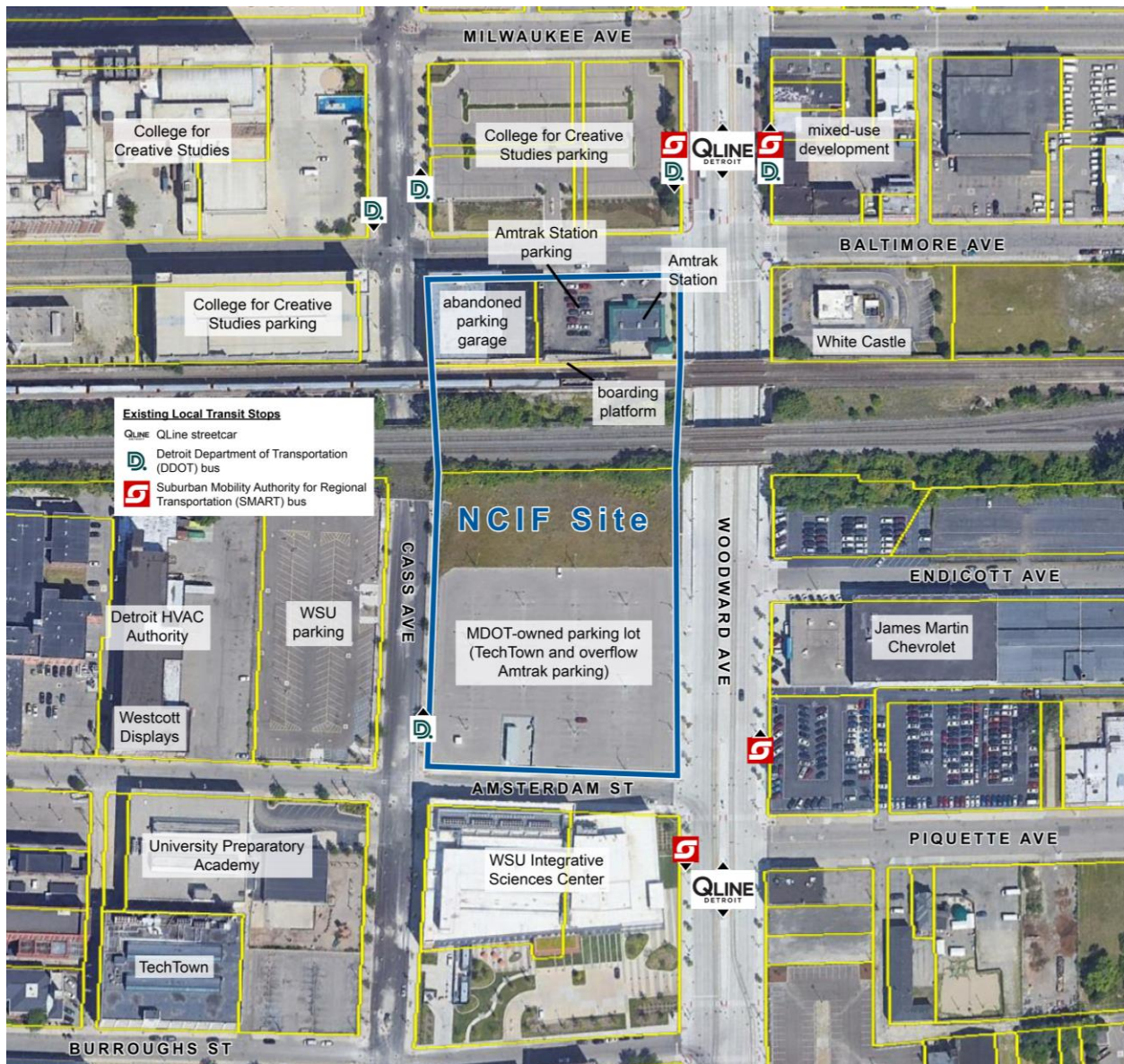
Figure 1: NCIF Location Context



1.2 Project Site

The **Detroit New Center Intermodal Facility Project** (hereafter “the NCIF” or “the Project”) is a proposed intermodal passenger hub at the current Amtrak rail station location west of Woodward Avenue between Baltimore Street and Amsterdam Street in the New Center neighborhood (see Figure 2). The Howard Street Bus Station will be relocated to the southern part of the NCIF site as part of the Project. The existing Amtrak station parcel and the parcel south of the railroad tracks between Cass Avenue, Amsterdam Street, and Woodward Avenue are owned by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). The existing abandoned parking garage on Baltimore Street, immediately west of the existing Amtrak rail station, is currently in private ownership.

Figure 2: Existing NCIF Site



1.3 Project Components

The NCIF proposes to construct:

- An upgraded Amtrak rail station at the existing station’s location;
- A lengthened and widened rail boarding platform with a canopy along the north side of the railroad tracks;
- An intercity bus station located on the ground floor of a multi-level parking garage to be constructed on the southern part of the NCIF site which would not preclude the potential for retail development;
- A pedestrian tunnel connecting the rail and bus stations;
- Transit and mobility hub components incorporated at both the rail and bus stations and along Cass Avenue; and
- Potential retail or cafe space within the Amtrak rail station.

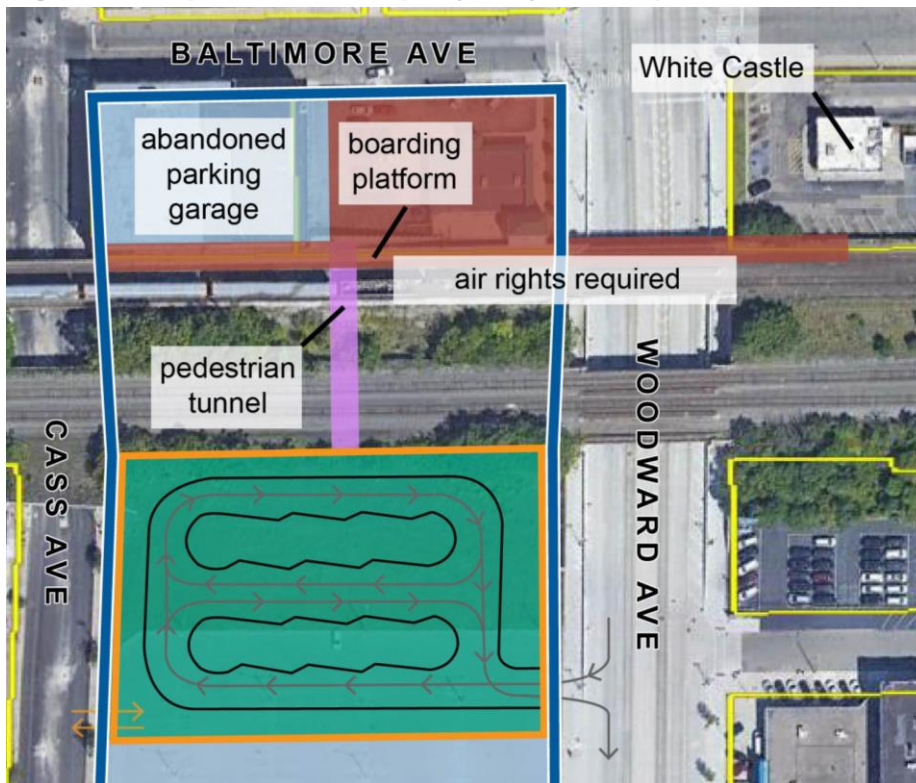
See Figure 3 for planned locations of each component.

Figure 3: NCIF Conceptual Site Plan



As shown in Figure 4, the parcel immediately west of the existing Amtrak rail station would be acquired and the garage demolished to accommodate the lengthened and widened rail boarding platform. After construction of the NCIF, unused land would be available for future joint development (labeled “G1” in Figure 3) and is not part of the Project. A portion of the existing White Castle parcel to the east of Woodward Avenue would need to be acquired to extend the rail boarding platform. In addition, air rights over the railroad tracks and over Woodward Avenue would be needed from Conrail and Canadian National railroads and from FHWA, respectively. After construction of the NCIF, the remaining land at the southern end of the site would be available for future joint development and/or a plaza/public space (labeled “G1-G2” in Figure 3) and is not part of the Project.

Figure 4: Proposed Real Property Project Components



1.4 Project Delivery

As part of an effort to maximize the project investment, and to potentially leverage the value of the state-owned property, MDOT intends to advance the Project via a Design-Build-Operate-Maintain (DBOM) procurement process. MDOT will advertise for competitive proposals with the selected entity responsible for final design, construction of the transportation facility, and ongoing operations and maintenance over the long term. MDOT would prefer to pursue a public/private joint development partnership that allows the selected entity to take advantage of adjoining portions of the site (surrounding or integrated with the transportation facility) for private development of dense, urban uses that complement the train and bus facility. The ultimate determination of whether to pursue a joint development arrangement will be based on a series of market studies that will happen in 2022. Ultimately, the full extent of the delivered project may depend on the results of this procurement effort.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the NCIF is to replace Detroit’s existing separate rail and intercity bus stations with a combined facility at the existing rail station’s location.

3. Needs

The three primary needs the Project would address are described in this section.

- 1 Overdue Facility Updates
- 2 Limited Access to Opportunity
- 3 Disconnected Transportation Options

3.1 Overdue Facility Updates

Currently, passenger rail and intercity bus services in Detroit are operated from the following two separate facilities:

1. Howard Street Bus Station located at Howard Street and John C Lodge Service Drive in the Corktown neighborhood; and
2. Amtrak rail station at the NCIF site (Woodward Avenue and Baltimore Street in the New Center neighborhood).

Both facilities require extensive repairs described in the sections below that would be better addressed by rebuilding and combining them at the NCIF site which is already owned by MDOT. As shown in Table 1, maintaining the existing facilities and operating as business as usual would result in increased operating and maintenance expenses over the 30-year period between 2024-2053. Rebuilding and combining the facilities at the NCIF site would yield a total of \$49.1 million in operating and maintenance savings over the same period, largely covering the cost of construction while delivering the benefits of a brand-new facility.

Table 1: Cost Comparison - Maintain Existing Facilities versus Build NCIF (2024-2053; 2019 dollars)

| Costs ¹ | Maintain Existing Facilities ² | Build NCIF |
|-----------------------------|---|----------------|
| Capital | \$0 | \$49.1 million |
| Net Operating & Maintenance | \$60.1 million | \$11.0 million |

¹ Source: NCIF RAISE Grant Application Benefit-Cost Analysis. 30-Year Analysis Period (2024-2053). Values stated in 2019 dollars and discounted at 7 percent.

² Total for Howard Street Bus Station and Amtrak Rail Station

3.1.1 Howard Street Bus Station

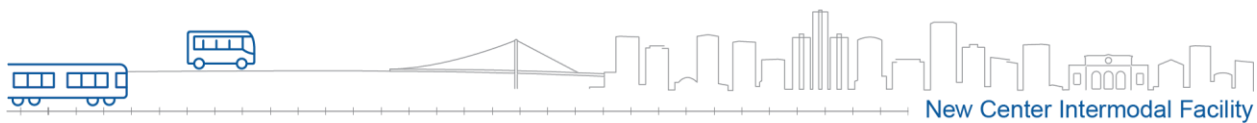
In 2016, MDOT’s Office of Operations and Administrative Services (OOAS) performed a facility assessment of the Howard Street Bus Station, built in 1989 with a useful life of 30 years, that estimated more than two million dollars in repairs (in 2016 dollars) would be needed to maintain the facility at an “Average” rating if operated beyond 2025 (see Table 2). Some of these repairs may need to be performed prior to 2025 if the rate of deterioration increases. The assessment concluded that due to the amount of work needed and associated cost, building replacement or sale should be considered.

Table 2: Howard Street Bus Station Major Capital Needs

| Work Needed | Condition/Location | Estimated Cost |
|---|---|--------------------|
| Repair boiler pipe water leak, replace boilers, HVAC for 2 nd floor | The 2 nd floor mechanical room. | \$650,000 |
| Repair building and canopy soffits and paint as needed. Remove all exterior wall and soffit joint caulking and re-caulk as needed. Replace all damaged wall tile to match remaining tile as needed. | The building and canopy soffits have many cracks and peeling paint due to past / current roof leak problem. The exterior joint caulking is dried out / cracked. There are damaged wall tile due to water infiltration from bad caulk. | \$350,000 |
| Replace exterior passenger entry doors, frames, and hardware as needed. | The south side “storefront style” exterior passenger entry doors are difficult to open / close due to being out of alignment. Servicing doors could not correct problem. | \$200,000 |
| Repair roof water leaks as needed. | The interior ceiling tile has water stains in various locations from possible roof leaks. | \$ 50,000 |
| Replace single pane windows | 1 st & 2 nd Floor – energy efficiently | \$400,000 |
| Replace ticket area skylight panels. Panels must be energy efficient and tinted. | The ticket area skylight panels are in poor condition and need to be tinted for bus terminal operations. | \$200,000 |
| Bathroom updates (1 st /2 nd floor) | Bathrooms have mold behind toilets/leakage around sinks. | \$150,000 |
| Clean out 2 nd floor/pest control (1 st & 2 nd Floor) | 2 nd floor has cockroach issues, need all items left in the locker rooms to be removed/cleaned out as well as all other rooms/closets on 2 nd floor. | \$50,000 |
| Total | | \$2,050,000 |

Source: Detroit Bus Terminal MDOT 2016 Facility Assessment

Since the 2016 assessment, nearly \$400,000 has been spent to date to make limited, necessary repairs to keep the facility operational. Although the station can be kept open long enough to move into the NCIF, it is already becoming cost-prohibitive to do so. The annual maintenance cost for the Howard Street Bus Station to remain operational in 2021 was \$91,000,



and if an unexpected failure occurs, the facility may need to be closed and emergency operations space will be required to maintain safe operations.

3.1.2 Amtrak Rail Station

MDOT's 1992 construction agreement with Amtrak for the existing rail station refers to the station as an "interim" facility "until such time as the permanent facility becomes fully operational"³. The existing rail boarding platform is not wide enough to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and is not long enough to accommodate boarding from all train doors serving the corridor, which constrains passenger rail operations.

3.1.3 Accessibility and Safety at Both Facilities

Neither the Howard Street Bus Station nor the existing Amtrak rail station meet ADA access requirements, lacking elevators that accommodate wheelchairs, ramps with correct grade, and bathrooms and customer areas designed to ADA standards. Furthermore, the aging facilities and poor lighting contribute to negative passenger perceptions of safety.

3.2 Limited Access to Opportunity

New Center neighborhood residents and Detroit residents in general have limited access to cars, putting these communities at a disadvantage. One in three households in the New Center neighborhood and nearly one in four households in the city of Detroit have no access to a car. Nearly three-quarters of New Center neighborhood residents and 85 percent of Detroit's residents are people of color. The area surrounding the NCIF and much of the city of Detroit are areas of persistent poverty as defined by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT)⁴. The NCIF represents an opportunity to enhance the convenience and comfort of travel via rail and bus services, providing improved access to opportunity for the people of Detroit. The NCIF will provide 3,600 people, including 470 households without a vehicle, with access to passenger rail and intercity bus service within a 10-minute (half-mile) walk⁵.

3.3 Disconnected Transportation Options

The existing Amtrak rail station and Howard Street Bus Station are approximately three miles away from each other. Because the facilities are in different locations, currently there is neither physical nor schedule coordination between the two modes to facilitate intermodal transfers. During stakeholder engagement, both Amtrak and intercity bus operators indicated that there was a strong opportunity to enhance the usability of their services by allowing passengers to purchase a single ticket for their entire journey using multiple transportation services in Detroit (as is done in numerous other hub stations around the country).

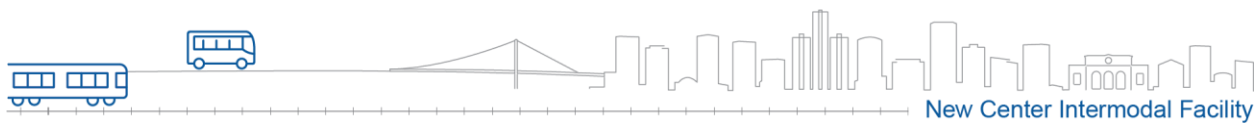
Moreover, the Howard Street Bus Station is relatively isolated from the local transit network, making it difficult for passengers to navigate beyond the station. Its location at Howard Street and John C Lodge Service Drive in the Corktown neighborhood is only served by two DDOT bus routes: one with buses that come every 30 minutes during the day and every 60 minutes in the early morning and evening, and one with buses that come every 60 minutes⁶. The NCIF site, however, is directly adjacent to a DDOT bus route that runs 24/7 and comes every 20 minutes, SMART bus routes that come every 20 minutes nearly 24/7, and the QLine streetcar that comes

³ National Railroad Passenger Corporation and State of Michigan Department of Transportation Southeast Michigan Station Development Agreement from September 15, 1992.

⁴ <https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/raise-app-hdc>

⁵ 2015-2020 5-year American Community Survey data.

⁶ Based on May 2022 schedules: <https://ddot.info/>



every 15 minutes⁷. The NCIF site also offers an opportunity to strengthen connections to the city's growing biking (and bikeshare) network, including bike lanes on Cass Avenue. As a result, the NCIF offers improved connectivity between rail, intercity bus, local bus, and streetcar services and a mix of transportation options accessible within a quarter mile.

In addition, there is a need for short- and long-term parking options that provide convenient access to intercity bus and rail travel options. Parking spaces at the Howard Street Bus Station are not available to the traveling public. Instead, passengers must park on the street or at public parking lots in the area. Convenient parking at the existing Amtrak rail station is also very limited. The public parking lot connected to the station only has 20 spaces, three of which are handicap reserved. About 50 to 60 percent of the spaces are occupied on an average weekday and usually completely occupied by mid-day Friday through the weekend⁸. The overflow lot to the south (see Figure 2) is usually 30 to 40 percent occupied on weekends and holidays.

4. Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives for the Project were identified through a previous scoping and options analysis conducted by MDOT to select the Proposed Action⁹. These same goals and objectives are intended to guide the NCIF's development to ensure it addresses the Project needs as well as the broader aspirations of the community.

- 1 Restore essential transportation facilities to a state of good repair.
- 2 Establish a regional transportation hub providing multimodal access and convenient connectivity with a focus on meeting the needs of disadvantaged communities.
- 3 Provide high-quality passenger amenities and public space improvements to enhance the customer and pedestrian experience in the Project area.
- 4 Invest in opportunities to drive transit-oriented development in the local area while offsetting facility capital and operating costs.

⁷ Based on May 2022 schedules: <http://www.smartbus.org/Schedules/Route-Schedules>, <https://qlinedetroit.com/how-to-ride.php>

⁸ Anecdotal observations from the local ticket agent at the existing Amtrak rail station. Official counts will occur as part of the Environmental Assessment.

⁹ Michigan Department of Transportation Detroit New Center Intermodal Facility Project Scoping and Commercial Options Analysis from June 15, 2021.

5. Environmental Regulations

The following regulations will be considered for the Project:

1. National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. §4321 et seq.
2. Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act, 40 CFR Part 1500
3. Department of Transportation Order 5610.2(a), August 2011 (Final DOT Environmental Justice Order)
4. Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, February 11, 1994
5. National Ambient Air Quality Standards
6. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, 16 U.S.C. §470 et seq.
7. Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation Act of 1966, 49 U.S.C. §303
8. Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, 42 U.S.C. §61
9. Endangered Species Act of 1973, 16 U.S.C. §1531 et seq., 50 CFR Part 17
10. Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, 16 USC §§ 703–712, as amended