FINAL

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

OF THE PROPOSED

JACKSONVILLE VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC AND DOMICILIARY

DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

425 I STREET NW

WASHINGTON, DC 20001

PREPARED BY:

TTL ASSOCIATES, INC.

AUGUST 21, 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared to identify, analyze, and document the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts associated with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA's) proposed establishment of an Outpatient Clinic (OPC) and domiciliary in the Jacksonville, Florida area (Duval County). This EA has been prepared as required in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 ([NEPA]; 42 United States Code 4321 et seq.), the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508), *Environmental Effects of the Department of Veterans Affairs Actions* (38 CFR Part 26), and in accordance with *VA NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects* (2010).

Proposed Action

VA's Proposed Action is to establish an approximately 158,600-square-foot,[1] two-story OPC and an approximately 26,900-square-foot, one-story domiciliary, with approximately 1,150 surface parking spaces on one contiguous piece of land in the Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida, area. Two undersized leased clinics would be replaced by the new facility, and the downtown Jacksonville OPC would continue to provide Veterans' health care services.

VA would select a developer to construct the OPC and domiciliary on a build-to-suit basis and then lease the facilities to VA for up to 20 years. The developer (lessor) would be responsible to design and construct the facilities in compliance with VA design requirements and applicable federal, state, and local regulations. The VA contract design requirements ensure sustainable development by requiring the OPC and domiciliary development meet a minimum rating of two Green Globes for new construction and sustainable interiors and the buildings earn an Energy Star label. These VA contract design requirements ensure that the OPC and domiciliary would be sustainably developed. The facilities would be staffed by VA, with facility management and maintenance provided by the lessor.

VA anticipates construction of the proposed OPC and domiciliary would begin in 2021 and the facilities would open in 2024. The new OPC would provide primary care, mental health, and specialty care outpatient services to the area's Veterans. The domiciliary would provide inpatient mental health services. Outpatient health care services currently provided by the undersized and overcrowded Jacksonville VA SouthPoint Clinic (6900 Southpoint Drive North) and Jacksonville VA University Clinic (3901 University Boulevard South) would be relocated to the new OPC. VA would no longer lease or operate these facilities once the proposed OPC is open and the existing leases expire.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide enhanced and expanded outpatient health care and inpatient mental health services to Veterans in the Jacksonville, Florida, area in integrated, right-sized, energy-efficient facilities. The proposed OPC would provide a centralized,

[1] Building areas were calculated using the methodology of American National Standards Institute/Building Owners and Managers Association Office Area standard.

appropriately sized facility for VA to consolidate, enhance, and expand primary care, mental health, and specialty care services to area Veterans. The proposed domiciliary would provide an appropriately sized facility to expand inpatient mental health services to area Veterans. The Proposed Action would allow VA to provide timely access to state-of-the-art, health care and mental health services in modern, properly sized facilities to meet current and projected workloads.

The Proposed Action is needed to address current and future projected health care capacity and space gaps and operational inefficiencies that were identified through the VA Strategic Capital Investment Planning process. The existing leased Jacksonville VA SouthPoint Clinic and Jacksonville VA University Clinic are undersized (total 50,000 square feet) and insufficient to meet the current and rapidly growing outpatient health care needs of area Veterans. In addition, operating separate outpatient clinics in the area creates operational inefficiencies, integrates services poorly, and increases costs. The domiciliary is needed to address inpatient mental health space gaps and the shortage of Veteran residential care in the Jacksonville area.

Alternatives

This EA examines in-depth two Action Alternatives for the implementation of the Proposed Action at Sites 1 or 2 and the No Action Alternative.

Action Alternatives

Site 1 (Max Leggett Parkway): Site 1 is located near the northwest corner of the intersection of Max Leggett Parkway (formerly Duval Road) and Hyatt Road within the City of Jacksonville. Site 1 is approximately 21 acres of mostly undeveloped land with overgrown grassy and scrub vegetation, wooded areas containing mostly pine trees, dirt roads, and a vacant office trailer. Site 1 contained grassy land and/or agricultural fields and wooded land with a residence and other structures from the 1940s through the 2006, was mostly cleared in 2007, was planted with pine trees by 2011, and was partially cleared and graded in 2017. Primary and secondary access to the OPC and domiciliary would be from Max Leggett Parkway.

Site 2 (Lone Star Road): Site 2 is located northwest of the intersection of Lone Star Road/Tredinick Parkway and the southbound Southside Connector (State Route 113) Service Drive within the City of Jacksonville. Site 2 is approximately 20.6 acres of vacant and cleared land. Site 2 was undeveloped woodlands in 1943, was part of a large titanium strip mine from approximately 1950 to the early 1970s, and was the site of land disposal of sanitary and industrial wastewater residuals from the early 1970s until 1985. Mixed use development of the surrounding properties began in the early 2000s, during which Site 2 was regraded; however, Site 2 has remained undeveloped. The preliminary site plan includes access to the OPC and domiciliary from the southbound Southside Connector Service Drive and Lone Star Road/Tredinick Parkway.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action would not be implemented. VA would continue to provide primary care, mental health, and specialty care outpatient services at two small VA-leased facilities in the area. The Action Alternative sites likely would remain vacant in the near future and ultimately may be developed by others for other commercial use or residential use, in accordance with local zoning. This alternative would limit VA's ability to provide health

care services to U.S. Veterans in the region, and thus would not meet the purpose of or need for the Proposed Action. However, the No Action Alternative was evaluated in this EA as required under the CEQ regulations, and provides a benchmark analysis for comparing the effects of the Proposed Action.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The affected environment of the Action Alternative sites and their immediate surroundings, or the region of influence of the Proposed Action, is discussed in Section 3 of this EA.

The three considered alternatives are evaluated in this EA to determine their potential direct or indirect impact(s) on the physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic aspects of the Proposed Action's region of influence. Technical areas evaluated in this EA are:

- *Aesthetics*
- *Air Quality*
- *Cultural Resources*
- *Geology and Soils*
- *Hydrology and Water Quality*
- *Wildlife and Habitat*
- *Noise*
- *Land Use*
- *Floodplains, Wetlands, and Coastal Zone Management*
- *Socioeconomics*
- *Community Services*
- *Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials*
- *Transportation and Parking*
- *Utilities*
- *Environmental Justice*
- *Cumulative Impacts*
- *Potential for Generating Substantial Controversy*

Potential Effects of the Action Alternatives

The Proposed Action would result in the impacts identified throughout Section 3 and summarized in the table below. These include short-term and/or long-term, less than significant potential adverse impacts to aesthetics, air quality, soils, hydrology and water quality, wildlife and habitat (Site 1), noise, wetlands (Site 1), solid waste and hazardous materials, and transportation. All of these potential impacts are less than significant and would be further reduced through careful implementation of general best management practices (BMPs); management, minimization, and mitigation measures; and compliance with regulatory requirements, as identified in Section 5.

Environmental investigations conducted in 2006 found the sanitary and industrial wastewater treatment residuals/sludges that were placed on Site 2 and the surrounding properties from the early 1970s until 1985 contaminated the soil at these properties. In 2006, contaminated soil was removed from surrounding properties that were planned for residential development and placed on properties planned for commercial development, including Site 2. Soil sampling conducted at Site 2 in 2020 identified polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) concentrations exceeding the Florida Residential and Commercial Direct Exposure Soil Cleanup Target Levels (SCTLs) and copper-impacted soil exceeding the Residential Direct Exposure SCTL. The impacted soil at Site 2 would require remediation to prevent potential unacceptable exposures to the contaminants by future occupants of the proposed OPC and domiciliary. The developer has preliminarily planned the excavation and removal from the site of the soil that exceeds the Residential Direct Exposure SCTLs, and has drafted a plan to ensure integrity of existing engineering controls for contamination that would remain in place. The developer would prepare and submit for approval by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) a Remedial Action Plan that would

prevent potential unacceptable exposures for future occupants of the proposed OPC and domiciliary. A Soil and Water Management Plan would inform construction contractors of the site conditions and ensure proper handling and disposal of excavated soils. With the effective and documented successful completion of these actions (state approval of the site as suitable for residential use, soil remediation, engineering control maintenance, and implementation of a Soil and Water Management Plan), potential impacts associated with contamination identified at Site 2 would be less than significant.

The Action Alternatives would result in beneficial short-term and long-term impacts to the local socioeconomic environment. Notably, a significant long-term beneficial effect to the health of U.S. Veterans in the region would occur should the new OPC and domiciliary be constructed under the Proposed Action.

Potential Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action would not be implemented and no improvements to the current level of VA's regional health care services or capability would occur. No beneficial impacts attributable to the Proposed Action would occur and VA's ability to provide sufficient, requisite health care services to the region's Veterans would be compromised.

Summary of Impact Analysis

Resource Area	Action Alternatives		No Action
	Site 1	Site 2	
Aesthetics	New OPC and domiciliary would be attractive buildings built in accordance with Jacksonville development standards. No significant impact.		None
Air Quality	Dust and particulate matter emissions during construction managed with BMPs. Vehicle and minor equipment emissions during operation. No significant impact.		Similar regional vehicle emissions
Cultural Resources	No NRHP-listed or eligible historic properties present at or near the sites. Florida SHPO, City of Jacksonville Historic Preservation Section, and Muscogee (Creek) Nation concurred no historic properties would be affected. No impact.		None
Geology and Soils	Soil erosion and sedimentation impacts during construction managed with BMPs. No significant impact.		None

Summary of Impact Analysis			
Resource Area	**Action Alternatives**		**No Action**
	Site 1	**Site 2**	
Hydrology and Water Quality	Stormwater runoff during construction managed through BMPs. Stormwater from the proposed development would discharge to existing stormwater management ponds located adjacent to/near the sites. No significant impact.		None
Wildlife and Habitat	Biological Evaluation identified no federally or state protected species at the site. Potential suitable habitat for eastern indigo snakes, gopher tortoises, and common ground doves. Preconstruction surveys and management would address potential impacts. No significant impact.	Site is mostly barren, vacant land with no habitat for federally or state protected species. No/Negligible impact.	None
Noise	Short-term noise impacts during construction managed through BMPs. Minor operational impacts associated with vehicle traffic, HVAC systems, and grounds maintenance. No significant impact.		None
Land Use	Sites and adjacent properties are located within mixed-use Planned Unit Development areas. Health care facilities are a permitted use under current zoning and compatible with surrounding land use. No/negligible impact.		None
Floodplains, Wetlands, and Coastal Zone Management	Two small wetlands are permitted to be filled. Site development would not disturb adjacent wetland conservation areas. No floodplains located on the site or adjacent properties. Located within a coastal zone. No significant impact.	No wetlands or floodplains located on the site or adjacent properties. Located within a coastal zone. No/negligible impact.	None

Summary of Impact Analysis			
Resource Area	**Action Alternatives**		**No Action**
	Site 1	**Site 2**	
Socioeconomics	Short-term localized beneficial impact to employment during construction. Enhanced and expanded health care services would be a significant beneficial impact to Veterans in the Jacksonville area.		Inadequate VA health care facilities - adverse impact to local Veterans
Community Services	Proposed OPC and domiciliary would not put a significant additional load on local community services. No/negligible impact.		None
Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials	No recognized environmental conditions identified at the site. Potential impacts from petroleum and hazardous substance handling during construction and operation would be managed through BMPs and regulatory compliance. No significant impact.	Contaminated soil and groundwater are present due to historical uses at levels that exceed residential and commercial direct exposure criteria. Developer would remediate impacted soil Impacted soil and groundwater would be properly handled and managed in accordance with FDEP requirements and site-specific management plans. FDEP would concur that site is suitable for residential use. Potential impacts from petroleum and hazardous substance handling during construction and operation would be managed through BMPs and regulatory compliance. No significant impact.	None
Transportation and Parking	Minor short-term impact from construction traffic. Local roads currently operate well and are anticipated to have sufficient capacity to accommodate OPC and domiciliary operations (estimated 2,000 round-trip vehicles trips per day). The developer would work with FDOT and the City of Jacksonville during the project design and permitting process to identify and implement transportation improvements, as necessary. Proposed OPC and domiciliary would include adequate on-site parking. No significant impact.		None

Summary of Impact Analysis			
Resource Area	**Action Alternatives**		**No Action**
	Site 1	**Site 2**	
Utilities	Utilities likely adequate for the OPC and domiciliary already service the sites. No/negligible impact.		None
Environmental Justice	Site is not located in an area with a larger than average low income or minority population. No impact.	Site is located in an area with a slightly higher minority population and slightly higher low-income population. Proposed Action would have little impact on area residents. Low-income and minority Veterans would benefit from the proposed OPC and domiciliary. Negligible impact.	None

Cumulative Impacts

The EA also examines the potential cumulative effects of implementing each of the considered alternatives. This analysis finds that the Action Alternatives, with the implementation of the management, mitigation, and minimization measures specified in this EA, would not result in significant adverse cumulative impacts to onsite or regional natural or cultural resources and would maintain or enhance the socioeconomic environment of the area through the long-term provision of additional health care services to the region's Veterans. The No Action Alternative would not produce these potential positive socioeconomic gains.

AGENCY AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Agencies consulted for this EA include:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)
- United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Department of Transportation
- Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources (State Historic Preservation Office or SHPO)
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) (various departments)
- Florida Department of Transportation
- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Florida Natural Areas Inventory

- North Florida Transportation Planning Organization
- Duval Soil and Water Conservation District
- St. Johns River Water Management District
- City of Jacksonville (various departments)
- JEA (formerly known as Jacksonville Electric Authority)

Responses with project input or information were received from USEPA, Florida SHPO, FDEP Air Quality Division, FDEP Northeast District, Jacksonville Planning and Development Department Historic Preservation Section, and USFWS. Agency information and comments have been incorporated into this EA, as and where appropriate, and are summarized in Section 4. Copies of relevant correspondence can be found in Appendix A.

Four federally recognized Native American tribes [Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, and Seminole Tribe of Florida] were identified as having possible ancestral ties to the Jacksonville area. VA sent Section 106 consultation letters to these Tribes requesting their concurrence that no historic properties would be affected by the Proposed Action. A response was received from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Tribal information and comments have been incorporated into this EA (Section 3.4) as appropriate. Tribal input is summarized in Section 4. Tribal correspondence is provided in Appendix B.

VA published and distributed the Draft EA for a 30-day public comment period, as announced by a Notice of Availability published in the Florida Times-Union, a local newspaper of general circulation, on July 8 and 12, 2020. A copy of the Draft EA was also made available on the North Florida Health Care System website:

www.northflorida.va.gov/NORTHFLORIDA/pressreleases/Jacksonville_OPC_and_DOM_EA.asp

Four agencies provided comments on the Draft EA; these comments were considered in preparing the Final EA, as appropriate, and are summarized in Section 4.

VA held a virtual public meeting on July 23, 2020, at 6 pm to present a summary of the Draft EA and to receive public input and comment on the Draft EA. One member of the public attended the public meeting. One comment was received regarding the timing of the lease award; this comment is also summarized and addressed in Section 4. No comments regarding the Proposed Action or the Draft EA were provided.

CONCLUSION

This EA concludes there would be no significant adverse impact, either individually or cumulatively, to the human environment associated with either of the Action Alternatives, provided the management, mitigation, and minimization measures described in this EA are implemented.

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared as required in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 ([NEPA]; 42 United States Code [USC] 4321 et seq.), the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508), and *Environmental Effects of the Department of Veterans Affairs Actions* (38 CFR Part 26) and VA's *NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects* (2010). Federal agencies are required to consider the environmental and related social and economic effects of their proposed actions. This EA is required to determine if VA's Proposed Action would have significant environmental impacts.

This EA has been prepared to identify, analyze, and document the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts associated with VA's proposed construction and operation of an approximately 158,600-square-foot, two-story, slab-on-grade outpatient clinic (OPC) and an approximately 26,900-square-foot, one-story, slab-on-grade domiciliary, with approximately 1,150 associated surface parking spaces; other required site improvements and amenities; and landscaped open space areas on one contiguous piece of land.

These facilities would be located on one of two Action Alternative sites (Site 1 or Site 2) in the Jacksonville, Florida, area (Duval County). Figures 1 through 3 depict the general locations of the two sites.

In accordance with the cited regulations, this EA allows for public input into the federal decision-making process; provides federal decision-makers with an understanding of potential environmental effects of their decisions, before making these decisions; identifies measures the federal decision-maker could implement to reduce potential environmental effects; and documents the NEPA process.

1.2 Background

The Malcom Randall VA Medical Center in Gainesville (Gainesville VAMC) is one of two VAMCs in the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, which also includes the Lake City VAMC in Lake City, Florida, and 12 outpatient clinics in Jacksonville, Tallahassee, Lecanto, Marianna, Ocala, Palatka, Perry, St. Augustine, and The Villages, Florida; and St. Mary's, Valdosta, and Waycross, Georgia. Health care is provided to Jacksonville area Veterans at the Gainesville VAMC and three Jacksonville area OPCs: the Jacksonville 1 VA Clinic (Jacksonville 1 OPC), Jacksonville VA SouthPoint Clinic (SouthPoint OPC), and Jacksonville VA University Clinic (University OPC). The Jacksonville OPC locations are shown on Figure 1. The Jacksonville 1 OPC, located within the urban core of the city, is a large clinic (90,000 square feet) that provides a broad range of general and specialized medical, dental, surgical, psychiatric, nursing and ancillary services. The SouthPoint OPC is approximately 30,000 square feet and provides primary care, prosthetics, physical therapy, occupational therapy, rehabilitation medicine, traumatic brain injury, and substance abuse services. The University OPC is approximately 20,000 square feet and provides primary care, mental health, and phlebotomy services.

The VA-leased SouthPoint OPC and University OPC facilities are undersized and insufficient to meet the current and rapidly-growing outpatient health care needs of Jacksonville area Veterans.

In 2018, Congress authorized VA, under the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act, to establish a new, larger OPC in the Jacksonville area to consolidate and replace the undersized, leased SouthPoint OPC and University OPC facilities and to establish a new domiciliary to provide inpatient mental health services and residential care and meet the requirements of the VHA Health Care Uniform Benefits package

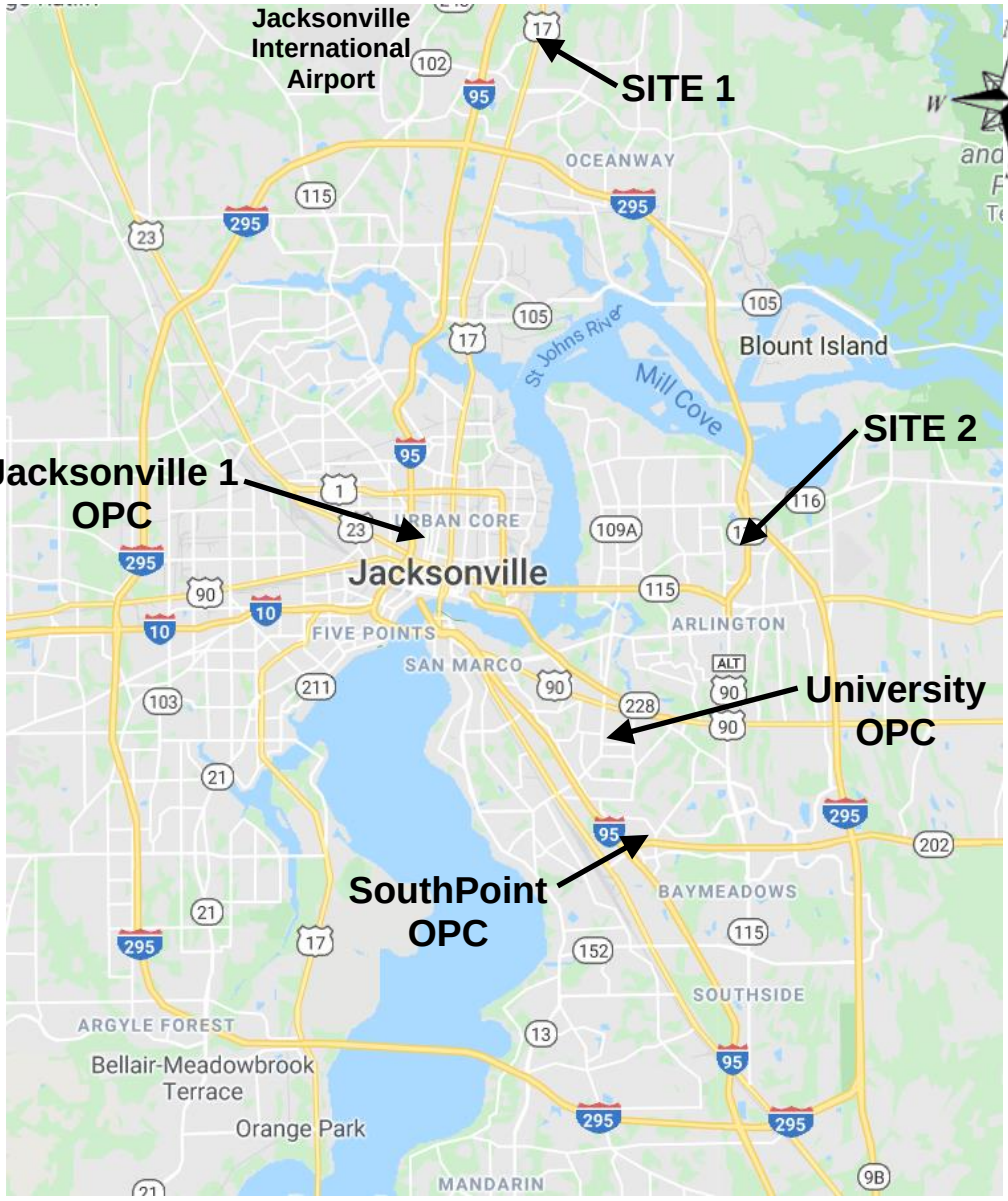

FIGURE 1
REGIONAL LOCATION MAP

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED JACKSONVILLE
VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC
AND DOMICILIARY
DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA

PREPARED FOR

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC

TTL PROJECT NO.

1925902

TTL associates inc
Environmental, Geotechnical Engineering & Testing

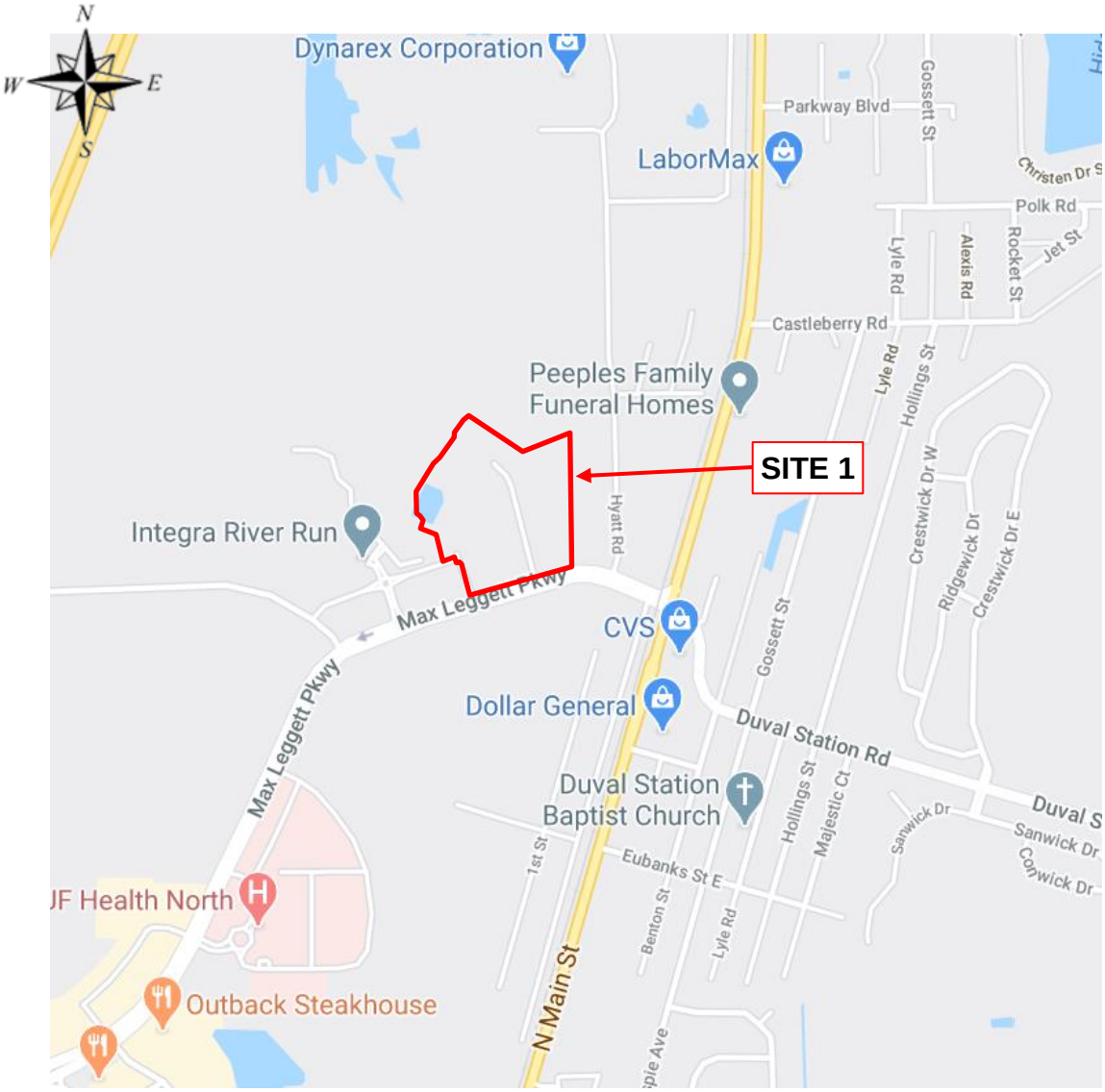

FIGURE 2
SITE 1 VICINITY STREET MAP

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED JACKSONVILLE
VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC
AND DOMICILIARY
DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA

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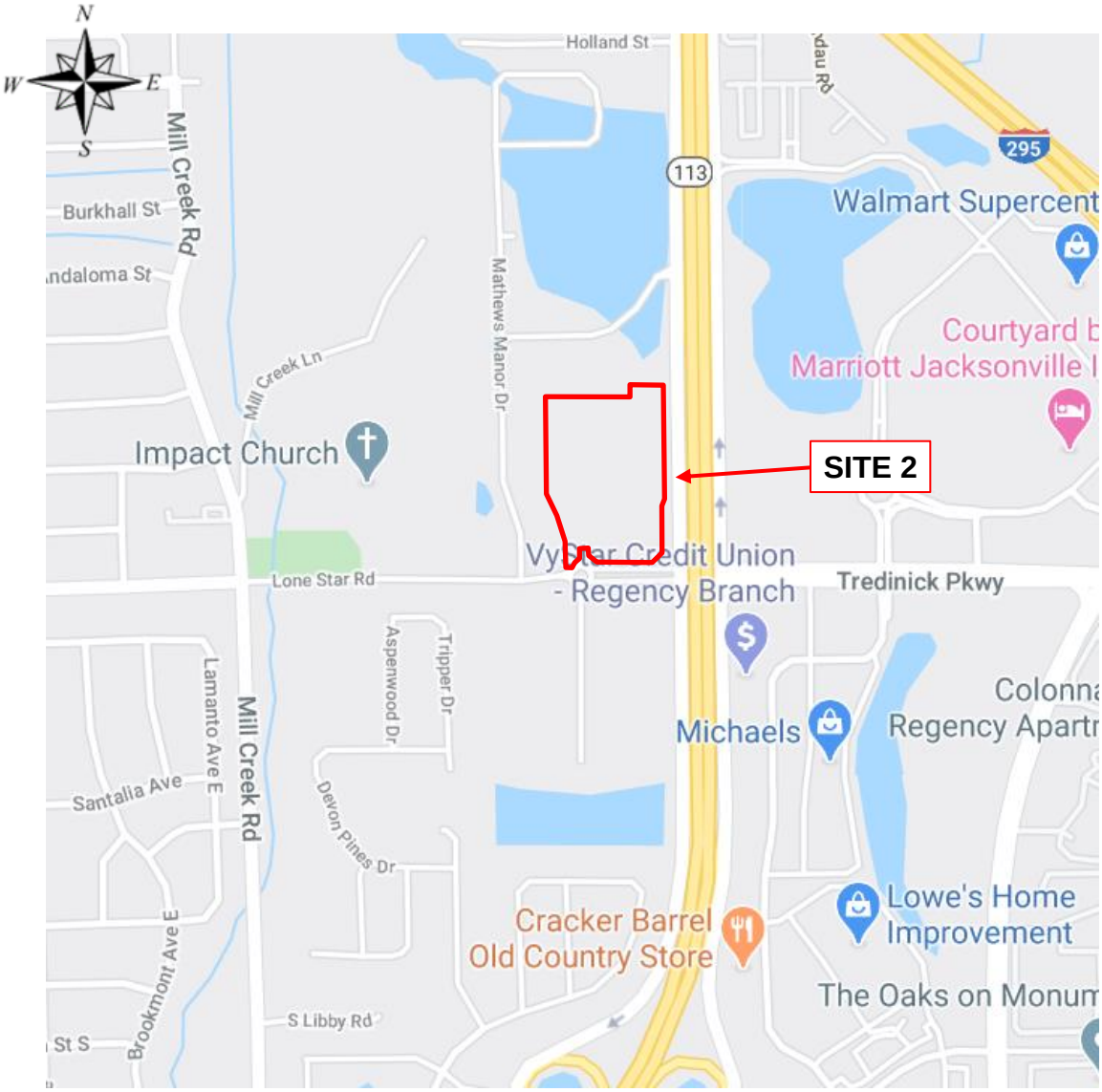

FIGURE 3
SITE 2 VICINITY STREET MAP

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED JACKSONVILLE
VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC
AND DOMICILIARY
DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA

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1.3 Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide enhanced and expanded outpatient health care and inpatient mental health services to Veterans in the Jacksonville, Florida area in integrated, right-sized, energy-efficient facilities. The proposed OPC would provide a centralized, appropriately sized facility for VA to consolidate, enhance, and expand primary care, mental health, and specialty care services to area Veterans. The proposed domiciliary would provide an appropriately sized facility to expand inpatient mental health services to area Veterans. The Proposed Action would allow VA to provide timely access to state-of-the-art, health care and mental health services in modern, properly sized facilities to meet current and projected workloads.

The Proposed Action is needed to address current and future projected health care capacity and space gaps and operational inefficiencies that were identified through the VA SCIP process. The existing leased Jacksonville VA SouthPoint Clinic and Jacksonville VA University Clinic are undersized (total 50,000 square feet) and insufficient to meet the current and rapidly growing outpatient health care needs of area Veterans. In addition, operating separate outpatient clinics in the area creates operational inefficiencies, poorly integrated services, and increases costs. The domiciliary is needed to address inpatient mental health space gaps and the shortage of Veteran residential care in the Jacksonville area.

1.4 Decision-Making

This EA has been prepared to identify, analyze, and document the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts associated with VA's proposed construction and operation of a new OPC and domiciliary in the Jacksonville, Florida, area.

VA, as a federal agency, is required to incorporate environmental considerations into their decision-making process for the actions they propose to undertake. This is done in accordance with the regulations identified in Section 1.1.

Ultimately, VA will decide, in part based on the analysis presented in this EA and after having taken potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic effects into account, whether VA should implement one of the Action Alternatives identified for the Proposed Action, and, as appropriate, carry out mitigation and management measures to reduce effects on the environment.

SECTION 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Introduction

This Section provides information regarding the Proposed Action and its alternatives, including those that VA initially considered but eliminated and the reasons for eliminating them. The screening criteria and process developed and applied by VA to identify and assess only viable sites are described, providing an understanding of VA's rationale for analyzing the two Action Alternatives in this EA.

2.2 Proposed Action

VA's Proposed Action is to establish an approximately 158,600-square-foot, two-story OPC and 26,900-square-foot, one-story domiciliary with approximately 1,150 surface parking spaces on one contiguous piece of land in the Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida, area.

VA established the sizes of the facilities and land area required for this proposal based on the number of Veterans currently receiving outpatient health care services at the existing Jacksonville area clinics and inpatient mental health services in the area, and those Veterans forecasted to require such services over the anticipated 20-year life of the proposed OPC and domiciliary. The proposed OPC would consolidate and replace the overcrowded and undersized VA-leased SouthPoint OPC and University OPC with a new, appropriately sized, centralized facility. The Jacksonville 1 OPC, in downtown Jacksonville, would continue providing its current level of Veterans' health care services. VA would select a developer who would construct the proposed OPC and domiciliary for VA on a build-to-suit basis, and then lease them to VA for up to 20 years.

No detailed design plans for the proposed OPC and domiciliary are currently available as this project would be executed as a build-to-suit lease. The developer (lessor) would be responsible to design and construct the facilities, in compliance with VA design requirements and applicable federal, state, and local regulations. The OPC and domiciliary would comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and meet all requirements set forth in EO 13834: *Efficient Federal Operations*. The facilities would be designed and built to VA design criteria and in accordance with local building and zoning codes.

The VA contract design requirements ensure that the OPC and domiciliary would be sustainably developed by requiring the development to meet a minimum rating of two Green Globes for new construction and sustainable interiors and the buildings to earn an Energy Star label.

VA anticipates construction of the proposed OPC and domiciliary would begin in 2021 and the facilities would open in 2024. The new OPC would provide enhanced, expanded and consolidated primary care, mental health, and specialty care outpatient services to the area's Veterans. The domiciliary would provide expanded Veteran inpatient mental health services and residential care. Outpatient health care services currently provided by SouthPoint OPC and University OPC would be relocated to the new OPC. VA would no longer lease or operate these facilities once the proposed OPC is open and the existing leases expire.

The OPC would operate Monday through Friday from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm and Saturdays from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm, except on federal holidays. Staff, patients, volunteers, and other guests would primarily be drawn from the current SouthPoint OPC and University OPC; however, additional VA staff would be required for expanded services at the new, much larger facility. The OPC and domiciliary would be available to Veterans and service members from all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces who meet the criteria for treatment at a VA facility.

2.3 Alternatives Analysis

The CEQ and VA regulations for implementing NEPA require reasonable alternatives to be explored and objectively evaluated. Alternatives that are eliminated from detailed study must be identified along with a brief discussion of the reasons for eliminating them. For purposes of analysis, an alternative was considered "reasonable" only if it would enable VA to accomplish the primary mission of providing suitable health care facilities that meet the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action. "Unreasonable" alternatives would not enable VA to meet the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action.

2.3.1 Alternatives Development

VA undertook a sequential planning and screening process, seeking viable alternatives for the Proposed Action. The process and its results are summarized below:

- After identifying the inadequacies of the leased Jacksonville area VA outpatient clinics to meet the current and increasing demand for primary, mental health, and specialty care services by area Veterans, VA examined these facilities for their potential to support the Proposed Action. The existing leased SouthPoint OPC and University OPC cannot be expanded beyond their current sizes. In addition, continued operation of two separate facilities would not enable VA to provide centralized, consolidated health care services. As such, VA determined that the existing facilities could not be expanded, modified, or renovated to meet the purpose and need for the Proposed Action.

- VA then advertised (via a pre-solicitation) for developable land (for new construction) or existing buildings of sufficient size located within a delineated area (Duval County) that would accommodate an approximately 164,054-square-foot OPC with 1,150 on-site parking spaces.

- VA received several responses (expressions of interest) to this advertisement. VA evaluated each of these sites based on surrounding land uses; location of nearest emergency response services; aesthetic quality; current zoning; accessibility to highways, public transportation, shopping, restaurants, and other features; utility availability; overall site condition; site shape and size; topography; floodplains; and visible environmental issues/features. Based on this analysis, VA determined that there appeared to be sufficient potentially suitable locations for the proposed OPC within the delineated area.

- VA then advertised through a Request for Lease Proposals for the development and lease of a new approximately 158,600-square-foot, one to two-story, OPC and approximately 26,900-square-foot, one-story domiciliary with 1,150 on-site parking spaces on one contiguous piece of land within the delineated area. In response to the solicitation, VA

received offers within the competitive range for the proposed OPC and domiciliary development at two sites (Sites 1 and 2). These sites are described in Section 2.3.2.

2.3.2 Evaluated Alternatives

This EA examines in depth two Action Alternatives for the implementation of the Proposed Action at Sites 1 or 2 and the No Action Alternative. The locations of the two Action Alternative sites are shown on Figures 1 through 3.

Action Alternatives

- **Site 1 (Max Leggett Parkway):** Site 1 is located near the northwest corner of the intersection of Max Leggett Parkway (formerly Duval Road) and Hyatt Road within the City of Jacksonville. Site 1 is identified by the Duval County Property Appraiser as part of Parcel ID 106277-0170. Site 1 is approximately 21 acres of mostly undeveloped land with overgrown grassy and scrub vegetation, wooded areas containing mostly pine trees, dirt roads, and a vacant office trailer. Site 1 contained grassy land and/or agricultural fields and wooded land with a residence and other structures from the 1940s through the 2006, was mostly cleared in 2007, was planted with pine trees by 2011, and was partially cleared and graded in 2017. Site 1 is depicted on Figures 4 and 5. The proposed development would include a two-story OPC building in the central portion of the site, a one-story domiciliary building in the northeastern portion of the site, and surface parking lots in the southeastern and northwestern portions of the site. Primary and secondary access would be provided by two drives from Max Leggett Parkway.

- **Site 2 (Lone Star Road):** Site 2 is located northwest of the intersection of Lone Star Road/Tredinick Parkway and the southbound Southside Connector (State Route 113) Service Drive within the City of Jacksonville. Site 2 is identified by the Duval County Property Appraiser as Parcel ID 120739-0010. Site 2 is approximately 20.6 acres of vacant and cleared land. Site 2 was undeveloped woodlands in 1943, was part of a large titanium strip mine from approximately 1950 to the early 1970s, and was the site of land disposal of sanitary and industrial wastewater residuals from the early 1970s until 1985. Mixed use development of the surrounding properties began in the early 2000s, during which Site 2 was regraded; however, the site has remained undeveloped. Site 2 is depicted on Figures 6 and 7. The proposed development would include a two-story OPC building in the west-central portion of the site with the one-story domiciliary located north of the OPC. The buildings would be surrounded by surface parking lots. The preliminary site plan includes access to the site provided by two drives from the southbound Southside Connector Service Drive and two drives from Lone Star Road/Tredinick Parkway.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action would not be implemented. VA would continue to provide primary care, mental health, and specialty care outpatient services at the two small VA-leased facilities in the area. The Action Alternative sites likely would remain vacant in the near future and ultimately may be developed by others for other commercial use or residential use, in accordance with local zoning. This alternative would limit VA's ability to provide health care services to U.S. Veterans in the region, and thus would not meet the purpose of or need for the Proposed Action. However, the No Action Alternative was evaluated in this EA as required

under the CEQ regulations and provides a comparative benchmark analysis against which to analyze the effects of the Proposed Action.

2.3.3 Alternatives Eliminated from Further Consideration

As described in Section 2.3.1, VA screened out some offers received in response to the Request for Lease proposals. Each of the offers, with the exception of the Site 1 and Site 2 offers, failed to meet the screening criteria or was not within the competitive range.

VA considered modification or renovation of the existing SouthPoint OPC or University OPC; however, these leased facilities cannot not be reconfigured or expanded beyond their current sizes.

VA considered building new VA-owned facilities in the Jacksonville area; however, new VA-owned facilities would limit VA's ability to relocate services in the future and adapt to changes in Veterans health care needs and demographics. VA-owned facilities would also require land acquisition and construction, increasing the cost and lengthening the implementation timeline.

VA considered the renovation of another VA-owned vacant or underutilized facility; however, local VA planners determined no other available VA-owned facilities of sufficient size and suitable for renovation are located in the Jacksonville area.

VA also considered contracting out all primary care, mental health, and specialty care outpatient services to private health care providers in the community. However, this alternative is not cost-effective and would not guarantee clear access and consistent standard and continuity of care. There also may not be sufficient, qualified, private-sector providers in the Jacksonville area to accommodate the Veteran workload.

VA considered the acquisition of existing facilities in the Jacksonville area through purchase; however, market research and interviews with local VA planners indicated that suitable facilities for possible acquisition and subsequent renovation that would meet all project requirements does not exist in the delineated market area of the proposed OPC and domiciliary. In addition, VA-owned facilities would limit VA's ability to relocate services in the future and adapt to changes in regional Veterans health care needs.

VA also considered collaboration with the Department of Defense (DoD) for a Joint Lease Project; however, according to local VA planners and VHA's Office of Interagency Health Affairs – Office of VA-DoD Coordination, there are currently no facility sharing opportunities in the Jacksonville area.

For the reasons stated above, these other alternatives were eliminated from further consideration.

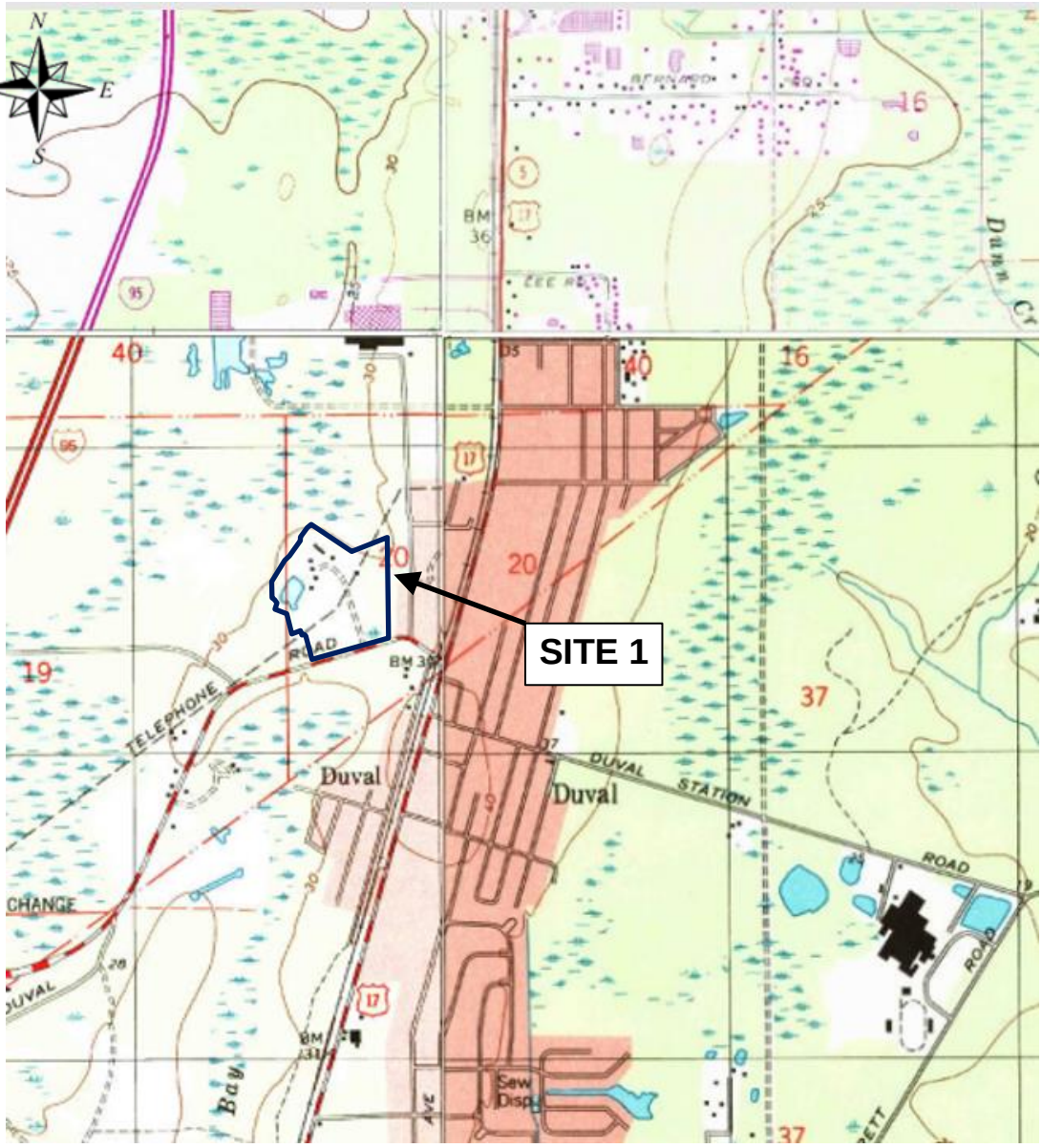

FIGURE 4
SITE 1 TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED JACKSONVILLE
VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC
AND DOMICILIARY
DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA

PREPARED FOR

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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FIGURE 5
SITE 1 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED JACKSONVILLE
VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC
AND DOMICILIARY
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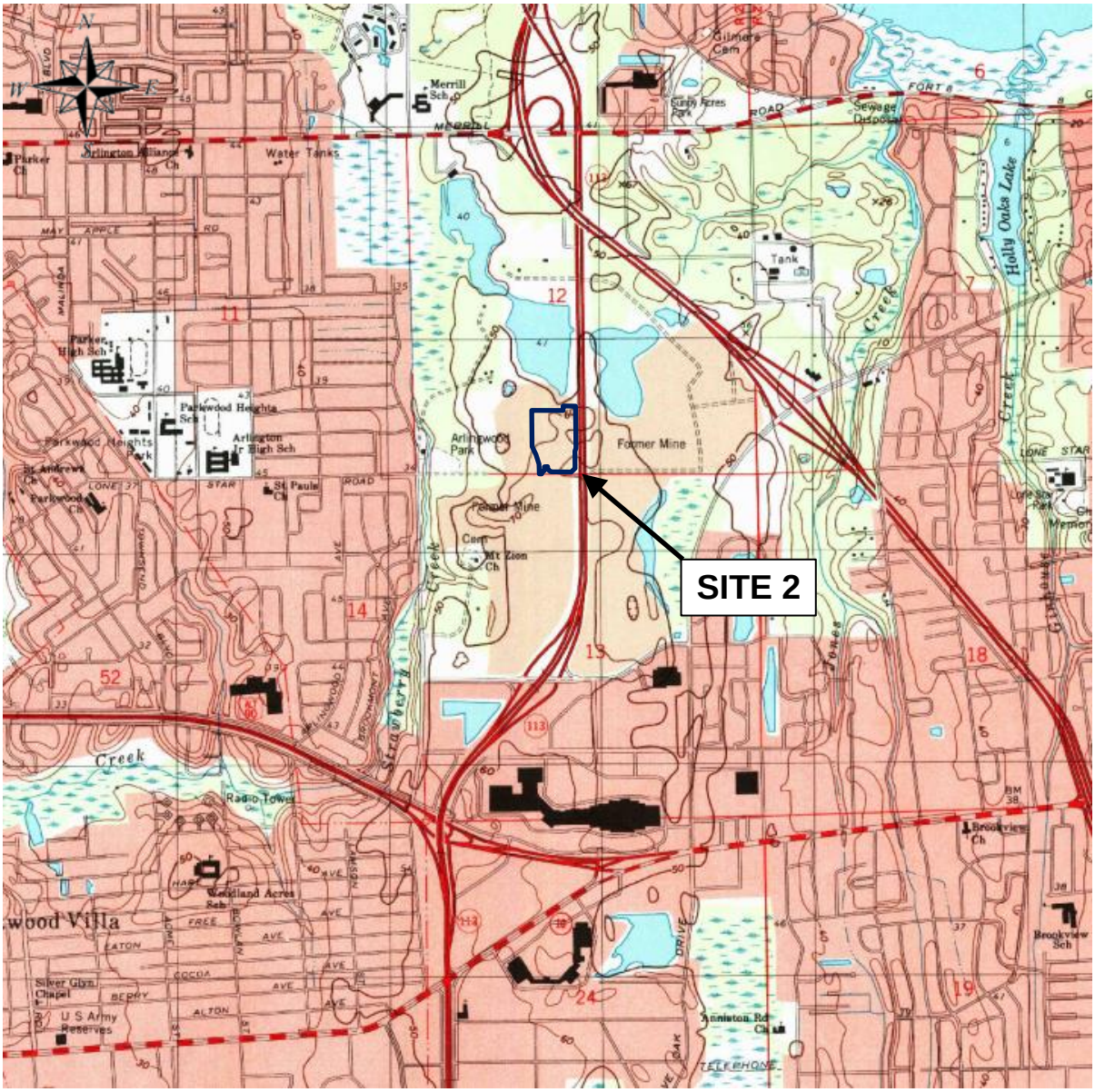

FIGURE 6
SITE 2 TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED JACKSONVILLE
VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC
AND DOMICILIARY
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FIGURE 7
SITE 2 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED JACKSONVILLE
VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC
AND DOMICILIARY
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SECTION 3: AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.1 Introduction

This Section describes the baseline (existing) environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic conditions at the two Alternative Action sites (see Figures 1 through 7) and their general vicinities (that is, the Proposed Action's region of influence), with emphasis on those resources potentially affected by the Proposed Action. Appendix C provides photographs, with captions, of the Alternative Action sites and their vicinities. Under each resource area (Sections 3.2 through 3.16), the potential direct and indirect effects of implementing the Proposed Action at the two Action Alternative sites and the No Action Alternative are identified. Potential cumulative impacts are discussed in Section 3.17.

In this EA, impacts are identified as either significant, less than significant (defined as impacts that would not be of the context or intensity to be considered significant under the CEQ regulations), or no/negligible impact. As used in this EA, the terms "effects" and "impacts" are synonymous. Where appropriate and clearly discernible, each impact is identified as either adverse or beneficial.

The CEQ regulations specify that in determining the significance of effects, consideration must be given to both "*context*" and "*intensity*" (40 CFR 1508.27).

Context refers to the significance of an effect to society as a whole (human and national), to an affected region, to affected interests, or to just the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the Proposed Action.

Intensity refers to the magnitude or severity of the effect, and whether it is beneficial or adverse.

In this EA, the significance of potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects has been determined through a systematic evaluation of each considered alternative in terms of its effects on each individual environmental resource component.

Resource areas considered in this EA are as follows.

- *Aesthetics*
- *Air Quality*
- *Cultural Resources*
- *Geology, and Soils*
- *Hydrology and Water Quality*
- *Wildlife and Habitat*
- *Noise*
- *Land Use*
- *Floodplains, Wetlands, and Coastal Zone Management*
- *Socioeconomics*
- *Community Services*
- *Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials*
- *Transportation and Parking*
- *Utilities*
- *Environmental Justice*
- *Cumulative Impacts*
- *Potential for Generating Substantial Controversy*

3.2 Aesthetics

Site 1

Site 1 is located in a mixed use (residential, commercial, and vacant land), developing suburban area approximately 11 miles north of the center of the City of Jacksonville (see Figure 1). Site 1 includes approximately 21 acres of mostly undeveloped land with overgrown grassy and scrub vegetation, wooded areas containing mostly pine trees, dirt roads, and a vacant office trailer. Site 1 is depicted on Figure 5.

Adjacent to the north of Site 1 are undeveloped wooded land and a recently constructed stormwater management pond. Adjacent to the east of Site 1 is a pine tree plantation. Adjacent to the south of Site 1, across Max Leggett Parkway, is undeveloped wooded land. Adjacent to the west of Site 1 is a recently constructed apartment complex, undeveloped wooded land, and cleared land. U.S. Highway 17/State Route 5 (Main Street) is located approximately 700 feet east of Site 1 and Interstate 95 is located approximately 0.5-mile west of Site 1.

Site 2

Site 2 is located in a mixed use (residential, commercial, and vacant land), mostly developed, suburban area approximately 6 miles east of the center of the City of Jacksonville (see Figure 1). Site 2 includes approximately 20.6 acres of vacant and cleared land. Site 2 is depicted on Figure 7.

Adjacent to the north of the Site 2 are single-family residential homes, vacant lots planned for additional homes, and a stormwater management pond. Adjacent to the east of the Site 2 are the southbound Southside Connector Service Drive and the Southside Connector (State Route 113), beyond which are cleared land, an apartment complex, and a pond. Adjacent to the south of Site 2, across Lone Star Road/Tredinick Parkway, is an apartment complex. Adjacent to the west of Site 2 are single-family residential homes. Interstate 295 is located approximately 0.5 miles northeast of Site 2.

3.2.1 Effects of the Action Alternatives

VA's closure of two existing Jacksonville VA outpatient clinics, leased facilities owned by others, would have no aesthetics impacts. These facilities would likely be leased by others for another commercial use.

Site 1

The Proposed Action at Site 1 would result in less-than-significant aesthetic impacts. Site 1 is located in a developing area of residential and commercial properties and undeveloped wooded land and is located within an approximately 156-acre mixed-use Planned Use Development area. The new OPC and domiciliary would be attractive two-story medical office and one-story residential buildings that would be designed and constructed in a way that is visually consistent with the development of the surrounding area, and built in accordance with the Jacksonville Ordinance Code (JOC) zoning ordinance and development standards. Existing on-site green space would be reduced and views from the surrounding areas would be altered by the OPC and domiciliary development. However, limited sensitive viewshed receptors are located in the Site 1

area (apartments to the west) and visual effects would be minimized through attractive OPC and domiciliary design and landscaping.

Site 2

The Proposed Action at Site 2 would result in less-than-significant aesthetic impacts. Site 2 is located in a recently developed/developing area of mostly residential properties and is located within a mixed-use Planned Use Development area. The new OPC and domiciliary would be attractive two-story medical office and one-story residential buildings that would be designed and constructed in a way that is visually consistent with the development of the surrounding area, and built in accordance with the JOC. Views from the surrounding residential areas would be altered by the OPC and domiciliary development. However, the site is currently graded barren land and visual effects would be minimized through attractive OPC and domiciliary design and landscaping.

3.2.2 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no aesthetics impacts by VA would result. The Action Alternative sites would likely be developed for commercial use or residential use by others, consistent with local zoning. Aesthetics impacts similar to those associated with the Proposed Action could occur, depending on the use of the sites.

3.3 Air Quality

3.3.1 Ambient Air Quality

The ambient air quality in an area can be characterized in terms of whether or not it complies with the primary and secondary National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The Clean Air Act requires the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to set NAAQS for pollutants considered harmful to public health and the environment. NAAQS are provided for the following principal pollutants, called “criteria pollutants” (as listed under Section 108 of the Clean Air Act):

- Carbon monoxide
- Lead
- Nitrogen oxides
- Ozone
- Particulate matter, divided into two size classes:
  Aerodynamic size less than or equal to 10 micrometers
  Aerodynamic size less than or equal to 2.5 micrometers
- Sulfur dioxide

Areas are designated by the USEPA as “attainment”, “non-attainment”, “maintenance”, or “unclassified” with respect to the NAAQS. Regions in compliance with the standards are designated as attainment areas. In areas where the applicable NAAQS are not being met, a non-attainment status is designated. Areas that have been classified as non-attainment but are now in compliance can be re-designated as maintenance status if the state completes an air quality planning process for the area. Areas for which no monitoring data is available are designated as unclassified, and are by default considered to be in attainment of the NAAQS. According to the USEPA Green Book (May 2020), Duval County is in full attainment of the NAAQS.

3.3.2 State and Local Regulations

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Division of Air Resource Management and the Jacksonville Neighborhoods Department, Environmental Quality Division, Air Quality Branch (AQB) are responsible for air quality planning and permitting for the Jacksonville area.

3.3.3 Sensitive Receptors

Sensitive air quality receptors in the immediate vicinity of the Action Alternative sites include the apartments to the west of Site 1 and the residential neighborhoods adjacent to Site 2. Additional sensitive receptors within 0.25-mile of the sites include scattered residences near Site 1 and the Impact Christian Academy located approximately 950 feet west of Site 2.

3.3.4 Effects of the Action Alternatives

Air emissions generated from the Proposed Action would have less-than-significant direct and indirect, short-term and long-term adverse impacts to the existing air quality environment around the selected Action Alternative site. Impacts would include short-term and long-term increased air emission levels as a result of construction activities and operation of the proposed OPC and domiciliary and onsite activities.

Construction activities would be performed in accordance with federal and state air quality requirements. Construction-related emissions are generally short-term, but may still have adverse impacts on air quality, primarily due to the production of dust. Dust can result from a variety of activities, including excavation, grading, and vehicle travel on paved and unpaved surfaces. Dust from construction can lead to adverse health effects and nuisance concerns, such as reduced visibility on nearby roadways. The amount of dust is dependent on the intensity of the activity, soil type and conditions, wind speed, and dust suppression activities used. Implementing dust control measures (BMPs) substantially reduces dust emissions from construction. Construction-related emissions also include the exhaust from the operation of construction equipment, including diesel particulate matter. The use of newer construction equipment with emissions controls and minimizing the time that the equipment is idling (BMPs) reduces construction equipment exhaust emissions. Implementation of BMPs, discussed in Section 5, would minimize these anticipated less-than-significant adverse, short-term construction-related, air quality impacts.

Operational (long-term) air quality impacts from the OPC and domiciliary would include emissions from equipment, such as boilers and generators, and vehicle emissions from patients and staff driving to and from the OPC and domiciliary. The proposed OPC and domiciliary would have daily site visits by approximately 2,000 staff, patients, volunteers, and other guests. As such, there would be a localized, less-than-significant increase in vehicle air emissions at the selected Action Alternative site. However, regional vehicle emissions would be similar to current emissions as most patients and staff that would use the proposed OPC and domiciliary currently travel to other Jacksonville area VA health care facilities.

A Title V operating permit is not anticipated to be required for the proposed OPC and domiciliary boiler equipment, generators, and other equipment as this equipment is not anticipated to emit more than 100 tons per year of any individual or combination of hazardous air pollutants. VA's

selected developer would secure any required air emissions permits from FDEP and Jacksonville Air Quality Branch.

VA's closure of the existing leased OPCs would have negligible air quality effects. These facilities would likely be leased by others for commercial use with similar operational air emissions.

3.3.5 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no air quality impacts associated with VA's Proposed Action would result. Should the Action Alternative sites ultimately be developed by others for another use, air quality impacts could occur, depending on future use.

3.4 Cultural Resources

Site 1

Site 1 is approximately 21 acres of mostly undeveloped land with overgrown grassy and scrub vegetation, wooded areas containing mostly pine trees, dirt roads, and a vacant office trailer. Site 1 contained grassy land and/or agricultural fields and wooded land with a residence and other structures from the 1940s through the 2006, was mostly cleared in 2007, was planted with pine trees by 2011, and was partially cleared and graded in 2017. Site 1 is not listed on the National Register of Historic Properties (NRHP). Environmental, Inc. prepared a Phase I cultural resource assessment survey for Site 1 in February 2020 (Environmental Inc. 2020a) that included historical research, archaeological inspections, and shovel testing. No historic buildings or structures were identified at the site. The Florida Master Site File listed no archaeological sites at Site 1. No archaeological sites were identified at the site during the pedestrian survey and shovel testing. No historic properties eligible for listing in the NRHP were identified at Site 1 or the surrounding properties.

Site 2

Site 2 is approximately 20.6 acres of vacant and cleared land. Site 2 was undeveloped woodlands in 1943, was part of a large strip mine from approximately 1950 to the early 1970s, was the site of land disposal of sanitary and industrial wastewater residuals from the early 1970s until 1985, and has remained undeveloped since 1985. Site 2 was regraded in the early 2000s. Site 2 is not listed on the NRHP. Environmental Services, Inc. completed a cultural resource assessment survey for Site 2 in April 2020 (Environmental Services, Inc. 2020) that included historical research, archaeological inspections, and shovel testing. No historic structures or buildings were identified at Site 2. The Florida Master Site File listed no archaeological sites at Site 2. No archaeological sites were identified at the site during the pedestrian survey and shovel testing. No historic properties eligible for listing in the NRHP were identified at Site 2 or surrounding properties.

3.4.1 Effects of the Action Alternatives

Based on the findings of the cultural resource assessment surveys, no historic properties listed on the NRHP or eligible for listing on the NRHP are known to be present at the Action Alternative sites or would be impacted by the Proposed Action.

In May 2020, VA initiated National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 consultation with the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources [the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)] regarding the Proposed Action. VA submitted information detailing the cultural resources identification efforts (including the cultural resource assessment surveys) and requested Florida SHPO concurrence implementing the Proposed Action at Site 1 or Site 2 would have no effect on historic properties listed or eligible for listing on the NRHP. The Florida SHPO concurred with VA's determination in a letter dated June 18, 2020 (Appendix A).

On May 20, 2020, VA sent Section 106 consultation letters to the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the Seminole Tribe of Florida, and the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission requesting concurrence that no historic properties would be affected by the Proposed Action. The Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission concurred with VA's findings that no historic resources would be impacted. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation concurred that there should be no effects to any known historic properties and the project should continue as planned. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation also stated that, if any discoveries of human remains or related Native American Graves and Repatriation Act items occur, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and other appropriate agencies should be notified immediately.

VA's closure of the existing leased outpatient clinics would have no cultural resources impacts.

3.4.2 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no cultural resources impact related to construction by VA would occur. Based on the results of the Cultural Resource Assessment Surveys, should the Action Alternative sites be developed by others, no cultural resources would be anticipated.

3.5 Geology and Soils

According to a Florida Geological Survey Geologic Map of Duval County (dated 2016), the area of Duval County where Sites 1 and 2 are located consists of undifferentiated Quaternary sediments that are highly variable in thickness. Generally, these undifferentiated Quaternary sediments consist of white to gray to orange to brown, fine- to coarse-grained, clean to clayey unfossiliferous sands, sandy clays, and clays with variable admixtures of organics.

The FDEP Florida Geological Survey (FGS) stated subsidence in the area of Sites 1 and 2 is largely due to the dissolution of shell and compaction of soils, although subsidence is a low geologic hazard in the region. In Florida, carbonate rocks belonging to the Floridan aquifer system are generally the host for large cavities that may develop into large cover-collapse sinkholes. Those rocks are relatively deeply buried in the vicinity of the sites and well-protected by low permeability overburden sediments, limiting the rate of dissolution at depth within those rocks. Therefore, large cover-collapse sinkholes are unlikely and would be a very rare occurrence; none have been documented or are known to exist in Duval County or in the far northeastern coastal counties of Florida. All Subsidence Incident Reports in the vicinity are either associated with shallow subsidence sinkholes and rare shallow cover-collapse sinkholes or are due to infrastructure failures. There are no reported sinkholes in the Site 1 or Site 2 areas.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Earthquake catalog, one earthquake reportedly originated from the state of Florida (since the 1970s) and was recorded at a magnitude 2.8 on the

Richter's scale on March 7, 2019. The earthquake was located in the western panhandle of Florida, approximately 330 miles west of Jacksonville. The closest earthquake to Jacksonville originated approximately 110 miles east in the Atlantic Ocean on June 11, 2001 and registered at 3.3 magnitude. Florida is located on the passive end of the North American tectonic plate and, as such, earthquakes are weak and rare in Florida. No active faults are known to be present in Florida.

Site 1

A review of the Trout River, Florida, USGS Topographic Quadrangle (dated 1994) indicates that surficial topography in the Site 1 area is relatively level at around 30 feet above mean sea level (msl) and generally slopes to the south/southeast toward the Broward River and Dunn Creek (approximately 10 feet above msl), located approximately 3.7 miles south and 2.1 miles southeast, respectively, from Site 1.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey, Site 1 consists of open surface water and three soil types: Leon fine sand (0 to 2 percent slopes); Sapelo fine sand (0 to 2 percent slopes); and Surrency loamy fine sand, depressional (0 to 2 percent slopes). The open water area was identified in the northwestern portion of the site. This area was formerly a pond that was filled in the early 2010s. The Sapelo soil series was identified in the northern portion of the site and consists of sandy and loamy marine deposits of poorly drained fine sand and fine sandy loam. The Surrency soil series was identified in the eastern portion of the site and consists of sandy and loamy marine deposits of very poorly drained loamy fine sand, fine sand, fine sandy loam, and sandy clay loam. The Leon soil series was identified in the central and southern portions of the site and consists of sandy marine deposits of poorly drained fine sand.

Site 2

A review of the Arlington, Florida, USGS Topographic Quadrangle (dated 1994) indicates that surficial topography in the Site 2 area is generally level at around 60 feet above msl and slopes gently to the north and northwest toward a pond and Strawberry Creek, located approximately 300 feet north and 1,600 feet west, respectively, from Site 2.

According to the USDA NRCS (2020) Web Soil Survey, Site 2 consists of Kershaw fine sand, smoothed (0 to 2 percent slopes). The Kershaw soil series consists of sandy marine deposits of excessively drained fine sand. However, soils at Site 2 have been altered considerably during strip mining, filling, and grading.

3.5.1 Prime and Unique Agricultural Land Soils

Prime and unique farmlands are regulated in accordance with the Farmland Protection Policy Act (7 USC 4201, et seq.) to ensure preservation of agricultural lands that are of statewide or local importance. Soils designated as prime agricultural land are capable of producing high yields of various crops when managed using modern farming methods. Prime agricultural land is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, fiber, forage, oilseed, and other agricultural crops with minimum inputs of fuel, fertilizer, pesticides, and labor, and without intolerable soil erosion. Unique agricultural lands are also capable of sustaining

high crop yields and have special combinations of favorable soil and climate characteristics that support specific high-value foods or crops.

According to the USDA NRCS Web Soil Survey, none of the soils at the Action Alternative sites are characterized as prime farmland.

Site 1

Site 2

LEGEND

26 - Kershaw fine sand, smoothed, 0 to 2 percent slopes

32 - Leon fine sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes

63 - Sapelo fine sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes

66 - Surrency loamy fine sand, depressional, 0 to 2 percent slopes

99 - Water

N
W E
S

FIGURE 8
SOIL MAPS

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED JACKSONVILLE VA
OUTPATIENT CLINIC AND DOMICILIARY
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

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3.5.2 Effects of the Action Alternatives

No major changes to topography would occur at the selected Action Alternative site due to the Proposed Action. The OPC and domiciliary development would be designed in concert with the selected site's current topography. Although Site 1 is relatively level, preliminary site grading plans indicate that approximately 89,000 cubic yards of compacted fill would be imported to raise the developed portions of the site to the proposed grades, approximately 3 to 5 feet higher than existing grades. Although some grading would be required, it is anticipated that the OPC and domiciliary buildings and parking areas would be constructed near current grades at Site 2.

The former on-site filled pond on Site 1, the filled portion of the lake located in the northern portion of Site 2, and anticipated filling of two small wetlands on the northeastern and southwestern portions of Site 1 may pose a potential settling and subsidence hazard. The site developer would complete a geotechnical evaluation of the selected site. The geotechnical investigation would provide site design recommendations to prevent unacceptable settling and subsidence.

Less-than-significant impacts to geology are anticipated. No active significant faults are known to extend through the subsurface geology in the Jacksonville area. As such, no impacts associated with seismic hazards are identified. The Action Alternative sites are located in an area where sinkholes are not common; no significant impacts associated with potential sinkholes are identified. No mineral resource impacts are anticipated, as the Proposed Action would not involve the commercial extraction of mineral resources, nor affect mineral resources considered important on a local, state, national, or global basis. In addition, the Proposed Action would not impact prime agricultural land.

During construction, less-than-significant, direct and indirect, short-term soil erosion and sedimentation impacts would be possible as the selected site is graded and proposed building, parking areas, entrance road, and other project components are constructed. Construction would remove the vegetative cover, disturb the soil surface, and compact the soil. The soil would then be susceptible to erosion by wind and surface runoff. Exposure of the soils during construction has the potential to result in increased sedimentation to stormwater management systems and offsite discharges of sediment-laden runoff. However, such potential adverse erosion and sedimentation effects would be prevented through utilization of appropriate BMPs (Section 5) and adherence to the terms of an approved FDEP-issued National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. In addition, stormwater management review by the St. John's River Water Management District (SJRWMD) would be required as part of any proposed onsite development activities. An Environmental Resources Permit (ERP) from the SJRWMD would be required to manage stormwater discharges associated with the proposed OPC and domiciliary development. The ERP supersedes any NPDES permits; however, documentation of the ERP is required to be provided to the lead NPDES agency.

Once construction is complete, no long-term erosion and sedimentation impacts would be anticipated. No long-term soil erosion impacts would occur as a result of increased impervious surfaces onsite; these effects would be mitigated by including appropriately designed stormwater management systems as part of final site design.

VA's closure of the existing leased Jacksonville outpatient clinics would have no geology and soils impacts.

3.5.3 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no construction by VA's selected developer would occur. No impacts to soils, topography, or geology would occur at the Action Alternative sites as a result of VA's actions. However, the Action Alternative sites would likely be developed by others for other commercial use and/or residential use and impacts similar to those as identified above could occur.

3.6 Hydrology and Water Quality

3.6.1 Surface Waters

Site 1

Site 1 is located in the Broward River Basin of the Lower St. John's River Watershed (SJRWMD 2015). The Broward River is located approximately 3.7 miles south of Site 1. The nearest stream is Dunn Creek, located approximately 3,500 feet east of the site. An off-site stormwater management pond is located northerly adjoining the site. The eastern portion of the site includes two small wetlands. Wetlands are also present on adjoining properties east and northwest of Site 1. Wetlands are further discussed in Section 3.10.

Site 2

Site 2 is located in the Arlington River Basin of the Lower St. John's River Watershed (SJRWMD 2015). The Arlington River is located approximately 2.5 miles southwest of Site 2. The nearest stream is Strawberry Creek, located approximately 1,600 feet west of the site. An off-site stormwater management pond is located approximately 300 feet north of the site. There are currently no on-site surface water features at Site 2.

3.6.2 Groundwater

According to the SJRWMD, Florida's aquifers information webpage and USGS National Water-Quality Assessment Program Circular 1355 (USGS 2014), northeast Florida is located in an area with an unconfined surficial aquifer system overlying a confined Upper Floridan aquifer. The Floridan aquifer system underlies a vast area—about 100,000 square miles that includes all of Florida and parts of Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina. The Upper Floridan aquifer is highly permeable and is the primary source of drinking water throughout its range. These aquifers range in thickness to more than 300 feet along the southeastern Georgia coast and eastern Florida coast.

Large quantities of groundwater withdrawals from the Floridan aquifer system have caused extensive water level drawdowns and saltwater intrusion in several areas. Near Jacksonville, water levels have declined at an average rate of up to 0.5 feet per year since 1950, and well fields have been relocated farther inland or have been supplemented with surface water (COJ 2020).

No site-specific information pertaining to the groundwater conditions was identified for Site 1. However, based on available information from the USGS Groundwater Resources Program and topographic maps, groundwater is likely to be found approximately 10 feet below grade at the site. Several previous environmental investigations have been conducted at Site 2 and the

surrounding area (see Section 3.13). Groundwater was encountered approximately 10 feet below grade during the previous investigations.

3.6.3 Effects of the Action Alternatives

The proposed OPC and domiciliary would be slab-on-grade buildings and serviced with municipal water supplies. Therefore, it is not anticipated that groundwater would be impacted by the Proposed Action. If shallow groundwater is encountered during construction, appropriate groundwater engineering controls would be utilized to ensure no adverse effects to groundwater. As such, impacts to groundwater are anticipated to be less than significant.

The Action Alternatives would not result in significant impacts to surface waters, provided that the BMPs described in Section 5 are implemented. These BMPs would control construction-related impacts of soil erosion and sedimentation and would provide proper stormwater management following the completion of the Proposed Action. Each site would include on-site stormwater collection and management systems that would convey stormwater to off-site stormwater management ponds that were constructed as part of the overall planned development of the site areas. The stormwater management systems would be designed and constructed in accordance with Florida Administrative Code, JOC, and SJRWMD requirements. Anticipated stormwater management for each site is described below.

Site 1

Stormwater from the proposed OPC and domiciliary development at Site 1 would be collected from the development areas and routed to the stormwater management pond located northerly adjoining the site.

Site 2

Stormwater from the proposed OPC and domiciliary development at Site 2 would be collected from the development areas and routed to an existing stormwater inlet at the northern site boundary that conveys stormwater to a stormwater management pond, located approximately 300 feet north of the site.

3.6.4 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no construction by VA's selected developer would occur. No impacts to water resources at the Action Alternative sites would occur as a result of VA's actions. However, should the sites be developed for commercial or residential use by others, impacts similar to those as identified for the Action Alternatives could occur.

3.7 Wildlife and Habitat

3.7.1 Vegetation and Wildlife

Site 1

Site 1 includes approximately 21 acres of mostly undeveloped land with overgrown grassy and scrub vegetation, wooded areas containing mostly pine trees, dirt roads, and a vacant office

trailer. Small wetland areas are located along the eastern site boundary and extend on-site. The properties surrounding Site 1 consist of undeveloped wooded land, a stormwater management pond, a pine tree plantation, cleared land, and an apartment complex. The wooded area north and northwest of the site is a designated wetland preservation area and is protected under a conservation easement. The vegetative communities on Site 1 and surrounding areas could support wildlife species associated with partially developed suburban Jacksonville areas.

Site 2

Site 2 is 20.6 acres of vacant and cleared land. The properties surrounding Site 2 consist of residences, apartment complexes, cleared land, ponds, commercial properties, and the Southside Connector highway. Site 2 is fully cleared and graded land and is unlikely to support wildlife species. The surrounding areas could support wildlife species associated with developed suburban Jacksonville areas.

3.7.2 Threatened and Endangered Species

As part of the preparation of this EA, the USFWS and state natural resources agencies were contacted to identify the potential for the presence of state or federally listed species on or in the vicinity of the Action Alternative sites.

According to the USFWS Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) internet application (USFWS 2020a), two federally listed threatened or endangered bird species, one bird species proposed for federal listing as threatened, five federally listed threatened or endangered reptile species, one federally listed candidate reptile species, and one federally listed threatened amphibian species were identified for the Site 1 and Site 2 vicinities. The IPaC reports for the sites are provided in Appendix D. The IPaC reports did not identify critical habitat for protected species at the sites.

Table 1 provides a summary of the federally protected species listed in the IPaC reports, their habitat requirements, and the potential presence of their required habitat at the Action Alternative sites.

Table 1
Federally Listed Species in the Vicinity of the Action Alternative Sites

Species	Status	Habitat	Potential Habitat	
			Site 1	Site 2
Birds				
Eastern black Rail	Proposed threatened	Salt, brackish, and freshwater marshes, pond borders, wet meadows, and grassy swamps.	Limited	No
Red-cockaded woodpecker	Endangered	Open mature pine woodlands, rarely deciduous or mixed pine-hardwoods located near pine woodlands.	No	No

Table 1
Federally Listed Species in the Vicinity of the Action Alternative Sites

Species	Status	Habitat	Potential Habitat	
			Site 1	Site 2
Wood stork	Threatened	Wetlands, primarily cypress swamps.	No	No
Reptiles				
Eastern indigo snake	Threatened	Sandhill regions dominated by mature longleaf pines, turkey oaks, and wiregrass.	Yes	No
Gopher tortoise	Candidate	Relatively deep well-drained sandy soils and open sunny sites in longleaf pine forests and dry oak sandhills with ample herbaceous vegetation.	Yes	No
Green sea turtle	Threatened	Shallow waters inside reefs, bays, and inlets.	No	No
Hawksbill sea turtle	Endangered	Rocky areas, coral reefs, shallow coastal areas, lagoons or oceanic islands, and narrow creeks and passes.	No	No
Leatherback sea turtle	Endangered	Mostly pelagic (open ocean dwelling) and nest on sloped sandy beaches backed with vegetation.	No	No
Loggerhead sea turtle	Threatened	Mostly pelagic and feed in coral reefs, rocky places and ship wrecks, and nest on open beaches or narrow bays with suitable sand.	No	No
Amphibians				
Frosted flatwoods salamander	Threatened	Slash and longleaf pine flatwoods with wiregrass floor and scattered wetlands.	No	No

Site 1

Environmental, Inc. (2020b) completed a biological evaluation of an approximately 43-acre area including Site 1 in April 2020. The biological evaluation included a database and literature review as well as a field evaluation by a qualified biologist for suitable habitat and protected species. The biological evaluation indicated the off-site stormwater management pond, located adjacent to the north of the site, provides limited foraging and breeding habitat for the wood stork, but did not identify habitat on Site 1. While no gopher tortoises, eastern indigo snakes, or gopher tortoise burrows were identified in the field survey, their future presence on the site cannot be ruled out. No suitable habitat was identified for any of the other federally listed species.

Environmental, Inc. also evaluated the 43-acre study area for USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act that were identified in the IPaC report. The biological evaluation found that minimal portions of the site may provide foraging habitat for the American kestrel, common ground dove, and prairie warbler and minimal nesting habitat for common ground dove.

State-protected species were identified (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission 2020). The Florida Natural Areas Inventory (2020) Biodiversity Matrix Report for Site 1 identified no documented occurrences of state-protected species at Site 1. Two likely elements (mesic flatwoods habitat and wood stork) were listed for the Site 1 area and 18 potential elements were listed for the Site 1 area. As noted above, the adjacent, off-site stormwater management pond provides limited habitat for the wood stork. No wood stork habitat is present at Site 1.

Site 2

Based on the previous clearing and grading at Site 2, there is no potential wildlife habitat and no biological survey of the site was conducted.

The Florida Natural Areas Inventory Biodiversity Matrix Report for Site 2 identified no documented occurrences of state-protected species at Site 2. One likely element (wood stork) and 16 potential elements were listed for the Site 2 area. No wood stork habitat is present at Site 2.

3.7.3 Effects of the Action Alternatives

The Proposed Action is not likely to have adverse effects on federally listed protected species or their critical habitats at either of the Action Alternative sites. No protected species were identified at either site.

While eastern indigo snakes (federally listed threatened), which shelter and nest in gopher tortoise burrows, and gopher tortoises (state-listed threatened, federal candidate species) were not observed during a field survey of Site 1, their future presence cannot be ruled out. Therefore, if Site 1 is selected, a preconstruction eastern indigo snake and gopher tortoise survey would be conducted, and any identified individuals would be relocated in coordination with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. On June 27, 2020, VA requested USFWS concurrence with a finding of “may affect – not likely to adversely affect” for the eastern indigo snake and gopher tortoise at Site 1 in accordance with consultation requirements under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. On July 30, 2020, USFWS concurred with VA’s “may affect – not likely to adversely affect” determination (Appendix A).

Site 1 provides minimal nesting habitat for the common ground dove. If vegetation clearing occurs within the common ground dove nesting season (February through December), impacted areas would be surveyed by a qualified biologist for active nests prior to clearing. Active nests would not be disturbed until eggs have incubated (12-14 days) and the young birds have fledged (another 11-12 days or more).

Through the implementation of these management measures and BMPs, wildlife and habitat impacts would be less than significant.

VA's closure of the existing leased Jacksonville outpatient clinics would have no wildlife and habitat impacts.

3.7.4 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no impacts to biological resources by VA would occur. However, should the Action Alternative sites ultimately be developed by others, impacts similar to those identified under the Proposed Action could occur.

3.8 Noise

Site 1

The existing noise environment around Site 1 is relatively quiet with noise from vehicle traffic along Max Leggett Parkway and Main Street (State Route 5), and more distant vehicle noise from Interstate 95 (approximately one-half mile west of the site) and the Jacksonville International Airport (approximately 2.5 miles west of the site). No other notable noise-generating sources are present in the immediate vicinity of Site 1. As such, the noise environment of Site 1 can be characterized as that typical of a partially developed suburban area.

Site 2

The existing noise environment around Site 2 is moderately quiet with vehicle traffic noise from Lone Star Road/Tredinick Parkway and the Southside Connector (State Route 113) highway. No other notable noise-generating sources are present in the immediate vicinity of Site 2. As such, the noise environment of Site 2 can be characterized as that typical of a developed suburban area.

3.8.1 Sensitive Receptors

Sensitive noise receptors in the vicinity of Site 1 includes the apartments adjacent to the west of the site and other residences within 700 feet southeast of Site 1. Sensitive noise receptors in the vicinity of Site 2 include adjacent residences to the west and north, and residences, apartments, and the Impact Church and Impact Christian Academy (approximately 950 feet west) in the surrounding area.

3.8.2 Effects of the Action Alternatives

The Proposed Action would have short-term impacts to the existing noise environment due to construction activities. Noise generating sources during construction activities would be primarily associated with standard construction equipment and construction equipment transportation. These increased noise levels could directly affect the neighboring areas. Construction activities would be conducted in accordance with the JOC noise control ordinance.

Construction activities generate noise by their very nature and are highly variable, depending on the type, number, and operating schedules of equipment. Construction projects are usually executed in stages, each having its own combination of equipment and noise characteristics and magnitudes. Construction activities are expected to be typical of other similar construction projects and would include mobilization, site preparation, excavation, placing foundations, utility

development, heavy equipment movement, and paving roadways and parking areas. The most prevalent noise source at typical construction sites is the internal combustion engine. General construction equipment using engines includes heavy, medium, and light equipment such as excavators; roller compactors; front-end loaders; bulldozers; graders; backhoes; dump trucks; water trucks; concrete trucks; pump trucks; utility trucks; and lube, oil, and fuel trucks.

Peak noise levels vary at a given location based on line of sight, topography, vegetation, and atmospheric conditions. In addition, peak noise levels would be variable and intermittent because each piece of equipment would only be operated when needed. However, peak construction noise levels would be considerably higher than existing noise levels. Relatively high peak noise levels in the range of 93 to 108 dBA (decibels, A-weighted scale) would occur on the active construction site, decreasing with distance from the construction areas. Generally speaking, peak noise levels within 50 feet of active construction areas and material transportation routes would most likely be considered “striking” or “very loud”, comparable to peak crowd noise at an indoor sports arena. At approximately 200 feet, peak noise levels would be loud - approximately comparable to a garbage disposal or vacuum cleaner at 10 feet. At 0.25 miles, construction noise levels would generally be quiet enough so as to be considered insignificant, although transient noise levels may be noticeable at times. Table 2 presents peak noise levels that could be expected from a range of construction equipment during proposed construction activities.

Combined peak noise levels when several loud pieces of equipment are used in a small area at the same time are expected to occur rarely, if ever, during the project. However, under these circumstances, peak noise levels could exceed 90 dBA within 200 feet of the construction area, depending on equipment being used.

Although noise levels would be quite loud in the immediate area, the intermittent nature of peak construction noise levels would not create the steady noise level conditions for an extended duration that could lead to hearing damage. Construction workers would follow standard federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration requirements to prevent hearing damage.

Areas that could be most affected by noise from construction are those closest to the construction footprint, including the apartments adjacent to Site 1 and the residences located adjacent to Site 2. Indoor noise levels would be expected to be 15-25 decibels lower than outdoor levels. In addition, BMPs (described in Section 5) would be implemented to reduce noise impacts. Direct construction noise impacts would be temporary and less than significant.

Indirect impacts include noise from workers commuting and material transport. Area traffic volumes and noise levels would increase slightly as construction employees commute to and from work at the project area, and delivery and service vehicles (including trucks of various sizes) transit to and from the site. Persons in the project area would experience temporary increases in traffic noise during daytime hours. These effects are not considered significant because they would be temporary, intermittent, and similar to existing traffic noise levels in the area.

Table 2
Peak Noise Levels

Peak Noise Level (dBA, attenuated) from Typical Construction Equipment								
Source	**Distance from Source (feet)**							
	0	**50**	**100**	**200**	**400**	**1,000**	**1,700**	**2,500**
Heavy truck	95	84-89	78-93	72-77	66-71	58-63	54-59	50-55
Dump truck	108	88	82	76	70	62	58	54
Concrete mixer	108	85	79	73	67	59	55	51
Jackhammer	108	88	82	76	70	62	58	54
Scraper	93	80-89	74-82	68-77	60-71	54-63	50-59	46-55
Bulldozer	107	87-102	81-96	75-90	69-84	61-76	57-72	53-68
Generator	96	76	70	64	58	50	46	42
Crane	104	75-88	69-82	63-76	55-70	49-62	45-48	41-54
Loader	104	73-86	67-80	61-74	55-68	47-60	43-56	39-52
Grader	108	88-91	82-85	76-79	70-73	62-65	58-61	54-57
Pile driver	105	95	89	83	77	69	65	61
Forklift	100	95	89	83	77	69	65	61

Combined Peak Noise Level (Bulldozer, Jackhammer, Scraper)					
Combined Peak Noise Level	**Distance from Source**				
	50 feet	**100 feet**	**200 feet**	**¼ mile**	**½ mile**
	103	97	91	74	68

Source: Tipler 1976

No significant long-term noise impacts are anticipated with the operation of the proposed OPC and domiciliary. The OPC and domiciliary would be quiet medical office and residential facilities with operational noise from HVAC systems typical of other comparably sized commercial buildings and grounds maintenance noise (such as lawn mowing or leaf blowers). Proposed operational activities at the new OPC and domiciliary would also include vehicle traffic to and from the selected Action Alternative site. The vehicle traffic would not produce excessive noise, is consistent with the existing noise environment of the Action Alternative site areas, and would not produce a significant adverse noise impact on surrounding land uses.

3.8.3 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the noise environment of the Action Alternative sites would not be altered by activities of VA; however, the development of the Action Alternative sites by others could produce similar construction noise impacts as identified under the Proposed Action. Operational noise impacts would be dependent on the specific use of the sites.

3.9 Land Use

Site 1

Site 1 includes approximately 21 acres of mostly undeveloped land with overgrown grassy and scrub vegetation, wooded areas containing mostly pine trees, dirt roads, and a vacant office trailer. The properties surrounding Site 1 are generally residential (apartments), agricultural, or undeveloped land. According to the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department (JPDD), Site 1 is currently zoned Planned Unit Development (PUD). Site 1 is part of the approximately 74-acre Max Leggett Parkway Phase II PUD, a planned mixed-use development of residential, senior living, commercial, medical, and warehouse/flex uses. Health care facilities are a permitted use under the current zoning designation for Site 1.

Surrounding properties to the north, east, west, and northwest of Site 1 are currently zoned PUD (also part of the Max Leggett Parkway PUD). Properties to the south of Site 1, beyond Max Leggett Parkway, are currently zoned Light Industrial.

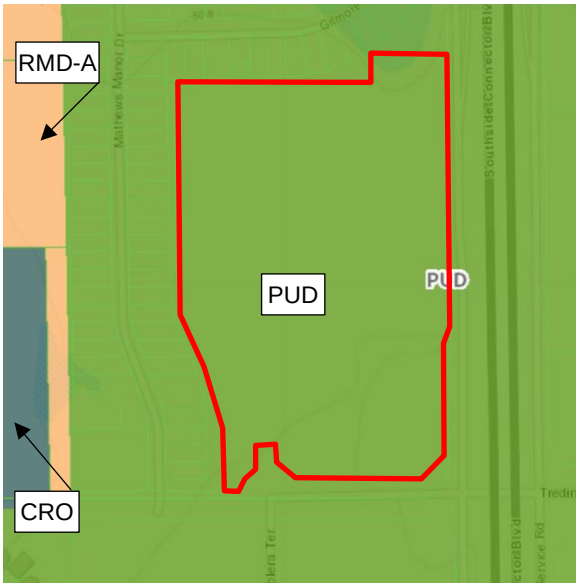
Site 2

Site 2 includes approximately 20.6 acres of cleared and graded vacant land. The properties surrounding Site 2 are generally single family residential and apartments with some vacant land and commercial development located to the east and southeast beyond the Southside Connector highway. According to the JPDD, Site 2 and the surrounding area are part of the Indigo Shoppes PUD. JPDD correspondence to the site developer indicated the Indigo Shoppes PUD allows for medical facilities and clinics, and the domiciliary at Site 2.

Zoning designations for Site 1 and Site 2 and surrounding properties are shown on Figure 9.

Site 1

Site 2



LEGEND

—	Approximate Site Boundary
PUD	Planned Use Development
IL	Light Industrial
RMD-A	Residential High Density-A
CRO	Commercial Residential and Office

FIGURE 9
ZONING MAPS

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED JACKSONVILLE VA
OUTPATIENT CLINIC AND DOMICILIARY
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

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3.9.1 Effects of the Action Alternatives

The Proposed Action at the Action Alternative sites would be consistent with local zoning and compatible with surrounding land use and would have negligible land use effects. No adverse onsite building function or architecture impacts are anticipated. The OPC and domiciliary would be designed and constructed in accordance with Jacksonville building codes and zoning ordinances.

VA's closure of the existing leased Jacksonville outpatient clinics would have negligible land use impacts.

3.9.2 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no land use impacts due to VA's Proposed Action would occur. The Action Alternative sites would likely be developed by others for commercial or residential use in accordance with local zoning regulations. The land use impacts (and associated community benefits) of any future proposed developments would depend upon the use proposed.

3.10 Wetlands, Floodplains, and Coastal Zone Management

3.10.1 Wetlands

This section discusses wetlands at or near the Action Alternative sites and surface waters (streams) as they pertain to wetlands. Additional information regarding surface waters is provided in Section 3.6.

Site 1

The USFWS National Wetland Inventory (NWI) map (USFWS 2020b) depicts a pond on the northwestern portion of Site 1 and freshwater forested/shrub wetlands along the eastern Site 1 boundary(Figure 10). The pond is no longer present on the northwestern portion of the site.

An Environmental Due Diligence Report prepared by Peacock Consulting Group, LLC in April 2020 (PCG 2020) summarizes the identified wetlands and associated SJRWMD and USACE permits for the Max Leggett Parkway PUD, which includes Site 1. Figure 11 depicts the identified wetlands and mitigation areas. Approximately 84 acres of the 156-acre PUD area were identified as wetlands. Most of these wetlands are located northwest of Site 1, but three of them were located on Site 1. WI 4 (0.87 acres) was the former pond located on the northwestern portion of Site 1. This wetland has already been filled. Two small remaining wetlands are partially located on the northeastern (WI 1C) and southeastern (WI 5) portions of Site 1. The on-site portions of these wetlands total less than 0.5 acres. Permits for filling these wetlands were issued by SJRWMD and USACE. The permits required preservation of other wetlands on the 156-acre PUD property, which has been completed with a conservation easement. The USACE permit also requires the purchase of 1.5 credits from the Longleaf Mitigation Bank, which is still pending.

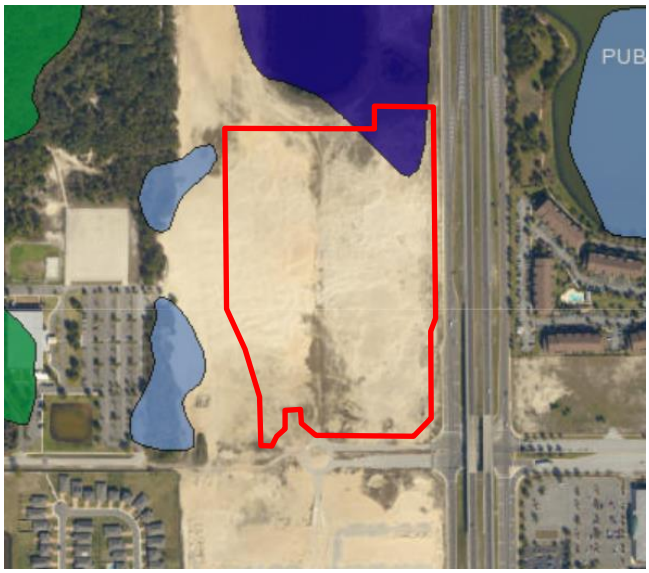
Site 2

A small portion of a lake extended into the northeastern portion of Site 2 on the NWI map (USFWS 2020b) (Figure 10). This lake is no longer present on the site. Additionally, two ponds depicted on

the NWI map west of the site are also no longer present. Site 2 and the surrounding area are part of a PUD and were permitted with the SJRWMD for future development. The lake, a remnant of the former strip-mining operations at the site and surrounding area, was reconfigured as a stormwater management pond for the area development. The stormwater management pond is located approximately 300 feet north of the site. The former ponds west of Site 2, also remnants from former strip mining, were filled for the area development. No wetlands are present at Site 2 or the surrounding properties.

Site 1

Site 2



LEGEND

- Pond
- Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
- Lake
- Approximate Site Boundary

N
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FIGURE 10
NWI WETLAND MAPS

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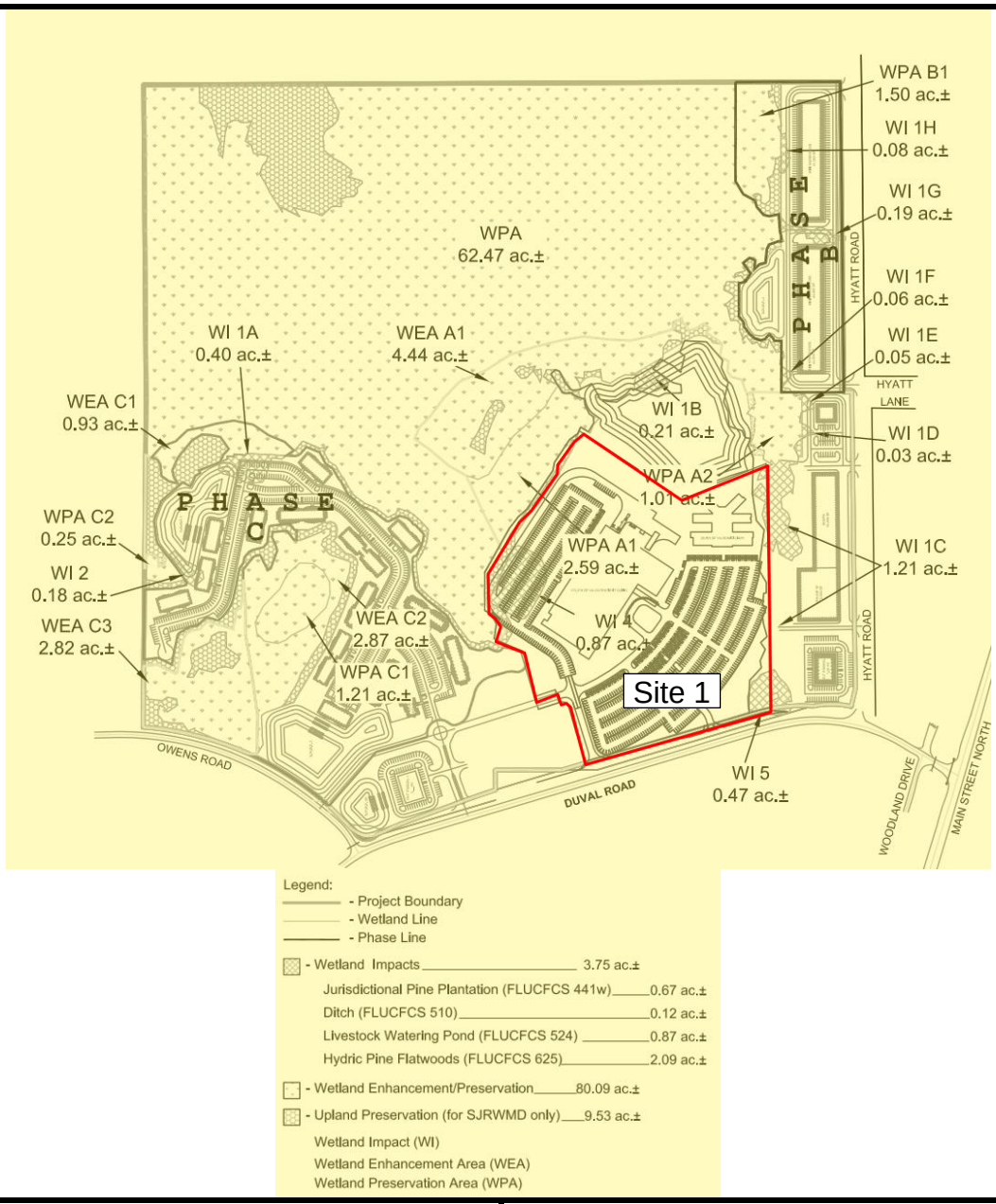

FIGURE 11
SITE 1 WETLAND PERMIT MAP

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3.10.2 Floodplains

The Federal Emergency Management Agency National Flood Hazard Flood Layer FIRMette internet mapping application was used to determine if the Action Alternative sites or surrounding properties are located in designated floodplains. The Action Alternative sites are not located within the 100-year or 500-year floodplain (Figure 12). The nearest floodplain to Site 1 is located approximately 450 feet northwest of the site. No floodplains are located in the vicinity of Site 2.

3.10.3 Coastal Zone

The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) was promulgated to control nonpoint pollution sources that affect coastal water quality. The CZMA of 1990, as amended (16 USC 1451 et seq.) encourages states to preserve, protect, develop, and where possible, restore or enhance valuable natural coastal resources such as wetlands, floodplains, estuaries, beaches, dunes, barrier islands, and coral reefs, as well as the fish and wildlife using those habitats. In Florida, the CZMA is administered by the FDEP-Coastal Management Program (FCMP).

The entirety of the State of Florida is identified as being in a managed coastal zone. VA, as a federal agency, must coordinate with the FDEP to ensure that the selected Action Alternative is consistent with the FDEP's Coastal Zone Management Program. FDEP review has been sought as part of this NEPA process. A formal review of plans and specifications would be required prior to site construction activities. Final concurrence with the FCMP will be determined during any environmental permitting processes.

3.10.4 Effects of the Action Alternatives

Small freshwater forested/shrub wetlands (totaling less than 0.5 acres) are located on the northeastern and southeastern portions of Site 1. These wetlands are permitted by USACE and SJRWMD to be filled in exchange for the preservation of other wetland areas and additional wetland credit purchase. With the completion of these permit-required mitigation measures, wetland impacts at Site 1 would be less than significant. The wetland conservation area adjacent to the site would not be altered or disturbed by the Proposed Action. No wetlands are present at Site 2; implementation of the Proposed Action at Site 2 would result in no wetland impacts.

The Proposed Action would have no impacts on floodplains. No floodplains are located at or adjacent to the Action Alternative sites. In addition, the Action Alternative sites would include sufficient stormwater management designed not to affect hydrology of the surrounding properties.

The Proposed Action would have minimal coastal zone impacts. Final concurrence would be determined during the review of plans and specifications to obtain permits for site development. However, as all required permits would be obtained, coastal zone impacts are anticipated to be negligible.

VA’s closure of the leased Jacksonville outpatient clinics would have no wetland, floodplains, or coastal zone impacts.

3.10.5 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no impacts to wetlands, floodplains, or coastal zones would occur as a result of the Proposed Action. The Action Alternative sites would likely be developed

for commercial or residential use by others, which could result in similar wetlands and coastal zone impacts, depending on the future development.

Site 1

Site 2

LEGEND

Approximate Site Boundary

N
W E
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FIGURE 12
FLOODPLAIN MAPS

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3.11 Socioeconomics

The following subsections identify and describe the socioeconomic environment of the City of Jacksonville, Duval County, and the State of Florida. Presented data provide an understanding of the socioeconomic factors that have developed the area. Socioeconomic areas of discussion include the local demographics, regional and local economy, local housing, and local recreation activities. Data used were collected from the 2010 Census of Population and Housing (U.S. Census Bureau 2010), subsequent U.S. Census Bureau data, and the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis (U.S. Census Bureau 2017).

3.11.1 Demographics

Demographic data for the State of Florida is presented in Table 3. High school graduation rates are generally similar for Jacksonville, Duval County, and the State of Florida; however, the State of Florida has a higher over 65 years of age population. Minority populations for Jacksonville and Duval County are higher than that of the State of Florida as a whole, but similar to the national average (39%). Minority population rates specific to each Action Alternative site area are discussed in Section 3.16 (Environmental Justice).

Table 3
Demographic Data for Jacksonville, Duval County, and Florida

Area	All Individuals (2017)	Population Under 18 Age Years (2017)	Population Over 65 Age Years (2017)	Minority (2017)	High School Graduates (2017)	Veterans (2017)
Florida	20,278,447	20.3%	19.4%	46.8%	87.6%	1,454,632
Duval County	912,043	22.8%	13.0%	48.0%	89.4%	82,265
Jacksonville	867,313	23.1%	12.7%	48.2%	89.0%	78,455

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, Profile of General Demographic Characteristics, 2013-2017.

3.11.2 Employment and Income

Jacksonville, Duval County, and the State of Florida have similar median household incomes, poverty levels, and unemployment rates (Table 4). Household incomes specific to the Action Alternative site areas are discussed in Section 3.16.

Table 4
Regional Income for Jacksonville, Duval County, and Florida

Area	Number of Households	Median Household Income	Population Below Poverty Level	Unemployment Rate December 2019
Florida	7,510,882	$50,883	15.5%	3.0%
Duval County	347,783	$51,296	16.0%	2.7%
Jacksonville	327,595	$50,555	16.4%	2.9%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, Profile of General Demographic Characteristics, 2013-2017. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

3.11.3 Protection of Children

Because children may suffer disproportionately from environmental health risks and safety risks, Executive Order (EO) 13045, *Protection of Children From Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks*, was introduced in 1997 to prioritize the identification and assessment of environmental health risks and safety risks that may affect children and to ensure that federal agencies' policies, programs, activities, and standards address environmental risks and safety risks to children. This section identifies the distribution of children and locations where numbers of children may be proportionately high (such as schools, childcare centers, family housing) in areas potentially affected by the Proposed Action.

Children are not regularly present at either of the sites. However, children may be present in the residential areas near each of the sites. Additionally, Impact Christian Academy is located approximately 950 feet west of Site 2. No additional schools, playgrounds, or child care centers where children may be present are located within the immediate vicinity of the Action Alternative sites.

3.11.4 Commuting Patterns

Residents of Jacksonville are largely dependent on personal automobiles for transportation to and from work. Other methods of transit include public transportation [Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA)], carpooling, and walking. The average commuting time in Jacksonville was approximately 25 minutes in 2017.

3.11.5 Effects of the Action Alternatives

The Proposed Action is anticipated to result in short-term, direct, beneficial impacts to local employment and personal income. Construction of the proposed new OPC and domiciliary would provide additional temporary construction jobs in the private sector, thus providing short-term socioeconomic benefit to the selected site area.

The Proposed Action would result in significant long-term beneficial health impacts by providing a new OPC and domiciliary that would enhance the health care provided to regional U.S. Veterans.

No adverse health or safety risks to children are anticipated to result from construction or operation of the new OPC and domiciliary. Children are not regularly present at the Action Alternative sites. In addition, once operational, children would only be present at the OPC and domiciliary as visitors; all Veterans are above the age of 18. Construction areas would be secured to prevent unauthorized access by children from the nearby residential areas. The construction contractor would limit and control construction dust and noise as discussed in Section 5, thereby minimizing adverse effects to children in the area.

VA's closure of the existing leased Jacksonville outpatient clinics would have negligible socioeconomic impacts. These facilities would likely be leased for another commercial use.

3.11.6 Effects of the No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would result in no construction and no increased short- or long-term economic benefit due to VA's action. The Action Alternative sites would likely be developed by others for commercial or residential use in accordance with local zoning. The socioeconomic impacts of any future developments would depend on the proposed use.

Most importantly, the inability of VA to provide adequate health care facilities commensurate with the current and anticipated future needs would result in a significant adverse, long-term, direct impact to U.S. Veterans in the region.

3.12 Community Services

The Action Alternatives sites are located within the Duval County Public School (DCPS) District. One private school (Impact Christian Academy) is located approximately 950 feet west of Site 2. No additional high schools, middle schools, or elementary schools are located within one-half mile of the Action Alternative sites (DCPS 2020).

The Jacksonville Sherriff's Office provides police protection to the Action Alternative sites and their vicinities. The Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department provides fire protection and emergency medical services to the Actional Alternative sites and their vicinities.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the Jacksonville Department of Public Works provide local road and bridge maintenance services in the Action Alternative sites vicinities.

The University of Florida Health – North Campus hospital is located approximately one-half mile southwest of Site 1. No additional major medical facilities are located within one mile of the Action Alternative sites.

Public transportation in the City of Jacksonville is provided by JTA. The nearest public transportation stop to Site 1 is located approximately 3,400 feet southwest of the site at the University of Florida Health – North Campus (Stop 5279, Route 1). The nearest public transportation stops to Site 2 are located approximately 800 feet northeast of the site and 970 feet southeast of the site, beyond the Southside Connector, at Southside Boulevard and Kendall Towne (Stop 425, Route 19) and Commerce Center Drive and Bealls Regency (Stop 531/532, Route 19). Additional information regarding public transportation in the site vicinities is provided in Section 3.14.

There are no developed recreational facilities in the immediate vicinity of the Action Alternative sites.

3.12.1 Effects of the Action Alternatives

No significant additional load is expected to be placed on the fire or police departments as the result of implementing the Proposed Action at either of the Action Alternative sites. Coordination with JTA may expand bus services to include new bus stops at the proposed OPC and domiciliary. Increased use of other public or community services as a result of the Proposed Action is not expected. As such, the Proposed Action is expected to have a negligible impact on local public services.

VA's closure of the leased Jacksonville outpatient clinics, which would be replaced with the larger, centralized proposed OPC and domiciliary, would have negligible community service impacts.

3.12.2 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no construction by VA's selected developer would occur and no impacts to community services would be anticipated. Should the Action Alternative sites be developed in the future by others, community service impacts may occur, depending on the use.

3.13 Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials

Hazardous and toxic materials or substances are generally defined as materials or substances that pose a risk (through either physical or chemical reactions) to human health or the environment.

Site 1

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (Phase I ESA) of approximately 42 acres of land located at the northwestern corner of the intersection of Max Leggett Parkway and Hyatt Road (including Site 1) was prepared by Environmental Inc. in February 2020 (Environmental Inc. 2020c). The Phase I ESA indicated Site 1 contained grassy land and/or agricultural fields and wooded land with a residence and other structures from the 1940s through the 2006 (including a propane gas business from the 1970s through the early 2000s), was mostly cleared in 2007, was planted with pine trees by 2011, and was partially cleared and graded in 2017. The Phase I identified no environmental concerns or recognized environmental conditions (RECs) for Site 1.

Site 2

Terracon Consultants, Inc. completed a Phase I ESA for Site 2 in April 2020 (Terracon 2020a). Site 2 was undeveloped woodlands in 1943. The site was part of an approximately 500-acre strip mine from approximately 1950 to the late 1960s/early 1970s, during which titanium and other heavy ores were extracted from the natural sand deposits in the area. Mining operations included dredging to depths of 30-40 feet below grade and mechanical separation of the ore from the sand. Excavations were backfilled with uncompacted sand tailings. After mining operations ceased, the disturbed soils had little organic matter to sustain vegetation and hold moisture and the sand blew onto surrounding properties. From the early 1970s to 1985, sanitary and industrial wastewater treatment residuals/sludges were applied to (landfarmed) approximately 220 acres of the former mine, including Site 2, to "reclaim" the mine. It appears the sludge was applied as a thin layer over the sand mine tailings. The land application of the sludge was permitted by FDEP from 1980-1985. Mixed use development of the surrounding properties began in the early 2000s, during which Site 2 was regraded; however, Site 2 has remained undeveloped.

Between 1986 and 2001, groundwater in the 220-acre landfarmed area was investigated under a Consent Order with FDEP. The investigation included a geophysical survey and the installation and sampling of groundwater monitoring wells for volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semi-volatile organic compounds, metals, and other water quality parameters. Sodium was the only contaminant detected in excess of the FDEP Groundwater Cleanup Target Levels (GCTLs), but was not detected in samples collected from Site 2. No groundwater contamination in excess of the GCTLs was identified at Site 2. The Site 2 area was released from the Consent Order in

1993. The remainder of the landfarmed area was released from the Consent Order in 2001, following the connection of adjacent residences to the municipal water system and implementation of an institutional control prohibiting groundwater use.

Phase II ESA investigations of Site 2 and the surrounding area were conducted in 2006 in anticipation of a planned development. Initial shallow soil samples were analyzed for VOCs, polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), total recoverable petroleum hydrocarbons (TRPH), and the eight metals regulated under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). No VOCs or RCRA metals were detected in excess of the FDEP Soil Cleanup Target Levels (SCTLs). PAHs and TRPH were identified in excess of the Residential Direct Exposure SCTLs. Elevated PAHs and TRPH concentrations correlated with the hard, organic crust (inferred to be residual wastewater treatment plant sludge). In 2006, approximately 43,000 cubic yards of soil that included the hard, organic crust and PAH and TRPH concentrations in excess of Residential Direct Exposure SCTLs, but below Commercial Direct Exposure SCTLs, were excavated from planned residential redevelopment areas and placed on areas planned for commercial development, including Site 2. Another Phase II ESA of the site was conducted in 2013. Soil samples from four locations contained PAHs in excess of the Residential Direct Exposure SCTLs; one sample contained PAHs in excess of the Commercial Direct Exposure SCTL. TRPH was also detected in some samples, but further speciation analysis found the TRPH not to be a concern.

In 2006/2007, during site preparation for redevelopment of the site and surrounding area, fly ash-based material (EZBase) from a local power plant was used to construct a temporary road at the site to facilitate construction of the stormwater pond north of the site. EZBase was also used as a base material to construct the section of Tredinick Parkway and the traffic circle in the right-of-way (ROW) located at the southern site boundary. EZBase was approved by FDEP for use as a base material for paved roads but was not approved for unpaved roads. During the 2013 site investigation, four samples of the EZBase material were collected and analyzed for RCRA metals plus vanadium and nickel. Arsenic, nickel, and vanadium were detected in excess of the SCTLs and vanadium was detected in shallow groundwater. Further investigations were conducted at Site 2 and the surrounding area between 2013 and 2015 to obtain regulatory closure from FDEP for the EZBase impacts (Terra-Com 2015). The investigations focused on vanadium, the primary contaminant of concern for EZBase. Vanadium soil impacts were delineated vertically and horizontally to the property boundaries. Three distinct vanadium groundwater plumes were identified during the investigations. One of the plumes is partially located under the northern portion of Site 2. During late 2016/early 2017, the EZBase used to construct the temporary road and the associated contaminated soil were excavated and removed from the site. However, the EZBase remains beneath the Tredinick Parkway and traffic circle in the ROW. In 2017, a Declaration of Restrictive Covenant (institutional control) was placed on Site 2 to address residual vanadium impacts that exceed the residential GCTL and SCTL. The restrictive covenant prohibits the use of groundwater, requires a plan approved by FDEP for any dewatering, requires approval from FDEP and SJRWMD for any alteration of the existing stormwater features or the construction of new stormwater features, and requires the ROW area with remaining EZBase to be permanently covered with impermeable material (engineering control). The restrictive covenant states that excavation and construction below the ROW engineering control is not prohibited, provided any contaminated soils that are excavated and removed are properly handled and disposed of. Based on the completion of the investigation and remediation activities, including the recording of restrictive covenants for the parcels with residual impacts in excess of the residential GCTL and SCTL, FDEP issued a Conditional Site Rehabilitation Completion Order for the EZBase vanadium impacts in 2018 (FDEP 2018).

Based on the previous site investigation and remediation activities, the April 2020 Terracon Phase I ESA identified the following REC and controlled REC (CREC) for Site 2.

- The identified PAH soil impacts (that exceed the direct exposure SCTLs) from the former sanitary and industrial waste landfarming on the site that have not been fully delineated were considered a REC.

- The documented vanadium impacts to soil on the southern ROW portions of Site 2 and surrounding parcels, as well as vanadium-impacted groundwater, stemming from the former use of EZBase, and the resultant Conditional Site Rehabilitation Completion Order (with required institutional and engineering controls) were considered a CREC.

Terracon completed a Limited Site Investigation and Site Wide Assessment report for Site 2 in June 2020 (Terracon 2020b). Terracon's Limited Site Investigation initially included 11 soil borings in the central, east-central, south-central and southeastern portions of Site 2 to further assess the PAH-impacted soil that had previously been identified at the site. Following the receipt of the initial laboratory analytical results, 17 additional soil borings were conducted (clustered around two of the original soil borings) to delineate the PAH impacts. The investigation identified two areas of impacted soil, located near the southeastern corner and in the south-central portion of Site 2, with PAH concentrations in soil exceeding the Residential and Commercial Direct Exposure SCTLs. The PAH impacts exceeding the SCTLs were delineated during the investigation. Terracon's Site Wide Assessment included 15 soil borings throughout the Site from which soil samples were collected and analyzed for VOCs, PAHs, TRPH, and metals. Copper was detected in excess of the Residential Direct Exposure SCTL in soil samples collected from the north-central and southeastern portions of the Site; no other analytes were detected in excess of the Residential SCTLs.

3.13.1 Effects of the Action Alternatives

VA's closure of the leased Jacksonville outpatient clinics would have no solid waste or hazardous materials impacts.

Implementing the Proposed Action at either Action Alternative site would result in short-term, less-than-significant adverse impacts due to the increased presence and use of petroleum and hazardous substances during construction. An increase in construction vehicle traffic would increase the likelihood for release of vehicle operating fluids (such as oil, diesel, gasoline, and antifreeze) and maintenance materials. As such, a less-than-significant, direct, short-term adverse impact from petroleum and hazardous substance use during construction is possible. Implementation of standard construction BMPs would serve to ensure this impact is further minimized.

Site 1

Based on the results of the 2020 Phase I ESA conducted for Site 1 (no RECs), no contamination is suspected to be present at the site. Consequently, no contaminated soil management issues or potential unacceptable exposures for construction workers or future site occupants are anticipated.

No significant adverse long-term impacts during operation of the OPC and domiciliary at Site 1 are anticipated. Long-term operational solid wastes, hazardous materials, and medical wastes would be managed in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. Wastes would be collected and properly disposed of by licensed, contracted transportation and disposal companies.

Site 2

Based on the results of the April 2020 Phase I ESA and June 2020 Limited Site Investigation and Site Wide Assessment for Site 2, soil and groundwater contamination associated with the use of EZBase for road construction and soil contamination associated with the former land disposal of sanitary and industrial wastewater residuals are present at the site. The recent identification of copper exceeding the Residential Direct Exposure SCTL in soil may indicate Site 2 is a site with heterogeneous soil contamination for which neither existing sampling or a conceptual site model have identified soil contamination and associated requirements for remediation with a high degree of confidence at this time. This is considered to be incomplete or unavailable information for the purposes of this EA.

The proposed OPC and domiciliary would be serviced by the municipal water system; therefore, the impacted groundwater at the site (vanadium in excess of drinking water criteria) would not pose a risk to future site occupants. Dewatering during construction, if necessary, would be conducted in accordance with a plan approved by FDEP, as required by the restrictive covenant. Compliance with this plan would prevent potential construction-related exacerbation of the groundwater impacts.

The proposed OPC and domiciliary development would require disturbance of the existing engineered barrier (pavement) covering the EZBase within the Tredinick Boulevard ROW. Construction in this area would be conducted in accordance with a plan approved by FDEP, which would include procedures for the proper handling and disposal of the excavated soils and restoration of the engineered barrier (as necessary). Compliance with this plan would prevent potential unacceptable exposures to the EZBase-impacted soils during construction.

PAH-impacted soil exceeding the Residential and Commercial Direct Exposure SCTLs and copper-impacted soil exceeding the Residential Direct Exposure SCTL are present on Site 2. VA has requested the potential developer to provide FDEP concurrence that the site is suitable for residential use; it is expected such concurrence would require remediation of contaminated soils and potentially additional measure to prevent potential unacceptable exposures for future patients, residents, visitors, and staff of the proposed VA OPC and domiciliary. The developer has stated a preliminary plan to excavate and remove the impacted soil from the site. A Remedial Action Plan would be prepared and submitted to FDEP for approval. Implementation of the FDEP-approved Remedial Action Plan would prevent potential unacceptable exposures to known contamination for future occupants of the proposed OPC and domiciliary. A Soil and Water Management Plan would be prepared and implemented to inform construction contractors of the site conditions and to ensure proper handling and disposal of excavated soils. All of these actions are incorporated into the Action Alternative at Site 2.

With FDEP concurrence that the site is suitable for residential use, potential impacts associated with contamination identified at Site 2 would be less than significant.

3.13.2 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no construction by the developer would occur, with no potential for less-than-significant, direct, short-term adverse impacts from petroleum and hazardous substance use during construction. Should the Action Alternative sites be developed in the future by others, similar short-term and long-term solid waste and hazardous materials impacts as realized under the Proposed Action could occur, depending upon the use.

3.14 Transportation and Parking

Traffic in the vicinities of the Action Alternative sites is regulated by the JPWD and/or FDOT.

Public transportation is provided to the vicinity of the Action Alternative sites by JTA via bus stops along Max Leggett Parkway near the University of Florida Health – North Campus (Bus Route 1) near Site 1 and along the Southside Connector and a nearby strip mall (Bus Route 19) near Site 2. As part of VA's contract requirements, the developer would ensure that one or more public bus stops is located within 1,320 safely accessible walkable feet from the primary entrance of the new OPC building.

Site 1

Access to Site 1 is from Max Leggett Parkway. Max Leggett Parkway is a northeast-southwest oriented four to six-lane divided paved road (two traffic lanes in each direction and additional dedicated turn lanes and bike lanes) with a current estimated Level of Service[2] (LOS) rating of B or better. Max Leggett Parkway intersects with Interstate 95 approximately one mile southwest of Site 1 and with North Main Street/State Route 5 approximately 750 feet east of Site 1. The intersection of Max Leggett Parkway and North Main Street is fully signalized with dedicated turn lanes in all directions.

Roads near Site 1 are illustrated on Figures 2, 4, and 5. Refer to Table 5 for roadway information for Site 1.

Table 5
Site 1 Area Roadways

Route	Direction	Road Width (feet)	Lanes	Average Daily Traffic	Estimated Level of Service
Max Leggett Parkway	Northeast-Southwest	88	4 lane divided road plus turn and bike lanes	11,200 (2019)	LOS B or better
State Route 5 (North Main Street)	North-South	56	2 lanes plus one to two turn lanes	11,500 (2019)	LOS C or better

[2] **Level of Service** – LOS represents a set of qualitative descriptions of a transportation system's performance. The Federal Highway Administration Highway Capacity Manual defines levels of service for intersections and highway segments, with ratings that range from A (best) to F (worst). Generally, a LOS of D or higher is considered acceptable by transportation planning agencies.

Table 5
Site 1 Area Roadways

Route	Direction	Road Width (feet)	Lanes	Average Daily Traffic	Estimated Level of Service
Interstate 95	North-South	134	6 lane divided highway	North of Max Leggett Pkwy/Airport Road exit 80,000 (2019) South of Max Leggett Pkwy/Airport Road exit 115,000 (2019)	LOS C or better

Average daily traffic data sources: FDOT (2019) and North Florida Transportation Planning Organization (2019).

FIGURE 13
SITE 1 PROPOSED MAIN AND SECONDARY ENTRANCES/EXITS

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED JACKSONVILLE VA
OUTPATIENT CLINIC AND DOMICILIARY
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

PREPARED FOR

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC

TTL PROJECT NO.
1925902

TTL associates inc
Environmental, Geotechnical Engineering & Testing

Site 2

Access to Site 2 is from the Southside Connector Service Drive (southbound) and Lone Star Road/Tredinick Parkway. The Southside Connector Service Drive is a north-south oriented one-way two= to five-lane paved road (two southbound traffic lanes and additional dedicated turn lanes and one bike lane) with a current LOS rating of C or better. Tredinick Parkway is an east-west oriented two to six-lane paved, divided road southeast of Site 2 leading to a two-lane traffic circle near the southwest corner of the site and then becoming a two to three-lane (undivided) paved road (Lone Star Road) west of the traffic circle with a current LOS rating of C or better. Traffic to the site would be from the Southside Connector (State Route 113), located east of Site 2, or from Interstate 295, located approximately 3,500 feet northeast of Site 2. Traffic from the Southside Connector flows onto Tredinick Parkway via the northbound and southbound Southside Connector Service Drives. Traffic from Interstate 295 flows south on Monument Road (six- to seven-lane northeast-southwest oriented divided road) onto Tredinick Parkway. The intersections of the Southside Connector Service Drives and Monument Road with Tredinick Parkway are fully signalized with dedicated turn lanes.

Roads near Site 2 are illustrated on Figures 3, 6, and 7. Refer to Table 6 for roadway information for Site 2.

Table 6
Site 2 Area Roadways

Route	Direction	Road Width (feet)	Lanes	Average Daily Traffic	Estimated Level of Service
Southside Connector (State Route 113)	North-South	110	4 lanes (divided)	32,500 (2019)	LOS C or better
Southside Connector Service Drive (southbound)	North-South	28-68	2 lanes plus 3 turn lanes (one-way)	No Count Available	LOS C or better
Lone Star Road	East-West	22-106	2 (undivided) to 4 (divided)	8,800 (2019)	LOS C or better
Tredinick Parkway	East-West	136	6 lanes (divided) plus 4 turn lanes	14,900 (2019)	LOS C or better

Average daily traffic data sources: FDOT (2019) and North Florida Transportation Planning Organization (2019).

FIGURE 14
SITE 2 PROPOSED MAIN AND SECONDARY ENTRANCES/EXITS

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED JACKSONVILLE VA
OUTPATIENT CLINIC AND DOMICILIARY
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

PREPARED FOR

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC

TTL PROJECT NO.
1925902

TTL associates inc
Environmental, Geotechnical Engineering & Testing

3.14.1 Effects of the Action Alternatives

The Proposed Action could have short-term and long-term, direct and indirect transportation impacts.

Construction traffic, consisting of trucks, workers' personal vehicles, and construction equipment, would increase traffic volumes in the local area, and could cause delays if this occurred during morning and evening peak traffic periods. Installation and connection of utilities, located within or adjacent to the site could also impact local roadways. These activities could result in additional traffic congestion, as well as a potential need to detour traffic around the area during utility work.

During operation, public roadways in the vicinity of the proposed OPC and domiciliary would experience increased traffic as a result of use of these new facilities. The OPC would be open Monday through Friday from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm and Saturdays from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm, except on federal holidays. VA estimates the OPC and domiciliary would experience approximately 2,000 Veteran, staff, volunteer and other visitor vehicle stops on an average, weekday, daily basis, generating a total of approximately 2,000 round-trip vehicle trips per day (4,000 one-way vehicle trips per day). Given the proposed operational use, traffic generated by the Proposed Action would occur throughout the day, Monday through Saturday. Patients of the OPC would travel at various times during the day during daylight hours. Staff at the OPC would primarily arrive and depart work during peak travel hours, at 7:00 am and 5:00 pm.

Traffic associated with the proposed OPC and domiciliary at the selected site would be new to the local area, because the Veterans who would be served by the OPC and domiciliary (and the associated staff) currently use the existing Jacksonville leased outpatient facilities. The Proposed Action would result in a reduction in VA traffic near the existing facilities and an increase in traffic near the selected OPC and domiciliary site. Overall, miles driven by Veterans and staff would be similar to existing conditions.

The Proposed Action would have no adverse impacts on parking. The OPC and domiciliary developments would include on-site parking (approximately 1,150 spaces) adequate to accommodate the projected needs of Veterans and VA staff using the proposed OPC and domiciliary.

Site 1

Based on preliminary site plans, primary and secondary access to the OPC and domiciliary at Site 1 would be provided by two access drives from Max Leggett Parkway. Tentative connection points from Site 1 to area roadways are illustrated on Figure 13. The estimated traffic associated with the proposed OPC and domiciliary (4,000 one-way vehicle trips/day) would be an increase of approximately 36 percent on Max Leggett Parkway. Assuming 75 percent of the vehicles would access Max Leggett Parkway from Interstate 95 and 25 percent of the vehicles would access Max Leggett Parkway from North Main Street, North Main Street would experience a traffic increase of approximately 8.7 percent. Traffic increases on Interstate 95 would be less than 5 percent. VA's NEPA regulations (38 CFR 26(26.6(a)2)(ii)) define a potential significant traffic impact as "an increase in average daily traffic volume of at least 20 percent on access roads to the site or the major roadway network." The anticipated increased traffic on Max Leggett Parkway is above the 20 percent threshold that indicates a potential significant traffic impact. However, Max Leggett Parkway was widened in approximately 2013 to accommodate the increased development in the

Site 1 area and currently operates at a good LOS (estimated B or better). Consequently, it is anticipated Max Leggett Parkway has sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional traffic associated with the proposed OPC and domiciliary as designed. During the OPC and domiciliary design and permitting process, the developer would work with the City of Jacksonville and FDOT, as applicable, to identify and implement roadway improvements, such as signalization and turn lanes, as necessary. With these consultations and improvements, no significant traffic impacts are anticipated.

Site 2

Based on preliminary site plans, primary access to the OPC and domiciliary at Site 2 would be provided by one entrance from the southbound Southside Connector Service Drive and one entrance from Tredinick Parkway. Secondary access would be provided by a second drive from Tredinick Parkway and a second drive from the southbound Southside Connector Service Drive. Tentative connection points from Site 2 to area roadways are illustrated on Figure 14. Assuming 50 percent of the vehicles would access Site 2 from the southbound Southside Connector Service Drive and 50 percent would access the site from Tredinick Parkway, the estimated traffic associated with the proposed OPC and domiciliary (4,000 one-way vehicle trips/day) would be an increase of 13.4 percent on Tredinick Parkway. The increase in traffic on Tredinick Parkway is below the 20 percent threshold that indicates a potential significant traffic impact. The increase in traffic on the southbound Southside Connector Service Drive is unknown as traffic counts are unavailable for this road; however, the road currently operates at a good LOS (estimated C or better).

FDOT reviewed tentative connection points (Figure 14) based on the developers' preliminary site plans and noted access may be an issue for Site 2. FDOT indicated they may not allow direct site access from the Southside Connector Service Drive as included in the preliminary site plans due to potential traffic backups and safety issues. During the OPC and domiciliary design and permitting process, the developer would work with the City of Jacksonville and FDOT, as applicable, to determine acceptable site access points and to identify and implement roadway improvements, such as signalization and turn lanes, as necessary. With these consultations and improvements, no significant traffic impacts are anticipated.

3.14.2 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no transportation or parking impacts associated with the Proposed Action would occur. However, should the Action Alternative sites ultimately be developed by others, traffic and parking impacts could occur. The type and magnitude of transportation and parking effects would be dependent upon the future use of the sites.

3.15 Utilities

Basic utilities in the vicinities of the Action Alternative sites (water, sewer, natural gas, and electric) are provided by various utility providers. As part of the preparation of this EA, local utility providers were researched and developer-provided information was reviewed to determine the availability of required utilities in the vicinity of the Action Alternative sites. Utility providers to the sites were identified as follows:

- **JEA** supplies potable water, sanitary sewer service, and electric services to both of the Action Alternative sites.

- **TECO Partners – Peoples Gas** supplies natural gas services to the Action Alternative sites.

- Various companies provide telecommunication services to the Action Alternative sites.

3.15.1 Effects of the Action Alternatives

The proposed OPC and domiciliary increase the consumption of utilities, including electricity, natural gas, potable water, and sanitary sewer discharges. All major utility services are available immediately next to or in close proximity to the Action Alternative sites. Stormwater retention, as discussed in Section 3.6, would also be required and provided by the Action Alternatives.

The proposed OPC and domiciliary are not anticipated to require extraordinary utility services beyond those of a similarly sized light industrial/commercial operation. Based on preliminary design information provided by the prospective developers, adequate utilities likely exist to supply the facilities as currently proposed. However, each utility provider would require a review of the detailed final design plans to validate these preliminary findings and to determine connection/extension requirements to service the proposed OPC and domiciliary. Utility impacts are anticipated to be negligible.

VA's closure of the existing leased Jacksonville outpatient clinics would have negligible utility impacts.

3.15.2 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no construction by VA's selected developer would occur and there would be no utility impacts by VA. However, should the Action Alternative sites ultimately be developed by others, impacts similar to those identified under the Proposed Action could occur. The type and magnitude of utility effects would be dependent upon the future use of the Action Alternative sites.

3.16 Environmental Justice

In 1994, EO 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, was issued to focus attention of federal agencies on human health and environmental conditions in minority and low-income communities and to ensure that disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on these communities are identified and addressed.

According to the USEPA-developed EJSCREEN (USEPA 2020) (an environmental justice mapping and screening internet application), Site 1 is not located in an area with disproportionately high minority or low-income population relative to the State of Florida as a whole. Site 2 is located in an area with a slightly higher minority population (49 percent) and slightly higher low-income population (42 percent) relative to the State of Florida as a whole (45 percent and 36 percent, respectively). EJSCREEN reports for the area of each site are provided in Appendix D.

3.16.1 Effects of the Action Alternatives

The Proposed Action would have negligible environmental justice effects. Although Site 2 is located in an area with a slightly larger than average minority population and a slightly larger than average low-income population, the Proposed Action would have very little impact on the residents in the area. During construction, effects on nearby residential land uses, such as through noise and dust, would be limited and controlled through BMPs, thereby minimizing adverse effects to populations within the region of influence.

Proposed Action construction activities are anticipated to have a short-term beneficial socioeconomic (and environmental justice) effect on the local employment and personal income in the region of influence, as described in Section 3.11.

3.16.2 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no development by VA's selected developer would occur at the Action Alternative sites and there would be no direct environmental justice effect by VA. However, Veterans in the Jacksonville area, including low-income and minority populations, would continue to be served by undersized, inadequate VA outpatient health care facilities.

3.17 Cumulative Impacts

As defined by the CEQ regulations in 40 CFR Part 1508.7, cumulative impacts are those which "result from the incremental impact of the Proposed Action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, without regard to the agency (federal or non-federal) or individual who undertakes such other actions." Cumulative impact analysis captures the effects that result from the Proposed Action in combination with the effects of other actions taken before, during, or after the Proposed Action in the same geographic area.

3.17.1 Effects of the Action Alternatives

Site 1

Site 1 is located in a developing suburban area approximately 11 miles north of the center of the City of Jacksonville. The region of influence for Site 1 is a mix of undeveloped land (north, east, southwest, and south), and apartments (west). The site and surrounding properties north of Max Leggett Parkway are part of a planned development (Max Leggett Parkway PUD). The apartments located west of the site (also within the PUD) were constructed between 2016 and 2018. Further development in the planned development area includes a medical office building southwest of the site and commercial development to the east along Hyatt Road. The area to the north and northwest of the site is set aside as a wetland conservation/preservation area. It is likely that the Max Leggett Parkway PUD will be developed in phases. Development in the undeveloped area south of Max Leggett Parkway (zoned light industrial) is also possible, although no development plans were identified for this area. The area near the intersection of Max Leggett Parkway and Interstate 95 (approximately one mile southwest of the site) has experienced considerable commercial development since approximately 2005. The University of Florida Health – North Campus hospital was developed approximately one-half mile southwest of the site in 2015.

Site 2

Site 2 is located in a mostly developed suburban area approximately 6 miles east of the center of the City of Jacksonville. The region of influence for Site 2 is predominantly residential (north, south, and west) with a highway (Southside Connector) to the east. Additionally, developed commercial properties are located to the southeast beyond the Southside Connector. Site 2 is part of a planned development (Indigo Shoppes PUD), which consists of mixed-use residential and commercial properties. The areas to the north, south, and west are residentially developed and/or under residential construction. No commercial development has yet begun in this area. Most of the properties surrounding Site 2 were developed beginning in 2006.

The Proposed Action would result in impacts to the area of the selected site as identified throughout Section 3. These include short-term and/or long-term potential adverse impacts to aesthetics, air quality, soils, hydrology and water quality, wildlife and habitat (Site 1), noise, wetlands (Site 1), solid waste and hazardous materials, and transportation. All of these potential impacts are less than significant and would be further reduced through careful implementation of the general best management practices (BMPs), management, mitigation, and minimization measures, and compliance with regulatory requirements, as identified in Section 5. Given the nature of the Proposed Action and the potential other development in the Action Alternative site areas, no significant cumulative adverse effects to any of these resource areas are anticipated. Other potential development in the area of the selected site would be subject to zoning requirements and site plan approval by the City of Jacksonville, which would serve to maintain and control regional potentially cumulative impacts.

No significant adverse cumulative impacts to the environment, induced by the Proposed Action, are anticipated within the region. Close coordination between federal and state agencies, the City of Jacksonville, and community representatives would serve to manage and control cumulative effects within the region, including managing regional transportation increases with adequate infrastructure. Implementation of local land use and resource management plans would serve to control the extent of environmental impacts, and continued planning would ensure future socioeconomic conditions maintain the quality of life the area's residents currently enjoy. Implementation of effective resource management plans and programs should minimize or eliminate any potential cumulative degradation of the natural ecosystem, cultural, or human environment within the region of influence of the Proposed Action.

3.17.2 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, cumulative impacts would be similar to those identified for the Proposed Action, as the Action Alternative sites would likely be developed for other commercial or residential use. The extent of cumulative effects under the No Action Alternative would depend upon that future use. However, cumulative impacts would not likely be significant, as any new development would be subject to zoning requirements and site plan approval.

3.18 Potential for Generating Substantial Public Controversy

As discussed in Section 4, VA has solicited input from various federal, state, and local government agencies regarding the Proposed Action. Several of these agencies have provided input; none of the input has identified opposition or controversy related to the Proposed Action or the Action

Alternatives. VA is publishing and distributing this Draft EA for a 30-day public comment period. Public comments will be considered and addressed in the Final EA.

SECTION 4: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

VA invites public participation in decision-making on new proposals through the NEPA process. Public participation with respect to decision-making on the Proposed Action is guided by 38 CFR Part 26, VA's policy for implementing NEPA. Additional guidance is provided in VA's NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects (VA 2010). Consideration of the views and information of all interested persons promotes open communication and enables better decision-making. Agencies, organizations, and members of the public with a potential interest in the Proposed Action, such as minority, low-income, and disadvantaged persons, are urged to participate. A record of agency coordination and public involvement associated with this EA is provided in Appendix A and Appendix E, respectively.

4.1 Agency Coordination

VA consulted with the following agencies during the preparation of this EA:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Department of Transportation
- Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources (Florida SHPO)
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection (various departments)
- Florida Department of Transportation
- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Florida Natural Areas Inventory
- North Florida Transportation Planning Organization
- Duval Soil and Water Conservation District
- St. Johns River Water Management District
- City of Jacksonville (various departments)
- JEA

VA initiated the agency scoping process for the Proposed Action in February 2020, which included an email request for information and comments based on the VA delineated area (area of consideration) for the proposed OPC and domiciliary, as well as two stakeholder meetings held in Jacksonville on March 5, 2020. Additional site-specific agency scoping (email request for information and comments) was conducted in May 2020, once Site 1 and Site 2 were identified as the prospective OPC and domiciliary locations.

VA initiated NHPA Section 106 consultation with Florida SHPO and the City of Jacksonville Historic Preservation Section in May 2020 and conducted informal Endangered Species Act consultation with USFWS in June 2020.

Scoping and consultation responses with project input or information were received from USEPA, Florida SHPO, FDEP Air Quality Division, FDEP Northeast District, Jacksonville Planning and Development Department Historic Preservation Section, and USFWS. Input provided by these

agencies is addressed in the appropriate resource sub-sections of Section 3. Written correspondence from the agencies is provided in Appendix A. The following summarizes that input, which VA used to focus this EA's analysis:

- **USEPA** indicated they reviewed online information and geospatial tools to identify potential resource impacts and provided the following input:

  - Air Quality: The project area is currently in attainment with the NAAQs and USEPA does not anticipate emissions from the project impacting the area's attainment status. However, short-term levels of exhaust emissions and fugitive dust could be elevated as a result of construction activities. Given the proximity of residential areas to Site 1 and Site 2, USEPA recommended implementing measures to reduce diesel emissions. Section 3.3 includes a discussion of air quality at the sites and BMPs to be conducted during construction activities to reduce diesel emissions and fugitive dust.

  - Contamination: USEPA noted Site 1 was formerly used for agriculture and may have herbicide and/or pesticide residue in soil. USEPA also noted facilities in the Site 1 area that were listed in environmental databases. Based on the Phase I ESA conducted for Site 1 (Environmental Inc. 2020c), these facilities are unlikely to have impacted the site. USEPA noted Site 2 has a history of industrial use that includes strip mining for metals (primarily titanium) between 1940 and 1960 followed by disposal of industrial and municipal waste sludges from the early 1970s to 1985. USEPA provided links to additional information related to the environmental investigation of Site 2 and the surrounding area, which is discussed in Section 3.13.

  - Environmental Justice: USEPA identified the potential presence of a higher than average minority population near Site 2 and the potential for environmental justice concerns. Potential environmental justice impacts are in Section 3.16.

  - Special Designations: USEPA recommended complying with Green Building standards to the extent feasible. VA design requirements specify the development must meet a minimum rating of two Green Globes for new construction and sustainable interiors.

  - Stormwater Management: USEPA noted the Clean Water Act's NPDES stormwater program requires permits for discharges from construction activities that disturb one or more acres, and provided information regarding the stormwater permitting authorities for the project.

  - Threatened and Endangered Species: USEPA identified the list of federally protected species generated from the USFWS IPaC report and recommended coordinating with USFWS. Protected species are discussed in Section 3.7.

  - Waters of the United States: USEPA stated the project should avoid and minimize, to the maximum extent practicable, placement of dredged or fill material in jurisdictional waters of the U.S. USEPA noted a 1.10-acre freshwater pond was identified as being located on Site 1 adjacent to an apartment complex and there may be residual wetlands on the eastern portion of the property. Site 2 has no remaining jurisdictional surface waterbodies. As discussed in Section 3.10, two small wetland areas located in the eastern portion of Site 1 are permitted by USACE and SJRWMD to be filled.

- VA submitted information detailing the cultural resource identification efforts and findings to the **Florida SHPO** and requested concurrence that implementing the Proposed Action at Site1 or Site 2 would have no effect on historic properties. Florida SHPO concurred with VA's determination.

- **FDEP Division of Air** stated that air quality is good in the site areas and in Duval County daily ozone and $PM_{2.5}$ (particulate matter less than 2. 5 micrometers in diameter) exceedances are rare. There are no major stationary sources of pollutants located near the site areas (the nearest major sources are 6 or more miles away). Air permits may be required depending on the equipment that may be installed.

- **FDEP Northeast District** provided general information and recommendations associated with environmental resource permitting, hazardous waste management, solid waste management, and storage tanks registration requirements information. No specific file information was provided for the sites.

- **City of Jacksonville Historic Preservation Section** concurred with VA's determination that the implementation of the Proposed Action at Site 1 or Site 2 would not impact historic resources.

- On June 27, 2020, VA requested **USFWS** concurrence with a finding of "may affect – not likely to adversely affect" for the eastern indigo snake and gopher tortoise at Site 1 in accordance with consultation requirements under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. On July 30, 2020, USFWS concurred with VA's "may affect – not likely to adversely affect" determination.

4.2 Native American Consultation

VA consulted with four federally recognized Native American Tribes as part of this NEPA process, in accordance with 36 CFR 800.2 and EO 13175, *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*, 6 November 2000. These Tribes, identified as having possible ancestral ties to the area of the Action Alternative sites, were invited by VA to participate in the EA process as Sovereign Nations per EO 13175. VA sent Section 106 consultation letters to these Tribes requesting their concurrence that no historic properties would be affected by the Proposed Action in May 2020. Written correspondence with the Tribes is provided in Appendix B.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation concurred that there should be no effects to any known historic properties and the project should continue as planned. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation also stated that, if any discoveries of human remains or related Native American Graves and Repatriation Act items occur, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and other appropriate agencies would be notified immediately. No additional responses have been received from the consulted Tribes.

4.3 Public Review

VA initiated the public scoping process for the Proposed Action in February 2020, which included a public meeting held in Jacksonville on March 5, 2020, that was announced in a public notice published in the Florida Times-Union on February 23 and 24, 2020. VA received no comments or input during the March 2020 public scoping meeting.

VA published and distributed the Draft EA for a 30-day public comment period, as announced by a Notice of Availability published in the Florida Times-Union, a local newspaper of general circulation, on July 8 and 12, 2020. A copy of the Draft EA was also made available on the North Florida Health Care System website: www.northflorida.va.gov/NORTHFLORIDA/pressreleases/Jacksonville_OPC_and_DOM_EA.asp.

VA emailed notification of the availability of the Draft EA for review and comment, with a link to the Draft EA on the North Florida Health Care System website, to each of the agencies and Tribes that were contacted during the NEPA scoping and Section 106 consultation. Four agencies (FDOT, FDEP Florida Geological Survey, and USEPA) provided comments on the Draft EA (Appendix E). Agency comments are summarized in Table 7. The responses to the comments are integrated into the Final EA, as applicable.

VA held a virtual public meeting on July 23, 2020, at 6 pm to present a summary of the Draft EA and to receive public input and comment on the Draft EA. One member of the public attended the public meeting. One comment was received regarding the timing of the lease award. No comments regarding the Proposed Action or the Draft EA were provided.

Table 7
Summary of Agency and Public Comments on Draft EA

Comment	Response	Section
Transportation, Traffic, and Parking		
FDOT requested to review the proposed site plans and to help guide roadway connections to ensure they are efficient as possible and do not impact any roadways. FDOT stated the site plans should be included in the EA to see the impact of the proposed facility on adjacent transportation facilities. FDOT also stated they are willing to assist in the layout/design of the roadway connections. FDOT reviewed tentative connection points provided by VA based on the developers' preliminary site plans and noted access may be an issue for Site 2. FDOT indicated they may not allow direct site access from the Southside Connector Service Drive as included in the preliminary site plans due to potential traffic backups and safety issues.	Tentative connection points to adjacent roads, based on the developers' preliminary site plans, have been included in the Final EA as Figures 13 and 14. FDOT's site access concern is acknowledged in the Final EA. VA's selected site developer would work with FDOT and the City of Jacksonville to refine the details of site access and identify and mitigate impacts to roadways, as necessary.	3.14

Table 7
Summary of Agency and Public Comments on Draft EA

Comment	Response	Section
Geology and Soils		
FDEP Florida Geological Survey (FGS) provided a link to updated regional geology information and provided clarification regarding the subsidence classification of the area of Sites 1 and 2. FGS noted that subsidence due to dissolution of shell and compaction of soil is more prevalent, but is still a low geologic hazard in the region.	Regional geological information in the Final EA has been updated.	3.5
FGS noted Site 1 contains a former pond that was filled in, has small wetlands that would be filled, and that the proposed site plans include raising the site 3 to 5 feet prior to construction. FGS stated organic material in the former pond and wetlands and imported fill, if not properly compacted, pose potential settling and subsidence hazards for any built structure.	The developer would complete a geotechnical evaluation of the selected site. The geotechnical investigation would provide site design recommendations to prevent unacceptable settling and subsidence. Imported soil used to raise the site would be properly compacted.	3.5
FGS noted the northern portion of Site 2 formerly contained part of a former lake that filled in. FGS stated organic material in the former lake poses a potential settling and subsidence hazard for any built structure.	The developer would complete a geotechnical evaluation of the selected site. The geotechnical investigation would provide site design recommendations to prevent unacceptable settling and subsidence.	3.5
General Comments		
USEPA stated the Draft EA addresses their project scoping concerns and identifies management measures that would be implemented to minimize potential adverse effects of the Proposed Action. Based on these management measures, USEPA does not expect significant impacts to environmental and human health resources.	USEPA project scoping concerns were addressed in the Draft EA. No EA revisions or responses were required.	NA
FDEP Division of Waste Management provided general environmental information for the sites.	The provided information was reviewed to confirm that the EA included all information relevant to assessing potential impacts of the proposed action. No EA revisions or responses were required.	NA
A member of the public inquired as to when the final site selection will be determined.	VA plans to select the site before the end of September 2020.	NA

SECTION 5: MANAGEMENT, MITIGATION, AND MINIMIZATION MEASURES

This section summarizes the management, mitigation, and minimization measures that are proposed to minimize and maintain potential adverse effects of the Proposed Action at acceptable, less-than-significant levels.

Per established protocols, procedures, and requirements, the developer and its construction contractors would implement BMPs and would satisfy all applicable regulatory requirements in association with the design, construction, and operation of the proposed OPC and domiciliary at the selected Action Alternative site. These "management measures" are described in this EA and are included as components of each of the Action Alternatives. "Management measures" are defined as routine BMPs and/or regulatory compliance measures that are regularly implemented as part of proposed activities, as appropriate, throughout the Jacksonville, Florida area. In general, implementation of such management measures would maintain impacts at acceptable levels for all resource areas analyzed. These are different from "mitigation measures," which are defined as project-specific requirements, not routinely implemented as part of development projects, necessary to reduce identified potentially significant adverse environmental impacts to less-than-significant levels.

The management, mitigation, and minimization measures summarized in Table 9 would be included by the selected developer in the selected Action Alternative to minimize and maintain adverse effects at less-than-significant levels.

Table 8
Management, Mitigation, and Minimization Measures
Incorporated into the Proposed Action

Technical Resource Area	Measure
Aesthetics	Comply with the development standards of the Jacksonville Code of Ordinances.
	Use vegetative buffers to enhance viewscapes, particularly near adjacent residential properties.
	Use shielded, downward-facing outdoor lighting.

Table 8
Management, Mitigation, and Minimization Measures
Incorporated into the Proposed Action

Technical Resource Area	Measure
Air Quality	Use appropriate dust suppression methods (such as the use of water, dust, palliative, covers, suspension of earth moving in high wind conditions) during onsite construction activities.
	Stabilize disturbed area through re-vegetation or mulching if the area would be inactive for several weeks or longer.
	Implement measures to reduce diesel particulate matter emissions from construction equipment, such as reducing idling time and using newer equipment with emissions controls.
	Comply with the applicable FDEP Division of Air and City of Jacksonville air quality regulations. Secure any required minor air emissions permits from FDEP, and the Jacksonville Regulatory Compliance Department of Environmental Quality, Air Quality Branch prior to construction.
Cultural Resources	Should potentially historic or culturally significant items be discovered during project construction, the construction contractor would immediately cease work in the area until VA, a qualified archaeologist, Florida SHPO, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, and other consulting parties are contacted to properly identify and appropriately treat discovered items in accordance with applicable state and federal law(s).
Geology and Soils	Properly compact fill soil imported to the site (Site 1).
	Complete a geotechnical investigation of the selected site. Identify and implement design recommendations to prevent unacceptable settling/subsidence.
	Control soil erosion and sedimentation impacts during construction by implementing erosion prevention measures and complying with the SJRWMD ERP and the FDEP NPDES permitting processes. Implement effective controls through a site-specific Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The ERP and NPDES permits would require stormwater runoff and erosion management using BMPs, such as earth berms, vegetative buffers and filter strips, and spill prevention and management techniques. The construction contractor would implement the sedimentation and erosion control measures specified in the ERP and NPDES permits and the SWPPP to protect surface water quality.
Hydrology and Water Quality	Control soil erosion and sedimentation impacts during construction by complying with the SJRWMD ERP and FDEP NPDES permit.
	Obtain approval from FDEP and SJRWMD for any alteration of existing stormwater features or the construction of new stormwater features per requirements of the restrictive covenant (Site 2).
	Design improvements in accordance with the requirements of Energy Independence Security Act Section 438 with respect to stormwater runoff quantity and characteristics.
	Ensure the design of the OPC and domiciliary includes sufficient stormwater management so as not to adversely affect the water quantity/quality in receiving waters and/or offsite areas.

Table 8
Management, Mitigation, and Minimization Measures
Incorporated into the Proposed Action

Technical Resource Area	Measure
Wildlife and Habitat	Conduct a preconstruction survey within 90 days of construction to determine the potential presence of gopher tortoises or eastern indigo snakes. If either species is identified, contact the FFWCC to obtain the necessary permit and approval for their relocation (Site 1).
	Avoid vegetation clearing construction during the common ground dove nesting season (February to December), if possible; that is, clear vegetation only during January. If not possible, have a qualified biologist survey the site for active nests prior to clearing. If active common ground dove nests are identified, avoid disturbance of the nests until eggs have incubated (12-14 days) and the young birds have fledged (another 11-12 days or more) (Site 1).
	Native species should be used to the extent practicable when re-vegetating land disturbed by construction to avoid the potential introduction of non-native or invasive species.
Noise	Limit, to the extent possible, construction and associated heavy truck traffic to occur between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday, or during normal, weekday, work hours.
	Locate stationary operating equipment as far away from sensitive receptors as possible.
	Comply with the noise control provisions of the Jacksonville Code of Ordinances.
	Coordinate proposed construction activities in advance with nearby sensitive receptors (residences adjacent and within 700 feet of each site). Let these local residents know what operations would be occurring at what times, including when they would start and when they would finish each day. Post signage at the entry points of the selected site providing current construction information, including schedule and activity.
	Shut down noise-generating heavy equipment when it is not needed.
	Maintain equipment per manufacturer's recommendations to minimize noise generation.
	Encourage construction personnel to operate equipment in the quietest manner practicable (such as speed restrictions, retarder brake restrictions, engine speed restrictions).
Land Use	Comply with the applicable zoning regulations and development standards for the selected site.
Wetlands, Floodplains, and Coastal Zone Management	Complete the required mitigation for filling on-site wetlands in accordance with the USCAE and SJRWMD permit requirements (Site 1).
	Include design measures to prevent impacts to the adjacent wetland off-site wetland conservation/preservation areas in the stormwater plan for the ERP permit (Site 1).
	Design improvements in accordance with the requirements of Energy Independence Security Act Section 438 with respect to stormwater runoff quantity so as not to adversely affect the flood elevations or water quantity/quality in downstream receiving waters.
	Obtain necessary environmental permits and coordinate with the FDEP, as required, to ensure that the Proposed Action is consistent with the FDEP's Coastal Zone Management Program.

Table 8
Management, Mitigation, and Minimization Measures
Incorporated into the Proposed Action

Technical Resource Area	Measure
Socioeconomics	Construction areas would be secured to prevent unauthorized access by children from the nearby residential areas.
Community Services	None required.
Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials	Comply with applicable federal and state laws governing the use, generation, storage, transportation, and disposal of solid and hazardous materials and medical wastes.
	Comply with the terms of the restrictive covenant placed on the site to address vanadium impacts from the use of EZBase at the site. The restrictive covenant prohibits the use of groundwater, requires a plan approved by FDEP for any dewatering, requires approval from FDEP and SJRWMD for any alteration of the existing stormwater features or the construction of new stormwater features, and requires the ROW area with remaining EZBase to be permanently covered with impermeable material (Site 2).
	Prepare, have approved by FDEP, and implement a plan for the proper handling and disposal of soils beneath the pavement covering the remaining EZBase within the Tredinick Parkway/Lone Star Road ROW that would be disturbed during site development. Restore the pavement engineering barrier, as necessary (Site 2).
	Develop and implement a Soil and Groundwater Management Plan to inform construction contractors of site contamination and to ensure the proper handling and disposal of impacted groundwater and soil that may be encountered during construction (Site 2).
	Remediate soils at the site that exceed the Florida Residential Direct Exposure SCTLs for PAHs and copper, and obtain FDEP concurrence with the site's suitability for residential use (Site 2).
Transportation and Parking	Work with FDOT and Jacksonville Department of Public Works, as applicable, during the OPC and domiciliary design and permitting to identify and implement roadway improvements, if necessary, such as signalization and turn lanes.
Utilities	Submit detailed design plans to each utility provider to determine the specific connection/extension requirements and implement the necessary requirements.
Environmental Justice	None required.

SECTION 6: LIST OF ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITS REQUIRED

6.1 Regulatory Framework

This EA has been prepared under the provisions of, and in accordance with NEPA, the CEQ Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA, and VA's regulations for implementing NEPA (38 CFR Part 26). In addition, the EA has been prepared as prescribed in VA's NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects (VA 2010b). Federal, state, and local laws and regulations applicable to this Proposed Action are specified within this EA, and include:

- Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (7 USC 136; 16 USC 1531 et seq.).
- Executive Order 11988, *Floodplain Management* (May 1977).
- Executive Order 11990, *Protection of Wetlands* (May 1977).
- Executive Order 12898, *Environmental Justice* (February 1994).
- Executive Order 13834, *Efficient Federal Operations* (May 2018).
- Energy Independence Security Act Section 438.
- Farmland Protection Policy Act (7 USC 4201, et seq.).
- Federal Clean Air Act of 1990 (42 USC 7401 et seq., as amended).
- Federal Clean Water Act (Federal Water Pollution Control Act) of 1948, as amended (1972, 1977) (33 USC 1251 et seq.); Sections 401 and 404.
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act; 16 USC 703-712, 3 July 1918; as amended 1936, 1960, 1968, 1969, 1974, 1978, 1986, and 1989).
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1949.4, as amended (36 CFR Part 800).
- FDEP Water Resource Regulations.
- Jacksonville Code of Ordinances.

6.2 Environmental Permits Required

In addition to the regulatory framework of NEPA, the CEQ Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA, VA's regulations for implementing NEPA (38 CFR Part 26), and VA's NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects, the following federal, state, and/or local environmental permits are required as part of this Proposed Action, and include:

- Florida Coastal Zone Management Program Consistency Determination.
- Florida National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit.
- SJRWMD Environmental Resource Program Permit.
- City of Jacksonville Site Development Permit.

SECTION 7: AGENCIES AND INDIVIDUALS CONSULTED

AGENCIES CONSULTED

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USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Region 4
North Florida Ecological Services Field Office
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Florida Department of Environmental Protection
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Florida Department of Transportation
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CARRIE HESS	SCOPING COORDINATION, RESEARCH AND DATA GATHERING, DOCUMENT PREPARATION, AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS	B.S. GEOLOGY, 2003	12

SECTION 9: REFERENCES

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Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Hazard Insurance Map: http://msc.fema.gov/portal

Florida Department of Environmental Protection: https://floridadep.gov/

Florida Department of Transportation: https://tdaappsprod.dot.state.fl.us/fto/

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission: https://myfwc.com/

Florida Geological Survey: https://floridadep.gov/fgs

Florida Natural Areas Inventory: https://www.fnai.org/

Jacksonville Transit Authority: https://www.jtafla.com/

National Wetlands Inventory: http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/Mapper.html

North Florida Transportation Planning Office: http://northfloridatpo.com/data/traffic-counts/

USACE 2020. Researched for wetland permit information. https://permits.ops.usace.army.mil/orm-public#

U.S. Bureau of Census (2010 and 2017 Census Data): http://www.census.gov

USGS: https://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/map/,
http://ngmdb.usgs.gov/maps/topoview/viewer/#4/40.00/-100.00

Mapping tools to locate properties: www.maps.google.com, www.google.earth.com

SECTION 10: LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BMPs	Best Management Practices
CAA	Clean Air Act
CEQ	President's Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
COJ	City of Jacksonville
CREC	controlled recognized environmental condition
CZMA	Coastal Zone Management Act
dBA	decibels (A-weighted scale)
DCPS	Duval County Public School
DoD	Department of Defense
EA	environmental assessment
EO	Executive Order
ERP	Environmental Resource Program
ESA	environmental site assessment
FCMP	Florida Coastal Management Program
FDEP	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
FDOT	Florida Department of Transportation
GCTLs	Groundwater cleanup target levles
IPaC	USFWS Information for Planning and Conservation
JOC	Jacksonville Ordinance Code
JPDD	Jacksonville Planning and Development Department
JTA	Jacksonville Transporation Authority
LOS	level of service
msl	mean sea level
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Properties
NWI	National Wetland Inventory
OPC	Outpatient Clinic
PAH	polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons
PCG	Peacock Consulting Group, LLC
$PM_{2.5}$	particulate matter less than or equal to 2.5 micrometers
PUD	Planned Unit Development
REC	recognized environmental condition
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
ROW	right-of-way
SCIP	Strategic Capital Investment Planning
SCTL	Soil cleanup target levels
SHPO	Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, State Historic Preservation Office
SJRWMD	St. Johns River Water Management District
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
TRPH	Total recoverable petroleum hydrocarbons
U.S.	United States
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USC	United States Code
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
VA	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
VAMC	VA Medical Center
VOCs	Volatile organic compounds

SECTION 11: GLOSSARY

100-Year Flood – A flood event of such magnitude that it occurs, on average, every 100 years; this equates to a one percent chance of its occurring in a given year.

Aesthetics – Pertaining to the quality of human perception of natural beauty.

Agricultural land - Cropland, pastures, meadows, and planted woodland.

Ambient - The environment as it exists around people, plants, and structures.

Ambient Air Quality Standards - Those standards established according to the CAA to protect health and welfare (AR 200-1).

Aquifer - An underground geological formation containing usable amounts of groundwater which can supply wells and springs.

Alternative – A reasonable way to fix the identified problem or satisfy the stated need.

Attainment Area - Region that meets the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for a criteria pollutant under the CAA.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) - Methods, measures, or practices to prevent or reduce the contributions of pollutants to U.S. waters. Best management practices may be imposed in addition to, or in the absence of, effluent limitations, standards, or prohibitions (AR 200-1).

Commercial land use – Land use that includes private and public businesses (retail, wholesale, etc.), institutions (schools, churches, etc.), health services (hospitals, clinics, etc.), and military buildings and installations.

Contaminants - Any physical, chemical, biological, or radiological substances that have an adverse effect on air, water, or soil.

Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) - An Executive Office of the President office composed of three members appointed by the President, subject to approval by the Senate. Each member shall be exceptionally qualified to analyze and interpret environmental trends, and to appraise programs and activities of the federal government. Members are to be conscious of and responsive to the scientific, economic, social, aesthetic, and cultural needs of the Nation; and to formulate and recommend national policies to promote the improvement of the quality of the environment.

Criteria Pollutants - The CAA of 1970 required the USEPA to set air quality standards for common and widespread pollutants in order to protect human health and welfare. There are six "criteria pollutants": ozone, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, and particulate matter.

Cultural Resources - The physical evidence of our Nation's heritage. Included are: archaeological sites; historic buildings, structures, and districts; and localities with social significance to the human community.

Cumulative Impact - The impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonable foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time (40 CFR 1508.7).

Decibel (dB) - A unit of measurement of sound pressure level.

Direct Impact - A direct impact is caused by a Proposed Action and occurs at the same time and place.

Emission - A release of a pollutant.

Endangered Species - Any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

Environmental Assessment (EA) - An EA is a publication that provides sufficient evidence and analyses to show whether a proposed system will adversely affect the environment or be environmentally controversial.

Environmental Justice - The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

Erosion - The wearing away of the land surface by detachment and movement of soil and rock fragments through the action of moving water and other geological agents.

Floodplain - The relatively flat area or lowlands adjoining a river, stream, ocean, lake, or other body of water that is susceptible to being inundated by floodwaters.

Fugitive Dust - Particles light enough to be suspended in air, but not captured by a filtering system. For this document, this refers to particles put in the air by moving vehicles and air movement over disturbed soils at construction sites.

Geology - Science which deals with the physical history of the earth, the rocks of which it is composed, and physical changes in the earth.

Groundwater - Water found below the ground surface. Groundwater may be geologic in origin and as pristine as it was when it was entrapped by the surrounding rock or it may be subject to daily or seasonal effects depending on the local hydrologic cycle. Groundwater may be pumped from wells and used for drinking water, irrigation, and other purposes. It is recharged by precipitation or irrigation water soaking into the ground. Thus, any contaminant in precipitation or irrigation water may be carried into groundwater.

Hazardous Substance - Hazardous materials are defined within several laws and regulations to have certain meanings. For this document, a hazardous material is any one of the following:

Any substance designated pursuant to section 311 (b)(2)(A) of the Clean Water Act.

Any element, compound, mixture, solution, or substance designated pursuant to Section 102 of Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act

Any hazardous substance as defined under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.

Any toxic pollutant listed under the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976.

Any hazardous air pollutant listed under Section 112 of CAA.

Any imminently hazardous chemical substance or mixture with respect to which the EPA Administrator has taken action pursuant to Subsection 7 of the Toxic Substances Control Act.

The term does not include: 1) Petroleum, including crude oil or any thereof, which is not otherwise specifically listed or designated as a hazardous substance in a above. 2) Natural gas, natural gas liquids, liquefied natural gas, or synthetic gas usable for fuel (or mixtures of natural gas and such synthetic gas). A list of hazardous substances is found in 40 CFR 302.4.

Hazardous Waste - A solid waste which, when improperly treated, stored, transported, or disposed of, poses a substantial hazard to human health or the environment. Hazardous wastes are identified in 40 CFR 261.3 or applicable foreign law, rule, or regulation.

Hazardous Waste Storage - As defined in 40 CFR 260.10, "... the holding of hazardous waste for a temporary period, at the end of which the hazardous waste is treated, disposed of, or stored elsewhere".

Historic Property - Any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places maintained by the Secretary of the Interior. This term includes artifacts, records, and remains that are related to and located within such properties. The term includes properties of traditional religious and cultural importance to an Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization and that meet the National Register criteria.

Indirect Impact - An indirect impact is caused by a Proposed Action that occurs later in time or farther removed in distance, but is still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect impacts may include induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air, water, and other natural and social systems. For example, referring to the possible direct impacts described above, the clearing of trees for new development may have an indirect impact on area wildlife by decreasing available habitat.

Jurisdictional Wetland – Areas that meet the wetland hydrology, vegetation, and hydric soil characteristics, and have a direct connection to the waters of the U.S. These wetlands are regulated by the USACE.

Listed Species - Any plant or animal designated by a state or the federal government as a threatened, endangered, special concern, or candidate species.

Mitigation - Measures taken to reduce adverse impacts on the environment.

National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) - Nationwide standards set up by the USEPA for widespread air pollutants, as required by Section 109 of the Clean Air Act (CAA). Currently, six pollutants are regulated by primary and secondary NAAQS: carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) - U.S. statute that requires all federal agencies to consider the potential effects of major federal actions on the human and natural environment.

Non-attainment Area - An area that has been designated by the EPA or the appropriate state air quality agency as exceeding one or more national or state ambient air quality standards.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) - A provision of the Clean Water Act (CWA) that prohibits discharge of pollutants into waters of the United States unless a special permit is issued by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, a state, or, where delegated, a tribal government on an Indian reservation.

National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) - The nation's inventory of known historic properties that have been formally listed by the National Park Service (NPS). The National Register of Historic Places is administered by the NPS on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior. National Register listings include districts, landscapes, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that meet the set of criteria found in 36 CFR 60.4.

Parcel - A plot of land, usually a division of a larger area.

Particulates or Particulate Matter - Fine liquid or solid particles such as dust, smoke, mist, fumes, or smog found in air.

Pollutant - A substance introduced into the environment that adversely affects the usefulness of a resource.

Potable Water - Water which is suitable for drinking.

Prime Agricultural land - A special category of highly productive cropland that is recognized and described by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service and receives special protection under the Surface Mining Law.

Remediation - A long-term action that reduces or eliminates a threat to the environment.

River Basin - The land area drained by a river and its tributaries.

Scoping – An early and open process for determining the extent and variety of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action (40 CFR Part 1501.7). The scoping process helps not only to identify significant environmental issues deserving of study, but also to deemphasize insignificant issues, narrowing the scope of the NEPA process accordingly, and for early identification of what are and what are not the real issues (40 CFR Part 1500.5(d)). The scoping process identifies relevant issues related to a proposed action through the involvement of all potentially interested or affected parties (affected federal, state, and local agencies; recognized Indian tribes; interest groups, and other interested persons) in the environmental analysis and documentation.

Sensitive Receptors - Include, but are not limited to, asthmatics, children, and the elderly, as well as specific facilities, such as long-term health care facilities, rehabilitation centers, convalescent centers, retirement homes, residences, schools, playgrounds, and childcare centers.

Significant Impact - According to 40 CFR 1508.27, "significance" as used in NEPA requires consideration of both context and intensity.

Context. The significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the Proposed Action. For instance, in the case of a site-specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short- and long-term effects are relevant.

Intensity. This refers to the severity of impact. Responsible officials must bear in mind that more than one agency may make decisions about partial aspects of a major action.

Soil - The mixture of altered mineral and organic material at the earth's surface that supports plant life.

Solid Waste - Any discarded material that is not excluded by section 261.4(a) or that is not excluded by variance granted under sections 260.30 and 260.31.

Threatened species - Any species that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

Topography - The relief features or surface configuration of an area.

Toxic Substance - A harmful substance which includes elements, compounds, mixtures, and materials of complex composition.

Waters of the United States - Include the following: (1) All waters which are currently being used, were used in the past, or may be susceptible to use in interstate or foreign commerce, including all waters which are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide. (2) All interstate waters including interstate wetlands. (3) All other waters such as intrastate lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), mudflats, sandflats, wetlands, sloughs, prairie potholes, wet meadows, playa lakes, or natural ponds; the use, degradation or destruction of which could affect interstate or foreign commerce.

Watershed - The region draining into a particular stream, river, or entire river system.

Wetlands - Areas that are regularly saturated by surface or groundwater and, thus, are characterized by a prevalence of vegetation that is adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Examples include swamps, bogs, fens, marshes, and estuaries.

Wildlife Habitat - Set of living communities in which a wildlife population lives.