

COVER SHEET

**Date:** September 17, 1993

**Title of Activity:** City of Durham Solid Waste Transfer Station

**Submitted By:** City Council  
City of Durham, North Carolina  
101 City Hall Plaza  
Durham, NC 27701

**Responsible State Agency and Contact:** Mr. Paul Crissman  
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Health and Natural Resources  
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**Type of Document:** Environmental Assessment

**Applicable Rule:** 1 NCAC 25

**Location of Facility:** Off of East Geer Street, near the intersection of East Geer and Miami Boulevard, Durham County, Durham, North Carolina.

**Background:** The North Carolina State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) states that activities related to projects on the "Major Actions" list, which includes new construction in excess of \$150,000 in cost, more than 5,000 square feet, and more than one (1) acre of previously undisturbed ground, are subject to an environmental assessment process.

The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) document reviews the environmental impacts of the construction and operation of a 650 - 1,000 ton per day solid waste transfer station located in East Durham, North Carolina, along the Norfolk Southern Rail Line. The EA contains a project description, review of the existing environment, the need for and alternatives to the project, environmental impacts associated with the project, and mitigation measures for those impacts.

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## SECTION 1.0

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

#### 1.1 FACILITY OPERATIONS

The City of Durham currently disposes of solid waste (garbage and trash from residents and businesses) in a sanitary landfill in the northern part of the City. This landfill will be closed in 1995 when it reaches full capacity.

In consideration of the limited disposal capacity remaining in the City, the City Council has approved the design and construction of a 650 - 1,000 ton per day (tpd) solid waste transfer station. The City has selected an abandoned rail yard owned by the Norfolk-Southern Corporation, with a total of approximately 21.5 acres, for the location of the facility. The site is located off of East Geer Street in the City of Durham, near the intersection of East Geer and Miami Boulevard (see Section 2.0, Figure 2-1), and is adjacent to the Norfolk Southern rail line.

The transfer station will consist of an enclosed building in which trucks, after being weighed on a scale system, enter, unload their wastes on a tipping floor inside the building, and exit. The building will be enclosed to minimize odor and control dust and litter. The waste will then be pushed into enclosed and watertight rail containers, located below the tipping floor on rail cars. Approximately 30 - 35 rail containers will be loaded daily. At the end of each day, a train will pull the rail cars to the Montgomery County landfill, where the waste will be unloaded and disposed. A conceptual site plan layout for this site is presented on Figure 1-1.

The transfer station shall only accept solid waste which is generated by households, institutions, commercial, and some industrial establishments. Explosives, pathological and biological wastes, and other hazardous waste are not acceptable wastes for processing at the facility. The functions of this facility are presented in Table 1-1.

**TABLE 1-1  
CITY OF DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA  
PLANNED TRANSFER STATION FUNCTIONS**

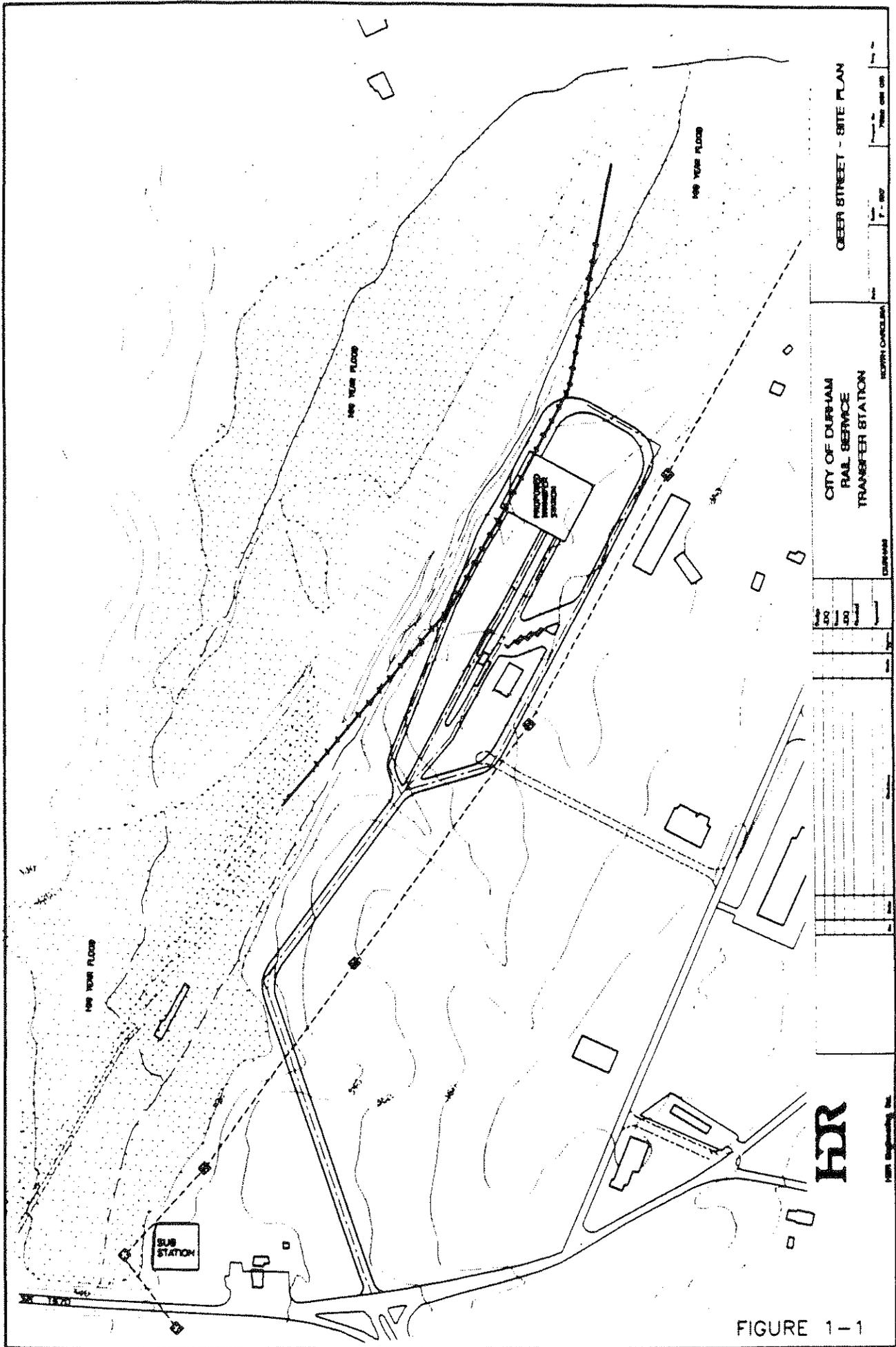
- Transfer of solid waste from collection trucks to watertight rail containers
- Recyclable materials market preparation
- Household hazardous waste collection and transfer
- Storage site for City collection trucks
- Special waste handling area, i.e., for tire, batteries, white goods, etc.
- Staff offices
- Public education facility
- Expansion capability for a residential or commercial materials recovery facility
- Odor and Vector Control

**1.2 PERMITS, LICENSES, AND APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS**

Table 1-2 presents a summary of the permits, licenses, and approvals required for the construction and operation of the facility:

**TABLE 1-2  
PERMITS, LICENSES, AND APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CONSTRUCTION AND  
OPERATION OF THE SOLID WASTE TRANSFER STATION**

Item	Administrative Authority
Solid Waste Management Facility Permit	N.C. Dept. of Environment, Health and Natural Resources
Environmental Assessment / Finding of No Significant Impact	N.C. Dept. of Environment, Health and Natural Resources
Building Permits	City of Durham Durham County
Site Plan Approval	Design Review Committee City Council City of Durham



CEER STREET - SITE PLAN

CITY OF DURHAM  
RAIL SERVICE  
TRANSFER STATION

DATE: 10/10/00  
SCALE: AS SHOWN

PROJECT NO: 00-0000

DESIGNER: H&R

CHECKED: [Signature]

APPROVED: [Signature]

DATE: 10/10/00

PROJECT NO: 00-0000

DESIGNER: H&R

CHECKED: [Signature]

APPROVED: [Signature]

DATE: 10/10/00

PROJECT NO: 00-0000

DESIGNER: H&R

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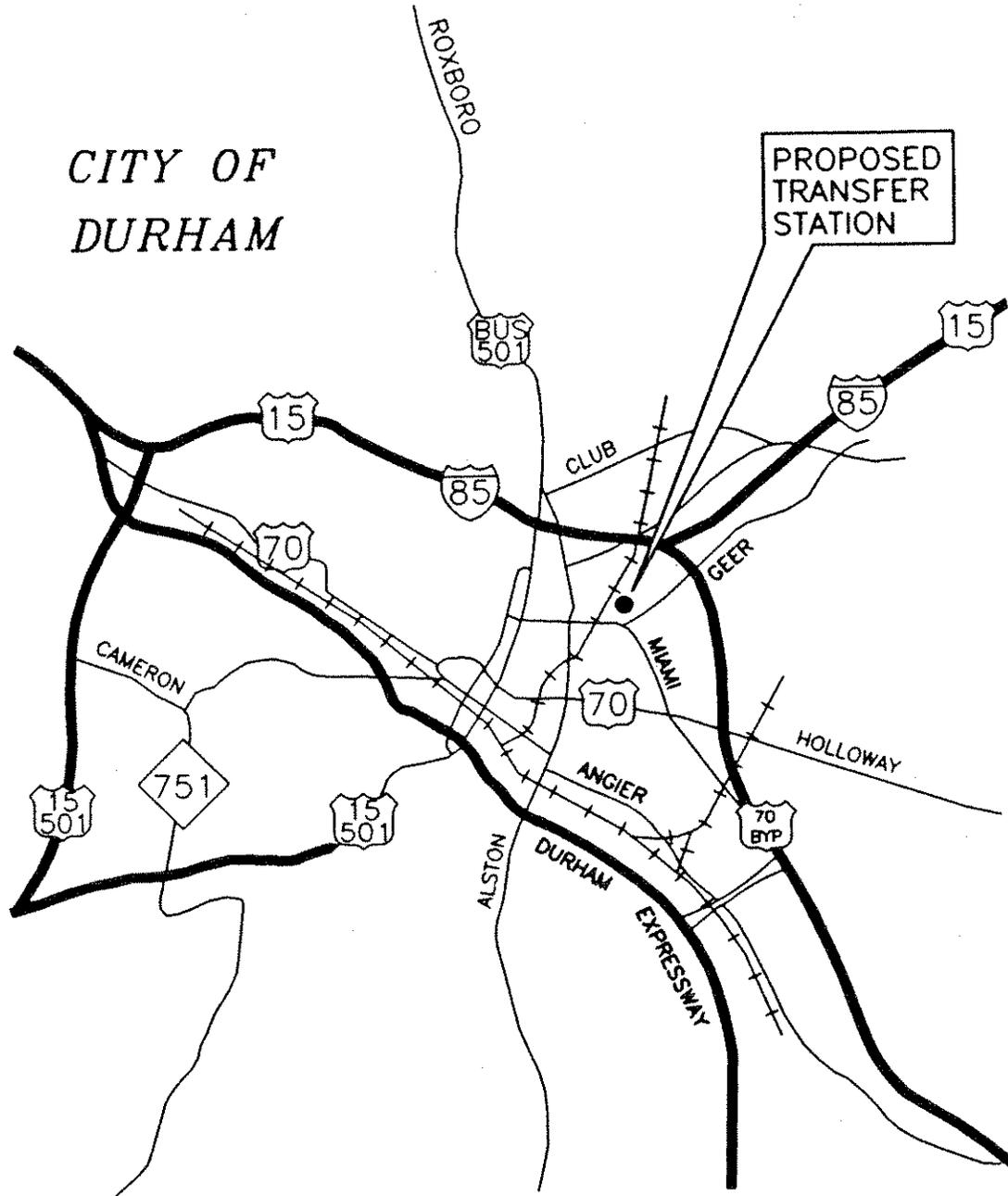
**H&R**

FIGURE 1-1

**SECTION 2.0**

**SOLID WASTE TRANSFER STATION SITE MAP**

CITY OF  
DURHAM



HDR Engineering, Inc.

DURHAM RAIL SERVICE  
TRANSFER STATION  
VICINITY MAP

Date

6/93

Figure

2-1

## SECTION 3.0

### DEMONSTRATED NEED FOR PROJECT

In the past, the siting of new landfills has been the solution to the increased need for disposal facilities. However, in recent years a number of factors have made the siting of new landfills increasingly difficult, such as decreasing amount of suitable land available, legal barriers and potential long-term environmental concerns, and mounting public opposition. This process is further restricted by new permitting regulations required by State agencies.

Currently, the majority of the waste generated in the City of Durham as well as Durham County is disposed of in the Durham City Landfill, located on East Club Boulevard in the City of Durham. In 1993 it is estimated that this landfill will receive approximately 193,000 tons of municipal solid waste. The Landfill is permitted to receive waste until March 1995, after which time there will be no municipal solid waste landfill options within Durham County.

In anticipation of the current Landfill's permit expiration date, efforts were made by the City to site a new sanitary landfill in Durham County. However, difficulties encountered in siting a new landfill resulted in the City's decision to transfer Durham's waste by rail to a permitted regional landfill facility in Montgomery County, N.C.

The decision to build a solid waste management facility to rail haul Durham's waste to the sanitary landfill facility in Montgomery County, N.C has been incorporated into the City of Durham's Preliminary Solid Waste Management Plan which was issued in March 1993. The Solid Waste Transfer Station project, however, comprises just one element of the City's overall preliminary plan for dealing with waste. The proposed plan is an integrated approach which includes source reduction efforts, recycling, composting, new collection and financing strategies, and public education programs to encourage involvement in all aspects of waste management, from generation through disposal.

## SECTION 4.0

### ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

The City of Durham has explored various alternatives to landfill disposal on a local as well as a regional basis. Consideration has been given to refuse derived fuel, transferring waste to a regional incineration facility, and pyrolysis for diverting waste from landfill disposal. The City has considered these technologies and will be receptive to evaluating others in the future, yet is sensitive to concerns regarding emerging alternatives and the substantial financial investment required to implement these technologies, and the fact that some portion of the waste stream will have to be landfilled regardless of technology.

As discussed in Section 3.0, the City has developed a preliminary solid waste management plan that integrates waste reduction by the consumer through public education programs, source separation and recycling, and yard waste composting, with landfilling remaining as the option to be used only for the disposal of nonreusable or nonrecyclable material. The implementation of these disposal alternatives will help to decrease the City's dependence on landfills, however the fact remains that there will continue to be a need for landfill acreage to dispose of the portion of the waste stream which has reached the "end of its life-cycle".

## SECTION 5.0

### EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

#### 5.1 LAND USE

##### 5.1.1 Existing Conditions

The site is an abandoned rail yard which consists of a 14.6 acre parcel of property owned by the Norfolk Southern Corporation. Additional property from the American Legion Fair Association (1.6 acres), the Durham Herald Company, Inc. (4.1 acres), and the estate of Mr. Fred E. Hamlin, Jr. (1.2 acres) will be required for the facility layout and to provide access to Miami Boulevard, bringing the total site area requirement to 21.5 acres. There is no structural development located within the site boundaries.

The site is located to the north of East Geer Street near the intersection of East Geer and Miami Boulevard, and parallel to a main line of the Norfolk Southern railway system (see Figure 1-1). The project vicinity is composed primarily of residential, open space, transportation corridors, and business and institutional land uses. The site and immediate surrounding area is zoned I-2 for light industrial development and use, and C-1, C-2, and C-4 for commercial development and use. This zoning classification therefore allows a solid waste transfer station as a permitted use. Other zoning classifications within half a mile radius of the site in addition to the previously mentioned classifications include I-3 for heavy industrial use, and R-2, R-6, R-G, RA 20-30 for general, single, duplex, and apartment residential districts. There are no prime or unique agricultural lands, public lands such as parks, or areas classified as scenic or recreational at the site or in the immediate surrounding area of the site.

##### 5.1.2 Impacts

Project development of this site does not conflict with zoning or planned land use for the area. Certain provisions of the zoning code regarding industrial development such as the solid waste transfer station facility discuss, in general terms, the requirements of compatible structural design and visual screening and

buffers with which the facility will comply. The site is already well-buffered from surrounding property(ies) by the natural terrain, i.e., a wooded area and an embankment. The closest residential area is located along Fay Street, which is approximately 520 feet east of the site. Primary access to the site would be from the intersection of East Geer Street and Miami Boulevard. The construction of the transfer station will not impact any prime or unique agricultural lands, public lands such as parks, or areas classified as scenic or recreational, as these are not characteristics of the existing uses of land at the site or the immediate surrounding area of the site.

## **5.2 WATER QUALITY AND GEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

### **5.2.1 Existing Conditions**

There do not appear to be any serious conflicts between the proposed site plan and existing surface water features or wetlands. The nearest surface water bodies are limited to a number of small draws which cross the site and flow to Goose Creek (which is located approximately 300 feet at the nearest point east of the site). Site development will not result in any significant (i.e. > 0.33 acres) wetland impacts.

The site topography consists of flat to gently sloping terrain along the rail lines that rises sharply from west to east. An elevation difference of approximately 40 feet exists across the site from west to east; with the terrain from north to south being fairly level. Earthwork will be necessary to overcome sharp grades and provide a more level and usable area for facility operations and erosion control.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture "Soil Survey of Durham County, North Carolina" the site area on which the transfer station facility will be constructed is overlain by mayodan sandy loam soils. The depth to the seasonal high water table for these soils is more than six feet.

### **5.2.2 Impacts**

City of Durham utility services are available within the immediate vicinity of the site.

Wastewater will originate during normal facility operations primarily from equipment and tipping floor cleaning, and sanitary wastes. Wastewater will be discharged into the City sanitary sewer system and will meet the standards established by the City of Durham utility department. Water and sanitary sewer line designs will be based on a maximum flow of 500 gpm (fire flow) and 85 gpm, respectively.

The wastewater associated with the project will have no adverse effect on surface or groundwater at the site as the facility will be designed so the tipping floor area will be totally enclosed, wastewater will be collected, pre-treated and discharged directly into the City's sanitary sewer system, and long-term outdoor storage of waste or other materials will not be allowed. To control stormwater runoff and erosion, the site will be graded to include a drainage system constructed along the perimeter of the facility layout and will include a water quality control retention basin. These same design features will also serve to protect surface and groundwater at the site from being polluted with toxic substances and from suffering the effects of eutrophication.

The project will have an overall positive effect on the groundwater resources of the County by reducing the amount of waste being landfilled, thus reducing the potential groundwater contamination.

## **5.3 AIR QUALITY**

### **5.3.1 Existing Conditions**

The project site is an abandoned rail yard situated on vacant land zoned for industrial development (see Section 5.1.1). Air quality at the site is considered to be good, as there are no industrial or commercial facilities immediately adjacent to the site which emit air pollutants.

### **5.3.2 Impacts**

The facility will have little impact on ambient air quality. The facility, which shall be fully enclosed, will be designed with air pickup points to separately collect dust and odor emissions from the general facility of loadout hoppers. The

air exhaust from the source will be filtered and scrubbed if required, thereby making the emission of any air toxics highly unlikely. Proven odor scrubbing technologies and other odor prevention measures will be incorporated to control emissions and maintain air quality.

## **5.4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES**

### **5.4.1 Existing Conditions**

The project site is an abandoned rail yard situated on vacant land zoned for industrial development (see Section 5.1.1). No known historical or archaeological resources exist on the site; however, an older structure (Fairgrounds Clubhouse) is located to the east of the site on property owned by the American Legion Fair Association.

### **5.4.2 Impacts**

The North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, was consulted as to the presence of any potentially significant archaeological or historical resources within the project area. An informational search done by the Department indicates that there are no known structures of historical importance or archaeological resources located within the site area. The Department of Cultural Resources also stated that, based on their present knowledge of the area, it is unlikely that any archaeological resources which may be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places will be affected by the project construction, and that no archaeological investigation is recommended in connection with this project (letter, N.C. Department of Cultural Resources; July 15, 1993). Therefore, no significant impacts of historical or archaeological resources are expected as a result of project development.

## **5.5 WILDLIFE AND UNIQUE HABITATS**

### **5.5.1 Existing Conditions**

The site area is wooded with urban types of development and land uses existing in the immediate vicinity. No known fish or wildlife habitat areas or endangered

or protected species exist in the project area; however a rare plant species, *Silphium terebinthinaceum* (a Candidate for state listing) has been recorded within two miles of the site.

### **5.5.2 Impacts**

The North Carolina Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation, was consulted as to the presence of any significant ecological resources or rare and endangered species within the project area. A field survey was conducted to evaluate the possibility of the Candidate species occurring at the site, and the findings (which were reported to the State) showed that the risk of the plant occurring at the site was negligible. The N.C. Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources concurred with this finding, and in their letter dated August 9, 1993 stated that there are no listings of rare, threatened, or endangered species at the site, nor are there any known special natural resources at or near the site. Therefore, no significant impact of the natural area is expected as a result of project development.

## **5.6 AESTHETICS AND FACILITY OPERATIONS**

### **5.6.1 Existing Conditions**

The project site is a vacant parcel of generally wooded land that slopes westward towards the rail line. The nearest structures are the American Legion Fair Association buildings located approximately 180 feet east of the facility. The closest residential area is located along Fay Street, which is approximately 520 feet east of the site.

### **5.6.2 Impacts**

The external and internal design of the facility will be developed to provide for overall facility aesthetics and protection from the weather. All components of the facility including the tipping area, hopper and transfer vehicle load out area will be enclosed. The visibility of the facility is minimized by the existing natural vegetation and topography. A landscaping plan will be developed for the facility

to enhance the local aesthetics. Existing vegetation adjacent to the perimeter of the site will be maintained where possible. Ditches and berm slopes will be seeded for erosion control, and appropriate areas will receive trees and shrubs for screening of the facility and truck traffic. Noise and odor from facility operation will be minimal because of enclosed systems.

- Noise

The transfer building will be totally enclosed and constructed with an acoustic building shell (interior insulation and liner panel system) to contain noise within the building.

On-site traffic and motor noise levels will be controlled by maintaining the natural wooded buffers around the site and through the addition of berming and noise barriers that attenuate and redirect the noise path away from the nearest residences.

- Odor

All waste will be removed from the facility at the end of each day's operation, i.e., no waste will be stored (on-site) overnight on the tipping floor.

The waste will be transferred from the collection vehicles to the rail containers in a manner that minimizes storage time on the tipping floor. Based on an 8-hour loading operation, the maximum length of time that the waste would be retained in the building is approximately 3 hours.

As part of routine operating procedures, the tipping floor and loadout areas will be cleaned and thoroughly washed down on a daily basis.

Tipping floor spotters will identify loads and material sources of particular high odors for immediate treatment with deodorizers and transfer materials to a rail container.

Air pickup points will be provided to separately collect dust and odor emissions from the general vicinity of loadout hoppers. The air exhaust from the source will be filtered and scrubbed if required. Proven odor scrubbing technologies and other prevention measures will be used to prevent the escape of odors.

The transfer building will be totally enclosed to prevent the escape of odor. Transfer trailers/containers will be equipped with rigid covers to prevent odor emissions once containers are moved from the transfer building.

- Vector Control

The transfer station will be cleaned of all waste at the end of each day. In addition, the tipping floor and loadout areas will also be washed down to prevent the infestation of rodents and insects. No waste will be stored overnight.

All building material selections and architectural closure designs will be done in such a manner as to reduce the potential for rodent nesting and/or insect infestation.

Interior curbing and trench gratings at major egress points from the building will be provided to control the incidence of any rodent from escaping the tipping floor or loadout areas.

As part of the operating plan for the transfer station, a professional extermination company will also be employed to develop a vector prevention and control program which will include regular monitoring of the operation of the facility and handle specific problem areas should they occur.

## 5.7 TRAFFIC

### 5.7.1 Existing Conditions

There is immediate access to the site via Avondale Drive, Geer Street, East Geer Street, and Miami Boulevard. Primary access to the site will be from the intersection of East Geer Street and Miami Boulevard. Major feeder routes into the area include Highway 15-501 from the north and south; Interstate 85 from the west; and Highway 70/I-85 from the east. Avondale Drive's current daily traffic volume within the site vicinity is approximately 8,700 vehicles, Geer Street's current daily traffic volume within the site vicinity is approximately 15,400 vehicles, East Geer Street's current daily traffic volume within the site vicinity is approximately 7,700 vehicles, and Miami Boulevard's within the site vicinity is approximately 10,700 vehicles.

### 5.7.2 Impacts

All project-related traffic will ingress and egress by East Geer Street or Miami Boulevard, and a dedicated access road of approximately 800 feet will serve the facility. Anticipated truck traffic to the site would generate an average of 240 waste delivery trips per day, plus an additional 5 - 10 employee vehicles per day, for a total of approximately 245 - 250 vehicle trips per day. Therefore, assuming the total traffic impact of 250 vehicles making daily round trips to the site, the total traffic impact on Avondale Drive would be 5.7%, if all trips were made via Avondale Drive; if all trips were made via Geer Street, the total traffic increase would be 3.2%; if all trips were made via East Geer Street, the total traffic increase would be 6.5%, and if all trips were made via Miami Boulevard, traffic impacts would increase a maximum of 4.7%. Existing traffic data from the Durham Department of Transportation was reviewed to determine the impacts to roads and streets in the vicinity of the proposed sites. Traffic volumes on Geer Street at the site entrance are approximately 77% of design capacity. Any truck queuing would take place on the project site itself and would be accommodated by the 800 foot dedicated access road to the facility. Based on the facility's minimal increase to the existing traffic volumes of the adjacent roadways and facility access designs, the project should have no significant adverse effect on traffic conditions in the area.

## SECTION 6.0

### MITIGATION MEASURES

It is anticipated that the construction and operation of the City of Durham's Solid Waste Transfer Station will have no significant impacts to the project area. This section reviews the mitigation measures that are incorporated into the siting, design, construction, and operation of the facility to eliminate or lessen any potentially adverse impacts on environmental resources.

As discussed in Section 5.2, the project will provide protection of both surface and groundwater by containing all facility operations within an enclosed structure. The wastewater system will be designed to meet all discharge standards of the City of Durham utility department. The facility will also have a perimeter drainage system and sedimentation control plan to handle stormwater runoff and erosion.

The impact on air quality from the facility, including the household hazardous waste facility or special waste handling facility, is not significant, and the design of the system is such that emissions for the facility will not pose a health risk.

The facility shall not impact areas of archeological or historical value, prime or unique agricultural lands, public lands such as parks, or any scenic or recreational areas. The aesthetic impact of the facility will be minimized by the surrounding wooded area and the natural terrain of the site, which combined with the facility landscaping plan, will provide excellent visual screening. Noise, odor, and dust will be controlled by the enclosed tipping floor.

Traffic impacts will be minimized by use of a dedicated access road developed for facility use only and by improvements scheduled to be made to major routes in the area.

After consideration of several alternative means of municipal solid waste management the decision has been made by the City of Durham to implement a variety of systems and programs for dealing with waste. The proposed solid waste management plan is an integrated approach which includes source reduction efforts, an expanded recycling program, composting efforts, new collection and financing strategies, and public education programs to encourage involvement in all aspects of waste management from generation through disposal. Each of these alternatives offers an opportunity to reduce the quantity of waste to be transferred for landfilling at the solid waste transfer facility. However the transfer station facility will be an integral part of the City's future solid waste management system, as there will continue to be a need for landfill acreage to dispose of the portion of the waste stream which has reached the "end of its life-cycle".

## ADDENDUM A

### MODEL FONSI STATEMENT

The North Carolina General Statute 113A State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requires that activities related to projects on the "Major Actions" list be subject to an environmental assessment process. To comply with SEPA requirements, the City of Durham is submitting an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Solid Waste Transfer Station facility located in Durham, North Carolina.

The following information is provided as required by the EA/FONSI guidelines developed by the North Carolina Department of Human Resources, Division of Health Services.

**Date:** September 17, 1993

**Title of Activity:** City of Durham Solid Waste Transfer Station

**Submitted By:** City Council  
City of Durham, North Carolina  
101 City Hall Plaza  
Durham, NC 27701

**Responsible State Agency and Contact:** Mr. Paul Crissman  
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401 Oberlin Road  
P.O. Box 27687  
Raleigh, NC 27611-7687

**Type of Document:** Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

**Project Description:** See Environmental Assessment, Solid Waste Transfer Station

**Environmental Impacts:** See Environmental Assessment, Solid Waste Transfer Station

**Mitigation Measures:** The project will provide protection of both surface and groundwater by containing all facility operations within an enclosed structure. The wastewater system will be designed to meet all discharge standards of the City of Durham utility department. Impacts of the project on the City's groundwater will be generally beneficial by eliminating landfill operations within the City limits and thereby reducing the potential for groundwater contamination. The impact on air quality is not significant, as air pollutants will not be emitted from the facility.

The aesthetic impact of the facility will be minimized by the surrounding wooded area and the natural topography of the site. Noise, odor, vectors, and dust will be controlled by the enclosed tipping floor, and daily waste clean-out and facility wash-down procedures.

Traffic impacts will be minimized by use of a dedicated access road developed for facility use only and accessibility to the facility from major thoroughfares in the area.

Growth in the City of Durham's waste reduction and recycling infrastructure offers an opportunity to reduce the quantity of waste requiring transfer to the landfill facility in Montgomery County. The program is expected to capture a significant portion of the waste stream during the next 10-20 years by encouraging source reduction actions; by increasing recycling rates for specific materials; by expanding the range of recyclable materials; by encouraging and implementing composting of organic waste wherever possible; and increasing public awareness of and participation in source reduction and recycling through educational and promotional efforts.

**FONSI Statement:**

The construction and operation of the City of Durham Solid Waste Transfer Station project as reviewed in the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact documents result in no adverse environmental impacts; therefore, no Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared for this project.

The Environmental Assessment and FONSI documents complete the environmental review record for this project.