Public Draft
Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Construction, Renovation, and Repair of Medical and Medically Related Facilities Established under the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Real Property Build-to-Suit Lease Program

Photo Credit: VA

Prepared by:
Scout Environmental, Inc.
169 Saxony Road, Suite 214
Encinitas, CA 92024

Prepared for:
Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Construction
and Facilities Management
425 I Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

Contract: 47QRAA21D009A
Order Number: 47PA0322F0078
April 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States (U.S.) Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has prepared this programmatic environmental assessment (PEA) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 U.S. Code 4321-4370h)

ES.1 Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to continue to provide eligible Veterans common medical services, assisted living care, and related services. The Proposed Action is needed to address current and future projected health care gaps and operational inefficiencies, especially in rural areas where access to common medical services offered by VA Medical Centers is not an easily accessible option.

ES.2 Proposed Action

The VA Office of Real Property (ORP), a division within VA Office of Construction and Facilities Management (CFM), supports VA's mission by acquiring land and leasing space for the construction of medical and medically related facilities to care for our nation's Veterans. Under the Proposed Action, ORP would establish leases that would result in the construction, renovation, or repair of leased medical and medically related facilities to care for our nation's Veterans in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Tribal Lands, and the Territories of American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

ES.3 Alternatives

VA has evaluated reasonable alternatives for meeting the purpose of and need for action, including a "No Action Alternative." VA considered potential reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Action but did not identify any. Under the No Action Alternative, VA would not implement the Proposed Action. The No Action Alternative does not fully meet the purpose and need. The No Action Alternative also provides a benchmark for comparing the effects of the Proposed Action.

ES.4 Environmental Resource Areas Evaluated and Potential Environmental Consequences of the Alternatives

Lease projects may occur in a wide variety of environments including urban areas, rural areas, and Tribal Lands, and the specific locations are not identified or prescribed at the programmatic level. Therefore, the affected environment is portrayed as a general overview of each resource. Table ES-1 presents the resources considered in this PEA and the potential environmental consequences of the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative.

Table ES-1. Summary of Potential Environmental Consequences

Resource Area	*Proposed Action*	*No Action Alternative*
Aesthetics	**Less than significant impacts**. Short-term visual impacts during construction, renovation, or repair activities. Long-term visual consistency with the existing visual environment.	**No impacts.**
Air Quality	**Less than significant impacts**. Short-term generation of pollutants during construction, renovation, or repair activities. Long-term increase in operational emissions from vehicle trips and miscellaneous stationary sources.	**No impacts.**
Geology and Soils	**Less than significant impacts**. Short-term disturbance of soils and erosion. Long-term improvement in seismic resiliency.	**No impacts.**
Hydrology and Water Quality	**Less than significant impacts**. Short-term increase in on- and off-site stormwater runoff during construction. Long-term increase in water use may affect groundwater levels.	**No impacts.**
Wildlife and Habitat	**Less than significant impacts**. Removal of up to 25 acres of vegetation/habitat and displacement and/or loss of common wildlife species which would be a negligible impact to area populations. If federally listed wildlife and/or critical habitat are in the area, VA would prepare a biological assessment and consult with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or National Marine Fisheries Service.	**No impacts.**
Noise	**Less than significant impacts**. Short-term increase in noise during construction. Long-term negligible increase in new stationary and mobile noise sources.	**No impacts.**
Cultural Resources	**Less than significant impacts**. Inadvertent discovery of cultural materials during construction and modification of existing historic resources.	**No impacts.**
Land Use	**Less than significant impacts**. Short-term disruption of land use during construction activities. Long-term consistency with existing and surrounding land use.	**No impacts.**
Floodplains, Wetlands, and Coastal Zone Management	**Less than significant impacts**. Projects would avoid the floodplain and wetlands. Project would demonstrate consistency with coastal zone, as applicable.	**No impacts.**
Socioeconomics	**Beneficial impacts**. Short-term increase in jobs and local revenue/spending during construction. Long-term increase in jobs, and healthcare services to Veterans.	**Adverse impacts**. Some Veterans would continue to be located far from healthcare services.
Community Services	**Beneficial impacts**. No additional strain on emergency services and increased availability of healthcare services to Veterans, especially in rural areas.	**Adverse impacts**. Some Veterans would not have easy access to healthcare services.
Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials	**Less than significant impacts**. Generation of wastes and hazardous materials during construction and operation.	**No impacts.**

Resource Area	*Proposed Action*	*No Action Alternative*
Transportation and Parking	**Less than significant impacts**. Short-term increase in construction-related traffic. Increase in patient and staff trips under a maximum development scenario may generate adverse impacts. Additional analysis would be required for certain projects, depending on local conditions, which may necessitate further NEPA analysis and project-specific measures. Each project would provide sufficient parking to serve the anticipated demand, based on the size of the proposed facility.	**No impacts.**
Utilities	**Less than significant impacts**. Increase in utility demand and increase in renewable energy systems.	**No impacts.**

Best management practices, monitoring requirements, and regulatory compliance are part of the Proposed Action and are not mitigation measures. These actions, presented in Table ES-2, would contribute to environmental resource protection during project implementation. In addition, regulatory compliance is not considered mitigation, but generally greatly contributes to reducing or preventing environmental impacts. The measures listed in Table ES-2 would be implemented during the construction and operation of medical facilities, as warranted. In addition, additional project-specific mitigation (e.g., for potential unavoidable impacts to a listed species) may be identified on a case-by-case basis and documented in a supplement to this PEA.

Table ES-2. Description and Type of Best Management Practices, Monitoring Requirements, and Regulatory Compliance Measures

Resource	*Practice/Requirement/Measure*
Wildlife and Habitat	Prior to each project, the proponent would use the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) database to screen for any federally listed endangered or threatened species and their habitat in the project area. If species or habitat are present, avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures would be identified and implemented through Section 7 consultation to address potential adverse effects to federally listed species.
Floodplains, Wetlands, and Coastal Zone Management	Projects will avoid the floodplains and/or wetlands. If development must occur in a FFRMS floodplain, then additional NEPA analysis would be required and VA would follow regulatory requirements and appropriate guidance. If impacts would exceed the nationwide permit thresholds, then VA would prepare an individual permit and additional NEPA documentation. If the placement of fill, or discharge of dredged materials in designated wetlands, could not be avoided, VA would obtain a Section 404 nationwide permit from USACE. If project impacts exceed the bounds afforded by the nationwide permit program, then an individual permit with additional NEPA documentation would occur. Local and state authorities will be consulted to ensure consistency with applicable Coastal Zone Management policies.

Resource	*Practice/Requirement/Measure*
Cultural Resources	(1) If previously unidentified historic or culturally significant items are discovered during construction, the construction contractor would immediately cease work in the area of the discovery until appropriate State Historic Preservation Office/Tribal Historic Preservation Office, and Tribes are contacted to properly identify and appropriately treat discovered items in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal law(s). (2) Should human remains be identified during ground-disturbing activities, all work in the vicinity of the discovery would cease immediately and local law enforcement contacted. The need for further consultation would be based on age and type of discovery as determined by initial assessment (i.e., likely crime scene, recent, historic, or prehistoric). (3) Mitigation measures developed during National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation to address potential adverse effects to cultural and historic resources will be implemented on a project-specific basis.
Transportation and Parking	(1) The construction contractor shall prepare and implement a transportation management plan to limit the effects of construction related on the surrounding roadway network, with special emphasis on scheduling trips to avoid the traditional peak commuting periods (typically between 7:00 and 9:00 A.M. and 4:30 to 5:30 P.M.). The delivery and removal of construction equipment, materials and debris, and worker commuting trips, must be scheduled to avoid these peak periods. The transportation management plan must also provide construction worker parking, and it must accommodate any existing parking spaces that are temporarily lost during construction activities. (2) Depending on the proposed operational traffic and existing transportation system capacity, additional coordination with the regional transportation authority would occur and appropriate mitigation measures would be identified and implemented. This may also include preparing a traffic study to support a project-specific analysis.

ES.5 Public Involvement and Agency Consultations

VA published a project scoping notice in the Federal Register, Vol. 88, No. 221 on Friday, November 17, 2023, initiating the scoping process for the PEA and inviting the public, government agencies, Tribes, and other interested persons and organizations to provide comments on the scope of issues for analysis, input on potential alternatives, or information/analyses relevant to the proposed action. The VA also posted the scoping notice to the VA CFM website https://www.cfm.va.gov/environmental/index.asp. VA also emailed and mailed scoping notices to federal, state, territorial, and tribal stakeholders. The VA received thirteen responses from twelve states and one territory (Puerto Rico) during the 30-day public scoping period. VA has addressed their input in this PEA as applicable.

PUBLIC DRAFT
PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF REAL PROPERTY
BUILD-TO-SUIT LEASE PROGRAM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIGURES

TABLES

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ACM	asbestos-containing materials
BMP	Best Management Practice
CBOC	Community Based Outpatient Clinic (now referred to as OPCs)
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act
CFM	Office of Construction and Facility Management
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CLC	Community Living Center
CO	carbon monoxide
CO2	carbon dioxide
CO2e	equivalent CO2 rate
CWA	Clean Water Act
dB	decibel
dBA	A-weighted decibels
EA	environmental assessment
EO	Executive Order
ESA	environmental site assessment
FFRMS	Federal Flood Risk Management Standard
FONSI	finding of no significant impact
GHG	greenhouse gas
HVAC	heating, ventilation and cooling
IPaC	Information for Planning and Consultation
LEED	Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
Leq	equivalent continuous sound level
Lmax	maximum noise level
MHC	Mental Health Clinic
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NO2	nitrogen dioxide
NOx	nitrogen oxide
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
OPC	Outpatient Clinic
ORP	Office of Real Property
PACT Act	Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act
PEA	programmatic environmental assessment
PM2.5	particulate matter less than or equal to 2.5 microns in diameter
PM10	particulate matter less than or equal to 10 microns in diameter
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
REC	recognized environmental conditions
RONA	Record of Non-Applicability
SC-GHG	social cost of greenhouse gas emissions
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SO2	sulfur dioxide
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
TRI	Toxics Release Inventory
U.S.	United States
U.S.C.	United States Code
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	Unites States Geological Survey
VA	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
VAMC	Veterans Affairs Medical Center
VHA	Veterans Health Administration
WOTUS	Waters of the United States

1 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE ACTION

1.1 Introduction

The United States (U.S.) Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has prepared this programmatic environmental assessment (PEA) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 U.S. Code [U.S.C.] 4321-4370h) .

This PEA evaluates the potential impacts on the human environment from the construction, renovation, and repair of leased medical and medically related facilities to care for our nation's Veterans in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Tribal Lands, and the Territories of American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

VA will use this environmental impact analysis of the Proposed Action to determine whether it supports a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) or if it is necessary to prepare an environmental impact statement (if there is a potential for significant impacts).

This PEA considers public, agency, and Tribal input into the federal decision-making process, provides the federal decision-maker with an understanding of potential environmental effects of the decision before making it, identifies measures to reduce potential environmental effects, and documents the VA's NEPA process to consider the environmental effects of the Proposed Action.

1.2 Background

The role of the VA Office of Construction and Facility Management (CFM) is to advance VA's larger mission in support of our Nation's Veterans by planning, designing, constructing, and acquiring major facilities and setting design and construction standards.

The VA Office of Real Property (ORP), a division within CFM, supports VA's mission by acquiring land and leasing space for the construction of medical and medically related facilities to care for our nation's Veterans. In addition to procurement, ORP is involved with intergovernmental transfers, and the granting of easements, licenses, and permits. ORP also provides guidance to regional and local VA offices regarding real property (VA CFM 2023a).

VA determines requirements for a medical facility based on the number of Veterans currently receiving and forecast to receive health care services in an area. Through a competitive process, ORP then selects a developer who would construct the facility on a build-to-suit basis and then lease the facility to VA for up to 20 years. The developer (lessor) would be responsible for designing and constructing the facilities in compliance with VA design requirements and applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

ORP strives to locate primary care facilities within 30 minutes and specialty care within 60 minutes of Veterans. The market drives many of the location factors when siting leases. These include the availability of sufficient land (to provide sufficient clinical space and parking) and the cost of the land (typically costs are higher in urban areas).

As shown in Table 1-1, VA has a total of 1,990 leases currently in operation. Nearly all the leases are for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) (VA ORP 2023).

Table 1-1. Current Office of Real Property Leases

Program	*Leases*	*Buildings*	*Total Gross SF*
National Cemetery Association	7	616	1,339,182
Staff	99	11	1,811,322
Veterans Benefits Administration	171	14	735,322
VHA	1,713	5,634	152,605,584
Totals	1,990	6,275	156,491,410

Notes: SF = square footage; VHA = Veterans Health Administration.
Source: VA ORP 2023.

1.2.1 Types of Build-to-Suit Leases Considered

This PEA focuses on the build-to-suit lease program for the construction, renovation, repair, and operation of outpatient clinics (OPCs), community living centers (CLCs), and other similar leased medical facilities across the U.S., Tribal Lands, and U.S. Territories. Descriptions of each main type of medical facility overseen by VA follows.

1.2.1.1 Outpatient Clinics

In the early 1990s, VHA began developing a strategy to expand its capacity to provide outpatient primary care, especially for Veterans who had to travel long distances to receive care at VA facilities. To facilitate access to primary care closer to where Veterans reside, VHA began implementing a system for approving and establishing OPCs. These clinics provide the most common outpatient services, including health and wellness visits, without the time and energy associated with visiting a larger medical center. A common example of an OPC is a community based outpatient clinic (CBOC).

An OPC is a fixed health care site that is geographically distinct or separate from its parent VA medical facility. An OPC can be either VA-owned and VA-staffed, or contracted to healthcare management organizations. It must have the necessary professional medical staff, access to diagnostic testing and treatment capability, and the referral arrangements needed to ensure continuity of health care for Veterans.

All OPCs operate under the supervision and guidance of a single VA hospital or medical center (VAMC). The parent VAMC maintains administrative responsibility for its OPC(s), specifically with respect to maintaining quality of care. VA and/or contracted staff operate OPCs.

As shown on Figure 1-1, VA currently offers nearly 750 OPCs to meet the needs of Veterans. VHA continues to expand their network of OPCs to include more rural locations, making access to care closer to home. Planning and development of a new OPC is based on VA's need, available resources, local market circumstances, and Veteran preference.

1.2.1.2 Community Living Centers

A CLC is a VA Nursing Home, also referred to as a domiciliary. A VA CLC resembles a "home" as much as possible. Veterans may stay for a short time or, in rare instances, for the rest of their life. It is a place where Veterans can receive nursing home level of care, which includes help with activities of daily living and skilled nursing and medical care. The mission of a CLC is to restore each Veteran to his or her highest level of well-being. It is also to prevent declines in health and to provide comfort at the end of life. CLCs provide long-term care, short-term rehabilitation, domiciliary cottages, memory care services, short-term “respite” care, and end-of-life/hospice services. Most CLCs are located on or close to the campus of a VAMC. As shown on Figure 1-1, there are 130 CLCs across the country.

1.2.1.3 Other Similar Leased Facilities

This PEA also analyzes the future construction, renovation, or repair of other similar medical facilities that provide common medical services, to include Outpatient Clinics (OPCs) and Mental Health Clinics (MHCs). OPCs provide primary care and specialty health services, including mental health care, physical and occupational therapy, treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder, social work, women’s health services, and more. MHCs provide mental health services such as therapy, treatment plans, consultations, and other related services. In addition to the medical facilities themselves, the construction, renovation, or repair of associated structures is also included. For example, parking lots, parking structures, and research facilities.

By offering primary health care services to new, off-site, leased locations, VA can enhance outpatient services by closing space and utilization gaps identified in the VA Strategic Capital Investment Planning process and reducing patient wait times. New OPCs also expand and enhance primary care and mental health services in appropriately sized and efficient state-of-the-art facilities.

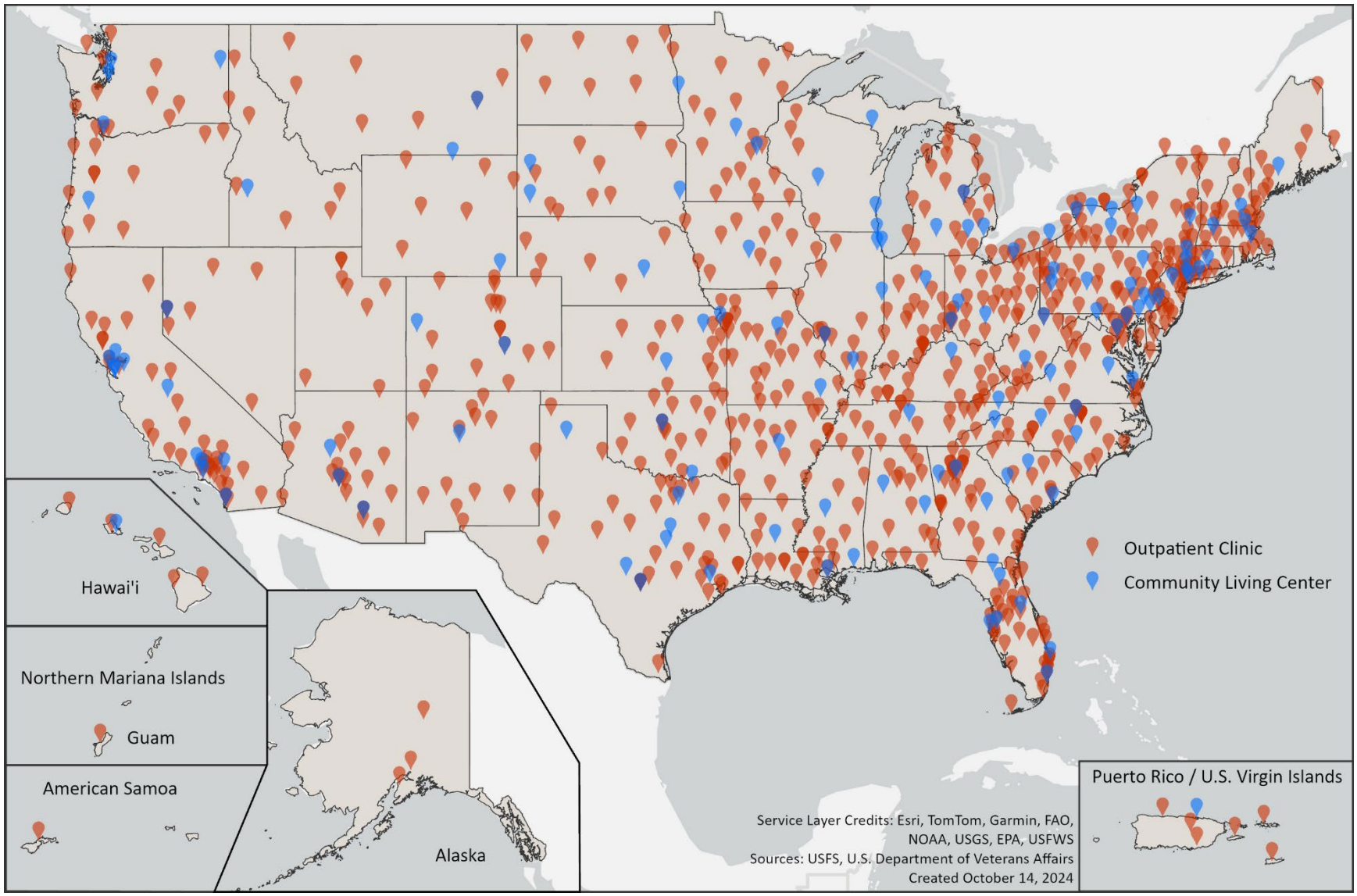

Figure 1.1. Location and Number of Existing Outpatient Clinics and Community Living Centers

1.2.2 Recent and Anticipated Future Build-to-Suit Leasing Projects

1.2.2.1 Recent Leases

In 2019, VA awarded 13 major leases to improve access to care and deliver health care facilities to Veterans. These awards were a result of VA's leasing business transformation effort to improve the timeliness of the lease procurement process. Of the 13 major leases, 11 were for CBOCs (also referred to as OPCs), 1 was for a primary care facility, and 1 was for a research and development facility. The projects occurred in eight states and Puerto Rico (VA 2018). As VA is committed to delivering these projects to Veterans as quickly as possible, while continuing to comply with all federal procurement laws and regulations, having an efficient NEPA compliance pathway established and available helps expedite project delivery.

1.2.2.2 Future Leases

VA anticipates awarding four medical leases in fiscal year 2024. The 2022 passing of the *Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act* (PACT Act) included more than 30 leases and established a simplified process for VA to award leases. As such, in the next three years, ORP anticipates awarding more than 50 leases to meet the growing needs of the Veteran population. Over the five years considered in this PEA, it is conceivable that dozens of leases could be awarded and rely on this PEA for NEPA compliance.

1.3 Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to continue to provide eligible Veterans common medical services, assisted living care, and related services. The Proposed Action is needed to address current and future projected health care gaps and operational inefficiencies, especially in rural areas where access to common medical services offered by VAMCs is not an easily accessible option.

1.4 Programmatic NEPA and the National Historical Preservation Act

1.4.1 Programmatic NEPA

VA NEPA reviews may be on a site- or project-specific level or on broader—programmatic—level. VA guidance from the VA NEPA Interim Guidance (VA 2010) suggests that using a programmatic approach for projects allows for deferring of issues that will be addressed in consultations, to include consultation with State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) and others as required by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (54 U.S.C. 300101 et seq.) and 36 CFR Part 800 (collectively referred to as "Section 106").

Programmatic NEPA reviews assess the environmental impacts of proposed policies, plans, programs, or projects for which subsequent actions will be implemented either based on the programmatic NEPA document or based on subsequent NEPA reviews tiered to the programmatic review (e.g., a site- or project-specific document). The same regulations and guidance that apply to non-programmatic NEPA reviews govern VA's programmatic NEPA reviews.

Programmatic NEPA reviews address the general environmental issues relating to broad decisions, such as those establishing policies, plans, programs, or suite of projects, and can effectively frame the scope of subsequent site- and project-specific federal actions. A well-crafted programmatic NEPA review provides the basis for decisions to approve such broad or high-level decisions such as identifying geographically bounded areas within which future proposed activities can occur or identifying broad mitigation and conservation measures to apply to subsequent tiered reviews.

One advantage of preparing a programmatic NEPA review for repetitive agency activities is that the programmatic NEPA review can provide a starting point for analyzing direct and indirect impacts. Using programmatic NEPA reviews allows an agency to tier this analysis, and analyze narrower, site- or proposal-specific issues. This avoids repetitive, broad-level analyses in subsequent NEPA reviews and provides a more comprehensive picture of the consequences of multiple proposed actions.

This PEA will decrease the time and cost associated with having to prepare stand-alone NEPA documents for those recurring, predictable, and low-impact construction, renovation, or repair projects that would result in less than significant impacts. The application of this PEA for qualifying actions would streamline the NEPA review process for future qualifying build-to-suit lease projects, while still allowing VA to consider the activities and their impacts.

VA must comply with all applicable federal environmental laws, executive orders (EOs), and regulations, including review of potential environmental impacts.. As such, this PEA evaluates, at a programmatic level, the potential environmental effects of qualifying projects. This PEA also facilitates VA's compliance with other environmental and historic preservation requirements by providing a framework to address the impacts of qualifying future build-to-suit lease projects.

This PEA aims to provide an efficient NEPA compliance pathway for the implementation of typical lease projects that would result in less than significant environmental impacts. Use of this PEA would decrease the time and cost associated with having to prepare stand-alone NEPA documentation for those future projects that would meet the conditions of this PEA.

Thus, implementation of the Proposed Action would provide the flexibility for future qualifying leasing projects to occur as needed and when needed, streamlining the NEPA documentation process and accelerating the implementation of projects to meet the needs of Veterans.

1.4.2 NHPA Program Alternatives

The NEPA process often involves coordinating with other environmental laws, including NHPA. NHPA establishes a national policy of historical preservation. Section 106 of the NHPA (54 U.S.C. 306108) requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their actions on historic properties, and states that the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) must be afforded an opportunity to comment. The Section 106 process involves identification of historic properties within area of potential effect and requires an assessment of the potential impact of an undertaking on historic properties with the goal to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects to such properties (36 CFR Part 800).

The regulations entitled "Protection of Historic Properties" (36 CFR Part 800) offer a variety of ways federal agencies may tailor the Section 106 review process. Federal agencies sometimes need a more flexible approach to ensure the requirements of Section 106 are achieved and historic preservation

concerns are balanced with other federal mission requirements and needs. There are five program alternatives through which agencies can streamline the review process for a group of undertakings or an entire program that may affect historic properties (ACHP 2023).

The five program alternatives (36 CFR § 800.14) are:

- Programmatic Agreements
- Exempted Categories
- Standard Treatment
- Program Comments
- Alternate Procedures

A program alternative might be considered in situations such as when:

- An agency will carry out a certain type of undertaking repeatedly (*this applies with this PEA*)
- Addressing effects to or a treatment of a category of historic properties is more efficient or consistent than individual reviews (*this applies with this PEA*)
- Tailoring the four-step process to agency programs could increase specificity, reduce delays, or allow applicants to take on more responsibility (*this applies with this PEA*) (ACHP 2023).

Program alternatives can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Section 106 reviews and streamline routine interactions while focusing effort on the more complex projects or historic properties most important to communities. In consultation with the ACHP and other stakeholders, VA is consulting to develop a program alternative to satisfy the Section 106 requirements for this project. This program alternative may be broader in scope than this PEA.

1.4.3 Prior NEPA and NHPA Compliance

1.4.3.1 Prior NEPA Compliance Documentation

Over the past 2+ years, VA has prepared more than ten separate environmental assessments (EAs) analyzing the potential impacts associated with demolishing, constructing, renovating, or repairing CBOCs (also known as OPCs), CLCs, and other similar leased facilities. Table 1-2 summarizes ten of the EAs and their respective key components. Each of the VA NEPA documents resulted in a FONSI.

Table 1-2. Recently Completed EAs for Build-to-Suit Lease Projects

Location	*Lease Type*	*Proposed Action*	*Project Area (SF)*
DeKalb County, GA	CLC	Demolition of existing CLC	30,500
Volusia County, FL	OPC	Construction of new OPC	122,900
Alachua County, FL	OPC and MHC	Construction of new OPC and MHC	OPC: 70,849 MHC: 39,932
Alameda County, CA	CBOC/OPC	Construction of CBOC/OPC	35,000
Spotsylvania County, VA	HCC	Construction of new HCC	426,722
Duval County, FL	OPC and CLC	Construction of new OPC and CLC	OPC: 158,600 CLC: 26,900
Alameda County, CA	CBOC/OPC	Construction of new CBOC/OPC	84,000
Wake County, NC	OPC	Construction of new OPC	222,325
Hernando County, FL	CBOC/OPC	Construction of current CBOC/OPC	48,638
Kent County, MI	CLC	Construction of new CLC	160,000

Notes: CBOC = Community Based Outpatient Clinic (also referred to as OPC); CLC = Community Living Center; OPC = Outpatient Clinic; MHC = Mental Health Clinic; HCC = Health Care Center; SF = square feet.
Source: VA CFM 2023b.

1.4.3.2 Prior NHPA Compliance Documentation

Lease projects must comply with the NHPA. Between January 2020 and March 2023, VA activated 526 leases. Of these efforts, VA, in consultation with SHPOs and participating Native American Tribes and other stakeholders, determined that no historic properties were affected or that the undertaking did not adversely affect historic properties in all consultation efforts. VA has consistently documented that Section 106 consultations related to lease projects often result in concurrence from stakeholders of our finding of No Historic Properties Affected (i.e., no historic properties were present on/or adjacent to the project site or the federal action did not impact historic properties). These consultation efforts involve considerable time and effort from VA to achieve this concurrence.

2 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Development of Alternatives

VA considered potential reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Action but did not identify any. Through this process, VA determined this PEA would evaluate the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative.

2.2 Alternatives

2.2.1 Proposed Action

2.2.1.1 Overview

Under the Proposed Action, VA would establish leases that would result in the construction, renovation, or repair of leased medical and medically related facilities to care for our nation's Veterans in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Tribal Lands, and the Territories of American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

This PEA will provide NEPA analysis and compliance for lease projects that meet the following conditions:

- Construction projects of no more than 250,000 square feet or 25 acres of total development.
- Renovation or repair projects of any size.

Conversely, if a proposed lease project would result in any of the following conditions, this PEA would not provide NEPA compliance and VA would have to prepare separate, stand-alone NEPA documentation:

- Proposed projects that are greater than the square footage or acreage limits identified above.
- Proposed projects with potential impacts anticipated to be greater than those considered/identified in this PEA.

Chapter 6 outlines the process VA would follow to determine if this PEA would provide NEPA compliance for a future VA leasing project.

2.2.1.2 Project Details

Table 1-1 provided examples of previous lease program construction projects and associated key components. Under the Proposed Action, those and similar types of projects would continue to occur, subject to conforming to the thresholds established in this PEA. The following sections and graphics provide details and visual depictions of the types of activities, infrastructure, operations, and timelines associated with the types of projects that would occur under the Proposed Action.

Construction

Outpatient Clinics/Community Based Outpatient Clinic

VA determines the size of the Outpatient Clinic (OPC) formerly referred to as CBOC, and land required for the OPC based on the number of Veterans currently receiving health care services in the area and the forecasted number of Veterans requiring these services. VA would then select a developer who would construct the OPC on a build-to-suit basis and then lease the facility to VA for up to 20 years. The developer (lessor) would be responsible for designing and constructing the facilities in compliance with VA design requirements and applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

OPCs are typically one- or two-story buildings constructed on vacant or previously developed or disturbed properties, generally in suburban or rural areas. If existing buildings or structures are on the property and they cannot be repurposed, the project would demolish and grade the property to meet the needs of the new facility. Following all applicable surveys for hazardous materials, workers would handle and dispose of all demolition debris in accordance with all applicable regulations. The OPC design would reflect a modern-quality building with a façade of stone, marble, brick, stainless steel, aluminum or other permanent materials.

OPCs provide primary, specialty, and/or ancillary medical services to Veterans, typically in one building. OPCs do not typically provide an emergency room or urgent care. An emergency generator to serve the OPC is usually located on-site. Parking would be provided with a lot or parking structure adjacent to the building for Veterans, staff, and visitors to use. OPCs would also include utilities, sidewalks, and landscaping. Figure 2-2 provides an example site plan from a recent OPC construction project in Fremont, California (VA 2020a).

A OPC may include renewable energy options such as solar hot water, photovoltaic panels, and a ground source heat pump. A OPC design may also include dedicated electric vehicle charging spaces. Stormwater management elements and best management practices (BMPs)are part of the project design. Construction of a OPC may take approximately one to three years to complete, depending on the size of the facility and complexity of the site/design.

OPCs are typically open Monday through Saturday except on federal holidays. Operating hours are typically Monday through Friday from 7 A.M. to 6 P.M. and on Saturdays from 7 A.M. to 1 P.M. VA workers would staff the facility and the lessor would provide facility management and maintenance. Depending on the size of the OPCs, anywhere from a few tens to several hundred staff may be employed. Daily traffic consists of vehicles associated with staff arriving and departing each day, Veteran visits, visitor vehicles, and deliveries.

Figure 2.1. Example of a Typical OPC Project Site Plan

Community Living Center

VA determines the size of the CLC and land required for the CLC based on the number of Veterans requiring CLC services. VA would then select a developer who would construct the CLC on a build-to-suit basis and then lease the facility to VA for up to 20 years. The developer (lessor) would be responsible for designing and constructing the CLC in compliance with VA design requirements and applicable federal, state, and local regulations. The style of the development of CLCs is typically "neighborhood-like" with smaller buildings centered on neighborhood and community centers.

CLCs are typically one- or two-story buildings constructed on vacant or previously developed properties. Most CLCs are located on or close to the campus of an existing VAMC. If existing buildings or structures are on the property and they cannot be repurposed, the project would demolish and grade the property to meet the needs of the new facility. Following all applicable surveys for hazardous materials, workers would handle and dispose of all demolition debris in accordance with all applicable regulations.

An emergency generator to serve the CLC is usually located on-site. Parking would be provided with a lot or parking structure adjacent to the building for Veterans, staff, and visitors to use. CLCs also include utilities, sidewalks, and landscaping. Figure 2-3 provides a photo of the exterior of a recently constructed CLC in American Lake, Washington (note the green roof and recreation elements).

Figure 2.2. Recently Constructed CLC (back of building)

A CLC may include renewable energy options such as solar hot water, photovoltaic panels, and a ground source heat pump. A CLC design may also include dedicating electric vehicle charging spaces. Stormwater management elements and BMPs are part of the project design. Construction of a CLC may take approximately one to three years to complete, depending on the size of the facility and complexity of the site/design.

Veterans can receive nursing home level of care, which includes help with activities of daily living (e.g., bathing and dressing) and skilled nursing and medical care at a CLC. A CLC may provide capacity for up to several hundred Veterans. CLCs would operate 24-hours a day, 7-days a week. VA employees would staff the facility and the lessor would provide facility management and maintenance. Depending on the size of the CLC, anywhere from a few dozen to several hundred staff may be employed, working in rotating shifts. Daily traffic would consist of vehicles associated with staff arriving and departing each day, visitor vehicles, and deliveries.

Other Similar Leased Facilities

Other similar leased facilities would consist of other medical facilities, most commonly MHCs, or "build out" projects. Build out projects are the renovation of an existing building or storefront into a medical facility[1]. The design, construction, and operation of these facilities would be like that described for OPCs and CLCs; however, these other facilities are smaller than average OPCs and CLCs and have different parking requirements. These similar facilities are not usually open 24-hours a day.

Combination Construction Projects

Depending on the need and site availability, VA may establish a lease or leases for a contractor or contractors to construct more than one medical facility at a site. For example, in Florida, the VA established a build-to-suit lease for a OPC and MHC as independent projects on the same site (VA 2019a) (Figure 2-3). In another Florida project example, an OPC and CLC were constructed on the same site (VA 2020b). In these instances when more than one medical facility is proposed at a site, all development proposed for the site would be considered as one activity for comparison purposes to this PEA. The construction and operation of these facilities would be as described for the OPCs and CLCs.

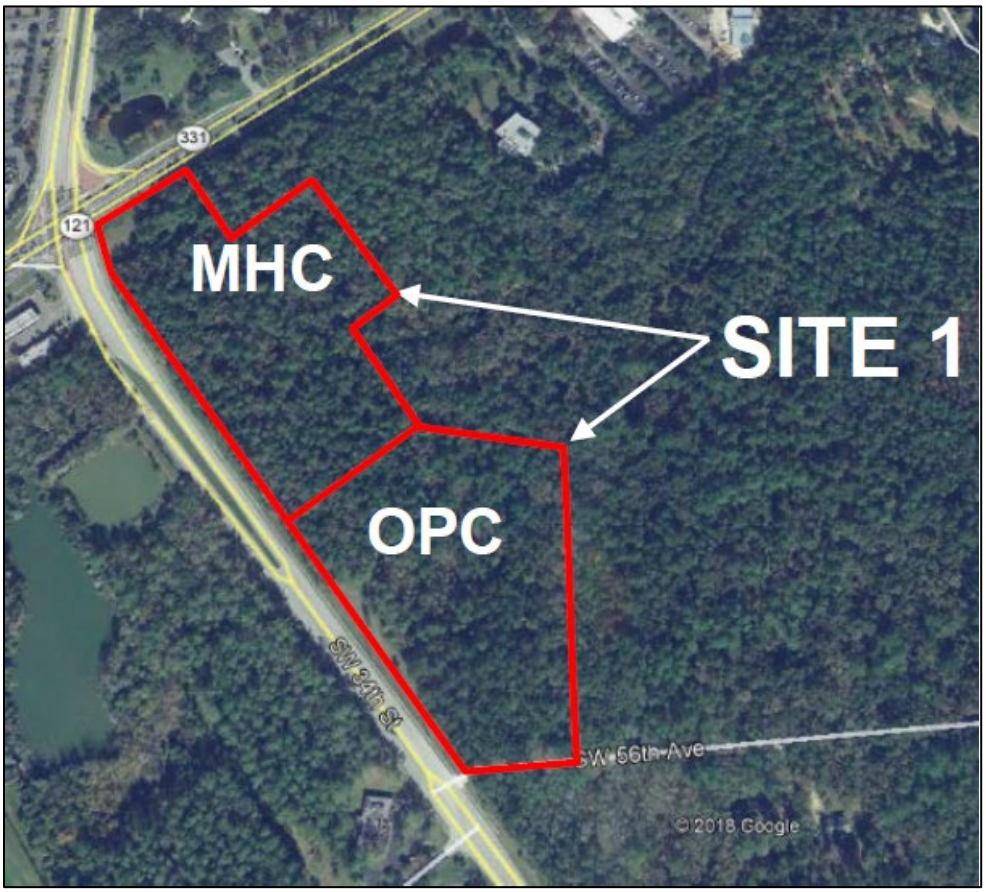

Figure 2.3. Example of Adjacent Build-to-Suit Lease Projects on the Same Site

[1] This news story provides a good summary of a typical build out project and the benefits to Veterans and the community: https://www.va.gov/central-iowa-health-care/news-releases/va-opening-new-south-des-moines-clinic-for-primary-care/

Renovation and Repair Projects

Renovation and repair activities would occur independently at an existing facility, or they could occur property-wide as part of a comprehensive repair/replacement program. Typical renovation/repair projects would not result in changes in staffing or traffic and in some instances may result in a decrease in utility demand. Renovation/Repair projects would typically take 6 months to 1 year to complete, depending on the type of project. Examples of both types of projects follow.

Renovation Projects

While some minor construction and/or demolition may occur, renovations generally can be categorized as roof replacements, heating, ventilation and cooling (HVAC) system improvements, room upgrades, and kitchen redesigns. Additional activities included as part of renovation projects could include:

- Upgrading, installing, and/or improving roads and pathways for Americans with Disabilities Act compliance and National Fire Protection Association fire access standards.
- Installing/Replacing non-compliant curb ramps with Americans with Disabilities Act compliant curb ramps.
- Repairing pavement.
- Installing solar photovoltaic panels opportunistically as rooftop-mounted photovoltaic solar array(s) on existing structure(s) or over existing parking area(s).
- Installing drop off canopies and covered walkways on existing buildings.

To accommodate advances in infection control, other types of renovation projects include:

- Conversion of multi-patient rooms to single-patient rooms.
- Replacement of porous surfaces with non-porous or “bleach-friendly” materials.
- Installation of “no-touch” systems such as hands-free soap dispensers.
- Replacement of existing HVAC units and systems with filtered units.

Repair Projects

These types of projects repair existing build-to-suit lease facilities. Typically repair projects do not result in substantial new construction or demolition as the activities are confined to the existing building and immediate surroundings. Example projects include roof repair/replacements, sidewalk repair/replacement, parking lot repair/replacement, utility repairs/replacements, window/door repair/replacements, and similar activities on existing buildings and infrastructure.

2.2.1.3 Related Elements Applicable to All Projects

The following elements would be part of all build-to-suit lease projects, as applicable.

Design to Avoid Sensitive Resource Areas

All projects would identify and avoid, as feasible, sensitive areas to avoid or minimize the potential for avoidable impacts. An example of an environmentally sensitive area is a wetland. In this example, the developer would obtain any necessary resource agency approvals/permits (e.g., a Clean Water Act [CWA] permit) prior to starting construction if the design cannot avoid impacting the wetland.

Sustainable Design

VA CFM Policy Memorandum 003C-2021-21, *Green Building Certification Requirements*, establishes green building certification requirements to support VA facility compliance with applicable laws. Section 5.4 of this memo states that CFM lease projects must comply with General Services Administration green building certification requirements. Major construction projects, including major upgrades/renovations are certified using U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification system and achieve a minimum certification level of silver (VA 2021a); however, certification via Green Globes is also an option. VA is currently reviewing their green building certification requirements with an intent to update the policy.

Staging Areas and Hazardous Materials

Contractors would use staging areas for temporarily storing materials and equipment in previously disturbed areas. All staging areas would be located within the property limits. Workers would drive to the project site and park in designated construction parking zones. Deliveries of project equipment and materials would occur during normal working hours.

Prior to performing any work, permitted workers would abate and properly dispose of all hazardous materials in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations and/or requirements. Workers would sort removed materials, appropriately stockpile them in a secure area, and then direct the materials for recycling or appropriate disposal at the nearest landfill or hazardous materials collection station.

Architectural Consistency

For renovation and repair projects, the resulting building finishes would strive to match existing finishes as much as possible and complement the overall site architecture. In addition, any surface architectural finishes of significance would be repaired/replaced with like materials to not diminish the integrity of the surface.

2.2.1.4 Hypothetical Applicability of PEA for Recently Completed Build-to-Suit Lease Program Environmental Assessments

Based on the limits of allowable activity established under this PEA, of the example past projects listed in Table 1-2 and again below in Table 2-1, nine of the recently completed build-to-suit lease VA NEPA documents would qualify under this PEA. The 10th project (Spotsylvania County, VA) would not qualify due to exceeding the square footage threshold.

Table 2-1. Hypothetical Applicability of PEA for Recently Completed Build-to-Suit Lease EAs

Location	*Lease Type*	*Proposed Action*	*Project Area (SF)*
DeKalb County, GA	CLC	Demolition of existing CLC	30,500
Volusia County, FL	OPC	Construction of new OPC	122,900
Alachua County, FL	OPC and MHC	Construction of new OPC and MHC	OPC: 70,849 MHC: 39,932
Alameda County, CA	CBOC/OPC	Construction of CBOC	35,000
Spotsylvania County, VA	*HCC*	*Construction of new HCC*	*426,722*
Duval County, FL	OPC and CLC	Construction of new OPC and CLC	OPC: 158,600 CLC: 26,900
Alameda County, CA	CBOC/OPC	Construction of new CBOC	84,000
Wake County, NC	OPC	Construction of new OPC	222,325
Hernando County, FL	CBOC/OPC	Construction of current CBOC	48,638
Kent County, MI	CLC	Construction of new CLC	160,000

Notes: CBOC – Community Based Outpatient Clinic (also referred to as OPC); CLC = Community Living Center; OPC = Outpatient Clinic; MHC = Mental Health Clinic; HCC = Health Care Center; SF = Square Feet/Footage.
Source: VA CFM 2023b.

2.2.1.5 PEA Duration

VA anticipates this PEA and the associated decision document will be valid for at least five years. After five years, VA will revisit the PEA conditions and analysis for each proposed project and assess if the PEA is still valid for use. If not, VA will prepare additional NEPA documentation.

2.2.1.6 PEA Geography

VA would be able to use this PEA for VA NEPA compliance, subject to confirmation of its applicability given the identified constraints, in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Tribal Lands, and the Territories of American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

2.2.1.7 Compliance with Other Environmental Requirements

National Historic Preservation Act

The most common resource agency compliance documentation VA prepares for their proposed actions is for Section 106 of the NHPA. This project is no exception. As such, VA prepared this PEA in concert with NHPA Section 106 compliance documentation. VA is consulting to develop a Program Alternative for the Proposed Action (or "Undertaking" as defined in Section 106) in coordination with stakeholders to satisfy Section 106 requirements. VA will update this PEA to reflect the outcome of Section 106 consultation. Until the Program Alternative is issued, VA will follow the standard Section 106 process.

Clean Air Act

For those future construction, renovation, or repair actions occurring within areas designated as being in non-attainment or in maintenance for air quality standards under the Clean Air Act, VA would rely on a Record of Non-Applicability (RONA) prepared as part of this PEA. The RONA demonstrates that the most potentially impactful project from an air quality perspective would generate emissions below *de minimis* in all non-attainment areas. Prior to construction, VA CFM would validate the RONA is applicable. If not,

a project-specific air conformity analysis would be prepared, along with additional VA NEPA documentation.

CWA and Endangered Species Act

As necessary, VA would prepare project and site-specific documentation to ensure compliance with the CWA and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. As a rule, VA strives to avoid direct impacts to water resources and sensitive species. However, should any unavoidable impacts occur, VA would engage in necessary consultation and obtain all required approvals and permits prior to construction, along with any additional NEPA documentation.

2.2.2 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, VA would not implement the Proposed Action. The No Action Alternative equates to baseline (existing) conditions and does not imply that VA would not implement future build-to-suit lease projects discussed in Section 2.2.1. Rather, VA would continue to prepare stand-alone VA specific NEPA documentation and associated regulatory compliance documents, thereby increasing costs, effort, and duration for VA, reviewers, agencies, and other stakeholders (e.g., SHPOs and the ACHP). The No Action Alternative does not fully meet the purpose and need. The No Action Alternative also provides a benchmark for comparing and analyzing the effects of the Proposed Action.

2.3 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated From Further Consideration

VA did not identify any potential alternatives to the Proposed Action that meet the purpose of and need for the project.

3 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This section describes the affected environment specific to each resource and evaluates the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative on that resource. As a nationwide program, the region of influence is the U.S., here defined as all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Tribal Lands, and the Territories of American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

To characterize this wide spectrum of geographically, ecologically, culturally, and socioeconomically diverse areas, this PEA presents the affected environment through 14 resource areas, with each resource area described using the most appropriate and meaningful "units of analysis." The units of analysis provide a reasonable resource-area specific way to divide up the project area into regions to support this analysis.

In considering the degree of the effects, this PEA considers the following:

- Both short- and long-term effects.
- Both beneficial and adverse effects.
- Effects on public health and safety.
- Effects that would violate federal, state, tribal, or local laws protecting the environment.

For each resource, this PEA identifies the methodology and general assumptions used in the analysis and identifies management measures such as BMPs or monitoring requirements that would be incorporated into the Proposed Action, as well as mitigation measures that decrease any identified potential environmental impacts. Chapter 4 identifies mitigation measures for each resource, as applicable.

As presented in Section 1.4.3.1, VA recently prepared ten separate EAs analyzing the potential impacts associated with constructing, renovating/repairing, and operating OPCs, CLCs, and other similar leased facilities. Each of these EAs determined that the proposed actions would result in less than significant impacts to all resources. Because the types of activities proposed under this PEA are nearly identical to the previous EAs, the findings of these representative EAs are incorporated into this PEA, as applicable, to support the analysis and conclusions herein.

The Proposed Action would comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including those listed in Appendix A. Because compliance with applicable laws is mandatory, including those that prevent potential impacts or lessen potential impacts to levels that are not significant, this PEA does not identify compliance with the requirements of such laws and regulations as mitigation. Compliance is an inherent component of the Proposed Action.

3.1 Aesthetics

Aesthetics refers to the visual interaction between an individual and the environment based on qualitative scenic features. A combination of natural and built features influence and contribute to the aesthetic quality of an area. The following site characteristics are typically included in determining aesthetic qualities: topographic relief; prominence of water in the viewscape; type of vegetation present; diversity of scenery; level of human development or disturbance in the area; and presence or absence of any unique scenic features compared with surrounding land.

3.1.1 Affected Environment

The aesthetic characteristics of a project area largely depend on whether the area is remote, rural, or urban. Remote or rural settings tend to consist of naturally occurring landforms and vegetation, such as mountains, undulating land, valleys, cliffs, lakes, streams, beaches, and natural vegetation. In rural areas, some signs of human activity are likely to be present and may contribute to the area's visual aesthetics. These may include farmhouses, agricultural fields, fences, barns, silos, scenic highways, and lighthouses. Remote areas may have no visible structures.

In contrast, urban settings tend to be dominated by constructed features. Examples of these features include houses, apartment buildings, office buildings, warehouses, rail yards, utility plants, historic buildings, landmarks, parking areas, storage yards, billboards, and signage. Vegetation in an urban setting is primarily lawns, shrubs, and ornamental trees.

A typical new construction, renovation, or repair of leasing projects usually occurs on vacant or previously developed or disturbed properties, or adjacent to existing VA facilities. The typical aesthetics of the facilities include a "neighborhood-like" style of development with smaller buildings centered on neighborhood and community centers. Leasing projects often include utilities, sidewalks, and landscaping.

3.1.2 Environmental Consequences

3.1.2.1 Proposed Action

Over the past two years, VA prepared 10 separate EAs analyzing the potential impacts of construction, renovation, or repair of leasing projects (see Section 1.4.3; VA CFM 2023b). The size of the project area assessed in the documents varied from 30,500 to 426,722 square feet.

Each of the EAs determined that there would be less than significant impacts to aesthetics from the construction, renovation, repair, and operation of the facilities, although short-term impacts to aesthetics over the course of demolition, construction, and/or renovation was common. Typical measures to minimize impacts included:

- Erecting temporary fencing to minimize views of the project area during construction.
- Designing new and renovated structures to be compatible with and/or enhance the aesthetics of the area.
- Placing electrical utilities underground wherever possible.
- Incorporating visually pleasing landscaping, trails, and parks when possible.

These measures would be implemented as warranted for future qualifying leasing projects.

Demolition/Construction/Renovation

VA would work with local leasing program representatives to site new facilities in areas of low to medium visual sensitivity. Doing so would ensure that the resulting facility would be compatible with the surrounding visual environment. If this is not possible, and the leasing program wishes to pursue development in an area of high visual sensitivity, then further NEPA analysis would be required.

Under the Proposed Action, demolition, construction, and renovation activities may include site preparation; grading and excavation; increased vehicle traffic; movement of heavy equipment; and paving roadways, pathways, and parking areas. These temporary activities would have short-term impacts on aesthetics over the course of the project. Any rehabilitation, renovation, or repair activities on the interior of the buildings would have no impact to the aesthetics of the project area.

Demolition and construction have a potential for short-term temporary impacts to aesthetics. Temporary fencing would be erected to minimize viewing of the site during the construction. Visually, the site would not be aesthetically pleasing during this phase. Construction of OPCs and CLCs is anticipated to last one to three years, depending on the size and complexity of the structure(s). The impacts to aesthetics would only last for the duration of the demolition and construction project.

A typical OPC design would reflect a modern-quality building with a façade of stone, marble, brick, stainless steel, aluminum, or other permanent materials. Most OPC structures would be one to two stories and include a parking lot/structure and associated utilities, sidewalks, and landscaping. Wherever possible, features such as green roofs will be incorporated into the design. Given these parameters, new OPCs would strive to reflect the overall visual character of the project area, thus maintaining or improving aesthetics.

The typical CLC design is “neighborhood-like” with smaller buildings centered on neighborhood and community centers. They are typically located on or close to an existing VAMC campus, and thus would contribute to the overall aesthetic of the VAMC. Most CLC structures will be one to two stories and include a parking lot/structure and associated utilities, sidewalks, and landscaping. Wherever possible, features such as green roofs will be incorporated into the design. Given these parameters, new CLCs would strive to reflect the overall visual character of the project area, thus maintaining or improving aesthetics.

The design and construction of other similar leased facilities would be like that described for OPCs and CLCs; however, these other facilities are smaller than average OPCs and CLCs and have different parking requirements. They would have similar short-term impacts to aesthetics during demolition, construction, or renovation activities. Additionally, they would be designed to complement the existing visual character of the project area, thus maintaining or improving aesthetics.

Renovations and repairs would involve upgrades and improvements to existing projects, such as pavement repair, covered walkway installation, and upgraded curb ramps. Upgrading outdated building components and surroundings would enhance overall aesthetics. Renovation and repair activities are typically confined to the existing building and immediate surroundings. Similar to rehabilitation projects, upgrading outdated building components and surroundings through renovations or repairs would enhance overall aesthetics. For renovation and repair projects, the resulting building finishes would strive to match existing finishes as much as possible and complement the overall site architecture. In addition, any surface architectural finishes of significance would be repaired/replaced with like materials to not diminish the integrity of the surface.

Operations

Under the Proposed Action, there would be no additional impact to aesthetics once construction and/or renovation is complete. Facility staff would provide upkeep and maintenance on the facilities and landscaping, which would preserve aesthetic quality over time.

Summary

Aside from short-term visual impacts during construction, renovation, or repair activities, implementation of the Proposed Action would result in medical facilities visually consistent with the existing visual environment. Therefore, the Proposed Action would result in less than significant impacts to aesthetics.

3.1.2.2 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative equates to the continuation of the existing leasing program. With respect to NEPA compliance, future proposed leasing actions would continue to require the preparation of project- and site-specific NEPA documentation. Under the No Action Alternative, for those projects that would have otherwise qualified for NEPA compliance under this PEA, overall impacts to aesthetics are anticipated to be no more than those as described for the Proposed Action. Therefore, while impacts to aesthetics are anticipated to be less than significant, the stand-alone NEPA document for each proposed project would determine and disclose the project-specific impacts.

3.2 Air Quality

Air quality is defined as the concentration of various pollutants in the atmosphere in a given location. Every location lies within a region, or air basin, that shares climate and air movement similarities. Many factors influence a region's air quality, including the type and quantity of pollutants emitted into the atmosphere, the size and topography of the air basin, and the prevailing meteorological conditions.

Most air pollutants originate from human-made sources, including mobile sources (for example, cars, trucks, buses) and stationary sources (for example, factories, refineries, power plants), as well as indoor sources (for example, some building materials and cleaning solvents). Natural sources such as dust storms and forest fires also release pollutants. Generally speaking, urban areas have higher concentrations of air quality pollutants than rural areas. However, rural areas can be affected by natural incidents that affect air quality. Due to the migratory nature of air pollutants, emissions from urban areas or large sources of pollutants (like a forest fire) can negatively affect air quality miles away.

Both the Federal Government and states have enacted legislation designed to improve or protect air quality. The 1970 Federal Clean Air Act covers the entire country. This law (and its amendments in 1977 and 1990) allows individual states to set stronger air quality standards, but states cannot have weaker air quality standards than those set for the entire country.

3.2.1 Affected Environment

3.2.1.1 Air Quality

The Federal Clean Air Act is the primary federal statute governing the control of air quality. The Clean Air Act designates six pollutants as "criteria pollutants" for which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has established National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) to protect public health and welfare. The criteria pollutants are carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), ozone, suspended particulate matter less than or equal to 10 microns in diameter (PM_{10}), fine particulate matter less than or equal to 2.5 microns in diameter ($PM_{2.5}$), and lead. CO, SO_2, NO_2, lead,

and some particulates emit directly into the atmosphere from emissions sources. Ozone and some NO_2 and particulates form through atmospheric chemical reactions from other pollutant emissions (called precursors).

Areas that meet the NAAQS are classified as attainment areas or attainment/unclassifiable. Unclassifiable just means that the monitoring data shows the area likely meets the standard or that the USEPA has determined the available data indicates the area is likely to be meeting the standard and not contributing to a nearby violation of NAAQS. Areas that do not meet NAAQS for criteria pollutants are "nonattainment areas" for that pollutant. The USEPA classifies areas that have transitioned from nonattainment to attainment as "maintenance areas." These areas are required to adhere to USEPA approved maintenance plans to ensure continued attainment standards. On February 7, 2024, the USEPA strengthened the NAAQS for particulate matter. The USEPA is reviewing data to determine if each area meets the new standard (USEPA 2024a).

Attainment status designations are codified under 40 CFR Subpart C – Section 107 Attainment Status Designations (81.300 to 81.356). The National Tribal Air Association works with the USEPA to determine proper designation. Certain parts of Tribal Lands are designated separately from adjacent areas (USEPA 2023a). The attainment designations for Tribal Lands are listed in 40 CFR 81.300 to 81.356 under the section with the state name. For example, *Lands of the Navajo Nation* is listed in Arizona (81.303).

Figure 3.1 provides an illustration of the counties designated as "nonattainment" or "maintenance" for NAAQS as of January 31, 2025 (USEPA 2025a). To view the most current listing of the nonattainment and maintenance areas in the U.S. and its Territories, and Tribal Lands, visit the USEPA Green Book site at https://www3.epa.gov/airquality/greenbook/ancl.html.

The USEPA General Conformity Rule (40 CFR Part 93, Subpart B) applies to federal actions occurring in nonattainment or maintenance areas. It sets limits for emissions that trigger requirements for a conformity determination. These limits, called *de minimis* thresholds, vary based on the pollutant and the specific designation of the project area. If a Proposed Action exceeds the *de minimis* thresholds, the General Conformity Rule requires the federal agency complete a more complex Conformity Determination.

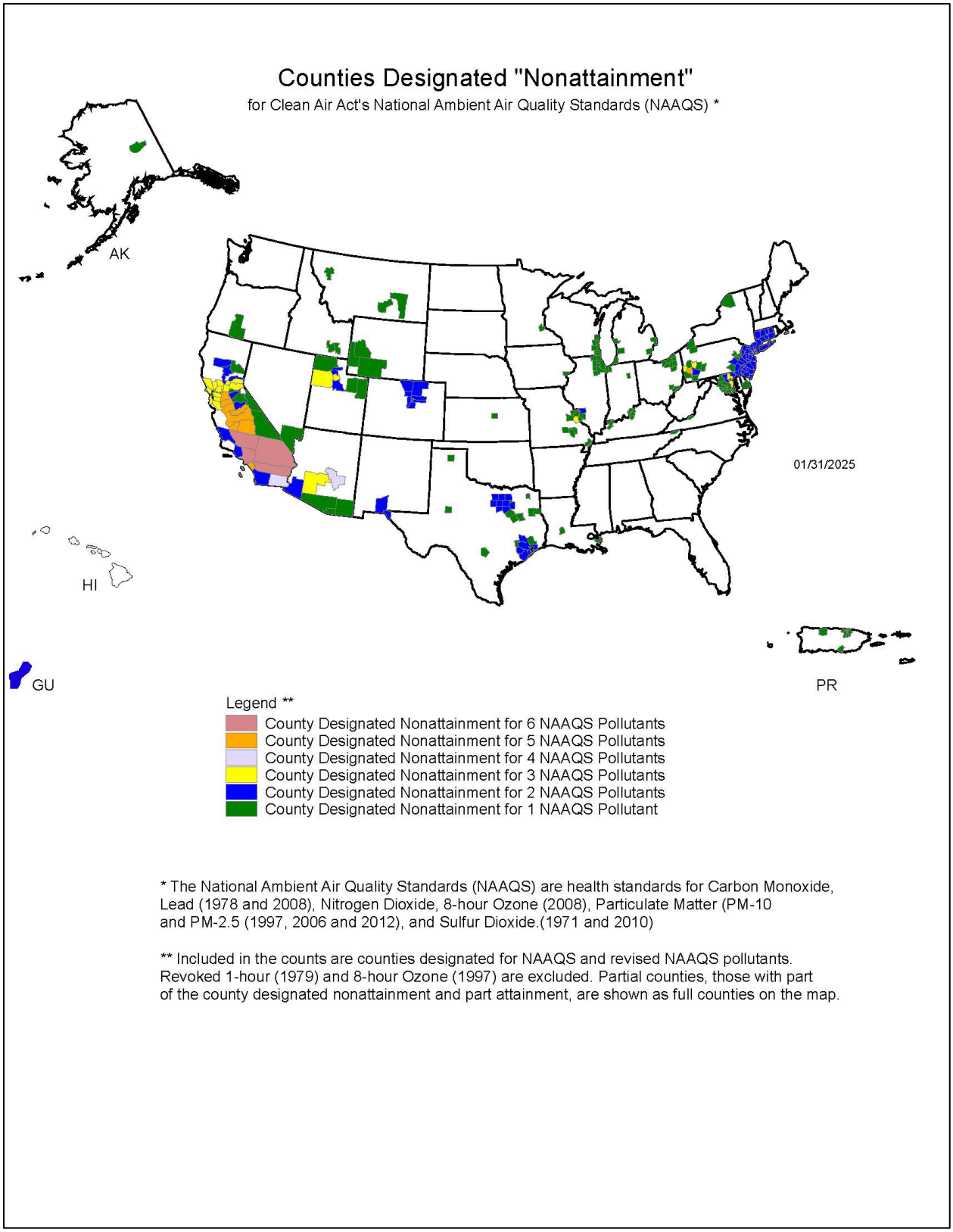

Figure 3.1. Counties Designated Nonattainment or Maintenance for NAAQS (USEPA 2025)

Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are gas emissions that trap heat in the atmosphere. These emissions occur from natural processes and human activities.

GHGs include carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane, nitrogen oxide (NOx), hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride, and other fluorinated gases including nitrogen trifluoride and hydrofluorinated ethers.

The VA Climate Action Plan (VA 2021b) details the VA's action plan for five priority adaptation actions, which include new and updated design standards and incorporating climate priorities into the VA's Strategic Capital Investment Planning Process.

3.2.2 Environmental Consequences

3.2.2.1 Proposed Action

This air quality analysis considers the degree of potential effects to the local air quality and evaluates short and long-term effects, beneficial and adverse effects, effects on public health and safety as they relate to air quality, and effects that may violate federal, state, tribal, or local laws protecting the environment. Over the past two years, VA prepared 10 separate EAs analyzing the potential impacts of construction, renovation, or repair of leasing projects (see Section 1.4.3; VA CFM 2023b). The size of the project area assessed in the documents varied from 30,500 to 426,722 square feet. Each of the EAs determined that there would be less than significant impacts to air quality from the construction, renovation, repair, and operation of the facilities.

For the purposes of analyzing the impacts on air quality, the Proposed Action is analyzed as a representative project for the land clearing of 25 acres and construction of 250,000 square foot VA facility in a build-to-lease format. This projected project could occur in any location in the U.S. and its Territories and Tribal Lands that meets VA's criteria for leasing. The representative project also is an upper bound scenario of projected emissions. Any proposed leasing project that is the same or smaller would have emissions less than this representative project. The representative project considers the following upper bound, or maximum disturbance, construction activity conditions:

Demolition/Construction Activities:

- 25 acres must be cleared for site preparation or demolished.
- 150,000 square feet of existing structures upwards of 3 stories high must be demolished.
- All parking and site civil work must be completed during the construction phase.
- The entire project would be completed within one calendar year.
- A 250,000 square foot facility with surrounding parking and site development would be completed for a total of 25 acres.
- Site development would be in an undeveloped or underdeveloped community requiring delivery of construction materials versus an urban core community with shorter commute and delivery distances.

Operational Activities:

- Staffing of 200 people who commute an average of 30 miles 5 days a week for an operational period of 30 years.
- Stationary sources of diesel-fueled emergency generator and natural gas boiler units operate in the building for 30 years.
- Patient travel to the medical facilities would not increase from baseline and may actually decrease.

Because the Proposed Action is a programmatic projection of an "example" project in an unknown location, *de minimis* thresholds are considered a bit different from a known location proposed action. The analysis assumes that the project projected emissions must be below the lowest *de minimis* threshold to account for variations in the requirements for different counties. Programmatically, if the example project does not exceed the most stringent *de minimis* threshold, then the analysis considers any actual project to pass and not require conformity determinations. The *de minimis* thresholds selected for the air quality analysis in this PEA are the most stringent levels published in 40 CFR 93.153(b)(1) and (b)(2).

GHG affects can be analyzed from an overall nationwide perspective for this programmatic approach. Because the exact project location is not known, local climate projection models are not able to be considered in the analysis. However, the Scope 1 direct emissions are reasonably calculated for the representative project. This representative project does not reasonably allow for calculation of Scope 2 and Scope 3 emissions, nor is it within the rule of reason to prepare a detailed analysis for a single facility with no major sources of GHG and under 500 employees.

Demolition/Construction/Renovation

The representative project is a 250,000 square foot construction with 25 acres of clearing, landscaping, and parking areas added. This project is comparable to projected emissions from a renovation of any size. The two types of projects have similar total gasoline and diesel-powered engine intensities. Construction may use large equipment for a shorter period, while renovation typically uses smaller equipment over a greater period of time to accomplish similar goals.

Table 3-1 provides the summary of the projected criteria pollutant construction emissions from the representative project. Table 3-1 also presents the most stringent (that is, lowest level) *de minimis* level thresholds for each pollutant.

Table 3-1. Estimated Criteria Pollutant Emissions (in tons per year) from Proposed Construction, Demolition Activities, Single Year Project

Emission Source	*CO*	*VOC*	*NOx*	*SOx*	*PM_{10}*	*$PM_{2.5}$*
Demolition	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Construction	7.5	0.5	2.1	0.0	0.3	0.3
Total Emissions Per Year	**7.7**	**0.7**	**2.5**	**0.0**	**0.3**	**0.3**
Conformity *de minimis* Thresholds	100	10	10	100	70	70
Exceeds Conformity *de minimis* Thresholds?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Notes: CO = carbon monoxide; $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter less than or equal to 2.5 microns in diameter; PM_{10} = particulate matter less than or equal to 10 microns in diameter; NO_x = nitrogen oxide; SO_x = sulfur oxides; VOC = volatile organic compounds.

Short-term, negligible adverse impacts on air quality would occur from worker commutes, deliveries, and operating diesel-fueled construction equipment during demolition, renovation, or construction. To minimize adverse impacts locally, construction equipment would be maintained in good working order, idling would be limited to local idling limits, BMPs to control dust would be used when needed, and contractors would use equipment with Tier 4-compliant engines. All anticipated emissions would be below the General Conformity Rule *de minimis* thresholds.

Temporary GHG emissions from the Proposed Action would be associated with the construction and demolition of the representative project. The projected emissions were calculated by using the rule of reason and expertise and experience. The depth of analysis is consistent with the anticipated quantity of projected GHG emissions overall, which is not a large amount as the proposed action itself does not have major sources of GHG such as power plant components or millions of square feet of development.

Table 3-2 presents the estimated GHG emissions from the representative project.

Table 3-2. Estimated GHG Emissions (in metric tons/year) from Proposed Construction, Renovation and Demolition Activities, Single Year Project (Represents Reasonably known Scope 1 and Scope 2 GHG Emissions)

GHG Emission Source	*CO_2e*
Demolition	75
Construction	1,461
Total Emissions Per Year	**1,536**

Notes: CO_2e = equivalent CO_2 rate; GHG = greenhouse gas

Operations

A Title V operating permit is not anticipated to be required. Local state or air pollution control district permits to construct are anticipated for some emergency generators and boilers depending on actual location and size. The VA would apply for and follow all applicable permits and operate within any permit requirements. Table 3-3 presents the projected emissions associated with the representative project operational scenario. Operational emissions from the maximum use would be below *de minimis* levels.

Table 3-3. Estimated Criteria Pollutant Operational Emissions (in tons/year – each year for 30 years) from Proposed Action

Emission Source	*CO*	*VOC*	*NOx*	*SOx*	*PM_{10}*	*$PM_{2.5}$*
Operational	5.7	2.3	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Emissions Per Year	5.7	2.3	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Conformity *de minimis* Thresholds	100	10	10	100	70	70
Exceeds Conformity *de minimis* Thresholds?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Notes: CO = carbon monoxide; $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter less than or equal to 2.5 microns in diameter; PM_{10} = particulate matter less than or equal to 10 microns in diameter; NO_x = nitrogen oxide; SO_x = sulfur oxides; VOC = volatile organic compounds.

Table 3-4 presents the estimated annual and 30-year GHG emissions associated with operations under the representative project.

Table 3-4. Estimated GHG Operational Emissions (in metric tons/year) from Proposed Action

GHG Emission Source	*CO_2e*
Operational	3,408
Total Emissions Per Year	3,408
Total Lifetime (Total by 2026 to 2050) Emissions	81,792

Notes: CO_2e = equivalent CO_2 rate; GHG = greenhouse gas
SC-GHG Models only go through 2050.

Summary

As demonstrated above, the representative project, which is the maximum development and operational scenario, would result in all anticipated criteria pollutant emissions being below General Conformity Rule *de minimis* thresholds. All other projects that would then qualify under the PEA would also be below *de minimis* thresholds. Therefore, the Proposed Action would result in less than significant impacts to air quality. A completed RONA for the Proposed Action is included in Appendix B.

3.2.2.2 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative equates to the continuation of the existing leasing program. With respect to NEPA compliance, future proposed leasing actions would continue to require the preparation of project- and site-specific NEPA documentation. Under the No Action Alternative, for those projects that would have otherwise qualified for NEPA compliance under this PEA, overall impacts to air quality are anticipated to be no more than those as described for the Proposed Action. Therefore, while impacts to air quality are anticipated to be less than significant, the stand-alone NEPA document for each proposed project would determine and disclose the project-specific impacts.

3.3 Geology and Soils

Geology

Geologic resources include the geology, topography, and geologic hazards of a given area. The geology of an area includes surface and bedrock materials, its orientation and faulting, and natural resources such as mineral deposits, petroleum reserves, and fossils. Topography is the elevation, slope, aspect, and surface features found within a given area. Potential geologic hazards include the seismicity (the relative frequency of earthquakes) and existence or potential for landslides, sinkholes, and liquefaction, as well as the potential for seismic events to pose a risk to people and property.

The Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act of 1977 established the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program. Since inception of the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program, federal agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), National Science Foundation, and National Institute of Standards and Technology, have coordinated efforts to reduce risks to life and property that result from earthquakes.

Soil

Soil resources refer to unconsolidated earthen materials overlaying bedrock or other parent material. Excavation, soil erosion, soil compaction, soil horizon removal, grading, and cutting and filling operations can result in a potential loss of soils and or changes in geology.

Construction activity includes earth-disturbing activities such as clearing, grading, and excavating land and other construction-related activities that could generate pollutants. A CWA permit is required for stormwater discharges from any construction activity disturbing one acre or more of land, or less than one acre of land, but that is part of a common plan of development or sale that would ultimately disturb one or more acres of land. While the USEPA sets the overarching framework for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program, it often delegates permitting authority to individual states. As a result, some states may have their own state-specific Construction General Permits, and the authority for permit issuance and enforcement may rest with state environmental agencies.

Federal agencies should assess the effects of their actions on farmland soils classified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service as prime or unique. Prime or unique farmland, as stated in Title 7, Chapter73, Section 4201 (c)(1) of the Farmland Protection Policy Act, is defined as soil that particularly produces general crops, such as common foods, forage, fiber, and oil seed; unique farmland produces specialty crops, such as fruits, vegetables, and nuts. Prime farmland is typically associated with river valleys and floodplains. Much of the prime farmland within the U.S. is present in the Midwest and Southeast regions, with smaller amounts along the east coast and in the western U.S. Prime farmland acreage has been steadily decreasing over the past several decades, due primarily to increasing urban development (USDA 2024a). Figure 3-2 depicts the distribution of prime farmland in the affected environment.

3.3.1 Affected Environment

3.3.1.1 Geology

USGS has subdivided the continental U.S. into broad-scale subdivisions, known as physiographic regions, based on terrain texture, rock type, geologic structure, and tectonic history (Virgil 2000). The underlying geology of these physiographic regions dictate how the soils, sediments, floodplains, and landscapes are formed over time. These factors influence zoning and development and dictate regional construction practices, local building codes, and development planning.

The geology of Alaska is complex and is made up of rocks and deposits that range from billions of years old to rock and deposits that are forming today. The rocks of the state were deposited, erupted, intruded, or metamorphosed in geographically separate areas of the Earth and have been assembled in Alaska through the process of plate tectonics (USGS 2017).

The Hawaiian Archipelago extends from Kure Atoll in the northwest to the island of Hawaii in the southeast. These islands were formed when lava extruded from a stationary “hot spot” in the ocean floor and created the islands one by one as the Pacific Tectonic Plate moved gradually to the northwest. Because of the difference in geologic time, the older islands in northwest have eroded more than the younger islands in the southwest (USGS 2021a).

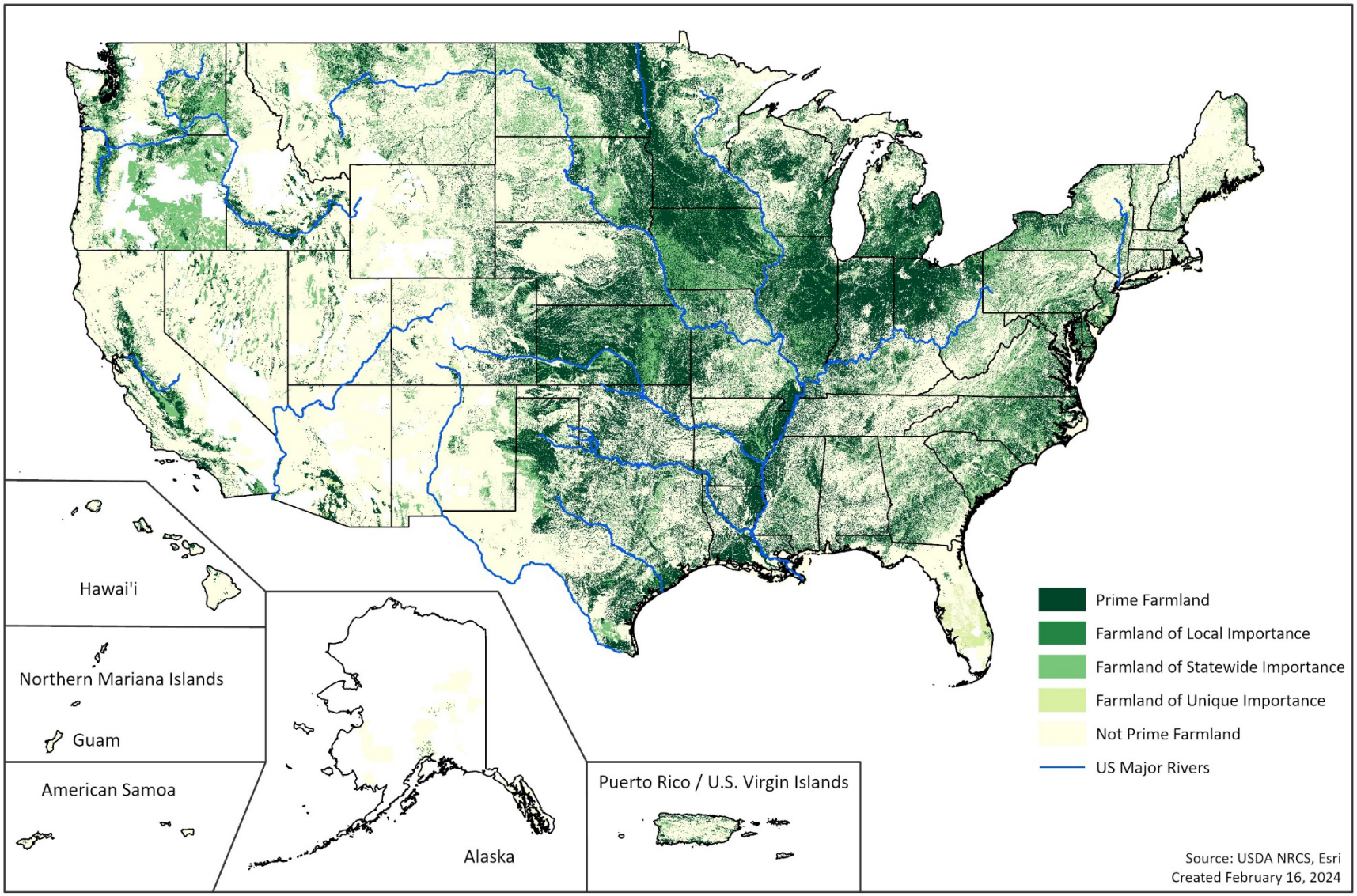

Figure 3.2. Distribution of Prime Farmland in the United States and its Territories

The island territories of American Samoa and Guam, the Commonwealths of the Northern Mariana Islands and Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have diverse geologic history and characteristics. American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam are pacific islands formed by volcanic events. In contrast, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are Caribbean islands formed by a combination of tectonic shifts and volcanic events. Puerto Rico lies between two tectonic plates, the Caribbean and North American, which has resulted in seismic events, such as earthquakes, and other related geologic hazards (USGS 2023).

The primary geologic hazard is based on the seismic stability of underlying bedrock and the variability of the regional topography. Generally, the central and eastern portions of the U.S. are more seismically stable than the younger, tectonically active areas in the west. However, the older, colder, and denser bedrock along the eastern seaboard propagates seismic waves farther, so a smaller earthquake can be felt further away. Figure 3-3 depicts the national seismic hazards by region.

3.3.1.2 Soils

A single landscape, not to mention all the affected environment can contain an immense variety of soils, based on the topography, parent material, organic matter, and vegetation. The affected environment is home to various soil orders, each with its own distinct characteristics and distribution patterns. While soil is extremely variable even at a local level, each physiographic region has distinct soils and soil characteristics.

The geologic characteristic described in the physiographic regions provide a broad understanding of potential local soil characteristics. Local soil surveys offer the most accurate soil descriptions and data. The Web Soil Survey provides soil data and information produced by the National Cooperative Soil Survey. It is operated by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and provides access to the largest natural resource information system in the world. The Natural Resources Conservation Service has soil maps and data available online for more than 95 percent of the nation’s counties (USDA 2024a).

In the U.S. prime farmland is typically associated with river valleys and floodplains. Much of the prime farmland within the U.S. is present in the Midwest and Southeast regions, with smaller amounts along the east coast and in the western U.S. Prime farmland acreage has been steadily decreasing over the past several decades, due primarily to increasing urban development (USDA 2024a). depicts the distribution of prime farmland in the affected environment.

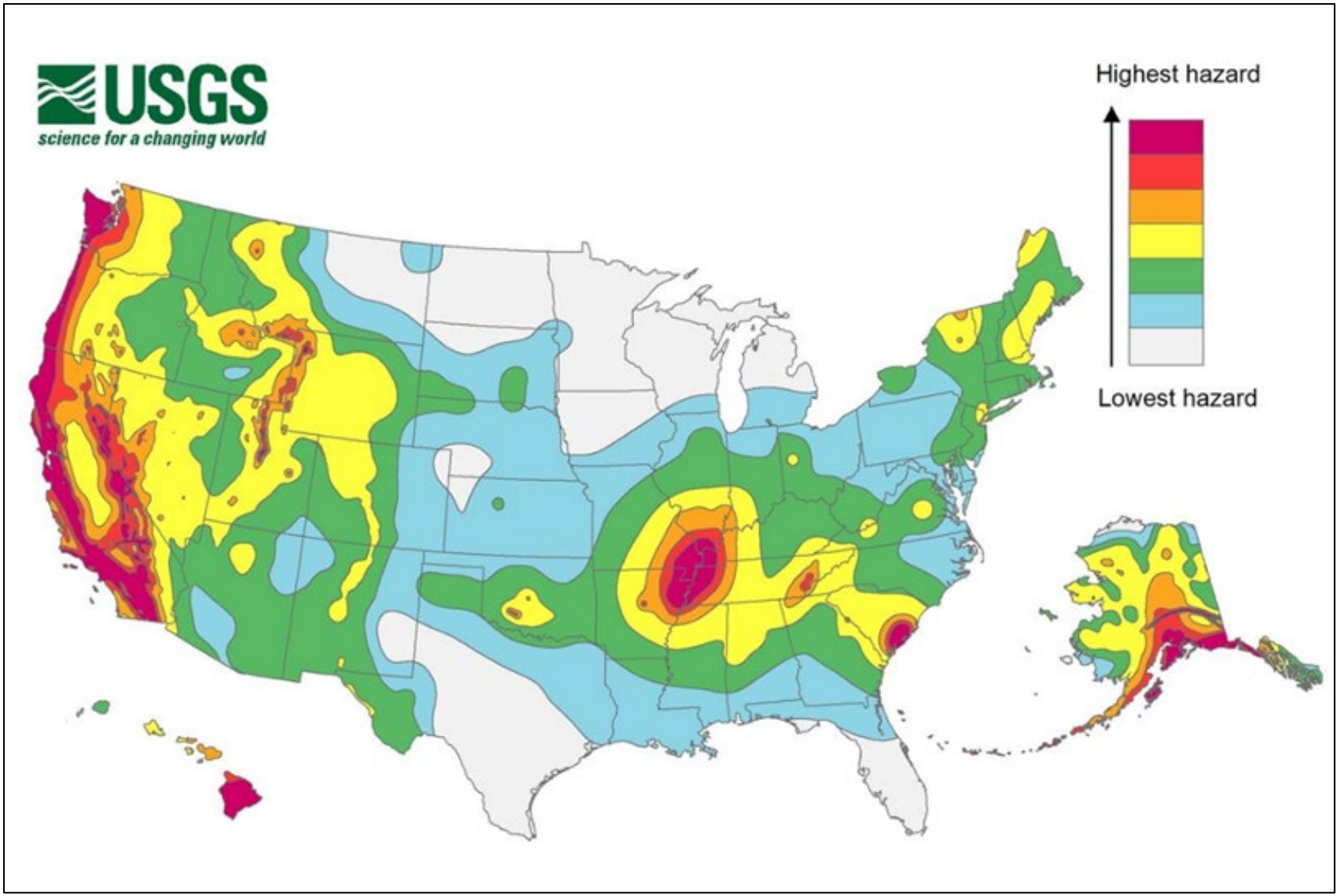

Figure 3.3. USGS Long-term National Seismic Hazard Map (2018)

3.3.2 Environmental Consequences

3.3.2.1 Proposed Action

Over the past two years, VA prepared 10 separate EAs analyzing the potential impacts of construction, renovation, or repair of leasing projects (see Section 1.4.3; VA CFM 2023b). The size of the project area assessed in the documents varied from 30,500 to 426,722 square feet. Each of the EAs determined that there would be less than significant impacts to geology and soils from the construction, renovation, repair, and operation of the facilities. Typical measures to minimize impacts to geology and soils included:

- Implementing erosion and sediment control measures to prevent soil erosion during construction activities. This includes installing silt fences, terracing, mulching, sediment basins, and erosion control blankets.
- Using stabilized construction entrances to reduce tracking of sediment onto roadways.
- Planting, preserving, and maintaining existing vegetative cover, especially in areas with vulnerable soils. Vegetation helps stabilize soil, reduces erosion, and promotes infiltration.
- Complying with VA seismic design requirements and state and local regulatory and policy requirements

These measures would be implemented as warranted for future qualifying leasing projects.

Demolition/Construction/Renovation

Geology

Under the Proposed Action, construction activities including demolition and renovation could occur within a seismically active region. The USGS National Seismic Hazard Maps would be used to determine if a specific project is in an area of seismic risk, and if necessary, a geotechnical survey would be performed. Construction and renovation in areas at risk of seismic activity would be required to comply with all state and local building codes, which would likely reduce the potential for damage resulting from earthquakes. In addition, VA would comply with VA seismic design requirements and regulatory and policy requirements that define VA requirements and policy regarding seismic safety of buildings (that is, VA Handbook H-18-8, Seismic Design Requirements [VA 2019b]; VA Directive 7512, Seismic Safety of VA Buildings [VA 2017]; and EO 13717, *Establishing a Federal Earthquake Risk Management Standard*).

Soil

For projects more than 1 acre in size, prior to starting construction, the contractor would obtain coverage under the General Permit for Discharges of Storm Water Associated with Construction Activity and prepare a stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP would include an Erosion Control Plan that identifies appropriate measures (e.g., silt fences, siltation basins, gravel bags) necessary to stabilize the soil in denuded or graded areas during construction. Soils would be maintained to the extent feasible during grading via implementation of the SWPPP/Erosion Control Plan and associated BMPs.

Proposed demolition, construction and renovation activities would result in minor and localized impacts to soils. Exposed soils would present a temporary potential for wind and water erosion. However,

erosion and sediment control BMPs would be employed to minimize this potential. There would be no long-term risk to soils and erosion because post-construction, structures, asphalt/paving, or landscaping would cover all soils exposed during construction.

To determine if the proposed action would impact “prime or unique” soil, VA would use the Web Soil Survey tool (https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/). The Web Soil Survey provides soil data and information produced by the National Cooperative Soil Survey. Potential future projects would avoid prime or unique soils. If the prime or unique soils cannot be avoided, then additional NEPA analysis would be required.

Operations

Following construction, disturbed areas not covered with impervious surface would be reestablished with appropriate vegetation and managed to minimize future erosion potential. No long-term soil erosion impacts would occur as a result of increased impervious surfaces onsite as these effects would be reduced by including appropriately designed stormwater management systems as part of final site design. Stormwater control features would reduce the potential for on- and off-site impacts to soils.

Summary

Aside from short-term impacts during construction, which would be reduced through compliance with the SWPPP, implementation of the Proposed Action would result in medical facilities designed and operated to comply with relevant seismic codes and the CWA. Facilities would also avoid prime farmland soils. consistent with the existing visual environment. Therefore, the Proposed Action would result in less than significant impacts to geology and soils.

3.3.2.2 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative equates to the continuation of the existing leasing program. With respect to NEPA compliance, future proposed leasing actions would continue to require the preparation of project- and site-specific NEPA documentation. Under the No Action Alternative, for those projects that would have otherwise qualified for NEPA compliance under this PEA, overall impacts to geology and soils are anticipated to be no more than those as described for the Proposed Action. Therefore, while impacts to geology and soils are anticipated to be less than significant, the stand-alone NEPA document for each proposed project would determine and disclose the project-specific impacts.

3.4 Hydrology and Water Quality

Hydrology is the study of the interrelationship between water and its environment and involves the occurrence, distribution, movement, and properties of the waters of the earth and their relationship with the environment within each phase of the hydrologic (water) cycle.

Water quality is defined as the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of water, usually with respect to its suitability for a particular purpose (such as for drinking or supporting wildlife). The presence of contaminants, such as increased sediment, can impact water quality. There are numerous laws and regulations that protect both hydrology and water quality on the federal level and on the state and regional levels. On the federal level, the primary law protecting the "chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters" is the CWA.

Section 401 certifications issued by states or authorized Tribes protect water quality. The Safe Drinking Water Act protects the quality of the nation's drinking water and provides limited protection of groundwater resources.

Under Section 401 of the CWA, any project which requires a license or permit from a federal agency for an activity that may result in a discharge to Waters of the United States (WOTUS) must obtain a Section 401 Water Quality Certification, which certifies that the project would be in compliance with applicable state water quality standards.

The CWA establishes federal limits, through the NPDES program, on the amounts of specific pollutants discharged into surface waters to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the water. The NPDES program regulates the discharge of point (that is, end of pipe) and nonpoint sources (that is, stormwater) of water pollution. The USEPA promulgated 40 CFR Part 122.26 which establishes requirements for storm water discharges under the NPDES program.

The NPDES stormwater program requires construction site operators engaged in clearing, grading, and excavating activities that disturb one acre or more to obtain coverage under a NPDES Construction General Permit for stormwater discharges.

Under section 303(d) of the CWA, states are required to develop and update, every two years, a list of waters that are impaired by one or more pollutants. Impaired waters are those that do not meet Water Quality Standards for their designated use. After identification as impaired, the state creates and prioritizes Total Maximum Daily Loads to target and implement pollution reduction strategies and watershed plans to improve water quality.

Section 438 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 requires federal agencies to reduce stormwater runoff from federal development projects to protect water resources. Section 438 requires any development or redevelopment of a federal facility with a footprint exceeding 5,000 square feet to maintain or restore, to the extent technically feasible, the predevelopment hydrology of a property with regard to the temperature, rate, volume, and duration of flow.

3.4.1 Affected Environment

3.4.1.1 Surface Water

Surface water resources, including lakes, streams, and rivers, are important for economic, ecological, recreational, human health, and spiritual and religious purposes. Surface water systems are typically defined in terms of watersheds. Any activity that affects water quality, quantity, or rate of movement at one location within a watershed has the potential to affect the characteristics of locations downstream.

According to the 2017 National Water Quality Inventory: Report to Congress, 46 percent of river and stream miles are in poor biological condition and 21 percent of the nation’s lakes are hypereutrophic. Nitrogen and phosphorous are the most widespread stressors assessed (USEPA 2017).

3.4.1.2 Ground Water

Groundwater is the water beneath the land surface that fills porous spaces in rock and sediment. Groundwater supplies are replenished, or recharged, by rain and snow melt which percolates down into the cracks and crevices beneath the land's surface. Porous subsurface areas where ground water

collects are referred to as aquifers. Principal aquifers are defined as a regionally extensive aquifer or aquifer system that has the potential to be used as a source of potable water. Communities use groundwater (e.g., aquifers) for potable water, irrigation, and industrial applications.

Groundwater depletion has been a concern in the Southwest and High Plains for many years, but increased demands on U.S. groundwater resources have overstressed aquifers in many areas of the Nation, not just in arid regions. In addition, groundwater depletion occurs at scales ranging from a single well to aquifer systems underlying several states (USGS 2021b).

3.4.2 Environmental Consequences

3.4.2.1 Proposed Action

Over the past two years, VA prepared 10 separate EAs analyzing the potential impacts of construction, renovation, or repair of leasing projects (see Section 1.4.3; VA CFM 2023b). The size of the project area assessed in the documents varied from 30,500 to 426,722 square feet. Each of the EAs determined that there would be less than significant impacts to hydrology and water quality from the construction, renovation, repair, and operation of the facilities, although all required compliance with NPDES permit and SWPPP requirements, which necessitated BMPs.

Demolition/Construction/Renovation

Surface Water

Under the Proposed Action, construction activities including demolition, and renovation such as site preparation, grading, movement of heavy equipment, and paving of parking areas could temporarily increase sedimentation and erosion. These activities would expose soil surfaces and could increase the potential for sedimentation and surface runoff. Potential impacts to surface waters would be minimized with the implementation of a SWPPP and associated erosion and sediment control BMPs for soil stabilization.

As noted in Section 3.3.2.1, for projects over one acre, an NPDES permit would be required. The NPDES Construction General Permit and SWPPP identify potential stormwater contaminants and address how to minimize stormwater pollution. The SWPPP would specify BMPs designed to prevent stormwater pollution such as temporary construction entrances, silt fences, inlet protection, ditch checks, slope protection, and sediment barriers.

The contractor would complete a Notice of Termination after construction. The Notice of Termination would include pictures of the final project demonstrating final stabilization. The Notice of Termination would also include a long-term maintenance plan ensuring adherence to post-construction BMPs.

Construction vehicles could potentially have an accidental release of fluids (for example, oil, diesel, gasoline, and antifreeze). To mitigate the potential for impacts to water resources, BMPs such as good vehicle maintenance and the installation of silt fences, would be employed.

Under the Proposed Action there are potential construction activities including demolition, and renovation that may result in a discharge to WOTUS. In cases where discharge is released to WOTUS, the leasing proponent would obtain a Section 401 Water Quality Certification, which certifies that the project would be in compliance with applicable state water quality standards. The authority for issuing a

water quality certification has generally been delegated to the state or tribal authority in which the discharge would originate but, in some jurisdictions, may be issued by the USEPA.

Pursuant to Section 438 of the Energy Independence and Security Act and VA's sustainable design guidelines, design of new medical facilities would reduce stormwater runoff through a combination of features. These may include rain gardens, infiltration planters, porous pavements, green roofs, rainwater harvesting, and other sustainable design features. The design would also include stormwater control and management infrastructure to reduce the potential for on- and off-site stormwater impacts.

Ground Water

Under the Proposed Action, activities such as site preparation, grading, and movement of heavy equipment may unearth shallow groundwater. If shallow groundwater is encountered during construction, appropriate groundwater control and dewatering measures such as sump pumps, wellpoint systems, or deep well systems, would be implemented. Potential impacts to ground waters would be minimized with the implementation of a SWPPP and associated erosion and sediment control BMPs for soil stabilization.

Operations

The operation of OPCs, CLCs, and other similar leased medical facilities have the potential to impact surface water quality. Potential impacts could occur from an increase in impervious surfaces and stormwater as sediment, waste and or, residues from facility operations could be released or emptied adjacent water resources. Potential impacts to surface waters would be minimized though operational BMPs such as stormwater design infrastructure, planting of ornamental vegetation and adherence to facility waste management and spill response plans. Over the long-term, the operation of leased medical facilities would require use of water for domestic use. This use may divert surface water or draw down existing groundwater levels; in arid regions, these drawdowns could stress already limited resources.

Summary

The Proposed Action would comply with the CWA, would prepare and follow a SWPPP (as applicable), adhere to VA design requirements, and install and maintain BMPs and permanent control measures to minimize on- and off-site impacts to water quality. Therefore, the Proposed Action would result in a less than significant impact to hydrology and water quality.

3.4.2.2 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative equates to the continuation of the existing leasing program. With respect to NEPA compliance, future proposed leasing actions would continue to require the preparation of project- and site-specific NEPA documentation. Under the No Action Alternative, for those projects that would have otherwise qualified for NEPA compliance under this PEA, overall impacts to hydrology and water quality are anticipated to be no more than those as described for the Proposed Action. Therefore, while impacts to hydrology and water quality are anticipated to be less than significant, the stand-alone NEPA document for each proposed project would determine and disclose the project-specific impacts.

3.5 Wildlife and Habitat

Wildlife and habitat include the flora (vegetation), fauna (mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, insects, and invertebrates), and the habitats in which they exist. Species evaluation requires an analysis of their behaviors, groupings, and interactions within the overall habitat and, larger still, ecosystems within which they are found. Habitats can be simply defined as the environmental factors that provide food, water, cover, and space that living things need to survive and reproduce. Habitat protection is crucial to the preservation of biological resources.

The Endangered Species Act establishes a national program for the conservation of threatened and endangered species of fish, wildlife, and plants, and the ecosystems upon which they depend. The Act is administered by the Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Commerce Department's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The USFWS has primary responsibility for terrestrial and freshwater organisms, while the responsibilities of NMFS are mainly marine species such as salmon and whales.

Under the Endangered Species Act, species may be listed as either "endangered" or "threatened." Endangered means a species is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. Threatened means a species is likely to become endangered within the near future throughout all or a significant portion of its range. The Endangered Species Act makes it unlawful for a person to take a listed animal without a permit. Take is defined as "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect or attempt to engage in any such conduct." The term "harm" is defined as "an act which actually kills or injures wildlife. Such an act may include significant habitat modification or degradation where it actually kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding, or sheltering."

As part of the process for listing a species as threatened or endangered, the USFWS considers the designation of critical habitat as a means of supporting recovery of the species. Critical habitat may also include areas that were not occupied by the species at the time of listing but are essential to its conservation (USFWS 2017). Designations of critical habitat affect federal agency actions or federally funded or permitted activities. An area may be excluded from designation as critical habitat for economic, national security, or other reasons if the benefits of excluding it outweigh the benefits of including it.

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act requires federal agencies to consult with the USFWS or NMFS to ensure that actions they authorize, fund, or carry out will not jeopardize listed species or destroy or adversely modify the critical habitat of a listed species. Critical habitat is specific, formally designated geographic areas that affect only federal agency actions or federally funded or permitted activities and must be taken into consideration even when not occupied by the species.

If a proposed action "may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect" a listed species, consultation with USFWS or NMFS can be initiated informally by the federal agency or their designated non-federal representative. If adverse effects are likely or informal consultation results in a determination that it is required, formal consultation with USFWS or NMFS is undertaken.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 is one of the first conservation laws enacted in the U.S. It protects more than 1,000 species of birds from extinction whether they are listed as threatened or endangered.

In addition, the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act prohibits the taking, possession, or commerce of both bald and golden eagles.

3.5.1 Affected Environment

The diversity of habitats throughout areas within the jurisdiction of U.S. laws and regulations is vast. The areas range from broad undisturbed sites to heavily developed areas in major cities. Most sites anticipated during this project are urban to semi-urban environments, grasslands, and forested fringe. Wildlife likely to be observed on such sites include grey squirrels, shrews, chipmunks, rabbits, voles, mice, white-tailed deer, and raccoon.

Birds consist of a mixture of forest, forest edge, and open habitat species, including migratory grassland species and songbirds, many of which are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Raptors, shore birds, and waterfowl may occasionally use some sites. Project areas may contain one or more threatened or endangered species and/or critical habitat. Site specific conditions would be determined and assessed to inform the decisionmaker as construction and renovation projects are proposed.

The USFWS has developed a decision support tool to help proponents of federal actions identify potential threatened and endangered species and other wildlife and habitat-related resources in specific geographic areas. The Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) database is available online to streamline and improve the threatened and endangered species review process (https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/). With just a few clicks, anyone with internet access can get a list of threatened or endangered species expected to be on or near a project area, or which could potentially be affected by activities in that location. The database also includes critical habitat, facilities such as fish hatcheries and refuges, wetlands, and information on migratory birds (USFWS 2022).

Since 1966 when the U.S. federal government enacted legislation to protect biological organisms, more than 2,400 species have been listed as threatened or endangered. In 2020, CRS prepared an overview of the Endangered Species Act to inform congressional members of the status of the Act and its implementation (CRS 2020). In that document, CRS reported that 2,363 species were listed as of October 2020; the majority (71 percent) occurred in the U.S. and the remainder (29 percent) in foreign countries. Of all the species listed, 79 percent were endangered, and 21 percent were threatened. A few (3.7 percent) have been removed from the list either because of extinction or recovery. The number of threatened and endangered species in a given area can vary considerably depending on the quality of habitat.

3.5.2 Environmental Consequences

3.5.2.1 Proposed Action

Over the past two years, VA prepared 10 separate EAs analyzing the potential impacts of construction, renovation, or repair of leasing projects (see Section 1.4.3; VA CFM 2023b). The size of the project area assessed in the documents varied from 30,500 to 426,722 square feet. Each of the EAs determined that there would be less than significant impacts to wildlife and habitat from the construction, renovation, repair, and operation of the facilities, although all required biological studies and/or some level of

consultation with USFWS, as well as actions to avoid or mitigate potential impacts to species. Common actions to minimize impacts included:

- Avoid removing roost trees for the northern long-eared bat. When tree removal cannot be avoided, restrict removal to occur between October 15 and March 31 to minimize impacts to the bats (VA 2021d).
- Implementing BMPs including directing drainage away from sinkholes and revegetating disturbed areas as soon as possible to minimize impacts to the Kentucky cave shrimp (VA 2021d).
- Replacing vegetation that is damaged or removed during construction with native noninvasive varieties prior to the conclusion of the construction phase (VA 2021e).
- Limiting outdoor construction and maintenance to days outside of nesting and roosting season to avoid potential impacts to listed species. Project activities would be implemented during non-nesting season (the non-nesting season is typically defined as September 1 through January 31) to the extent feasible. If project activities are scheduled to start during nesting season (February 1 through August 31), a qualified biologist would conduct pre-disturbance surveys to identify nesting birds

These measures would be implemented as warranted for future qualifying leasing projects.

Demolition/Construction/Renovation

Where possible, the VA would select a site where potential impacts could be avoided or minimized. IPaC would be used as a tool to determine species and other resources likely to occur within the area of potential affect. Field surveys would be conducted as needed to document specific areas where species or available habitat exist. Regardless of the type of work or size of the area of potential effect, the action proponent would determine if listed wildlife and/or critical habitat are in the area, and if necessary, prepare a biological assessment and consult with USFWS and/or NMFS prior to deciding to implement a proposed action. Additional NEPA analysis may be required.

Under the Proposed Action, construction activities including demolition and renovation could result in the direct loss of common, less-mobile wildlife species, such as lizards and ground squirrels, and their habitat. However, the numbers of individuals that could be lost would be inconsequential to populations present in the area. Indirect, temporary, adverse impacts to wildlife species would occur within adjacent areas due to an increase in dust, noise, or other demolition-related disturbances. Temporary disturbances due to noise associated with construction, as well as an increase in the general activity and human presence could mask bird vocalizations, invoke stress in birds, and cause common bird and wildlife species to avoid the work area during construction. The noise would be temporary and intermittent and not likely to impair wildlife species from foraging, nesting, or resting. When existing structures are proposed for renovation or repair, potential impacts are minimal to nonexistent if all work is accomplished indoors. Each proposed action would be evaluated to determine if additional environmental analysis is needed.

Operations

The operation of OPCs, CLCs, and other similar leased medical facilities would have the potential to disturb terrestrial wildlife and their habitat. Potential impacts could occur from increases in air emissions, noise, water runoff, and other sources. These impacts would be negligible and confined to

the immediate areas surrounding the sources. In addition, standard design BMPs would reduce the potential for off-site impacts.

Future projects would not be able to determine whether the impacts of the specific activity to the listed species, designated critical habitat, migratory birds, or bald and golden eagles would be significant without an appropriate site-specific evaluation. If the site-specific evaluation, which may include a biological assessment, results in something other than a No Effect determination, then an appropriate level of consultation with USFWS and/or NMFS would be performed, along with additional NEPA analysis, as warranted.

Summary

Proposed demolition and/or site preparation activities would result in the removal of vegetation and/or habitat, up to a maximum of 25 acres. This removal of habitat would displace some of the existing common wildlife within the project area. Prior to construction proposed sites would be evaluated for sensitive wildlife and habitat. If sensitive habitat and/or species are detected and cannot be avoided through site relocation or design, then further NEPA analysis and Endangered Species Act compliance documentation would be required. For those projects in areas with no or avoidable biological resources, construction and operational activities would disturb common terrestrial wildlife and their habitat. Therefore, the Proposed Action would result in less than significant impacts to wildlife and habitat.

3.5.2.2 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative equates to the continuation of the existing leasing program. With respect to NEPA compliance, future proposed leasing actions would continue to require the preparation of project- and site-specific NEPA documentation. Under the No Action Alternative, for those projects that would have otherwise qualified for NEPA compliance under this PEA, overall impacts to wildlife and habitat are anticipated to be no more than those as described for the Proposed Action. Therefore, while impacts to wildlife and habitat are anticipated to be less than significant, the stand-alone NEPA document for each proposed project would determine and disclose the project-specific impacts.

3.6 Noise

Noise is an unwanted or annoying sound that interferes with or disrupts normal human activities. Sound is most commonly measured in decibels (dB). The Noise Pollution and Abatement Act of 1972 initiated a federal program of regulating noise pollution with the intent of protecting human health and minimizing annoyance of noise to the general public.

3.6.1 Affected Environment

Although continuous and extended exposure to high noise levels (for example, through occupational exposure) can cause hearing loss, the principal human response to noise is annoyance. The response of different individuals to similar noise events is diverse. The type of noise, perceived importance of the noise, its appropriateness in the setting, time of day, type of activity during which the noise occurs, and sensitivity of the individual influence the response to the noise.

Sound characteristics include the sound power, which relates to the source of the sound and sound pressure, which is the sound received at a receptor. Sound power is the amount of energy of sound at the source. Sound pressure is the pressure vibrations caused by the source but perceived at the ear.

The dB is the common unit to measure levels of noise. However, several factors affect how the human ear perceives sound: the actual level of noise, frequency, period of exposure, and fluctuations in noise levels during exposure. Daytime noise levels of 40 dB are generally perceived as quiet, 60 dB as moderate, and greater than 70 dB as loud.

Because the human ear cannot equally perceive all pitches or frequencies, scientists adjust noise measurements metrics to compensate for the human lack of sensitivity to low- and high-pitched sounds. This commonly used adjusted unit is known as the A-weighted decibel, or dBA. The A-weighted metric de-emphasizes very low and very high-pitched sound generated by motor vehicle traffic and construction equipment. Noise impacts can vary depending upon the duration and loudness of the event. The loudest noise level during an individual event is called the maximum noise level and is expressed as dBA Lmax or simply Lmax.

Existing site-specific noise sources define the affected environment for each individual project location, such as transportation or stationary sources. Examples of transportation noise sources include transportation routes for highways, railways, and airport flight patterns. Stationary sources can include nearby HVAC systems, boilers, industrial facilities, power plants, and firing ranges. In addition, sensitive noise receptors need to be considered. Examples of such receptors include residences, schools, churches, hospitals, and parks.

3.6.2 Environmental Consequences

3.6.2.1 Proposed Action

Over the past two years, VA prepared 10 separate EAs analyzing the potential impacts of construction, renovation, or repair of leasing projects (see Section 1.4.3; VA CFM 2023b). The size of the project area assessed in the documents varied from 30,500 to 426,722 square feet. Each of the EAs determined that there would be less than significant impacts to overall noise levels from the construction, renovation, repair, and operation of the facilities.

Noise impacts involve both the effects of noise on the project by outside sources such as transportation and stationary sources and the noise generated by the proposed action on existing noise sensitive receptors. Noise level thresholds vary depending upon local and state noise regulations. Most are expressed as a given noise level at the property boundary, but levels may vary and also whether the noise is construction related or non-construction. Others have time restrictions i.e., weekdays between 7 A.M. to 7 P.M.

Demolition/Construction/Renovation

Noise generated during construction, including demolition and renovations, depend upon the type and amount of construction equipment being used at the same time. Typically, site work using graders, excavators, front-end loaders, dump trucks, and the like, generated the greatest noise levels during a project. In some instances, an impact pile driver may be used, and the impact sounds can be particularly

loud and annoying. Noise levels for earth moving equipment are 80-90 dBA Lmax and 101 dBA Lmax for impact pile drivers.

The Federal Highway Administration's Road Construction Noise Model uses the actual noise measurements of construction equipment as shown in Table 3-5. The model calculates noise from a variety of equipment at multiple receptor locations. The noisiest phase of construction is usually the beginning during the demolition and site preparation phases when workers are using impact and earth-moving equipment.

The decibels levels indicated in Table 3-5 are maximum noise levels; however, for calculating noise impacts, equivalent noise levels are calculated. Publicly available noise calculators, such as the Federal Highway Administration's, Road Construction Noise Model, used Lmax and a usage factor (percent of time per hour at full noise level) along with the receptor information to calculate equivalent continuous sound level (Leq) at the receptors.

VA requires construction contractors to maintain lower noise values than those presented in Table 3.5 in accordance with Part 1(F) of the VA Temporary Environmental Controls, Section 01 57 19 (VA 2014).

Noise levels generated by construction equipment at the nearest receptors, or property line, would be compared to local, state or VA ordinances. Significant noise impacts for construction would be if noise levels at the nearest receptor or property line exceed any of the local, state, or VA thresholds.

Per VA 01 57 19, noise mitigations can be accomplished by employing any or all of the following (VA 2014):

- Use shields or other physical barriers to restrict noise transmission.
- Provide soundproof housings or enclosures for noise producing machinery.
- Use efficient silencers on equipment air intakes.
- Use efficient intake and exhaust mufflers on internal combustion engines that are maintained so equipment performs below noise levels specified.
- Line hoppers and storage bins with sound deadening material.
- Conduct truck loading, unloading, and hauling operations so that noise is kept to a minimum.
- Erect temporary sound barriers such as soundproof fence panels for long term demolition, construction, and renovation related projects.

Proposed medical facilities would be sited in areas away from sensitive noise receptors when possible to minimize the potential for construction-related noise impacts. Implementation of noise reducing measures above, as warranted, would reduce impacts to any sensitive noise receptors in the vicinity.

Table 3-5. Typical Construction Equipment Noise

Equipment Description	*Actual Measured L_{max} (dBA) at 15 meters (50 feet)*
Flat Bed Truck	74
Welder/Torch	74
Man Lift	75
Dump Truck	76
Backhoe	78
Compressor (air)	78
Concrete Mixer Truck	79
Drill Rig Truck	79
Front End Loader	79
Rivet Buster/Chipping Gun	79
Ventilation Fan	79
Drum Mixer	80
Vibratory Concrete Mixer	80
Concrete Pump Truck	81
Crane	81
Generator	81
Pumps	81
Dozer	82
Boring Jack Power Unit	83
Warning Horn	83
Auger Drill Rig	84
Scraper	84
Pneumatic Tools	85
Vacuum Excavator	85
Vibrating Hopper	87
Jackhammer	89
Concrete Saw	90
Sheers (on backhoe)	96
Impact Pile Driver	101
Vibratory Pile Driver	101

Source: Federal Highway Administration 2006.

Operations

The most likely sources for operational noise impacts would be HVAC systems, boilers, grounds maintenance, and vehicular traffic associated with automobiles used by employees, patients, and visitors accessing the site. Like construction noise, the proximity of local noise sensitive receptors is key to determining noise impacts. Also, threshold criteria are regulated by local and state regulations, and traffic criteria used by Federal Highway Administration of 67 dB Leq at residential receptors.

Noise levels for grounds maintenance equipment such as lawn mowers, leaf blowers, and similar equipment would be required to follow local noise ordinances and significant noise impacts would be if the equipment exceeds the local regulations.

HVAC systems and other facility related noise generating equipment would also be designed to meet local and state regulations. Most HVAC and other equipment can utilize sound barriers and/or

enclosures and in some case, vegetation surrounding the equipment which would provide a sufficient noise decrease to insignificant levels. Site-specific analyses would be required to determine predicted noise levels and potential mitigation strategies. Sound levels diminish inside a structure when compared to exterior noise levels, average sound level reductions are 15 dB with windows open and 25 dB with windows closed.

Summary

All construction-related noise impacts would be short-term and would cease at completion. The health facilities would be modern buildings and would include noise-reducing features to dampen external noise sources. After construction, the facilities would not create any new substantial sources of noise that would noticeably contribute to the overall noise environment. Vehicles, other construction projects, aircraft, and operations would continue to dominate the noise setting. Therefore, the Proposed Action would result in less than significant impacts to noise.

3.6.2.2 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative equates to the continuation of the existing leasing program. With respect to NEPA compliance, future proposed leasing actions would continue to require the preparation of project- and site-specific NEPA documentation. Under the No Action Alternative, for those projects that would have otherwise qualified for NEPA compliance under this PEA, overall impacts to noise are anticipated to be no more than those as described for the Proposed Action. Therefore, while impacts to noise are anticipated to be less than significant, the stand-alone NEPA document for each proposed project would determine and disclose the project-specific impacts.

3.7 Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are defined by VA Handbook 7545 Cultural Resource Management as “all aspects of the human environment that have historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural significance, including, but not limited to, historic properties, archaeological resources and data, Native American ancestral remains and cultural items, religious places and practices, historical objects and artifacts, historical documents, and community identity.” Cultural resources are protected through several federal laws and associated regulations (Table 3-6).

NEPA requires that prior to funding, authorizing, or implementing a major federal action, federal agencies consider the effects of their actions on the human environment. Pursuant to 40 CFR §1508.4, the human environment is interpreted comprehensively to include the natural and physical environment, and the relationship of people with that environment. NEPA ensures agencies consider the significant environmental consequences of their proposed actions and inform the public about their decisions. One component of this consideration within the human environment is cultural resources, including prehistoric or historic structures, buildings, objects, archaeological sites, districts, landscapes, natural features, burial sites, and cemeteries.

Table 3-6. Summary of Federal Laws and Regulations Pertaining to Cultural Resources

Law/Regulation	*Description*
National Historic Preservation Act 54 U.S.C. § 300101 et seq. (2014).	The NHPA was enacted in recognition that preservation was in the public's interest. Section 106 (54 U.S.C. §306108) of the NHPA provides a review process that ensures federal agencies consider the effects of their undertakings on historic properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
EO 13007, Indian Sacred Sites 61 FR 26771-26772 (1996)	EO 13007 requires federal land managing agencies to accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners and to avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sacred sites.
Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act 25 U.S.C. § 3001 et seq. (1990).	The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act assures control of human remains and certain cultural items excavated or discovered on federal or tribal lands and in institutions that receive federal funds. Cultural items under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act are funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony.
Archaeological Resources Protection Act 16 U.S.C. § 470aa-470mm (1979).	The Archaeological Resources Protection Act was enacted to secure the protection of archaeological resources and sites on public and Indian lands, and to foster increased cooperation and exchange of information between governmental authorities, the professional archaeological community, and private individuals.
American Indian Religious Freedom Act 42 U.S.C. Chapter 21 Subchapter 1 § 1996 (1978)	The American Indian Religious Freedom Act was enacted to protect and preserve Native American freedom to believe, express, and exercise traditional religions, including access to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites.
Archeological and Historic Preservation Act 16 U.S.C. §§ 469-469c (1974)	The Archeological and Historic Preservation Act requires that Federal agencies provide for the preservation of historical and archaeological data (including relics and specimens) which might otherwise be irreparably lost or destroyed as the result of any alteration of the terrain caused as a result of any federal action.
Religious Freedom Restoration Act 42 U.S.C. § 2000bb through 42 U.S.C. § 2000bb-4 (1993)	The Religious Freedom Restoration Act Prohibits any agency, department, or official of the U.S. or any state (the government) from substantially burdening a person's exercise of religion – such as using federally controlled land for a ceremony – unless there is a compelling reason to do so.
EO 13006, Locating Federal Facilities on Historic Properties in Our Nation's Central Cities 41 CFR § 102-83.75 (1996)	EO 13006 requires agencies to give priority to the use of historic buildings and structures in historic districts in central business areas to meet space needs and conduct agency missions.
EO 13287, Preserve America 3 CFR 13287 (2003)	EO 13287 directs federal agencies to advance the protection, enhancement, and contemporary use of federal historic properties and to promote partnerships for the preservation and use of historic properties, particularly through heritage tourism

Legend: CFR = Code of Federal Regulations; EO = executive order; NHPA = National Historic Preservation Act; U.S.C. = U.S. Code

Historic properties are a subset of cultural resources that are on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). To be eligible for the NRHP, properties must be 50 years old (unless they have special significance) and have national, state, or local significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. They also must possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and meet at least one of four criteria for evaluation (36 CFR § 60.4):

- Criterion A: be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- Criterion B: be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- Criterion C: have distinctive characteristics of type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- Criterion D: have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

3.7.1 Affected Environment

The diversity of habitats throughout areas within the jurisdiction of U.S. laws and regulations is vast. The areas range from broad undisturbed sites to heavily developed areas in major cities. Most sites anticipated during this project are urban to semi-urban environments, grasslands, and forested fringe. As such, the variety of cultural resources that may be encountered include archaeological resources, above ground structures/objects/buildings, cultural landscapes, significant natural features, and tribal and/or indigenous resources that can include any of the above listed cultural resources or other sites of traditional and cultural significance as defined in EO 13007.

Due to the nationwide nature of the Proposed Action, this PEA does not analyze the potential impacts to cultural resources for individual projects. Instead, this PEA lays out the process that VA would use to meet their due diligence requirements for NEPA and NHPA and ensure there would be no significant impacts to cultural resources as a result of the Proposed Action.

Section 106 of the NHPA (54 U.S.C. 306108) requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their actions on historic properties, and states that the ACHP must be afforded an opportunity to comment. The Section 106 process involves identification of historic properties within the area of potential effect and requires an assessment of the potential impact of an undertaking on historic properties with the goal to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects to such properties (36 CFR Part 800). VA has determined that developing a Program Alternative for the Proposed Action (or “Undertaking” as defined in Section 106) in coordination with stakeholders will apply consistent consultation efforts and satisfy Section 106 requirements. VA will update this PEA to reflect the outcome of Section 106 consultation.

3.7.2 Environmental Consequences

3.7.2.1 Proposed Action

Over the past two years, VA prepared 10 separate EAs analyzing the potential impacts of construction, renovation, or repair of leasing projects (see Section 1.4.3; VA CFM 2023b). The size of the project area assessed in the documents varied from 30,500 to 426,722 square feet. Each of the EAs determined that

there would be less than significant impacts to cultural resources from the construction, renovation, repair, and operation of the facilities, although all required cultural studies and/or some level of consultation with SHPOs and Tribes, as well as actions to avoid or mitigate potential impacts to cultural resources. Typical measures to minimize impacts included:

- Additional investigation, beyond initial cultural studies, may include subsurface testing for identification of culturally sensitive areas.
- Development of cultural sensitivity map to assist with cultural studies and site design.
- Avoidance of archaeological and historical resources during site design.
- Implementation of an environmentally sensitive area exclusion zone around sensitive cultural areas near to planned project footprint.
- Archaeological monitoring during excavation work.
- Recordation of historic-age buildings prior to renovation and/or demolition.
- Development and implementation of an Unanticipated Discoveries Plan.
- Implementing BMPs and actions arising from consultation to minimize impacts resulting in less than significant impacts to cultural resources.
- Implementing mitigation measures developed during Section 106 consultation to address potential adverse effects to historic properties.

These measures would be implemented as warranted for future qualifying leasing projects.

Demolition/Construction/Renovation

Under the Proposed Action, construction activities including demolition and renovation could result in impacts to cultural resources. However, leases that have specific conditions would have less-than-significant adverse impacts to cultural resources including historic properties. Therefore, for the purposes of this PEA, impacts from the Planned Action are considered in three categories of lease, regardless of location: 1) move-in ready, 2) build-out, and 3) build-to-suit.

Move-in ready leases are defined by a property that is leased and is ready for move in with little or no interior or exterior renovations planned for operation, including access to the building from the surrounding landscape. The building may be of historic-age or a historic property, as defined by NHPA, but the scope of work most likely would not involve actions that have the potential to directly or indirectly diminish the integrity or significance of historic structures or rise to the level of an adverse effect under Section 106. Impacts are expected to be temporary, minor, and reversible and would not permanently alter the integrity or character of any cultural resources, and would not directly affect the property's eligibility for listing in the NRHP.

Build-out leases are defined by a lease that would include rehabilitating or renovating an existing space. If the building is determined to be historic, interior and exterior renovations and rehabilitations that would affect or alter important architectural or historical characteristics may have adverse effects on historic properties. Additionally, proposed exterior modifications or demolition of an existing structure that is not historic, but is near a historic property or a historic district, may have adverse effects on historic properties. Interior and exterior renovations have the potential to change the character of a historic property. If the building is not a historic property and exterior renovations do not include ground disturbance and would not change the NRHP eligibility of near-by historic properties or historic districts, interior and exterior renovations under the Proposed Action are anticipated to result in short-term, less-than-significant adverse impacts to cultural resources and have no potential to affect historic

properties. Indirect Impacts are expected to be temporary, minor, and reversible including general construction activity and temporary ingress and egress restrictions. These impacts would not permanently alter the integrity or character of any cultural or historical resources, and would not directly affect the property's eligibility for listing in the NRHP.

If the building is determined to be a historic property or is near to a historic property or historic district, mitigation measures would be implemented to result in less-than-significant adverse impacts to cultural resources. Mitigation measures could include review of proposed modifications by a qualified architectural historian to ensure consistency with Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (36 CFR Part 68, 1995) and no ground disturbance. VA would consult with SHPOs, Tribes, and other parties if adverse effects to historic properties were identified.

Build-to-suit leases are those that include construction of a new building. Also considered under this section is any exterior modifications on build-out leases that include ground disturbance. These construction activities have the potential to adversely impact cultural resources and historic properties.

With the application of BMPs and mitigation measures as needed, the potential for significant adverse impacts to cultural resources and adverse effect to historic properties would be minimized. While project specific measures would be needed, the following sample mitigation measures are provided as examples of ways to avoid or minimize adverse effects:

- Revise project activities to be consistent with the *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.
- Revise design to avoid archaeologically sensitive areas or decrease the amount of proposed ground disturbance.
- Use archaeological monitors on site during ground disturbing activities to halt construction from damaging sites.
- Develop Unanticipated Discoveries Plan in the event archaeological resources or human remains are encountered during construction.

If adverse effects to historic properties could not be avoided, VA would consult in accordance with Section 106. If VA could not avoid or minimize adverse effects and still meet the goals of the proposed undertaking, VA would develop mitigation measures to resolve adverse effects through consultation. Potential mitigation measures include:

- Documentation of historic buildings and structures prior to demolition or alteration.
- Archaeological data recovery if sites cannot be avoided.

Operations

Under the Proposed Action, there would be no additional impacts to cultural or historical properties once construction and/or renovation is complete, as long-term impacts would be determined during the initial review process. Therefore, the operation of OPCs, CLCs, and other similar leased medical facilities would have no impact on the cultural and historic resources of the area.

Summary

VA is preparing a Program Alternative for the Proposed Action (or "Undertaking" as defined in Section 106) in coordination with stakeholders to satisfy Section 106 requirements. VA will update this PEA to reflect the outcome of Section 106 consultation. Should the consultation continue past the point when

this PEA is completed, then VA would continue to complete stand-alone project-specific NHPA compliance prior to initiating the project.

Implementation of the Proposed Action would include the application of BMPs and mitigation measures as needed, to minimize the potential for an adverse effect to historic properties. Therefore, the Proposed Action would result in less than significant impacts to cultural resources.

3.7.2.2 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative equates to the continuation of the existing leasing program. With respect to NEPA compliance, future proposed leasing actions would continue to require the preparation of project- and site-specific NEPA and NHPA documentation. Under the No Action Alternative, for those projects that would have otherwise qualified for NEPA compliance under this PEA, overall impacts to cultural resources are anticipated to be no more than those as described for the Proposed Action. Therefore, while impacts to cultural resources are anticipated to be less than significant, the stand-alone NEPA document for each proposed project would determine and disclose the project-specific impacts.

3.8 Land Use

The term “land use” refers to real property classifications that indicate either natural conditions or the types of human activity occurring on a parcel or within the structures that occupy the parcel. In many cases, land use descriptions are codified in local zoning laws. Zoning focuses on how land is currently being used and how it will be used in the future. The goal is to provide for public safety and protect the character of neighborhoods and special districts.

The land use associated with a project area is dependent upon the local zoning classification. Types of land uses may include residential, agricultural, commercial, institutional, industrial, vacant land, and parks. City government typically has a General/Master Plan or local zoning laws that list approved land uses for all areas within the city.

An important factor affecting a Proposed Action in terms of land use is its compliance with applicable land use or zoning regulations. Other relevant factors include existing land use at the proposed project location; the type of land uses on adjacent properties; their proximity to the proposed project location; and the duration of a proposed activity and its permanence.

There is no nationally recognized convention or uniform terminology for describing land use categories. As a result, the meanings of land use descriptions and definitions vary among jurisdictions.

3.8.1 Affected Environment

Virtually every state has adopted legislation that passes at least some of the authority to adopt zoning ordinances to their counties, cities, towns, and other local governments. The Federal Government does not typically make zoning decisions for land parcels. Zoning ordinances are locally devised regulations and therefore differ greatly across the country with respect to their extent of regulation. The basic intent of “zoning” is to separate incompatible uses of land.

Approximately 52 percent of the 2012 U.S. land base (including Alaska and Hawaii) is used for agricultural purposes, including cropping, grazing (on pasture, range, and in forests), and

farmsteads/farm roads (USDA 2012). Developed lands are generally characterized as large urban and built-up areas, small built-up areas, and rural transportation land (USEPA 2024b).

3.8.2 Environmental Consequences

3.8.2.1 Proposed Action

Over the past two years, VA prepared 10 separate EAs analyzing the potential impacts of construction, renovation, or repair of leasing projects (see Section 1.4.3; VA CFM 2023b). The size of the project area assessed in the documents varied from 30,500 to 426,722 square feet. Each of the EAs determined that there would be less than significant impacts to land use from the construction, renovation, repair, and operation of the facilities. Typical measures to minimize impacts included:

- Analyzing the current land use of the project area and adjacent parcels.
- Selecting a project location that is zoned for medical facility use.
- Complying with required permitting processes and zoning ordinances, including obtaining a zoning variance when necessary.

These measures would be implemented as warranted for future qualifying leasing projects.

Demolition/Construction/Renovation

Prior to beginning any demolition, construction, or renovation associated with the Proposed Action, VA would gather the following information to analyze for any potential land use impacts:

- The Proposed Action's location within the area;
- City plans, including zoning maps, master plan, or general plan, as applicable;
- Current land use of the proposed site; and
- Current land use of the adjacent properties.

Proposed new construction projects on undeveloped or undisturbed sites that are consistent with the existing land use or zoning designation, and do not affect important farmlands, would have no significant impacts on land use. Renovations that do not involve structural changes to an existing facility would not require a construction permit or alter current land use status; these types of renovations would have no significant impacts on land use.

If, per local zoning ordinances, construction of a VA leasing project would not be consistent with the land use designation of the property being acquired, VA would determine whether another suitable location is available or request a zoning variance. Additional NEPA analysis may be required.

If a proposed new construction project would convert prime or unique farmland to non-agricultural use, it is subject to Farmland Protection Policy Act. This requires VA to conduct an assessment using the Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form AD-1006 and to consult with the Natural Resources Conservation Service when necessary (USDA 2024b). A proposed project scoring greater than 160 points on Form AD-1006 requires a consideration of appropriate alternative actions that could reduce adverse impacts (such as alternative sites, modifications, or mitigation). In this case, additional NEPA analysis beyond this PEA would be required.

Operations

There would be no change to land use status during facility operations, as the land use/zoning designation and compatibility would be determined during the construction or renovation phase of the Proposed Action.

Summary

Prior to project initiation, VA would ensure the proposed project would be consistent with existing land use. Incompatible land use discoveries would result in relocation to a more accommodating land use or additional NEPA analysis. Proposed projects that are consistent with existing and surrounding land use designations would be compatible with land use. Therefore, the Proposed Action would result in less than significant impacts to land use.

3.8.2.2 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative equates to the continuation of the existing leasing program. With respect to NEPA compliance, future proposed leasing actions would continue to require the preparation of project- and site-specific NEPA documentation. Under the No Action Alternative, for those projects that would have otherwise qualified for NEPA compliance under this PEA, overall impacts to land use are anticipated to be no more than those as described for the Proposed Action. Therefore, while impacts to land use are anticipated to be less than significant, the stand-alone NEPA document for each proposed project would determine and disclose the project-specific impacts.

3.9 Floodplains, Wetlands, and Coastal Zone Management

The Federal Emergency Management Agency defines a floodplain as any land area susceptible to being inundated by floodwaters from any source. This can include coastal areas impacted by storm surge, land along a river or bayou that is flooded when that waterway rises out of its banks, or low-lying land that fills with water when it rains. Flooding occurs in a wide range of landscapes due to rainfall or storm surge. The Federal Emergency Management Agency designates 100-year and 500-year floodplain maps to determine the likelihood of flooding in a given area.

EO 11988, *Floodplain Management*, as amended by EO 13690, aims to eliminate the long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains, and to avoid direct or indirect support of floodplain development wherever there is a practicable alternative for locating a project outside of the floodplain. EO 11988 applies to federally funded projects and directs agencies to consider alternatives to siting projects within a floodplain.

On July 11, 2024, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) revised its floodplain management regulations (44 CFR Part 9), *Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands*. The rule revised regulations to fully implement the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) via increased flood risk minimization requirements for federally funded projects. The final rule and policy were effective on September 9. 2024.

Projects within the FFRMS floodplain are required to complete an 8-step process as defined in 44 CFR Part 9. The 8-step process is used to ensure responsible entities consider how their actions affect floodplains and/or wetlands. The rule also requires public notices for environmental reviews to be

published online or on appropriate government websites. VA's Physical Security & Resiliency Design Manual (VA 2024), states that no new facilities may be constructed within the 100-year floodplain.

Wetlands are ecosystems characterized by a combination of soil, water, and vegetation, which gives rise to unique environmental conditions and ecological functions. There are many kinds of wetlands and methods by which to classify them. The USFWS has developed a decision support tool to help proponents of federal actions identify wetland and other water-related resources in specific geographic areas. The National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) Mapper (https://www.fws.gov/program/national-wetlands-inventory/wetlands-mapper) is a comprehensive online database and mapping program that provides detailed information on the location, extent, type, and status of wetlands across the U.S. (NWI 2024).

Under Section 404 of the CWA, any project involving placement of fill or discharge of dredged materials into any WOTUS requires U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) authorization. USACE jurisdiction extends up to the ordinary high-water line for non-tidal waters and up to the line of high tide (for dredge or fill) or mean high water line (for work or structures) for tidal waters.

EO 11990, *Protection of Wetlands*, directs federal agencies to "avoid to the extent possible the long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with the destruction or modification of wetlands and to avoid direct or indirect support of new construction in wetlands whenever there is a practicable alternative." Federal agencies shall minimize impacts to wetlands and preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands in carrying out their responsibilities for the use, management, or development of federal lands.

The coastal zone consists of the coastal waters (including the lands therein and thereunder) and the adjacent shorelands (including the waters therein and thereunder), strongly influenced by each other and in proximity to the shorelines of the several coastal states, and includes islands, transition and intertidal areas, salt marshes, wetlands, and beaches.

The Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. Section 1451–1464) encourages coastal states to be proactive in managing coastal zone uses and resources. The Act established a voluntary coastal planning program in which participating states submit a Coastal Management Plan to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for approval. All 35 coastal and Great Lakes states and territories have coastal development plans and participate in the National Coastal Zone Management Program, with the exception of Alaska that withdrew from the voluntary program in July 2011.

Under the Coastal Zone Management Act, federal agency actions within or outside the coastal zone that affect any land or water use or natural resource of the coastal zone shall be carried out in a manner that is consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of the approved state management programs. Each state defines its coastal zone in accordance with the Coastal Zone Management Act.

3.9.1 Affected Environment

The U.S. has more than 3.5 million miles of rivers and streams combined; floodplains account for approximately 7 percent of the nation's total land area and 15 percent of urban areas, as over half of urban floodplains have been already developed. Approximately 175 million acres are subject to periodic flooding. (VA 2022).

Wetlands are typically associated with lakes, rivers, streams, and coastal areas; many of which are located in floodplains. They are found in all 50 states and physiographic regions in the country, and in every U.S. territory. Wetlands compose approximately 5 percent, by area, of the conterminous U.S. An estimated 95 percent of these wetland types are freshwater; the rest are marine or estuarine (VA 2022).

In 1997 the USGS compiled wetlands data for nearly every state that includes estimated total state wetlands acreage. Those states in the lower 48 containing the largest wetland acreages (over 1 million acres) are Florida (11 million acres), Minnesota (9.5 million acres), Georgia (7.7 million acres), Texas (7.6 million acres), and South Carolina (5.7 million acres) (VA 2022).

The U.S. coastal zone[2] includes the 35 U.S. coastal and Great Lakes states and territories shown on Figure 3-4. The U.S.'s extensive coastal resources include nearly 67,000 miles of coastal shoreline (including Alaska), more than 5,500 miles of Great Lakes shoreline, and approximately 90,500 square miles of tidal estuaries (VA 2022). The coastal zone supports ecologically important habitats (e.g., estuaries and wetlands) and natural resources.

[2] The zone extends inland from the shorelines only to the extent necessary to control shorelands, the uses of which have a direct and significant impact on the coastal waters, and to control those geographical areas which are likely to be affected by or vulnerable to sea level rise (16 U.S.C. § 1453).

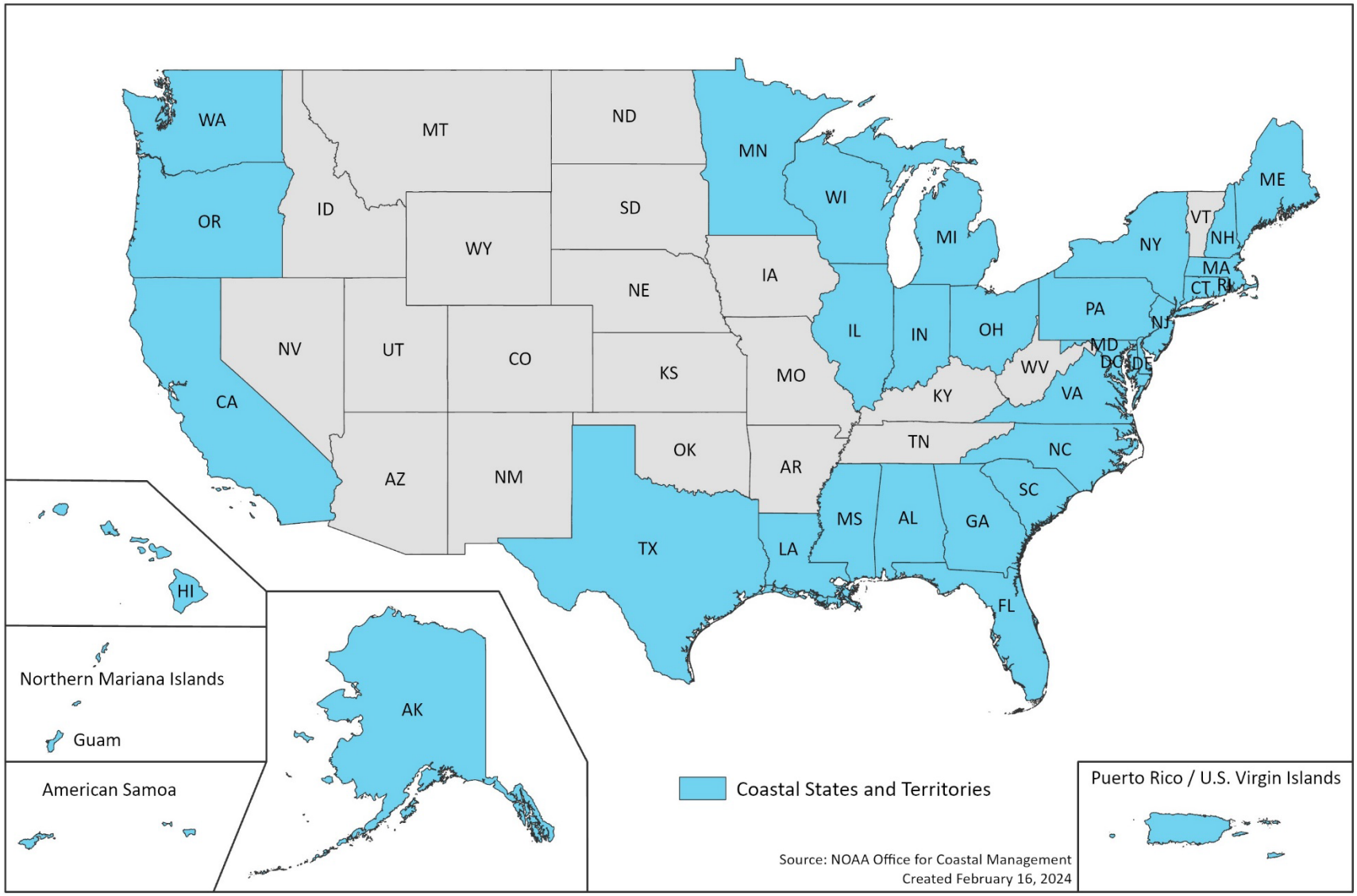

Figure 3.4. U.S. and U.S. Territories Coastal Zone

3.9.2 Environmental Consequences

3.9.2.1 Proposed Action

Over the past two years, VA prepared 10 separate EAs analyzing the potential impacts of construction, renovation, or repair of leasing projects (see Section 1.4.3; VA CFM 2023b). The size of the project area assessed in the documents varied from 30,500 to 426,722 square feet. Each of the EAs determined that there would be less than significant impacts to floodplains, wetlands, and the coastal zone from the construction, renovation, repair, and operation of the facilities. Typical measures to minimize impacts included:

- Avoidance: The best way to minimize impacts to wetlands is to avoid them altogether whenever possible. This may involve siting development, infrastructure projects, or other activities in areas that are not designated as wetlands.
- Buffer Zones: Establishing buffer zones around wetlands can help protect them from adjacent development and activities. Buffer zones can serve as protective areas to minimize the impacts of runoff, pollution, and disturbance on wetland ecosystems.
- Stormwater Management: Implementing stormwater BMPs can help prevent pollutants from entering wetlands and protect water quality. Stormwater design practices like culverts, detention ponds, and vegetated swales can help control runoff and reduce the risk of sedimentation and contamination in wetland areas.

These measures would be implemented as warranted for future qualifying leasing projects.

Demolition/Construction/Renovation

Under the Proposed Action, no projects would occur within the FFRMS floodplain. If there is no feasible alternative and development must occur in a floodplain, then additional NEPA analysis would be required and VA would follow regulatory requirements and appropriate guidance identified in 44 CFR Part 9 (the 8-step process).

Under the Proposed Action, construction activities including demolition, and renovation such as site preparation, grading, movement of heavy equipment, and paving of parking areas could temporarily increase sedimentation and erosion. These activities would expose soil surfaces and could increase the potential for sedimentation and surface runoff. Potential impacts would be minimized with the implementation of a SWPPP and associated erosion and sediment control BMPs for soil stabilization. For projects over one acre, an NPDES permit would be required (refer to Section 3.3.2, Geology and Soils).

Before construction, demolition or renovation VA would identify local wetlands using the NWI. Construction activities including demolition, and renovation would avoid placement of fill or discharge of dredged materials into any WOTUS. However, if the placement of fill, or discharge of dredged materials, could not be avoided, VA would obtain a Section 404 nationwide permit from USACE and abide by the permit conditions. If the impact would be greater than the bounds afforded by the nationwide permit program, then an individual permit would be required along with additional NEPA documentation.

Under the Proposed Action, construction activities including demolition and renovation could occur within the coastal zone. Federal agencies must show consistency with state programs to implement projects in the coastal zone. VA actions within or outside the coastal zone that affect any land or water

use or natural resource of the coastal zone would be carried out in a manner that is consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of the approved state management programs by demonstrating how the proposed action would be consistent with the coastal zone.

Operations

The operation of OPCs, CLCs, and other similar leased medical facilities have the potential to impact floodplains, wetlands, and the coastal zone. Potential impacts could occur from increases in water runoff. During design, features would be included to reduce the impacts of runoff due to operations. Existing and new stormwater design infrastructure would be properly maintained to ensure stormwater runoff is properly managed such that its flow would not cause soil erosion or sedimentation.

Summary

Under the Proposed Action, no projects would occur within the FFRMS floodplain. If there is no feasible alternative and development must occur in a floodplain, then additional NEPA analysis would be required and VA would follow regulatory requirements and appropriate guidance identified in 44 CFR Part 9. If impacts to wetlands would exceed nationwide permit thresholds, then additional NEPA analysis and permitting with the USACE would be required. Proposed projects would demonstrate their consistency with the CZMA, as applicable, prior to implementing the project. Through avoidance and minimization, proposed projects would reduce the potential for impacts to floodplains, wetlands, and the coastal zone. Therefore, the Proposed Action would result in less than significant impacts to floodplains, wetlands, and the coastal zone.

3.9.2.2 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative equates to the continuation of the existing leasing program. With respect to NEPA compliance, future proposed leasing actions would continue to require the preparation of project- and site-specific NEPA documentation. Under the No Action Alternative, for those projects that would have otherwise qualified for NEPA compliance under this PEA, overall impacts to floodplains, wetlands, and the coastal zone are anticipated to be no more than those as described for the Proposed Action. Therefore, while impacts to floodplains, wetlands, and the coastal zone are anticipated to be less than significant, the stand-alone NEPA document for each proposed project would determine and disclose the project-specific impacts.

3.10 Socioeconomics

In the context of NEPA, the analysis of socioeconomics is concerned with the interaction between social and economic characteristics of populations with the potential to be affected by a given project or action. The socioeconomic indicators discussed in relation to the Proposed Action include regional employment and income, local government fiscal resources, recreational spending, agricultural economics, and municipal and industrial water use economics. Socioeconomic indicators, such as population, housing, and regional economic activity inform the assessment of socioeconomics and are utilized to understand the community potentially affected by the Proposed Action.

3.10.1 Affected Environment

Socioeconomics describes the local economic and social conditions in an area. Socioeconomic indicators, such as population, housing, and regional economic activity inform the assessment of socioeconomics.

The U.S. had an official estimated resident population of 331,449,281 in 2020. This figure includes the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The 2020 population for the inhabited U.S. Territories is as follows: Puerto Rico (3,285,874), Guam (153,836), the U.S. Virgin Islands (87,146), American Samoa (49,710), and the Northern Mariana Islands (47,329) (U.S. Census Bureau 2020). As of 2022, there were 324 federally recognized American Indian reservations in the U.S. In 2020, an estimated 3.7 million people identified as American Indian and Alaska Native alone, accounting for 1.1 percent of all people living in the U.S. (Office of Minority Health 2024).

The U.S. population is highly urbanized, with more than 82 percent of the population residing in cities and suburbs. Large urban clusters are spread throughout the eastern half of the U.S. (particularly the Great Lakes area, northeast, east, and southeast) and the western tier states; mountainous areas, principally the Rocky Mountains and Appalachian chain, deserts in the southwest, the dense boreal forests in the extreme north, and the central prairie states are less densely populated. California and Texas are the most populous states, as the mean center of U.S. population has consistently shifted westward and southward. In the U.S. territories, population centers include the San Juan metro area in Puerto Rico, Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands, and the island of Tutuila in American Samoa.

Veterans live in every state and community in the U.S. Three states – California, Florida, and Texas – each have more than 1 million Veterans. Another 10 states each have more than 500,000 Veterans: Arizona, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington (VA 2020c). States with the highest Veteran percentages of the total adult population in 2022 include Alaska, with the highest at 10.07 percent; Wyoming at 9.43 percent, and Virginia at 9.2 percent. Maine and Montana are at 8.95 and 8.9 percent respectively. South Carolina, Nevada, New Mexico, South Dakota, and Hawaii were the next highest, between 8.36 and 8.2 percent, with South Carolina at 8.36 percent (U.S. News & World Report 2023).

As of 2021, there were approximately 28,820 Veterans in the District of Columbia (VA 2021c). As of 2020, there were approximately 103,710 Veterans living in Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (Center for a New American Security 2020). Puerto Rico had approximately 90,000 Veterans as of 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau 2016).

3.10.2 Environmental Consequences

3.10.2.1 Proposed Action

Over the past two years, VA prepared 10 separate EAs analyzing the potential impacts of construction, renovation, or repair of leasing projects (see Section 1.4.3; VA CFM 2023b). The size of the project area assessed in the documents varied from 30,500 to 426,722 square feet. Each of the EAs determined that there would be less than significant impacts to socioeconomics from the construction, renovation, repair, and operation of the facilities.

Demolition/Construction/Renovation

Anticipated effects to socioeconomics of proposed sites are those associated with construction, demolition, and/or renovation. All three of these activities would induce short-term benefits regarding local employment. Long-term benefits apply to locations receiving new medical facilities as these facilities would provide new permanent employment opportunities. The proposed activities would have a negligible impact on broad nationwide-population, income, or housing.

Securing construction areas, fencing service areas and equipment pads, and using landscaping around the perimeter of the property would prevent unauthorized access and associated public safety risks, to include children, during project implementation.

During construction, demolition, or renovation there would be minor impacts from noise, fugitive dust, and traffic to nearby populations; however, as demonstrated in the respective resource sections, the impacts are not anticipated to be high (using the terminology from EO 12898, and defined in this PEA as significant), and thus would not constitute disproportionately "high and adverse human health or environmental effects" on minority and low-income populations. In addition, there is a possible beneficial impact due to the increase in temporary employment opportunities during the construction, demolition, or renovation of proposed sites. Once constructed, the operation of a VA leased facility would enhance and expand healthcare services for Veterans. Additionally, the facility's operation would likely provide long-term employment opportunities for residents in the surrounding community. Indirect benefits to local businesses would occur from spending by employees, patients, and visitors to the new facility. New businesses may open in the vicinity to support the users of the new care facility, providing additional indirect economic and employment benefits. There would also be long-term benefits to veterans in the region by reducing the travel distance to obtain medical care from a facility dedicated to veterans.

Operations

The operation of the proposed medical facilities could have a minor effect due to increased noise and traffic. These impacts would affect nearby populations, which for some project locations may be primarily low-income or minority populations. In addition, Veterans who are members of minority or low-income populations would have the beneficial effect of greater access to medical facilities and temporary or permanent housing. Another potential benefit is the operation of new facilities would increase permanent employment opportunities for low-income or minority populations in the vicinity of the proposed project locations. If there are low-income groups or minorities who may be affected by a future project (as identified through the EJSCREEN tool), special efforts would be made to reach out to them as required by EO 12898. This may involve adjusting meeting schedules, translating documents, having interpreters on hand during meetings, and making other adjustments to overcome cultural, linguistic, and economic barriers to their participation (VA 2010). Therefore, the Proposed Action would result in beneficial impacts to socioeconomics.

3.10.2.2 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative equates to the continuation of the existing leasing program. With respect to NEPA compliance, future proposed leasing actions would continue to require the preparation of project and site-specific NEPA documentation. Under the No Action Alternative, for those projects that would have otherwise qualified for NEPA compliance under this PEA, overall impacts to socioeconomics are

anticipated to be no more than those as described for the Proposed Action. Therefore, while impacts to socioeconomics are anticipated to be less than significant, the stand-alone NEPA document for each proposed project would determine and disclose the project-specific impacts.

3.11 Community Services

Community services include fire and police protection, medical services, schools, and recreational areas. OPCs, CLCs, and other similar leased facilities would be located in areas where these community services are present.

3.11.1 Affected Environment

Approximately 15,400 local law enforcement agencies exist across the country; if counting all college campus security departments, tribal land units, sheriff offices, and local, state, and federal police, this number increases to approximately 18,000 agencies (VA 2022). While local law enforcement agencies range in size from 1 officer to over 30,000, the most common type of agency is the small town department with up to 10 officers (VA 2022). In 2017, there were 29,819 fire departments comprised of 1,056,200 local firefighters in the U.S. (VA 2022).

The VHA is America's largest integrated health care system, providing care at 1,321 health care facilities, including 172 medical centers and 1,138 outpatient sites of care of varying complexity (VHA outpatient clinics), serving 9 million enrolled Veterans each year (VHA 2024).

3.11.2 Environmental Consequences

3.11.2.1 Proposed Action

Over the past two years, VA prepared 10 separate EAs analyzing the potential impacts of construction, renovation, or repair of leasing projects (see Section 1.4.3; VA CFM 2023b). The size of the project area assessed in the documents varied from 30,500 to 426,722 square feet. Each of the EAs determined that there would be less than significant impacts to community services from the construction, renovation, repair, and operation of the facilities. Typical measures to minimize impacts included:

- Locating the existing community service providers surrounding the project area, including fire stations, police stations, schools, medical facilities, and recreational areas.
- Establishing the existing population being served by the current community service providers.
- Analyzing the potential for additional community service needs as a result of the Proposed Action, and determining whether the existing community service providers can manage any additional load.
- Determining whether the Proposed Action would alleviate a community service need in the area.

These measures would be implemented as warranted for future qualifying leasing projects.

Demolition/Construction/Renovation

Demolition, construction, and renovation-related activities would result in a slight increase in demand for fire protection, police services, and emergency medical services due to the potential for workplace

accidents. Construction and work crews would implement best construction practices and health and safety procedures to minimize such hazards. Construction and work crews would be required to comply with Occupational Safety and Health Administration safety and health regulations for construction detailed in 29 CFR Part 1926. These activities would have a minor and temporary impact. Demolition, construction, and renovation would have no long-term significant impacts to community services.

Operations

The Proposed Action would facilitate VA's ability to provide affordable health care services to Veterans in U.S. and its Territories, and Tribal Lands. OPCs, CLCs, and other similar leased facilities would add to the existing community services in the area by providing basic medical care (OPCs), nursing care (CLCs), mental health services (MHCs), and more. Given the increased availability of health care services to Veterans, the Proposed Action would have a beneficial impact on community services.

The operation of new OPCs, CLCs, and other similar leased facilities could require anywhere from a few tens to several hundred staff. New facilities that require a small staff, and renovation or repair projects that would not result in a change in staff size would have no significant impact on fire protection, police services, or other community services. New facilities that require staff could have result in a slight increase in demand for a variety of community services.

Summary

The Proposed Action would result in a slight increase in demand for fire protection, police services, and emergency medical services due to the potential for workplace accidents during construction and renovation. Operationally, the Proposed Action would not place a strain on existing community services; conversely, the added services would benefit the Veteran population and reduce travel times, thus reducing the potential for accidents and emergency response. Therefore, the Proposed Action would result in a beneficial impact to community services.

3.11.2.2 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative equates to the continuation of the existing leasing program. With respect to NEPA compliance, future proposed leasing actions would continue to require the preparation of project- and site-specific NEPA documentation. Under the No Action Alternative, for those projects that would have otherwise qualified for NEPA compliance under this PEA, overall impacts to community services are anticipated to be no more than those as described for the Proposed Action. Therefore, while impacts to community services are anticipated to be less than significant, the stand-alone NEPA document for each proposed project would determine and disclose the project-specific impacts.

3.12 Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials

Waste is defined as any byproduct of an action, including chemicals and other hazardous materials and construction debris. Hazardous waste is defined as liquid, solid, contained gas, or sludge wastes that contain properties that are dangerous or potentially harmful to human health or the environment.

Hazardous materials include, but are not limited to, hazardous and toxic substances and waste, and any materials that pose a potential hazard to human health and the environment due to their quantity, concentration, or physical and chemical properties. Hazardous wastes are characterized by their ignitability, corrosivity, reactivity, and toxicity.

Hazardous materials and wastes, if not controlled, may either (1) cause or significantly contribute to an increase in mortality, serious irreversible illness, or incapacitating reversible illness; or (2) pose a substantial threat to human health or the environment. Hazardous materials may be classified in several different categories based on laws and regulations that define their characteristics and use. Applicable laws and regulations include the following:

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) of 1976, as amended (42 U.S.C. 6901, et seq.) Which gives the EPA authority to control hazardous waste from creation to disposal. This includes the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste. RCRA attempts to reduce and eliminate hazardous wastes before environmental problems arise.

The Toxics Substances Control Act (15 U.S.C. 2601-2629) provides the EPA with authority to require reporting, record-keeping and testing requirements, and restrictions relating to chemical substances and/or mixtures

The Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) (42 U.S.C. 9601, et seq.) CERCLA, is a Federal law designed to clean up abandoned hazardous waste sites. CERCLA focuses on past actions of hazardous waste disposal in which the adverse environmental situation already exists. The law authorizes the EPA to identify parties responsible for creating hazardous waste sites and force them to clean the site. The superfund associated with CERCLA is a trust fund devoted to cleaning up contaminated hazardous waste sites where responsible parties cannot be identified (VA 2010).

3.12.1 Affected Environment

Waste is generated by virtually all activities across the affected environment and is a standard consideration in managing resources. Examples of materials at construction sites that may be classified as hazardous wastes include spent cleaners (e.g., organic solvents), paints (including lead-based paint), used oil, paint thinners, wastes that contain ignitable and corrosive materials, and wastes that contain certain toxic pollutants. A list of hazardous wastes and their allowed concentrations is in the regulations that implement the RCRA. These regulations also contain requirements for managing, treating, and disposing of hazardous wastes (USEPA 2024c).

In 2014, Americans generated a total of approximately 258 million tons of municipal solid waste, or approximately 4.4 pounds per person per day. Approximately half of the discarded material is diverted for recycling (25.7 percent) or composting (8.9 percent) or burned for energy recovery (12.8 percent); however, most (52.6 percent) of this waste ends up in landfills. As of 2012, 1,908 landfills existed across the country, mostly located in the south (668 landfills, 35.0 percent) and west (718 landfills, 37.6 percent) (VA 2022).

Numerous activities require the use, storage, and disposal of regulated and non-regulated hazardous materials. Residential households use a wide variety of hazardous chemicals, typically in small quantities, including paints, pesticides, herbicides, cleaning chemicals, and other cleaning solvents. Vehicles and small engine units, including small trucks, lawnmowers, and blowers that contain or require use of petroleum products.

Special hazards regulated under federal law and potentially encountered during remodeling and demolition projects include Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM), lead-based paint, and polychlorinated biphenyls.

3.12.2 Environmental Consequences

3.12.2.1 Proposed Action

Over the past two years, VA prepared 10 separate EAs analyzing the potential impacts of construction, renovation, or repair of leasing projects (see Section 1.4.3; VA CFM 2023b). The size of the project area assessed in the documents varied from 30,500 to 426,722 square feet. Each of the EAs determined that there would be less than significant impacts to solid and hazardous waste resulting from the construction, renovation, repair, and operation of the facilities

Property acquisition, construction of new facilities, or large additions that involve ground-disturbing activities would need to provide a Phase I environmental site assessment (ESA) conducted in accordance with ASTM Standard E1527-21 (or the most recent update), *Standard for Environmental Site Assessments: Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Process.* The purpose of a Phase I ESA is to identify, to the extent feasible, recognized environmental conditions (RECs) at the property being investigated. A REC is the presence or likely presence of any hazardous substances, with respect to the range of contaminants within the scope of CERCLA or petroleum products, in, on, or at a property due to any release to the environment; under conditions that indicate a release to the environment, or under conditions that pose a material threat of a future release to the environment. RECs do not include *de minimis* conditions that generally do not represent a threat to human health or the environment and that generally would not be the subject of an enforcement action if brought to the attention of appropriate governmental agencies.

Chemical wastes, as reported to USEPA's Toxics Release Inventory (TRI), may or may not also be considered RCRA hazardous waste, but they are toxic chemicals. TRI reporting is based on how chemicals are used and not on the characteristics of the wastes generated. While the quantity of TRI chemicals released to the air, water, or land does not indicate their health risks, the information can be used as a starting point to evaluate the potential for human exposure to TRI chemicals and whether their releases may pose risks to human health and the environment (USEPA 2024c).

Demolition/Construction/Renovation

Under the Proposed Action construction activities including demolition and renovation would, by nature, require the use of hazardous materials and generate hazardous wastes. Prior to demolition, the construction contractor(s) would treat and abate all locations known to contain asbestos or lead in accordance with applicable USEPA, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and state regulations and VA requirements.

Acquisition or renovation of existing structures may need to be evaluated for the presence of ACM, lead-based paint, and polychlorinated biphenyls. ACM and lead-based paint in an existing structure are not within the scope of the ASTM Phase I ESA standard, and therefore may not always be noted in a Phase I ESA report.

If a Phase I ESA identifies a REC, a Phase II ESA may be required. A Phase II ESA would obtain data concerning actual property conditions, often by sampling and laboratory analysis. Information gathered from Phase I and Phase II ESAs would guide potential remedial actions and mitigations to protect workers and the public during construction, renovation, or demolition.

Construction, demolition, or renovation of the facilities would increase the presence and use of petroleum and hazardous materials and would result in a short-term potential for minor impacts from spills or accidents. The operation of construction equipment requires petroleum and hazardous materials such as oil, diesel, gasoline, hydraulic fluids, and lubricants. BMPs such as proper storage and labeling of these substances in approved containers, storage of the containers on a level and impervious surface and providing a secondary containment system around fuel storage containers and during refueling activities would reduce the potential for unintentional releases.

Wastes generated as part of construction activities would be properly managed and disposed of according to federal, state, and local regulations. Wastes would be collected and properly disposed of by a waste disposal company at an approved disposal facility.

Operations

Operation of the leased medical and medically-related facilities would generate solid waste, hazardous materials, and medical waste. Information gathered from Phase I and Phase II ESAs would guide potential remedial actions and mitigations to protect the public, staff, Veterans, and visitors during operation of transitional housing and medical service centers. The wastes would be collected and properly disposed of by approved waste disposal companies at approved disposal facilities. VA medical facilities would continue to manage their use of hazardous materials and wastes, in both patient care activities and maintenance activities, in accordance with all applicable state and federal regulations.

Summary

Proposed demolition, construction, and renovation activities would follow all applicable regulations and laws relating to the use, storage, and safe disposal of solid waste and hazardous materials. VA facilities would also continue to manage their use of wastes and materials in accordance with all applicable state and federal regulations. Therefore, the Proposed Action would result in a less than significant impact to solid waste and hazardous materials.

3.12.2.2 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative equates to the continuation of the existing leasing program. With respect to NEPA compliance, future proposed leasing actions would continue to require the preparation of project- and site-specific NEPA documentation. Under the No Action Alternative, for those projects that would have otherwise qualified for NEPA compliance under this PEA, overall impacts to solid waste and hazardous materials are anticipated to be no more than those as described for the Proposed Action. Therefore, while impacts to solid waste and hazardous materials are anticipated to be less than significant, the stand-alone NEPA document for each proposed project would determine and disclose the project-specific impacts.

3.13 Transportation and Parking

Transportation refers to the movement of people, goods, and equipment on a local and regional surface transportation network consisting of streets, railroads, transit facilities, bicycle lanes, and other modes of transportation, such as walking. Parking refers to the capacity of nearby public and parking facilities (such as on-street spaces, surface parking lots, and multilevel parking facilities) to accommodate existing and projected future demand.

3.13.1 Affected Environment

The Proposed Action would involve a range of construction and operational activities in a variety contexts (e.g., city, rural, or suburban). Transportation facilities that may be affected by the Proposed Action include freeways, surface roadways (such as multi-lane arterial highways, collector roads, and local streets), transit facilities (such as local bus service), and non-motorized facilities (such as bike lanes and sidewalks). To the extent that the Proposed Action would be located in an area characterized by peak hour commuting patterns, the affected transportation facilities may also include roadway intersections and freeway interchanges, most of which are controlled by traffic signals and stop signs, and public and private parking facilities.

The geographic limits of the affected environment would be defined on a case-by-case basis, depending on local conditions (such as the location of employees and patients relative to the Proposed Action and the location and capacity of transportation facilities connecting these land uses,) and the volume of construction- and operations-related traffic. For example, the affected environment for a large OPC in a generally built out suburban area with dispersed and separated land uses would be substantially larger than the affected environment for limited and temporary construction activities in a rural context. Even a small project in an undeveloped area may introduce a regionally impactful increase in traffic.

In most states, traffic-related effects are measured in terms of transportation capacity, expressed as Level of Service, and based on procedures documented in the Highway Capacity Manual (Transportation Research Board 2016). However, in some locations such as California, state environmental regulations dictate that transportation impacts are measured in terms of Vehicle Miles Traveled (and not Level of Service).

3.13.2 Environmental Consequences

3.13.2.1 Proposed Action

Over the past two years, VA prepared 10 separate EAs analyzing the potential impacts of construction, renovation, or repair of leasing projects (see Section 1.4.3; VA CFM 2023b). The size of the project area assessed in the documents varied from 30,500 to 426,722 square feet. Each of the EAs (to include the project with 426,722 square feet of new construction [VA 2020d])determined that there would be less than significant impacts to transportation and parking from the construction, renovation, repair, and operation of the facilities. The EAs identified mitigation actions to reduce potential impacts to transportation and parking. Typical mitigation actions included:

- Drafting a project specific transportation management plan to minimize a project's concentration of traffic in the peak hour and/or peak direction of travel.
- Implement various traffic control features, such as lane separation, and physical and timing improvements to increase traffic capacity (for example, adding lanes).

A potential significant traffic impact would occur if there would be an increase in average daily traffic volume of at least 20 percent on access roads to the site or the major roadway network.

Demolition/Construction/Renovation

Construction-related activities would involve the removal of construction and demolition debris, the delivery of construction materials and equipment, worker commuting, and the removal of equipment after construction concludes. Delivery and removal activities would likely be periodic and may be scheduled to occur outside of peak commuting periods. Construction worker travel would recur on a daily basis and may coincide with peak commuting periods. While worker trips would recur during the peak commuting periods, some of these trips may involve carpooling and/or transit, thus limiting effects on traffic.

The short-term increased traffic volumes could cause delays if they occur during morning and afternoon peak times and would contribute to congestion of the roadways and intersections. In addition, the installation and connection of utility lines could further contribute to short-term congestion and delays. These delays would slow traffic and make travel along the neighboring roads more difficult.

To help offset potential construction-related delays, especially for larger projects in settings with existing transportation issues, a transportation management plan would help to manage the flow of traffic and reduce impacts to the transportation network.

Construction-related trips would be temporary and any impacts would cease with the completion of construction. Renovation and repair projects would generate a much smaller number of trips and would not require preparation of a Traffic Management Plan.

Operations

During operation, public roadways providing local and regional access to and from the new leasing facility would experience an incremental increase in traffic volumes due to an increase in the number of employees, patients, and visitors accessing the new facility. Each project would provide sufficient parking to serve the anticipated demand, based on the size of the proposed facility.

The Proposed Action may involve the construction of new facilities with a building square footage of up to 250,000 square feet. Table 3-7 summarizes the estimated traffic generation for a 250,000 square foot OPC based on traffic generation rates published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers. This table reflects the maximum potential traffic generation for the types of facilities covered in this PEA. As shown, the hypothetical project would generate approximately 9,400 daily trips, including 688 in the morning peak hour and 923 in the afternoon peak hour.

Table 3-7. Estimated Daily Trips Generated from Maximum Construction Scenario

Land Use	*Intensity*	*Traffic Generation*						
		Average Daily Traffic	*AM Peak Hour*			*PM Peak Hour*		
			In	*Out*	*Total*	*In*	*Out*	*Total*
OPC	250,000 SF	9,400	557	131	688	277	646	923

Notes: SF = Square feet
Source: Institute of Transportation Engineers 2021 (Land Use Code 630, Clinic)

As shown in Table 3.7, the trips generated would be numerous and would increase traffic and associated service ratings in just about every setting (e.g., city, suburban, or urban). As such, should it be

determined that a leasing project of or close to this magnitude, would result in an increase of traffic to this level, the selected developer would coordinate with the local transportation authority to develop appropriate mitigation measures including the development of a project specific transportation management plan to minimize a project's concentration of traffic in the peak hour and/or peak direction of travel. Mitigation measures may include implementing various traffic control features, such as lane separation, and physical and timing improvements to increase capacity traffic (for example, adding lanes) to offset these impacts to the local transportation network.

Conversely, Table 3-8 depicts the number of trips associated with a 48,000 square foot CBOC, which was one of the past projects presented in Section 1.4.3 with the lowest square footage. As shown in Table 3-8, the predicted number of trips would be much less. It is likely that the addition of these trips to a regional transportation network would not require mitigation. However, local conditions would dictate if further analysis and/or mitigation would be needed.

Table 3-8. Low-Level Traffic Generation

Land Use	*Intensity*	*Traffic Generation*						
		Average Daily Traffic	*AM Peak Hour*			*PM Peak Hour*		
			In	*Out*	*Total*	*In*	*Out*	*Total*
OPC	48,000 SF	1,805	107	25	132	53	124	177

Notes: SF = Square feet
Source: Institute of Transportation Engineers 2021 (Land Use Code 630, Clinic)

For future projects, VA would first consider the transportation setting of the project. This includes the population, condition of roads, and existing traffic (collectively referred to as the existing transportation network capacity). Generally smaller projects in developed areas would have a negligible impact on the regional road network.

Without knowing the local traffic volumes it is impossible in this PEA to determine if a final project design as implemented would result in an increase in average daily traffic volume of at least 20 percent on access roads to the site. However, using the qualitative and quantitative analysis herein along with sound judgement and coordination with local transportation authorities as warranted, future projects can determine if their proposed project would require additional analysis and/or mitigation.

Over the past two years, VA prepared 10 separate EAs analyzing the potential impacts of construction, renovation, or repair of leasing projects (see Section 1.4.3; VA CFM 2023b). The size of the project area assessed in the documents varied from 30,500 to 426,722 square feet. Each of the EAs determined that there would be less than significant impacts to transportation and parking from the construction, renovation, repair, and operation of the facilities. As a point of comparison, a VA EA prepared in 2020 determined that the construction of a 426,722-square foot health care center with more than 2,600 new parking spaces would result in less than impacts to transportation and parking (VA 2020d).

Summary

Under the Proposed Action, there would be a temporary increase in traffic during construction and renovation activities. Preparation of a transportation management plan would identify measures to reduce these impacts, as needed for larger projects. During operations, the increase in patient and staff trips under a maximum development scenario may generate adverse impacts without mitigation.

Additional analysis would be required for certain projects, depending on local conditions, which may necessitate further NEPA analysis and project-specific mitigation. However, for those projects where the impacts would be negligible and/or accommodated within the existing roadway network, this PEA can be used. Therefore, the Proposed Action would result in less than significant impacts to transportation and parking.

3.13.2.2 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative equates to the continuation of the existing leasing program. With respect to NEPA compliance, future proposed leasing actions would continue to require the preparation of project- and site-specific NEPA documentation. Under the No Action Alternative, for those projects that would have otherwise qualified for NEPA compliance under this PEA, overall impacts to transportation and parking are anticipated to be no more than those as described for the Proposed Action. Therefore, while impacts to transportation and parking are anticipated to be less than significant, the stand-alone NEPA document for each proposed project would determine and disclose the project-specific impacts.

3.14 Utilities

Utilities are the services that support the efficient and comfortable operation of a facility or location. Utilities considered include electricity, natural gas, steam, telecommunications, water, and wastewater.

3.14.1 Affected Environment

The affected environment for utilities requires site-specific investigation to determine the existing capacity for each of the following: electricity, water, wastewater, stormwater, natural gas, and telecommunications. Each location may have a different set of utilities available, and the site-specific investigation would identify all utility provider and the facility design needs to be compatible with available utilities. For example, some areas of the country do not have or are phasing out natural gas service. Capacity analyses would also include the total amount of the utility available, amount used by existing customers, and the excess capacity available for use by a proposed leasing project.

3.14.2 Environmental Consequences

3.14.2.1 Proposed Action

Over the past two years, VA prepared 10 separate EAs analyzing the potential impacts of construction, renovation, or repair of leasing projects (see Section 1.4.3; VA CFM 2023b). The size of the project area assessed in the documents varied from 30,500 to 426,722 square feet. Each of the EAs determined that there would be less than significant impacts to utilities demands from the construction, renovation, repair, and operation of the facilities.

Demolition/Construction/Renovation

Generally, utility usage during demolition/construction/renovation phases of a project would be minimal and often supplied by the building contractor. For example, temporary electrical power would be provided by a portable generator until the building is sufficiently completed to be hooked up to the

electrical grid. During construction water and wastewater is not typically used. Similarly, natural gas, stormwater, and telecommunication lines are not hooked up until project completion.

Prior to the start of construction on any water and/or sewer lines, plans and specifications would be signed, stamped and dated by a Licensed Professional Engineer in the location of the action (e.g., Kentucky) and submitted to the appropriate state division for review and approval (e.g., the Kentucky Division of Water), as appropriate for each location. If any projects require the relocation of water or wastewater utilities, a construction permit from the appropriate state water quality division (e.g., the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality's Water Quality Division) would be required for the following:

- construction of new water and wastewater treatment facilities;
- modifications and upgrades to existing facilities;
- construction of new water distribution and wastewater collection lines;
- relocation of existing water distribution and wastewater collection lines.

Conversely, projects that would not require a construction permit include the replacement of existing equipment with the same type and size equipment and the replacement of existing water and wastewater lines with the same size line in the same location.

The proposed new buildings and renovations would meet VA sustainable design and LEED criteria that require increased efficiency in heat generation, air conditioning, lighting, and water systems over existing facilities. Overall utility demand would increase; however existing utility providers would meet this increase in demand.

Operations

Design specifications for the building would determine the utility demand. Each utility system demand would be compared to the utility service provider's ability to supply the utility. Examples of these strategies may include for excess water demand to reduce the number of total fixtures and to install low-flow fixtures. For electrical shortfalls, solar panels may be able to offset the demand.

Summary

The Proposed Action would require some increases in utility capacity and service connections due to an increase in building square footage and demand over existing uses. Given the relatively small to medium size of the facilities, existing utility providers would be anticipated to meet this demand. Building design would apply modern energy efficiency standards. Renewable energy options such as PV rooftop solar would be installed as warranted, reducing the utility demand. Construction of health care facilities would comply with agency-specific design and construction specifications. Therefore, the Proposed Action would result in less than significant impacts to utilities.

3.14.2.2 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative equates to the continuation of the existing leasing program. With respect to NEPA compliance, future proposed leasing actions would continue to require the preparation of project- and site-specific NEPA documentation. Under the No Action Alternative, for those projects that would have otherwise qualified for NEPA compliance under this PEA, overall impacts to utilities are anticipated to be no more than those as described for the Proposed Action. Therefore, while impacts to

utilities are anticipated to be less than significant, the stand-alone NEPA document for each proposed project would determine and disclose the project-specific impacts.

4 PROTECTION, MITIGATION, AND COMPLIANCE MEASURES

This chapter summarizes the measures VA would implement as part of the Proposed Action to mitigate potential impacts to resources such that impacts would be below a level considered significant, as well as minimized or avoided altogether when feasible. This chapter also identifies area-specific requirements identified by stakeholders during the scoping period.

4.1 Mitigation Measures

BMPs, monitoring requirements, and regulatory compliance are part of the Proposed Action and are not mitigation measures; these included actions would contribute to environmental resource protection during project implementation. Chapter 4 identifies mitigation measures for each resource, as applicable. In addition, regulatory compliance is not considered mitigation, but generally greatly contributes to reducing or preventing environmental impacts. The measures listed in Table 4-1 would be implemented by leasing program partners during construction and operation of medical facilities, as warranted.

Table 4-1. Description and Type of Mitigation and Minimization Measures by Resource

Resource	***Mitigation Measure***
Wildlife and Habitat	Prior to each project, the proponent would use the USFWS IPaC database to screen for any federally listed endangered or threatened species and their habitat in the project area. If species or habitat are present, avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures would be identified and implemented through Section 7 consultation to address potential adverse effects to federally listed threatened and endangered species.
Floodplains, Wetlands, and Coastal Zone Management	Projects will be planned in such a way as to avoid siting the project in an area that may cause direct or indirect impacts to floodplains and/or wetlands. If possible, a practicable alternative avoiding floodplains and wetlands will be adopted. If development must occur in a floodplain, then VA would, follow regulatory requirements and appropriate guidance. If impacts would exceed the nationwide permit thresholds, then VA would prepare an individual permit and additional NEPA documentation. If the placement of fill, or discharge of dredged materials in designated wetlands, could not be avoided, VA would obtain a Section 404 nationwide permit from USACE. If project impacts exceed the bounds afforded by the nationwide permit program, then an individual permit with additional NEPA documentation would occur. Local and state authorities will be consulted to ensure consistency with applicable Coastal Zone Management policies.
Cultural Resources	(1) If previously unidentified historic or culturally significant items are discovered during construction, the construction contractor would immediately cease work in the area of the discovery until appropriate SHPO/Tribal Historic Preservation Office and Tribes are contacted to properly identify and appropriately treat discovered items in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal law(s). (2) Should human remains be identified during ground-disturbing activities, all work in the vicinity of the discovery would cease immediately and local law enforcement contacted. The need for further consultation would be based on age and type of discovery as determined by initial assessment (i.e., likely crime scene, recent, historic, or prehistoric). (3) Mitigation measures developed during NHPA Section 106 consultation to address potential adverse effects to cultural and historic resources will be implemented on a project-specific basis.

Resource	*Mitigation Measure*
Transportation and Parking	(1) The construction contractor shall prepare and implement a transportation management plan to limit the effects of construction related on the surrounding roadway network, with special emphasis on scheduling trips to avoid the traditional peak commuting periods (typically between 7:00 and 9:00 A.M. and 4:30 to 5:30 P.M.). The delivery and removal of construction equipment, materials and debris, and worker commuting trips, must be scheduled to avoid these peak periods. The transportation management plan must also provide for construction worker parking and it must accommodate any existing parking spaces that are temporarily lost during construction activities. (2) Depending on the proposed operational traffic and existing transportation system capacity, additional coordination with the regional transportation authority would occur and appropriate mitigation measures would be identified and implemented. This may also include preparing a traffic study to support the project-specific analysis.

Notes: IPaC = Information for Planning and Consultation; SHPO = State Historic Preservation Office; USFWS = U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

4.2 Location-Specific Requirements

Based on the analysis contained herein and scoping comments provided, this PEA has identified the following location-specific requirements.

4.2.1 Coastal Zone Management Act

The U.S. coastal zone includes the 35 U.S. coastal and Great Lakes states and territories shown on Figure 3-4. Any projects occurring within these 35 locations would first be evaluated for their location within the coastal zone. If within the coastal zone, then a coastal consistency determination would be made prior to starting construction.

4.2.2 Oklahoma

Any burning associated with land clearing operations in the Oklahoma City or Tulsa Metropolitan Statistical Areas must be conducted using an air curtain incinerator.

4.2.3 Kentucky

The State of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet Water Quality Branch notes that 401 KAR 10:026 should be consulted to identify any special use waters in the project areas prior to construction. If such waters are present then VA would contact the branch to discuss avoidance and if needed, mitigation measures.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, COORDINATION, AND CONSULTATION

5.1 Public Involvement

VA published a project scoping notice in the Federal Register, Vol. 88, No. 221 on Friday, November 17, 2023 (see Appendix C), initiating the scoping process for the PEA and inviting the public, government agencies and other interested persons and organizations to provide comments on the scope of issues for analysis, input on potential alternatives, or information/analyses relevant to the proposed action. The VA also posted the scoping notice to the VA CFM website https://www.cfm.va.gov/environmental/index.asp.

The geographic scope of the PEA is all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Tribal Lands, and the Territories of American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Accordingly, the VA also emailed and mailed scoping notices to federal, state, territorial, and tribal stakeholders.

VA will make the Draft PEA available for public review for 30 days by announcing its availability in a notice of availability of the Draft PEA published in the Federal Register in spring 2024. VA will also post the Notice of Availability and Draft PEA to the VA CFM website and notify all federal, state, territorial, and tribal stakeholders of the availability of the Draft PEA via email and mail.

5.2 Agency and Tribal Coordination and Consultation

5.2.1 Coordination and Consultation

VA sent agencies (federal, state SHPOs, and clearinghouses) the scoping memo. The SHPO distribution list includes fifty-six total stakeholders including all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the Territories of American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. VA (via the Office of Tribal Government Relations) sent 482 emails to Tribal representatives providing them with a scoping memo inviting input and their comments on cultural resource concerns. A copy of the scoping memos is in Appendix C. In their letter to the SHPO and Tribes, VA indicated that VA would be initiating Section 106 consultation in the near future and would conduct separate outreach at that time.

5.2.2 Stakeholder Notification

In addition to the stakeholders identified above, VA emailed or mailed the general stakeholder scoping notice to all state agencies, numerous federal agencies, and all individual members of the U.S. Congress. The VA will provide a Notification of the Availability of the Draft PEA to stakeholders once the Draft PEA is available for review. Additional stakeholder notification details can be found in Appendix C.

5.2.3 Summary of Stakeholder Comments and VA Responses

The VA received thirteen responses from twelve states, and one territory (Puerto Rico) during the 30-day public scoping period. Comments were received from the following state and territorial agencies:

- Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality
- Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
- Puerto Rico SHPO
- North Carolina State Environmental Review Clearing House
- The Massachusetts Historical Commission
- CMNI Department of Community and Cultural Affairs
  Division of Historic Preservation Office
- Arizona SHPO
- Iowa Economic Development Authority
- Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Division of Natural Heritage
- Georgia Historic Preservation Division
- North Carolina Department of Administration
- North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
  SHPO
- Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

The VA has incorporated all relevant responses and information into this PEA. Appendix C contains copies of the correspondence VA received from stakeholders. Table 5-1 presents how VA addressed relevant comments in the PEA.

Table 5-1. Summary of Scoping Comments and VA Responses

Agency and Comment(s)	*VA Response*
Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality	
1. Demolitions must be conducted following Air Quality Asbestos Rules (OAC 252:100, Subchapter 40). 2. Prior to beginning any construction activity disturbing more than one acre, a Notice of Intent and authorization under OKR10, construction stormwater, will be required. 3. Any burning associated with land clearing operations in the Oklahoma City or Tulsa Metropolitan Statistical Areas must be conducted using an air curtain incinerator. 4. If any projects will require relocation of water or wastewater utilities, a construction permit from DEQ's Water Quality Division will be required for the following: - construction of new water and wastewater treatment facilities;- modifications and upgrades to existing facilities; - construction of new water distribution and wastewater collection lines;- relocation of existing water distribution and wastewater collection lines. Projects that will not require a construction permit include: - replacement of existing equipment with same type and size equipment;- replacement of existing water and wastewater lines with the same size line in the same location.	The PEA reflects these comments in the appropriate resource area sections.
Virgina Department of Environmental Quality	
The Department of Environmental Quality, through its Office of Environmental Impact Review (DEQ-OEIR), is responsible for coordinating Virginia's review of federal environmental documents and responding to appropriate federal officials on behalf of the Commonwealth. Similarly, DEQ-OEIR coordinates Virginia's review of federal consistency documents prepared pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act. Affects to any land or water use or natural resources of Virginia's designated coastal resources management area must be consistent with the enforceable policies Virginia Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program. The environmental documents should include U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps as part of their information. We strongly encourage you to issue shape files with the NEPA document. In addition, project details should be adequately described for the benefit of the reviewers.	The role and authority of the DEQ-OEIR has been recorded and noted. The PEA identifies Virgina as being within the Coastal Zone and that projects would comply with the CZMA. Due to the scale of the project (Nationwide, U.S. Territories, and Tribal Lands), it is not feasible to include USGS topographic maps in the PEA.
Puerto Rico SHPO	
We acknowledge receipt of your email; we will pass the information on for appropriate action. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.	Thank you for your response.

Agency and Comment(s)	*VA Response*
North Carolina State Environmental Review Clearing House	
The projects have been assigned State Clearinghouse # 24-E-6100-0149 (Raleigh, NC) AND 24-E-6100-0150 (Asheville, NC) and the numbers should be used in all inquiries or correspondence with this office. The EA FONSI have been forwarded to various governmental organizations for review and comment. In addition, notification of the availability of the document will appear on the North Carolina Environmental Bulletin at NC Environmental Bulletin | NC DOA. The review of this project should be completed on December 15, 2023. After the review has concluded, the comments and signoff letter will be emailed to the email address used for the message. Should you have any questions, please email State.Clearinghouse@doa.nc.gov.	The request for use of project numbers in communications, timeline, and point of contact has been noted.
The Massachusetts Historical Commission	
The Massachusetts Historical Commission office of the Massachusetts SHPO does not accept electronic transmissions for review. Please print, and mail or deliver the information to the MHC's office.	The requested mode of submission has been noted and will be used for Section 106 correspondence.
Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Division of Historic Preservation Office	
I will be forwarding this email to the Acting State Historic Preservation Officer, Lufo Babauta, and the HPO Coordinator, John Palacios. You can get in contact with them through email and phone: Lufo Babauta: lqbabauta.cnmihpo@gmail.com / (670) 664-2123 John Palacios: jdpalacios.cnmihpo@gmail.com / (670) 664-2120	Scoping notice point of contacts have been noted.
Arizona SHPO	
We recommend that, to best facilitate the VA's compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and its implementing regulations at 36 CFR 800, the VA consult with the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation, the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, and the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers to develop a Nationwide Programmatic Agreement in accordance with 36 CFR 800.14(b). Please use azshpo@azstateparks.gov to initiate consultation.	Your comments regarding S106 and NHPA compliance and appropriate points of contact have been noted.
Iowa Economic Development Authority	
Alterations to buildings/structures can pose adverse effects to historic properties and compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA should occur before any building/structure alterations or earthmoving activities are initiated. The VA should integrate cultural resource identification, effects assessments, and resolution of effects into project planning in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA and its implementing regulations, 36 CFR 800.	Your comments regarding for S106 and NHPA compliance have been noted.

Agency and Comment(s)	*VA Response*
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Division of Natural Heritage	
DCR requests more detailed information when available about the selected project locations for the proposed construction, renovation, or repair of leased medical and medically related facilities to care for our nation's Veterans. This information will allow us to determine if there is any potential for impacts to natural heritage resources and associated natural area preserves from the proposed project. Under a Memorandum of Agreement established between the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) and the DCR, DCR represents VDACS in comments regarding potential impacts on state-listed threatened and endangered plant and insect species. New and updated information is continually added to Biotics, DCR-DNH's database for tracking natural heritage resources and we recommend updates for this information if six months or more has passed. The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources maintains a database of wildlife locations, including threatened and endangered species, trout streams, and anadromous fish waters that may contain information not documented in this letter. Their database may be accessed https://services.dwr.virginia.gov/fwis/ or contact Amy Martin at 804-367-2211 or amy.martin@dwr.virginia.gov.	Information requests/recommendations and appropriate points of contact have been noted.
Georgia Historic Preservation Division	
We look forward to receiving Section 106 compliance documentation, as appropriate. If the federal agency intends to utilize NEPA to comply with Section 106, in lieu of the procedures set forth in 36 CFR Part 800, the VA should notify us and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation of its intent. Please refer to project number TA-231128-0016 in future correspondence regarding this project.	Points of contact recommendations regarding S106 compliance have been noted.
North Carolina Environmental Review Clearinghouse	
According to G.S. 113A-10, when a state agency is required to prepare an environmental document under the provisions of federal law, the environmental document meets the provisions of the State Environmental Policy Act. If any further environmental review documents are prepared for this project, they should be forwarded to this office for intergovernmental review.	Comment noted; thank you.
North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources State Historic Preservation Office	
We have conducted a review of the project and are aware of no historic resources which would be affected by the project. Therefore, we have no comment on the project as proposed. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.	Comment noted; thank you.

Agency and Comment(s)	*VA Response*
Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet	
We have reviewed the document and provided comments below. The Water Quality Branch notes that 401 KAR 10:026 should be consulted to identify any special use waters in the project areas. 401 KAR 10:031 specifies surface water quality criteria for surface waters in Kentucky. Additionally, best management practices should be utilized to reduce runoff from project activities into nearby waters. Prior to the start of construction on any water and/or sewer lines, plans and specifications that have been signed, stamped and dated by a Licensed Professional Engineer in Kentucky shall be submitted to the Division of Water for review and approval. The proposed work is endorsed by the Groundwater Section of the Watershed Management Branch. However, it is our recommendation that site be made aware of the requirements of 401 KAR 5:037 and the need to develop a Groundwater Protection Plan (GPP) for the protection of groundwater resources within that area. Portions of the project in the regulated floodplain will require permitting from the Division of Water, Water Resources Branch. All solid waste generated by the project must be disposed of at a permitted facility. If asbestos, lead paint and/or other contaminants are encountered during the project contact the Kentucky Division of Waste Management for proper disposal and closure. Please keep in mind that locations of releases, potential contamination or waste facilities may be present but unknown to the agency. Therefore, it is recommended that appropriate precautions be taken during construction activities. Please report any evidence of illegal waste disposal facilities and releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants or petroleum to the 24-hour Environmental Response Team at 1-800-928-2380.	Thank you for your comment, additional information specific to Kentucky, and appropriate points of contact. The PEA reflects many of the comments received in the appropriate resource area sections. Projects would avoid the floodplain.

6 USER'S GUIDE

This chapter illustrates how VA would determine if a future VA leasing action would qualify under this PEA for NEPA compliance, or if supplemental NEPA analysis would be needed. Figure 6-1 below summarizes the overall process VA would follow to determine if this PEA would provide NEPA compliance for a future leasing project. Appendix D provides a checklist and a worksheet to aid in the determination of PEA adequacy for a future VA leasing project.

6.1 Determination of PEA Adequacy

This PEA identifies a three-step process for determining the adequacy of the PEA for future VA leasing projects. The 3 steps are: 1) Evaluation, 2) Review, and 3) Determination. Each of these steps are described below. Appendix D provides an adequacy worksheet.

6.1.1 Step 1: Evaluation

This first step is used to determine if the action meets the scope of the PEA and consists of two sub-steps as follows.

Initial Screening

6.1.1.1 Initial Screening

The VA environmental engineer would first check if their proposed action is consistent with the list of activities in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1.2. The proposed action must meet the project description characteristics. If the proposed action is one of the activities listed in that section, then it is a qualifying action. Table 2-1 in Section 2.2.1.4 provides hypothetical examples of where the PEA could be relied upon in its entirety.

Conversely, if the VA lead determines that their proposed action is not one of the listed activities in Section 2.2.1.2, then the PEA cannot be used for NEPA compliance. VA would then prepare stand-alone NEPA documentation.

6.1.1.2 Evaluate Impacts to Resources

Once it is determined that the action qualifies, VA would then consider the resources present at the project site using the checklist in Appendix D. The checklist provides a guideline for assessing the potential thresholds of impact to each resource. If the proposed action would generate impacts consistent with the analysis and not exceed any of the identified thresholds triggering additional analysis, then the NEPA compliance would be considered complete as a result of this PEA.

The proposed action would also apply all relevant standard resource protection, compliance, and impact avoidance measures as identified in this PEA.

Furthermore, VA must also consider the time that has passed since the PEA was completed. Generally, this PEA is valid for five years. If more than five years have passed since the PEA was written, the VA environmental engineer must consider if the resource-specific conditions and analysis are still valid.

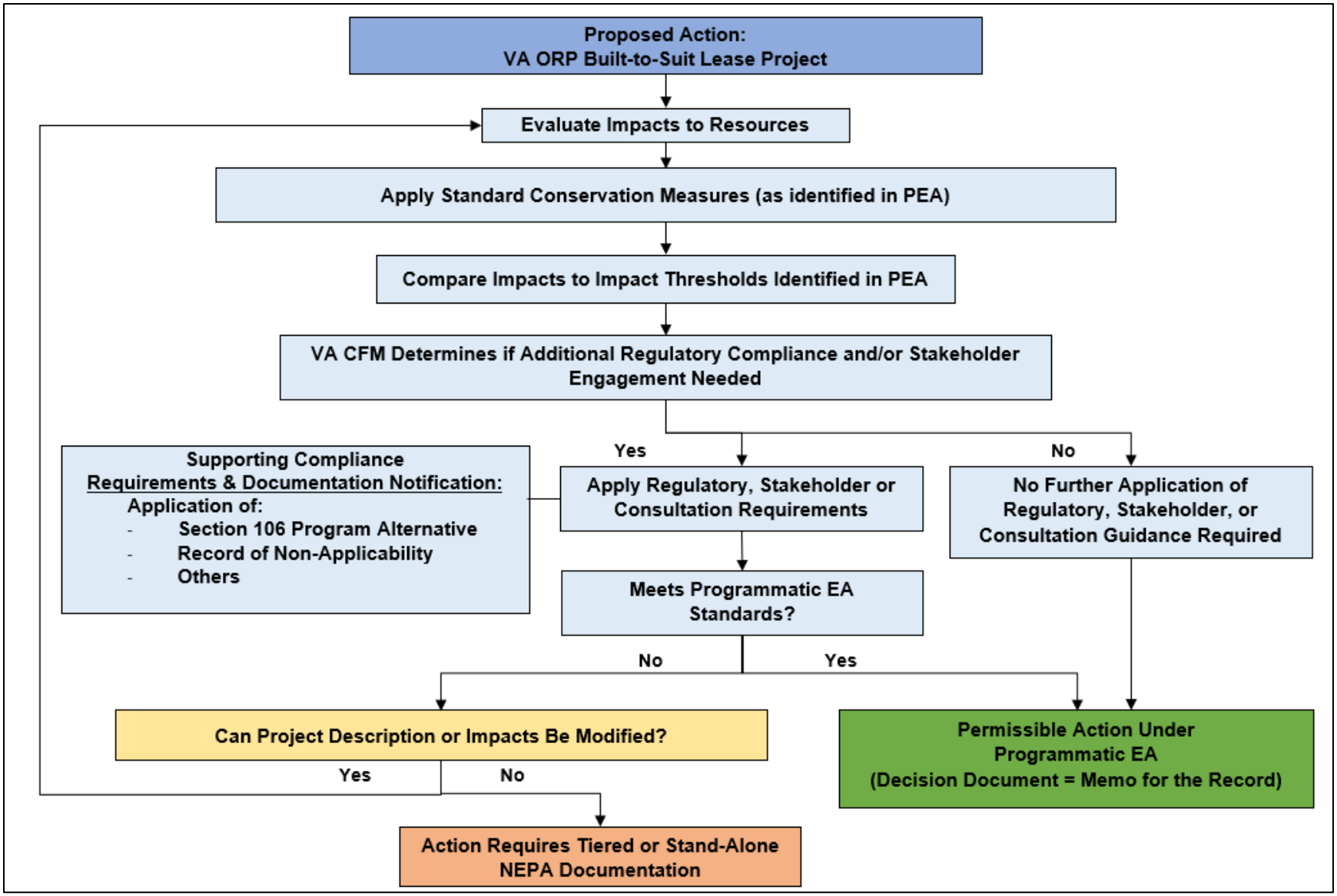

Figure 6.1. NEPA Compliance Pathway for Future Build-to-Suit Lease Projects

6.1.2 Step 2: Review

In this second step, the VA environmental engineer reviews and documents the anticipated impacts of their proposed action against the findings of the PEA while answering the following questions:

1. Is the proposed action an activity, or essentially similar to, the Proposed Action analyzed in the PEA?
2. Is the proposed action within the same analysis area, or if the project location is different, are the geographic and resource conditions sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the PEA? If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial?
3. Is the PEA analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (for example, recent endangered species listings, updated lists of sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that new information and new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new Proposed Action?
4. Are the effects that would result from implementation of the proposed action similar (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to those analyzed in the PEA? See the sections below for specific resource steps.
5. Is the proposed action likely to generate public controversy or concern?
6. Are there any state-specific requirements identified through scoping/public review that apply? (refer to Section 4.2)

The VA environmental engineer would document the answers to the questions in the worksheet in Appendix D. Any additional NEPA analysis or regulatory consultations must be identified, completed, and documented as part of the project record before proceeding with the project.

As part of Question 4, the following subsections provide resource-specific review actions for those resources most commonly subject to scrutiny.

6.1.2.1 Air Quality

Would the proposed action be greater (in acreage) and/or longer in duration (months) than analyzed under the maximum disturbance scenario evaluated in this PEA? If so, then the emissions would need to be estimated and compared to applicable *de minimis* levels. The findings would be documented in a supplement to the PEA. Conversely, if not, then the PEA is sufficient.

6.1.2.2 Geology and Soils

Would the Proposed Action impact “prime or unique” soil? To determine, VA would use the Web Soil Survey tool (https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/). If not, then no further analysis would be needed. If prime or unique soils cannot be avoided, then additional NEPA analysis would be required.

6.1.2.3 Wildlife and Habitat

Utilizing the IPaC database, identify potential impacts of the proposed action on federally listed species and their habitat. Are the findings consistent of this PEA?

The VA environmental engineer would assess the potential for federally listed species to be present within the project area using the USFWS’s decision support tool. The tool helps proponents of federal actions identify potential threatened and endangered species and other wildlife and habitat-related

resources in specific geographic areas. The IPaC database is available online to streamline and improve the threatened and endangered species review process (https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/). The VA environmental engineer would follow the IPaC instructions and get a list of threatened or endangered species expected to be on or near a project area, or which could potentially be affected by activities in that location. The database also includes critical habitat, facilities such as fish hatcheries and refuges, wetlands, and information on migratory birds (USFWS 2022).

The VA environmental engineer would then make an assessment as to the potential for impacts to federally listed species and/or their habitat. If the assessment is consistent with the findings of this PEA, no further analysis is needed. However, if there is a potential for impacts beyond those identified in this PEA, consultation under section 7 of the ESA would be required. Additional analysis and any Endangered Species Act-related measures or mitigation would be implemented.

6.1.2.4 Cultural Resources

Are the impacts of the proposed action within the scope of the Program Agreement?

The VA environmental engineer would evaluate the proposed action with the Program Alternative. If the activity is consistent with the analysis and any applicable measures can be implemented, no further analysis would be required. However, if the impacts would be beyond the scope of the Program Alternative, additional NEPA analysis and/or NHPA Section 106 compliance would occur, be documented, and implemented as part of the project.

6.1.2.5 Floodplains, Wetlands, and Coastal Zone Management

Would the proposed action involve activity within an area that may be designated as a floodplain or wetland?

If the proposed action would occur in an area that may be a floodplain or wetland, then the site would be investigated, and a determination made. If the facility would be located within a floodplain, VA would first look to avoid the floodplain. If avoidance is not feasible, then VA would follow the FFRMS eight-step process to demonstrate no practicable alternative to development within the floodplain. The additional analysis and any measures would be documented in additional NEPA documentation. If the project has the potential to impact a jurisdictional wetland, then the selected developer would prepare the proper CWA permit with the USACE and obtain a 401 WQS from the responsible state or tribal entity. The additional analysis and any CWA-related measures and/or mitigation would be documented and implemented.

6.1.2.6 Public Outreach and Stakeholder Involvement

Is additional public outreach or stakeholder involvement required?

While VA did perform outreach to provide the opportunity for public and agency review of the PEA, there may be some location-specific future projects that may generate public interest and potential controversy. In these instances, additional outreach may be prudent. This determination is at the VA environmental engineer’s discretion. Any additional engagement would be documented.

6.1.3 Step 3. Determination

In this final step, the VA environmental engineer would document how the proposed action either complies with the PEA or how and where it does not. This determination would be made and explained in the worksheet provided in Appendix D.

If the VA environmental engineer finds that the proposed action complies with the PEA Proposed Action and analysis and no additional NEPA or regulatory compliance is needed, then the VA environmental engineer would prepare a memo to file documenting that the PEA provides NEPA coverage.

Conversely, if the determination is that the PEA does not provide any or incomplete NEPA coverage, then the VA environmental engineer would initiate supplemental or stand-alone NEPA compliance documentation. An example of supplemental NEPA coverage would be for a proposed action that would generate significant traffic. In this instance, VA would prepare supplemental NEPA analysis for just the transportation conditions and impacts and rely on the PEA for the other resource-specific analysis. In this manner, the supplemental transportation analysis "tiers" off the PEA to provide complete NEPA coverage.

In some instances, the PEA may be found to be sufficient for the proposed action; however, additional regulatory compliance would be needed. For example, an action impacting a jurisdictional wetland would require a permit from the USACE before proceeding with the action. The USACE permit may include conditions that would have to be implemented as part of the proposed action.

7 LIST OF PREPARERS

The following professionals contributed to the preparation of this PEA.

VA

Jason Sturm, VA CFM, Environmental Engineer

Héctor M. Abreu-Cintrón, VA CFM HPO, VA Federal Preservation Officer

Scout Environmental, Inc.

Ryan Pingree, AICP, CEP, PMP, Project Manager/Senior Environmental Planner

Callie Hansen, Quality Control Reviewer

Julie Werner, PE, LEED AP, Environmental Engineer

Scott Barker, PE, AICP, Environmental Engineer

Jim Campe, Senior Environmental Planner

Laura Noland, Senior Environmental Planner/Scientist

Caidy Riggs, Junior Environmental Planner

Becky Diaz, Junior Environmental Planner

Evan Reider, Junior Environmental Planner

Roxanne Beasley, Document Production

Tom Lillie, PhD, Senior Environmental Scientist/ Biologist

Row 10 Historic Preservation Solutions, LLC

Kelly Sellers Wittie, Senior Historian and Architectural Historian

8 REFERENCES CITED

ACHP. 2023. Program Alternatives. https://www.achp.gov/program_alternatives. Accessed on January 17, 2023.

Carbon Footprint. 2024. Carbon Calculator – Flight Carbon Footprint Calculator. Obtained from (https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx). Accessed February 11, 2024.

Center for a New American Security. 2020. Veteran Benefits in U.S. Territories. https://www.cnas.org/publications/commentary/state-level-veteran-benefits-in-u-s-territories. Accessed on February 14, 2024.

Congressional Research Service (CRS). 2020. State Veterans Homes. October 1, 2020. 3 pp.

Federal Highway Administration. 2006. Roadway Construction Noise Model, Version 1.1. U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. December 2008.

Institute for Policy Integrity. 2024a. New York University School of Law. 2024. Calculating the Social Cost of Greenhouse Gases. Online Calculator hosted at (https://costofcarbon.org/calculator). Accessed February 1 thru 11, 2024.

Institute for Policy Integrity. 2024b. EPA Values for the Social Cost of Greenhouse Gases. Obtained from (https://costofcarbon.org/epa-values-for-the-social-cost-of-greenhouse-gases). Accessed February 11, 2024.

Institute of Transportation Engineers. 2021. Trip Generation Manual, 11th Edition. Washington, DC

National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics. Veteran Poverty Trends. May. https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/specialreports/veteran_poverty_trends.pdf. Accessed on February 19, 2024.

NWI. 2024. National Wetland Inventory. https://www.fws.gov/program/national-wetlands-inventory Accessed February 8, 2024.

Office of Minority Health. 2024. American Indian and Alaska Native Population Health Data. https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/american-indianalaska-native-health. Accessed on February 19, 2024.

Transportation Research Board. 2016. Highway Capacity Manual. 6th Edition. Washington, DC.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2016. Thousands of U.S. Veterans Call the Island Areas Home. https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2016/05/thousands-of-u-s-veterans-call-the-island-areas home.html#:~:text=According%20to%20the%202010%20Census%2C%20there%20were%2014%2C047,civilian%20Island%20Area%20population%20age%2018%20and%20over. Accessed on May 1, 2024.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2020. U.S. Census Bureau. 2020. Census Bureau Tables. Obtained from https://data.census.gov/table?t=Population%20Total. Accessed February 19, 2024.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2023. Poverty Thresholds for 2023 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years. Obtained from https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html. Accessed February 9, 2024.

USDA. 2012. Major Land Uses. https://ers.usda.gov/topics/farm-economy/land-use-land-value-tenure/major-land-uses. Accessed on February 19, 2024.

USDA. 2024a. Soil Data Access Prime Farmland. Accessed February 7, 2024, at https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/LA/Prime_and_other_Important_Farmland.html.

USDA. 2024b. Web Soil Survey. https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/. Accessed on February 12, 2024.

USEPA. 2017. National Water Quality Inventory: Report to Congress. https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2017-12/documents/305brtc_finalowow_08302017.pdf. Accessed on February 23, 2024.

USEPA. 2023a. Tribal Policy Documents National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) Designation Process. Obtained from EAP Website (https://www.epa.gov/tribal-air/tribal-policy-documents). Updated March 29, 2023. Accessed February 11, 2024.

USEPA. 2023b. Supplementary Material for the Regulatory Impact Analysis for the Final Rulemaking, "Standards of Performance for New, Reconstructed, and Modified Sources and Emissions Guidelines for Existing Sources: Oil and Natural Gas Sector Climate Review. EPA Report on the Social Cost of Greenhouse Gases: Estimates Incorporating Recent Scientific Advances. November.

USEPA. 2024a. National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for PM. Obtained from EPA Website (https://www.epa.gov/pm-pollution/national-ambient-air-quality-standards-naaqs-pm). Updated February 7, 2024. Accessed on February 11, 2024.

USEPA. 2024b. Definitions of Land Use Categories. https://cfpub.epa.gov/roe/definitions.cfm?i=51#:-:text=A%20land%20use%20category%20consisting.land%20used%20for%20such%20purposes%3B. Accessed on February 15, 2024.

USEPA. 2024c. Wastes Accessed February 9, 2024 at https://www.epa.gov/report-environment/wastes#:~:text=Hazardous%20wastes%20are%20either%20specifically%20listed%20as%20hazardous,and%20negatively%20affect%20human%20health%20and%20environmental%20conditions.

USEPA. 2025. Green Book: Counties Designated "Nonattainment" for Clean Air Act's National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Obtained from https://www3.epa.gov/airquality/greenbook/mapnpoll.html. Accessed on February 18, 2025.

USFWS. 2017. Critical Habitat: What is It? USFWS Fact Sheet. 2 pp.

USFWS. 2022. Instructions for Conducting Endangered Species Act Project Reviews using IPaC. USFWS Michigan Ecological Services Field Office (version 2). 8 pp.

USGS. 2017. Geologic Map of Alaska. Obtained from https://www.usgs.gov/centers/alaska-science-center/science/geologic-map-alaska. Accessed on March 6, 2024.

USGS. 2021a. Geologic map of the State of Hawaii. Obtained from https://www.usgs.gov/maps/geologic-map-state-hawaii. Accessed on May 20, 2024.

USGS. 2021b. Principal Aquifers of the United States. Obtained from https://www.usgs.gov/mission-areas/water-resources/science/principal-aquifers-united-states. Accessed on February 23, 2024.

USGS. 2023. USGS Science in the American Territories. Obtained from https://www.usgs.gov/tools/usgs-science-american-territories. Accessed on March 6, 2024.

U.S. News & World Report. 2023. Who Are America's Veterans? Data from US Census Bureau: https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2021.S2101?q=S2101. Accessed on February 13, 2024.

VA. 2010. Office of Construction and Facilities Management. NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects. PG-18-17 (rev.). September 30.

VA. 2014. Section 01 57 19, Temporary Environmental Controls. https://www.cfm.va.gov/TIL/NCA/015719TempEnvironControls.docx. June 1, 2014. Accessed on August 26, 2021.

VA. 2017. VA Directive 7512, Seismic Safety Of VA Buildings. August 3, 2017.

VA. 2018. *VA Awards New Leases to Provide Health Care Facilities to Veterans.* https://news.va.gov/press-room/va-awards-new-leases-to-provide-health-care-facilities-to-veterans/. October 2, 2018.

VA. 2019a. Environmental Assessment of the Proposed VA Outpatient Clinic and Mental Health Clinic. Alachua County, Florida. July.

VA. 2019b. Office of Construction & Facilities Management. Seismic Design Requirements. VA Handbook 18-8 (H-18-8). November.

VA. 2020a. Supplemental Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Community Based Outpatient Clinic. Fremont, California. December.

VA. 2020b. Environmental Assessment of the Proposed Jacksonville VA Outpatient Clinic and Domiciliary. Duval County, FL. August

VA. 2020c. VetPop2020 Living Veterans By State, Race/Ethnicity, Gender, 2020-2050. https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:79d2d7a4-d2c9-4daa-99a3-1b7a306596bd. Accessed on February 13, 2024.

VA. 2020d. Final Environmental Assessment of the Proposed VA Health Care Center. Fredericksburg, Virginia. August.

VA. 2021a. CFM Policy Memorandum 003C-2021-21, *Green Building Certification Requirements*. August 3, 2021.

VA. 2021b. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Climate Action Plan. Obtained from VA website (https://department.va.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/va-climate-action-plan.pdf. Updated August 2021. Accessed February 11, 2024.

VA. 2021c. State Summaries. https://www.data.va.gov/stories/s/bn2v-jbm5. Accessed on February 14, 2024.

VA. 2021d. Final Environmental Assessment, Land Acquisition, Construction, and Operation of State Veterans Home Bowling Green, Kentucky. August 26, 2021.

VA. 2021e. Capital Grants Under the Grant and Per Diem Program Final Programmatic Environmental Assessment. December 2021.

VA. 2022. Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Veterans Affairs Housing Loan Program. July.

VA. 2024. Physical Security and Resiliency Design Manual. October 1, 2020. Revised May 1, 2024.

VA. ORP. 2023. Personnel communication via email with VA ORP Director, Policy & Programs. Received on February 15, 2023.

VA CFM. 2023a. Office of Real Property. https://www.cfm.va.gov/realproperty/index.asp. Accessed on February 22, 2023.

VA CFM. 2023b. Recent Build-to-Suit Lease Program NEPA Documents. Obtained from VA CFM Environmental Program Office Website (https://www.cfm.va.gov/environmental/index.asp) various dates in February and March 2023.

VHA. 2024. Providing Health Care for Veterans. https://www.va.gov/health/. Accessed on February 19, 2024.

Virgil. 2000. A Tapestry of Time and Terrain: USGS Geologic Investigations Series 2720.

Washington Post. 2021. Where America's developed areas are growing: 'Way off into the horizon'. https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/interactive/2021/land-development-urban-growth-maps/. Accessed on February 13, 2024.

APPENDIX A ENVIRONMENTAL PERMIT AND COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

Table A-1 identifies the principal federal, state, and local laws and regulations that are applicable to the Proposed Action and briefly describes how VA would comply with the applicable requirements.

Table A-1. Permit and Compliance Requirements Applicable to the Proposed Action

Requirement	*Status of Compliance*
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 United States [U.S.] Code [U.S.C.] 4321-4370h) and VA's NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects.	VA has prepared this PEA in compliance with NEPA, and VA's NEPA Interim Guidance.
Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. section 7401 et seq.)	VA has demonstrated that project-related emissions would be below *de minimis* levels and as such the project would comply with the Clean Air Act.
National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (section 6, 54 U.S.C. section 3001 et seq.)	VA is initiating Section 106 consultation with SHPOs, the ACHP, Tribes, and Stakeholders.
Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 U.S.C. Chapter 32)	If workers encounter human remains, VA would notify the local county coroner's office immediately upon discovery. If the coroner determines that the remains are not of recent history and potentially of Native American origin, VA would inform Tribes and the appropriate SHPO and consult on their disposition.
Executive Order (EO) 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments	Through the Section 106 process, VA is conducting meaningful consultation and collaboration with Indian Tribal officials.
VA Handbook H-18-8, Seismic Design Requirements; VA Directive 7512, Seismic Safety of VA Buildings; EO 13717, Establishing a Federal Earthquake Risk Management Standard, and Title 38 U.S.C. section 8105, Structural Requirements	The Proposed Action (renovation projects) would address current seismic deficiencies, comply with VA seismic design requirements and regulatory and policy requirements that define VA requirements and policy regarding seismic safety of buildings, and decrease the risk of seismic-related impacts to people and property.
Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. section 1251 et seq.)	Proposed construction activities would follow BMPs to limit potential water quality impacts and comply with the Clean Water Act and state regulations. The construction contractor would comply with the requirements of the Construction General Permit for any qualifying project.
Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. section 1531 et seq.)	Prior to each project, the proponent would use the USFWS IPaC database to screen for any federally listed endangered or threatened species and their habitat in the project area. If species or habitat are present, avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures would be identified and implemented through Section 7 consultation to address potential adverse effects to federally listed threatened and endangered species.
Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. Sections 703-712)	By performing work outside of the breeding season and performing pre-construction nest surveys, impacts to migratory birds or their habitat would occur.
Noise Pollution and Abatement Act of 1972, VA Temporary Environmental Controls, Section 01 57 19 (VA 2014)	The Proposed Action would generate temporary noise at levels below those that could impact human health.
EO 11988, Floodplain Management	No impacts to floodplains would occur because no facilities would be constructed within the floodplain. If there is no feasible alternative and development must occur in a FFRMS floodplain, then additional NEPA analysis would be required and VA would follow regulatory requirements and appropriate guidance identified in 44 CFR Part 9.

Requirement	*Status of Compliance*
Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. section 1451 et seq.)	For those projects occurring in areas within a coastal zone, VA would make a consistency determination to demonstrate compliance with the CZMA.
EO 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks	The Proposed Action would not result in environmental health risks and safety risks that may affect children.
Asbestos National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants	Workers would isolate and remove asbestos containing materials in accordance with all regulatory requirements.
Occupational Safety and Health Administration	VA would ensure workers handle all lead containing components in accordance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

APPENDIX B AIR QUALITY, EMISSION ESTIMATES AND RECORD OF NON-APPLICABILITY

Emissions Summary
VA PROGRAMMATIC BUILD-TO-SUIT LEASING ACTIONS

Table AQ-ES.1 Projected Construction Emissions: Criteria Pollutants

Activity	Emissions (tons/year)					
	CO	VOC	NOx	SOx	PM10	PM2.5
Construction Of Building and Site Features with Clearing	6.8	0.5	2.0	0.0	0.3	0.3
Demolition of Existing Structures and Site Features Prior to Construction	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Emissions Per Year	7.0	0.6	2.3	0.0	0.3	0.3
***de minimis* Threshold for PEA - Most Stringent**	**100**	**10**	**10**	**100**	**70**	**70**
Exceeds *de minimis* in any year?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

Table AQ-ES.2 Projected Construction Emissions: Greenhouse Gases (GHG)

Activity	Emissions (metric tons/year)
	CO2e
Construction Of Building and Site Features with Clearing	1,324
Demolition of Existing Structures and Site Features Prior to Construction	75
Total Emissions Per Year	1,400

Table AQ-ES.3 Projected Operational Emissions: Criteria Pollutants Per Year

Activity	Emissions (tons/year)					
	CO	VOC	NOx	SOx	PM10	PM2.5
Total Projected Operational Emissions Per Year	5.7	2.3	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
***de minimis* Threshold for PEA - Most Stringent**	**100**	**10**	**10**	**100**	**70**	**70**
Exceeds *de minimis*?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

Table AQ-ES.4 Projected Operational Emissions: Greenhouse Gases (GHG)

Activity	Emissions (metric tons/year)
	CO2e
Total Projected Operational Emissions Per Year	3,408
Total Emissions Per Year	3,408
Total Emissions Over 30 Year Lifetime	81,792

Note to reviewers: The No Action Alternative would not result in any change in air quality impacts from baseline.
Numbers may not add precisely by hand if calculated from this table due to rounding and decimal values not shown. Values are shown in the table rounded to the nearest 10th. The actual calculation result may include values in the 1000th place, and may summarize to a value with a result in the 10th place.

Construction and Operational Assumptions
VA PROGRAMMATIC BUILD-TO-SUIT LEASING ACTIONS

Additional Assumptions for Projected Emissions Estimates

- Construction projects of no more than 225,000 square feet or 25 acres of total development.
- Renovation or repair projects of any size.

•25 acres must be cleared for site preparation or demolished
•150,000 square feet of existing structures upwards of 3 stories high must be demolished
•All parking and site civil work must be completed during the construction build phase
•The entire project will be completed within one calendar year
•A 225,000 square foot facility with surrounding parking and site development is completed for a total of 25 acres.
•Site development is in an undeveloped or underdeveloped community requiring delivery of construction materials versus an urban core community with shorter commute and delivery distances.
•Staffing of 200 people who commute an average of 30 miles 5 days a week for the operational period of 30-years.
•Stationary sources of diesel-fueled emergency generator and natural gas boiler units operate in the building for 30-years.

- Assume construction takes one year to complete, including demolition and site clearing activities. Construction could start as early as 2025; however generic construction years are used (Year 1) as to not limit the VA to specific calendar years.

- Assume dump trucks/haul trucks are highway licensed and worthy vehicles due to distance of fill haul, not quarry-type dump trucks.

- Assume a crew of 100 every day for one year to complete work.

- For vehicle trips for workers, a light-duty pick up truck is the assumed most common vehicle. Actual worker vehicle usage will vary.

- Emissions calculated based on methodology and data published in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Motor Vehicle Emission Simulator, 2014b, CALEE MOD, an emissions modeling software published by the California Air Resources Board and San Diego County Air Pollution Control District, and the International Council on Clean Transportation's Working Paper 16-4, Non-road emission inventory model methodology.

- Fugitive emissions of dust are calculated assuming no control measures (such as watering) are used. Actual emissions would be lower if dust suppression best management practices, like watering down a site, are used.

- Estimated operational emissions are only calcuated for known additional or sources that are a large upgrade to existing equipment. The calculated operation emissions do not include all replacement heating and cooling units at individual buildings, and do not inlcude the boilers. The boilers are not included because the maximum heating input of the new units would be projected to be smaller than the existing units.

Heavy Equipment Construction Emissions Estimates and Fugitive Dust
VA PROGRAMMATIC BUILD-TO-SUIT LEASING ACTIONS

Nonroad Equipment Emissions

		Equipment				Emission Factors (lb/bhp-hr)									Equipment Operations			Emissions (lbs/day)									Emissions								
Year	Phase/Element	Equipment	Fuel Type	Horsepower (hp)	Load Factor	CO	VOC	NOx	SOx	PM10	PM2.5	CO2	CH4	N2O	Pieces of Equipment	Hours per day	Days in Service	CO	VOC	NOx	SOx	PM10	PM2.5	CO2	CH4	N2O	CO (tpy)	VOC (tpy)	NOx (tpy)	SOx (tpy)	PM10 (tpy)	PM2.5 (tpy)	CO2 (mtpy)	CH4 (mtpy)	N2O (mtpy)
1	New Building	Concrete Truck	Diesel	210	20	5.73E-03	3.09E-04	6.61E-04	1.76E-06	4.41E-05	4E-05	1.15	0.011	0.118	4	6	150	5.8	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,159.2	11.3	118.9	0.43	0.02	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	78.9	0.8	8.1
1		Generator - 50 KW	Diesel	30	74	7.72E-03	3.09E-04	6.61E-04	1.76E-06	4.41E-05	4E-05	1.15	0.01	0.029	4	8	150	5.5	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	817.0	7.2	20.7	0.41	0.02	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	55.6	0.5	1.4
1		Fork Lift	Diesel	83	30	7.69E-03	2.18E-03	1.93E-02	1.08E-05	1.52E-03	0.00137	1.15	0.013	0.08	4	4	150	3.1	0.9	7.7	0.0	0.6	0.5	458.2	5.0	31.8	0.23	0.07	0.58	0.00	0.05	0.04	31.2	0.3	2.2
1		Crane - 150 Ton	Diesel	314	41	5.73E-03	3.09E-04	6.61E-04	1.76E-06	4.41E-05	4.4E-05	1.15	0.011	0.118	4	4	50	11.8	0.6	1.4	0.0	0.1	0.1	2,368.8	23.1	243.1	0.30	0.02	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	53.7	0.5	5.5
1		CAT 416 Rubber Tire Backhoe/Loader	Diesel	87	55	8.16E-03	3.09E-04	6.61E-04	1.76E-06	2.20E-05	2.2E-05	1.15	0.023	0.22	4	4	100	6.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	880.4	17.2	168.4	0.31	0.01	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	39.9	0.8	7.6
1		Trencher	Diesel	69	75	8.16E-03	3.09E-04	6.61E-04	1.76E-06	2.20E-05	2.2E-05	1.15	0.01	0.067	1	4	30	1.7	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	238.1	2.1	13.9	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.2	0.0	0.2
1		Paver	Diesel	89	62	8.16E-03	3.09E-04	6.61E-04	1.76E-06	2.20E-05	2.2E-05	1.15	0.011	0.071	4	4	50	7.2	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,015.3	9.8	62.7	0.18	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	23.0	0.2	1.4
1		Roller Compactor	Diesel	84	56	8.16E-03	3.09E-04	6.61E-04	1.76E-06	2.20E-05	2.2E-05	1.15	0.008	0.052	4	4	50	6.1	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	865.5	5.8	39.3	0.15	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	19.6	0.1	0.9
1		Air Compressor	Diesel	50	48	7.69E-03	2.18E-03	1.93E-02	1.08E-05	1.52E-03	0.00137	1.15	0.011	0.023	4	4	50	3.0	0.8	7.4	0.0	0.6	0.5	441.6	4.0	8.7	0.07	0.02	0.19	0.00	0.01	0.01	10.0	0.1	0.2
1		Skid Steer Loader	Diesel	37	55	7.72E-03	3.09E-04	6.61E-04	1.76E-06	4.41E-05	4.4E-05	1.15	0.003	0.02	4	4	50	2.5	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	374.4	1.1	6.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.5	0.0	0.1
1	Grubbing and Site Clearing	CAT 416 Rubber Tire Backhoe/Loader	Diesel	87	55	8.16E-03	3.09E-04	6.61E-04	1.76E-06	2.20E-05	2.2E-05	1.15	0.023	0.22	1	10	6	3.9	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	550.3	10.8	105.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.3
1		Dump Truck - 15 CY Topsoil	Diesel	489	59	5.73E-03	3.09E-04	6.61E-04	1.76E-06	2.20E-05	2E-05	1.15	0.023	0.22	1	10	6	16.5	0.9	1.9	0.0	0.1	0.1	3,317.9	64.9	634.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.0	0.2	1.7
1		Excavator - Large (250 hp)	Diesel	250	58	5.95E-03	1.50E-03	1.80E-02	1.08E-05	8.38E-04	0.00075	1.15	0.013	0.08	1	10	6	8.6	2.2	26.1	0.0	1.2	1.1	1,667.5	18.3	115.7	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	0.0	0.3
1		Generator - 50 KW	Diesel	30	74	7.72E-03	3.09E-04	6.61E-04	1.76E-06	4.41E-05	4E-05	1.15	0.01	0.029	1	10	6	1.7	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	255.3	2.2	6.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0
1		Grader	Diesel	162	61	5.95E-03	1.50E-03	1.80E-02	1.08E-05	5.26E-02	0.04734	1.15	0.011	0.118	1	10	6	5.9	1.5	17.8	0.0	52.0	46.8	1,136.4	11.1	116.6	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.1	3.1	0.0	0.3
1		Trencher	Diesel	69	75	8.16E-03	3.09E-04	6.61E-04	1.76E-06	2.20E-05	2.2E-05	1.15	0.01	0.067	2	10	6	8.4	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,190.3	10.7	69.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.2	0.0	0.2
1		Water Truck - 4000 Gallon	Diesel	235	61	5.73E-03	3.09E-04	6.61E-04	1.76E-06	4.41E-05	4.4E-05	1.15	0.003	0.036	1	10	6	8.2	0.4	0.9	0.0	0.1	0.1	1,648.5	4.9	50.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	0.0	0.1
		Total Construction+ Clearing																106.2	9.3	67.4	0.1	54.8	49.3	18,384.7	209.4	1,813.0	2.3	0.2	1.1	0.0	0.2	0.2	350.3	3.7	30.7
1	Demolition	CAT 416 Rubber Tire Backhoe/Loader	Diesel	87	55	8.16E-03	3.09E-04	6.61E-04	1.76E-06	2.20E-05	2.2E-05	1.15	0.023	0.22	4	4	5	6.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	880.4	17.2	168.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.4
1		Impact Hammer	Diesel	300	50	5.95E-03	1.50E-03	1.80E-02	1.08E-05	8.38E-04	0.00075	1.15	5E-04	0.003	4	4	5	14.3	3.6	43.2	0.0	2.0	1.8	2,760.0	1.2	7.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.3	0.0	0.0
1		Skid Steer Loader	Diesel	37	55	7.72E-03	3.09E-04	6.61E-04	1.76E-06	4.41E-05	4.4E-05	1.15	0.003	0.02	4	4	5	2.5	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	374.4	1.1	6.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0
1		Water Truck - 4000 Gallon	Diesel	235	61	5.73E-03	3.09E-04	6.61E-04	1.76E-06	4.41E-05	4.4E-05	1.15	0.003	0.036	4	4	5	13.1	0.7	1.5	0.0	0.1	0.1	2,637.6	7.8	81.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.0	0.0	0.2
		Total Demolition																36.2	4.6	45.4	0.0	2.1	1.9	6,652.5	27.3	263.4	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.1	0.1	0.6
Overall Total																		**142.4**	**13.9**	**112.9**	**0.1**	**56.9**	**51.3**	**25,037.2**	**236.8**	**2,076.4**	**2.4**	**0.2**	**1.2**	**0.0**	**0.2**	**0.2**	**365.4**	**3.8**	**31.3**

Notes:
tpy = tons per year mtpy = per year
Conversion to metric tons = 1 short ton (2000 lbs) = 0.9071847 metric tons

Emissions Factors:

Equipment	CO	VOC	NOx	SOx	PM10	PM2.5	CO2	CH4	N2O
Excavator - Large (250 hp)	6.0E-03	1.5E-03	1.8E-02	1.1E-05	8.4E-04	7.5E-04	1.2E+00	1.3E-02	8.0E-02
Water Truck - 4000 Gallon	5.7E-03	3.1E-04	6.6E-04	1.8E-06	4.4E-05	4.4E-05	1.2E+00	3.4E-03	3.6E-02
Grader	6.0E-03	1.5E-03	1.8E-02	1.1E-05	5.3E-02	4.7E-02	1.2E+00	1.1E-02	1.2E-01
Concrete Truck	5.7E-03	3.1E-04	6.6E-04	1.8E-06	4.4E-05	4.0E-05	1.2E+00	1.1E-02	1.2E-01
Generator - 50 KW	7.7E-03	3.1E-04	6.6E-04	1.8E-06	4.4E-05	4.0E-05	1.2E+00	1.0E-02	2.9E-02
Fork Lift	7.7E-03	2.2E-03	1.9E-02	1.1E-05	1.5E-03	1.4E-03	1.2E+00	1.3E-02	8.0E-02
CAT 416 Rubber Tire Backhoe/Loader	8.2E-03	3.1E-04	6.6E-04	1.8E-06	2.2E-05	2.2E-05	1.2E+00	2.3E-02	2.2E-01
Trencher	8.2E-03	3.1E-04	6.6E-04	1.8E-06	2.2E-05	2.2E-05	1.2E+00	1.0E-02	6.7E-02
Crane - 150 Ton	5.7E-03	3.1E-04	6.6E-04	1.8E-06	4.4E-05	4.4E-05	1.2E+00	1.1E-02	1.2E-01
Skid Steer Loader	7.7E-03	3.1E-04	6.6E-04	1.8E-06	4.4E-05	4.4E-05	1.2E+00	3.4E-03	2.0E-02

Emissions Summary Onroad Vehicles Trips - Construction
VA PROGRAMMATIC BUILD-TO-SUIT LEASING ACTIONS

Year	Phase	Vehicle Class	No. of Vehicles Trips (per day)	Average Speed (mph)	VMT (mi/vehicle trip-day)	Hours per day per trip	Total Hours Per day per Vehicle Type	Emissions (lbs/day)							Days of Work	Emissions							Number of Trips per Project
								CO	VOC	NOx	SOx	PM10	PM2.5	CO2e		CO (tpy)	VOC (tpy)	NOx (tpy)	SOx (tpy)	PM10 (tpy)	PM2.5 (tpy)	CO2e (Mtpy)	
1	Take Debris for Disposal	Heavy-duty truck, diesel, GVWR 33,000 and up, 2003 and up	10	40	60	3	30	2.4	4.5	8.9	0.0	0.5	0.5	2,660.2	50	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	60.3	500
							Demolition Total	**2.4**	**4.5**	**8.9**	**0.0**	**0.5**	**0.5**	**2,660.2**		**0.1**	**0.1**	**0.2**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**60.3**	
1	Transport Trucks/Trailer Delivery	Heavy-duty truck, diesel, GVWR 33,000 and up, 2003 and up	6	40	60	3	18	2.4	4.5	8.9	0.0	0.5	0.5	931.0	50	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	21.1	300
1	Box trucks/delivery trucks	Light-duty truck (gasoline) with catalyst	10	40	10	1	10	35.5	1.5	5.2	0.1	0.3	0.3	267.6	50	0.9	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	500
1	Worker Vehicle Trips	Light-duty truck (gasoline) with catalyst	100	55	40	2	200	35.5	1.5	5.2	0.1	0.3	0.3	10,434.9	200	3.5	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	946.6	20000
							Construction Total	**73.4**	**7.6**	**19.3**	**0.1**	**1.1**	**1.0**	**11,633.5**		**4.5**	**0.3**	**0.9**	**0.0**	**0.1**	**0.0**	**973.8**	

mph = miles per hour
VMT = Vehicle Miles Traveled
tpy = Tons per year
mtpy = metric tons per year
Conversion of grams to pounds (lb) 453.6
Conversion to metric tons = 1 short ton (2000 lbs) = 0.907 metric tons

For Emissions Factors see: On Road Equipment Emissions Factors

Emissions Summary Operational Emissions - Stationary
VA PROGRAMMATIC BUILD-TO-SUIT LEASING ACTIONS

Stationary Equipment Emissions

		Equipment				Emission Factors (lb/bhp-hr)									Equipment Operations			Emissions (lbs/day)									Emissions							
Year	Phase/Element	Equipment	Fuel Type	Horsepower (hp)	Load Factor	CO	VOC	NOx	SOx	PM10	PM2.5	CO2	CH4	N2O	Pieces of Equipment	Hours per day	Days in Service	CO	VOC	NOx	SOx	PM10	PM2.5	CO2	CH4	N2O	CO (tpy)	VOC (tpy)	NOx (tpy)	SOx (tpy)	PM10 (tpy)	PM2.5 (tpy)	CO2 (mtpy)	CH4 (mtpy)	N2O (mtpy)	CO2e (mtpy)
Ongoing	**Operational - Generator**	Emergency Generator, 1650 kW and up	Diesel	1750	80	4.41E-04	9.70E-03	9.70E-03	0.00E+00	0.00E+00	0	1.15	0.01	0.029	3	4	25	7.4	163.0	163.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	19,320.0	169.7	490.6	0.1	2.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	219.1	1.9	5.6	1,984.0
																	Total	**7.4**	**163.0**	**163.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**19,320.0**	**169.7**	**490.6**	**0.1**	**2.0**	**2.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**219.1**	**1.9**	**5.6**	**1,984.0**

Notes:
tpy = tons per year mtpy = per year
Conversion to metric tons = 1 short ton (2000 lbs) = 0.9071847 metric tons

Conversion of grams to pounds (lb) 453.592 grams/lb

Emissions Factors (g/hp-hr)

Equipment	CO	VOC	NOx	SOx	PM10	PM2.5	CO2	CH4	N2O
Emergency Generator, 1650 kW and up	4.4E-04	9.7E-03	9.7E-03		0.0E+00		30.60	0.0101	0.0292

Emission Factor Sources:
CAT Electric Power Technical Spec Sheet 3516C 1650 eKW/2050 kVA/60 Hz/1800 rpm/480 V/0.8 Power Factor 2018.
Assume Hydrocarbon emissions are equivalent to VOC emissions.

Emissions Summary Onroad Vehicles Trips - Operational
VA PROGRAMMATIC BUILD-TO-SUIT LEASING ACTIONS

Year	Phase	Vehicle Class	No. of Vehicles Trips (per day)	Average Speed (mph)	VMT (mi/vehicle trip-day)	Hours per day per trip	Total Hours Per day per Vehicle Type	Emissions (lbs/day)							Days of Work	Emissions							Number of Trips per Project
								CO	VOC	NOx	SOx	PM10	PM2.5	CO2e		CO (tpy)	VOC (tpy)	NOx (tpy)	SOx (tpy)	PM10 (tpy)	PM2.5 (tpy)	CO2e (Mtpy)	
Per Year	Worker Vehicle Trips	Light-duty truck (gasoline) with catalyst	200	55	30	1	200	55.8	2.5	7.9	0.1	0.4	0.4	15,697.3	200	5.6	0.2	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,424.0	40000
		Total						**55.8**	**2.5**	**7.9**	**0.1**	**0.4**	**0.4**	**15,697.3**		**5.6**	**0.2**	**0.8**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**1,424.0**	

mph = miles per hour
VMT = Vehicle Miles Traveled
tpy = Tons per year
mtpy = metric tons per year
Conversion of grams to pounds (lb) 453.6
Conversion to metric tons = 1 short ton (2000 lbs) = 0.907 metric tons

For Emissions Factors see: On Road Equipment Emissions Factors

Heavy Construction Estimates - Emission Factors
Updated to Tier 4 Standards

				Emission Factors (lb/bhp-hr)								
Equipment	Fuel Type	Horsepower (hp)	Load Factor	CO	VOC	NOx	SOx	PM10	PM2.5	CO2e (from AP-42)	CH4	N2O
Air Compressor	Diesel	50	48	0.007690	0.002180	0.019300	0.000011	0.001520	0.001368	1.15	0.0105	0.0227
Barge Crane - 150 Ton	Diesel	314	41	0.005950	0.001500	0.018000	0.000011	0.000838	0.000754	1.15	0.0112	0.1180
Barge Crane - 250 ton	Diesel	314	41	0.005950	0.001500	0.018000	0.000011	0.000838	0.000754	1.15	0.0112	0.1180
Bore/Drill Rig	Diesel	82	75	0.467600	0.037600	0.373600	0.000900	0.016000	0.014300	1.15	0.0034	0.0355
CAT 416 Rubber Tire Backhoe/Loader	Diesel	87	55	0.008157	0.000309	0.000661	0.000002	0.000022	0.000022	1.15	0.0225	0.2200
Concrete Pump Truck	Diesel	210	20	0.005950	0.001500	0.018000	0.000011	0.000838	0.000754	1.15	0.0112	0.1180
Concrete Truck	Diesel	210	20	0.005732	0.000309	0.000661	0.000002	0.000044	0.000040	1.15	0.0112	0.1180
Crane - 150 Ton	Diesel	314	41	0.005732	0.000309	0.000661	0.000002	0.000044	0.000044	1.15	0.0112	0.1180
Dump Truck - 15 CY Topsoil	Diesel	489	59	0.005732	0.000309	0.000661	0.000002	0.000022	0.000020	1.15	0.0225	0.2200
Excavator - Large (250 hp)	Diesel	250	58	0.005950	0.001500	0.018000	0.000011	0.000838	0.000754	1.15	0.0126	0.0798
Excavator - Small (56 hp)	Diesel	56	58	0.007690	0.002180	0.019300	0.000011	0.001520	0.001368	1.15	0.0126	0.0798
Fork Lift	Diesel	83	30	0.007690	0.002180	0.019300	0.000011	0.001520	0.001368	1.15	0.0126	0.0798
Generator - 50 KW	Diesel	30	74	0.007716	0.000309	0.000661	0.000002	0.000044	0.000040	1.15	0.0101	0.0292
Grader	Diesel	162	61	0.005950	0.001500	0.018000	0.000011	0.052600	0.047340	1.15	0.0112	0.1180
Hand-held compactor	Diesel	8	50	0.026300	0.005000	0.031400	0.000100	0.001200	0.001100	1.15	0.0005	0.0030
Impact Hammer	Diesel	300	50	0.005950	0.001500	0.018000	0.000011	0.000838	0.000754	1.15	0.0005	0.0030
Loader	Diesel	147	54	0.005950	0.001500	0.018000	0.000011	0.000838	0.000754	1.15	0.0110	0.0916
Paver	Diesel	89	62	0.008157	0.000309	0.000661	0.000002	0.000022	0.000022	1.15	0.0111	0.0710
Roller Compactor	Diesel	84	56	0.008157	0.000309	0.000661	0.000002	0.000022	0.000022	1.15	0.0077	0.0522
Skid Steer Loader	Diesel	37	55	0.007716	0.000309	0.000661	0.000002	0.000044	0.000044	1.15	0.0034	0.0195
Trencher	Diesel	69	75	0.008157	0.000309	0.000661	0.000002	0.000022	0.000022	1.15	0.0103	0.0671
Water Truck - 4000 Gallon	Diesel	235	61	0.005732	0.000309	0.000661	0.000002	0.000044	0.000044	1.15	0.0034	0.0355
Wharf Crane - 150 ton	Diesel	247	41	0.005950	0.001500	0.018000	0.000011	0.000838	0.000754	1.15	0.0112	0.1180
Emergency Generator, 1650 kW and up	Diesel	3486	80	4.4E-04	9.7E-03	9.7E-03	NA	0.0E+00	NA	1.15	0.0101	0.0292

				Emission Factors (g/hp-hr)								
Equipment	Fuel Type	Horsepower (hp)	Load Factor	CO	VOC	NOx	SOx	PM10	PM2.5	CO2	CH4	N2O
Trencher	Diesel	69	75	3.700000	0.140000	0.300000	0.000800	0.010000	0.010000	NA	NA	NA
CAT 416 Rubber Tire Backhoe/Loader	Diesel	87	55	3.7	0.140000	0.300000	0.000800	0.010000	0.010000	NA	NA	NA
Paver	Diesel	89	62	3.7	0.140000	0.300000	0.000800	0.010000	0.010000	NA	NA	NA
Roller Compactor	Diesel	84	56	3.7	0.140000	0.300000	0.000800	0.010000	0.010000	NA	NA	NA
Skid Steer Loader	Diesel	37	55	3.500000	0.140000	0.300000	0.000800	0.020000	0.020000	NA	NA	NA
Crane - 150 Ton	Diesel	314	41	2.600000	0.140000	0.300000	0.000800	0.020000	0.020000	NA	NA	NA
Water Truck - 4000 Gallon	Diesel	235		2.600000	0.140000	0.300000	0.000800	0.020000	0.020000	NA	NA	NA
Dump Truck - 15 CY Topsoil	Diesel	489	59	2.600000	0.140000	0.300000	0.000800	0.010000	0.010000	NA	NA	NA
Concrete Truck	Diesel	210	20	2.600000	0.140000	0.300000	0.000800	0.020000	0.020000	NA	NA	NA
Generator - 50 KW	Diesel	30	74	3.500000	0.140000	0.300000	0.000800	0.020000	0.020000	NA	NA	NA

Updated: Feb-24

Sources:
USEPA. 2021. Exhaust and Crankcase Emission Factors for Nonroad Compression-Ignition Engines in MOVES3.0.2. Available at (https://nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPDF.cgi?Dockey=P1013KWQ.pdf). September 2021.
Argonne National Laboratory. 2021. MOVES3 Vehicle Operation Emissions Factors. October 2021.
United States Environmental Protection Agency. 2015. Exhaust Emission Rates for Heavy Duty On-road Vehicles in MOVES2014. November.
USEPA 2016. Air Toxic Emissions from On-road Vehicles in MOVES2014
CalEEMod handbook for Emissions Factors and Data Tables. 2022. For Version 2022.1 https://www.caleemod.com/documents/handbook/appendices/appendix_c.pdf

On Road Equipment Emission Factors

Emissions Factors:

Equipment	CO		VOCs						NOx		SOx		PM10				CO2e	
	Running Exhaust (g/mi)	Start-up (g/start)	Running Exhaust (g/mi)	Start-up (g/start)	Hot-Soak (g/trip)	Resting Loss (g/hr)	Running Evaporative (g/mi)	Diurnal Evaporative (g/hr)	Running Exhaust (g/mi)	Start-up (g/start)	Running Exhaust (g/mi)	Start-up (g/start)	Running Exhaust (g/mi)	Start-up (g/start)	Tire Wear (g/mi)	Brake Wear (g/mi)	Running Exhaust (g/mi)	Start-up (g/start)
Heavy-duty truck, diesel, GVWR 33,000 and up, 2003 and	1.83		3.44						6.76		0.02		0.36		0.04	0.01	2,011.10	
Light-duty truck (gasoline) with catalyst	3.44	11.79	0.06	0.87	0.08	0.05	0.07	0.02	0.56	0.59	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	1,173.10	203.87

Last Update: Feb-24

Emission Factor Sources:
United States Environmental Protection Agency. 2015. Exhaust Emission Rates for Heavy Duty On-road Vehicles in MOVES2014. November.
USEPA 2016. Air Toxic Emissions from On-road Vehicles in MOVES2014
CalEEMod handbook for Emissions Factors and Data Tables. 2022. For Version 2022.1 https://www.caleemod.com/documents/handbook/appendices/appendix_c.pdf

Emission Factor Discussions and Assumptions:
MOVES 2014 is an USEPA Model. The model was not used; however the emissions factors are utilized in this NEPA Air Quality Review.
Heavy-duty is any vehicle with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating above 8,500 lbs.
Emission factors are based on the common construction-activity related equipment (including and estimated average age). Actual equipment used may vary.
In 2007, stricter emission standards for NOx and PM went into effect.
Generally, for NEPA actions the assumed fleet year is 2003 equipment. This is considered an average between older equipment and newer equipment. Actual emissions per equipment will vary with the specific truck in use. Newer model years have lower emission rate

DRAFT

RECORD OF NON-APPLICABILITY (RONA) FOR CLEAN AIR ACT CONFORMITY

PROGRAMMATIC BUILD-TO-SUIT LEASING ACTIONS
Various Air Quality Control Regions

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) published *Determining Conformity of General Federal Actions to State or Federal Implementation Plans; Final Rule* in the 30 November 1993, Federal Register (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 6, 51, and 93). This publication provides implementing guidance to document CAA Conformity Determination requirements.

Federal regulations state that no department, agency, or instrumentality of the Federal Government shall engage in, support in any way or provide financial assistance for, license to permit, or approve any activity that does not conform to an applicable implementation plan. It is the responsibility of the federal agency to determine whether a federal action conforms to the applicable implementation plan, before the federal agency takes the action (40 CFR Part 1, Section 51.850[a]).

The general conformity rule applies to federal actions proposed within areas for which the USEPA has designated as being either nonattainment or maintenance areas for a National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS). The USEPA has designated former nonattainment areas that have attained a NAAQS as maintenance areas. Emissions of pollutants for which an area is in attainment are exempt from conformity analyses.

The Proposed Action would be a programmatic completion of build-to-suit lease of a VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics or Community Living Centers or similar medical and medically-related facility in any location for the analysis and completion of this RONA. The project location is assumed for this analysis to be any location in all 50-States, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, America Samoa, and Tribal Lands. This analysis assumes the "location" for the purposes of the RONA is a location subject to the most stringent *de minimis* levels for general conformity analysis. The most stringent levels were chosen to demonstrate how any project covered under this Programmatic Build-To-Suit Leasing Actions PEA would not exceed designated *de minimis* levels for any region. Therefore, this demonstrates how the Federal actions may be exempt from conformity determinations if they do not exceed designated *de minimis* levels (40 CFR Part 1, Section 51.853[b]).

The annual *de minimis* levels for this analysis are a combination of the most stringent levels from 40 CFR 93.153(b)(1) and (b)(2) as listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Conformity *de minimis* Levels for Criteria Pollutants - For Most Stringent Application of *de minimis* to For Programmatic Evaluation

Criteria Pollutant	*De minimis* Level (tons/year)
Carbon monoxide (CO)	100
Ozone Precursor Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)	10
Ozone Precursor NOx	10
SOx	100
Particulate Matter <10 microns (PM10)	70
Particulate Matter <2.5 microns (PM2.5)	70

PROPOSED ACTION

Action Proponent: Department of Veterans Affairs

Location: Programmatic – 50 States, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and Tribal Lands.

Proposed Action Name: Programmatic Environmental Assessment for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Real Property Build-To-Suit Lease Program

Proposed Action & Emissions Summary: Under the Proposed Action, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Under the Proposed Action, ORP would establish leases that would result in the construction, renovation, or repair of leased medical and medically-related facilities to care for our nation's Veterans in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and Tribal Lands.

This PEA will provide NEPA analysis and compliance for ORP lease projects that meet the following conditions:

- Construction projects of no more than 250,000 square feet or 25 acres of total development.
- Renovation or repair projects of any size.

This PEA focuses on the build-to-suit lease program for the construction, renovation, repair, and operation of community based outpatient clinics (CBOCs), community living centers (CLCs), and other similar leased medical facilities across the Nation. In order to estimate projected emissions, an upper bound scenario was created to be a representative project. The upper bound scenario considers that:

- 25 acres must be cleared for site preparation or demolished
- 150,000 square feet of existing structures upwards of 3 stories high must be demolished
- All parking and site civil work must be completed during the construction build phase
- The entire project will be completed within one calendar year
- A 250,000 square foot facility with surrounding parking and site development is completed for a total of 25 acres.
- Site development is in an undeveloped or underdeveloped community requiring delivery of construction materials versus an urban core community with shorter commute and delivery distances.

- Staffing of 200 people who commute an average of 30 miles 5 days a week for the operational period of 30-years.
- Stationary sources of diesel-fueled emergency generator and natural gas boiler units operate in the building for 30-years.

Table 2 presents a summary of the projected emissions associated with the upper bound scenario for construction or renovation and repair under the Proposed Action. Table 3 present a summary of the projected emissions associated with the upper bound scenario operation of a CBOC, CLC or other similar leased medical facility.

As shown in Table 2 and Table 3, emissions from construction activities and the operation would be well below *de minimis* thresholds and would not trigger a formal Conformity Determination under the CAA General Conformity Rule.

Table 2. Project Emissions – Construction Emissions

Emission Source	Emissions (tons/year)					
	CO	VOC	NOx	SOx	PM10	PM2.5
Construction Of Building and Site Features with Clearing	7.5	0.5	2.1	0.0	0.3	0.3
Demolition of Existing Structures and Site Features Prior to Construction	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Emissions Per Year	7.7	0.7	2.5	0.0	0.3	0.3
Conformity *de minimis* Thresholds	100	10	10	100	70	70
Exceeds Conformity *de minimis* Thresholds?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Table 3. Project Emissions – Additional Operational Emissions

Emission Source	Emissions (tons/year)					
	CO	VOC	NOx	SOx	PM10	PM2.5
Operational – Staff Commutes, Emergency Generator Maintenance, Building Heating	5.7	2.3	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Emissions Per Year	5.7	2.3	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Conformity *de minimis* Thresholds	100	10	10	100	70	70
Exceeds Conformity *de minimis* Thresholds?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Affected Air Basin: Varies. Programmatic analysis suitable for any county with a nonattainment or maintenance area.

Date RONA Prepared: February 17, 2025

RONA Prepared By: Julie Werner, Environmental PE (Washington State), Scout

PROPOSED ACTION EXEMPTION(S)

The Proposed Action is possibly located within a nonattainment area; therefore, the Proposed Action is subject to the General Conformity Rule requirements. Because project emissions would be below *de minimis* thresholds, the project has demonstrated conformity with the requirements of the General Conformity Rule, the VA is not required to conduct a formal conformity determination.

There would be no significant direct or indirect impacts to air quality under this Proposed Action. Therefore, the VA concludes that formal Conformity Determination procedures are not required, resulting in this RONA.

RONA APPROVAL

To the best of my knowledge, the information presented in this RONA is correct and accurate, and I concur in the finding that implementation of the Proposed Action does not require a formal CAA Conformity Determination.

_____ _____

NAME
VA CFM

Date

APPENDIX C AGENCY AND STAKEHOLDER CORRESPONDENCE

Appendix C
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE

	Documents Included in Appendix C	Date
1.	Federal Register Notice	November 17, 2023
2.	Scoping Notice - Honorable Member of the House of Representatives	November 20, 2023
3.	Scoping Notice - Honorable Member of the Senate	November 20, 2023
4.	Scoping Notice - State Historic Preservation Officers	November 20, 2023
5.	Scoping Notice – Tribal Leaders	December 5, 2023
6.	Scoping Email Notice – Federal Agencies	November 28, 2023
7.	Scoping Email Notice – States Agencies	November 28, 2023
8.	SHPO Mail Contact List	November 28, 2023
9.	State Address List	November 28, 2023
10.	Federal Agency Address List	November 28, 2023
11.	Scoping Response Comments (13 Commentors)	

be made to Dwight Wolkow at (202) 622–1276, or email: *comments2TIC@do.treas.gov*.

When To Report: Data must be submitted to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, acting as fiscal agent for the Department of the Treasury, by March 1, 2024.

Paperwork Reduction Act Notice: This data collection has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act and assigned control number 1505–0146. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid control number assigned by OMB. The estimated average annual burden associated with this collection of information is 49 hours per respondent for end-investors and custodians that file Schedule 3 reports covering their foreign securities entrusted to U.S. resident custodians, 146 hours per respondent for large end-investors filing Schedule 2 reports, and 546 hours per respondent for large custodians of securities filing Schedule 2 reports. Comments concerning the accuracy of this burden estimate and suggestions for reducing this burden should be directed to the Department of the Treasury, Attention: Administrator, International Portfolio Investment Data Reporting Systems, Room 1050, Washington, DC 20220, and to OMB, Attention: Desk Officer for the Department of the Treasury, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Washington, DC 20503. Please also email your comments to Dwight Wolkow at: *comments2TIC@do.treas.gov*.

Dwight Wolkow,

Administrator, International Portfolio Investment Data Reporting Systems.

[FR Doc. 2023–25501 Filed 11–16–23; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4810–AK–P

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900–0636]

Agency Information Collection Activity under OMB Review: Accelerated Payment Verification of Completion Letter

AGENCY: Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, this notice announces that the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), Department of Veterans Affairs, will submit the collection of information abstracted below to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and comment. The PRA submission describes the nature of the information collection and its expected cost and burden, and it includes the actual data collection instrument.

DATES: Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be sent within 30 days of publication of this notice by clicking on the following link *www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain*, select ''Currently under Review—Open for Public Comments'', then search the list for the information collection by Title or ''OMB Control No. 2900–0636.''

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Maribel Aponte, Office of Enterprise and Integration, Data Governance Analytics (008), 810 Vermont Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20420, (202) 266–4688 or email *Maribel.aponte@va.gov*. Please refer to ''OMB Control No. 2900–0636'' in any correspondence.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Authority: Public Law 107–103 and Public Law 110–181; 10 U.S.C. 16131a and 38 CFR 21.7154(d)(1).

Title: Accelerated Payment Verification of Completion Letter, VA Form 22–0840.

OMB Control Number: 2900–0636.

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Abstract: Eligible Veterans, Service members, and beneficiaries electing to receive an accelerated payment for educational assistance payments must certify they received such payment and how the payment was used, and the data collected from the VA Form 22–0840 is used to determine the entitlement to the accelerated payment.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The **Federal Register** *Notice* with a 60-day comment period soliciting comments on this collection of information was published at 88 FR 63674 on Friday, September 15, 2023, Page 63674.

Affected Public: Individuals and Households.

Estimated Annual Burden: 1 hour.

Estimated Average Burden Time per Respondent: 5 minutes.

Frequency of Response: One Time.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 10.

By direction of the Secretary.

Dorothy Glasgow,

VA PRA Clearance Officer, (Alt.) Office of Enterprise and Integration, Data Governance Analytics, Department of Veterans Affairs.

[FR Doc. 2023–25503 Filed 11–16–23; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8320–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Scoping Notice for Preparation of a Programmatic Environmental Assessment for the Build-to-Suit Lease Program

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is preparing a programmatic environmental assessment (PEA) in accordance with the regulations implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality regulations, and VA's NEPA Implementing Regulations.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before December 18, 2023. VA anticipates releasing the draft PEA for a 30-day public review and comment period in the first quarter of fiscal year 2024. VA will notify stakeholders via email/mail, publish a notice of availability of the draft PEA in the **Federal Register** and solicit comments at that time. The draft PEA will be available for review via the VA website: *www.cfm.va.gov/environmental/*.

ADDRESSES: Comments must be submitted through *www.regulations.gov*. Except as provided below, comments received before the close of the comment period will be available at *www.regulations.gov* for public viewing, inspection, or copying, including any personally identifiable or confidential business information that is included in a comment. We post the comments received before the close of the comment period on the following website as soon as possible after they have been received: *http://www.regulations.gov*. VA will not post on *Regulations.gov* public comments that make threats to individuals or institutions or suggest that the commenter will take actions to harm the individual. VA encourages individuals not to submit duplicative comments. We will post acceptable comments from multiple unique commenters even if the content is identical or nearly identical to other comments. Any public comment received after the comment

period's closing date is considered late and will not be considered.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Jason Sturm, Environmental Engineer, Office of Construction & Facilities Management (003C2), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington DC 20420, (224) 628–1946 (this is not a toll-free number), *Jason.Sturm@va.gov.* Reference ''Build-to-Suit Lease PEA'' in your correspondence.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The VA Office of Construction and Facilities Management, Office of Real Property supports VA's mission by, among other functions, leasing space for the construction of medical and medically related facilities to care for the Nation's Veterans.

The PEA will analyze the proposed construction, renovation, repair and operation of community-based outpatient clinics, community living centers and other similar leased medical facilities identified under the VA Office of Construction & Facilities Management, Office of Real Property build-to-suit program. The geographic scope of the PEA is all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa and Tribal Lands. The PEA aims to provide a streamlined NEPA compliance process for those recurring, predictable, and low-impact construction, renovation or repair projects that would result in less than significant impacts.

This notice initiates the scoping process for the PEA and invites the public, government agencies and other interested persons and organizations to provide comments on the scope of issues for analysis, input on potential alternatives, or information/analyses relevant to the proposed action.

Use of the PEA would decrease the time and cost associated with having to prepare stand-alone NEPA documentation for those future build-to-suit lease projects that would meet the conditions of the PEA. VA would complete additional NEPA compliance as required on projects outside the parameters of the PEA.

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide eligible Veterans common medical services, assisted living care and related services. The proposed action is needed to address current and future projected health care gaps and operational inefficiencies, especially in rural areas where access to common medical services offered by Veterans Affairs Medical Centers is not an easily accessible option.

The PEA will evaluate the potential direct and indirect impacts on the human environment from the proposed action and alternatives. VA will make the Draft PEA available for a public comment period following its completion.

Signing Authority

Denis McDonough, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, approved and signed this document on November 13, 2023, and authorized the undersigned to sign and submit the document to the Office of the Federal Register for publication electronically as an official document of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Jeffrey M. Martin,

Assistant Director, Office of Regulation Policy & Management, Office of General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs.

[FR Doc. 2023–25416 Filed 11–16–23; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8320–01–P

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Office of Construction & Facilities Management
Washington DC 20420

Congress of the United States
Honorable Member of the House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

SUBJECT: Scoping Notice for a Programmatic Environmental Assessment for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Real Property Build-To-Suit Lease Program

Dear Representative,

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) proposes to construct, renovate, or repair leased medical and medically related facilities to care for our nation's Veterans in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and Tribal Lands. The VA Office of Real Property, a division within the VA Office of Construction & Facilities Management, supports VA's mission by acquiring land and leasing space for the construction of medical and medically related facilities to care for our nation's Veterans.

As part of the decision-making process, VA will undertake activities to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by preparing a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA). VA is seeking input on issues to be addressed during the NEPA process, including environmental concerns.

VA invites your input to the NEPA process. Please see the attached scoping notice for information on the proposed project and how to submit any comments or input on alternatives and issues VA should analyze in the PEA.

Enclosure:

Scoping Notice

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Office of Construction & Facilities Management
Washington DC 20420

Congress of the United States
Honorable Member of the Senate
Washington, DC 20510

SUBJECT: Scoping Notice for a Programmatic Environmental Assessment for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Real Property Build-To-Suit Lease Program

Dear Senator,

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) proposes to construct, renovate, or repair leased medical and medically related facilities to care for our nation's Veterans in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and Tribal Lands. The VA Office of Real Property, a division within the VA Office of Construction & Facilities Management, supports VA's mission by acquiring land and leasing space for the construction of medical and medically related facilities to care for our nation's Veterans.

As part of the decision-making process, VA will undertake activities to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by preparing a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA). VA is seeking input on issues to be addressed during the NEPA process, including environmental concerns.

VA invites your input to the NEPA process. Please see the attached scoping notice for information on the proposed project and how to submit any comments or input on alternatives and issues VA should analyze in the PEA.

Enclosure:

Scoping Notice

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Office of Construction & Facilities Management
Washington DC 20420

SUBJECT: Scoping Notice for a Programmatic Environmental Assessment for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Real Property Build-To-Suit Lease Program

Dear State Historic Preservation Officer,

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) proposes to construct, renovate, or repair leased medical and medically related facilities to care for our nation's Veterans in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and Tribal Lands. The VA Office of Real Property, a division within the VA Office of Construction & Facilities Management, supports VA's mission by acquiring land and leasing space for the construction of medical and medically related facilities to care for our nation's Veterans.

As part of the decision-making process, VA will undertake activities to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by preparing a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA). VA is seeking input on issues to be addressed during the NEPA process, including cultural resource concerns.

VA invites your input to the NEPA process. Please see the attached scoping notice for information on the proposed project and how to submit any comments or input on alternatives and issues VA should analyze in the PEA.

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended (54 U.S.C. 306108), VA will initiate Section 106 consultation for the undertaking with your office at the appropriate time. VA will send your office separate correspondence at that time.

Enclosure:

Scoping Notice

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Office of Construction & Facilities Management
Washington DC 20420

SUBJECT: Scoping Notice for a Programmatic Environmental Assessment for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Real Property Build-To-Suit Lease Program

Dear Tribal Leader,

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) proposes to construct, renovate, or repair leased medical and medically related facilities to care for our nation's Veterans in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and Tribal Lands. The VA Office of Real Property, a division within the VA Office of Construction & Facilities Management, supports VA's mission by acquiring land and leasing space for the construction of medical and medically related facilities to care for our nation's Veterans.

As part of the decision-making process, VA will undertake activities to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by preparing a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA). VA is seeking input on issues to be addressed during the NEPA process, including environmental and Tribal concerns.

VA invites your input to the NEPA process. Please see the attached scoping notice for information on the proposed project and how to submit any comments or input on alternatives and issues VA should analyze in the PEA.

The Federal Register notice for the Leasing PEA was published on Friday, November 17, 2023. Although the Federal Register notice and the enclosed scoping notice state that comments must be submitted by December 18, 2023, we will accept comments through January 8, 2024.

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended (54 U.S.C. 306108), VA will initiate Section 106 consultation for the undertaking with your Tribe at the appropriate time. VA will send your office separate correspondence at that time.

Enclosure:

Scoping Notice

From: VACO Environment <VACOEnvironment@va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 9:43 AM
To: julie.a.alcon@usace.army.mil; barger.cindy@epa.gov; Tejada.matthew@Epa.gov; alicialogalbo@fws.gov; scott.blackburn@usda.gov; colleen.vaughn@dot.gov; brian.costner@hq.doe.gov; leoangelo.gumapas@psc.hhs.gov; Lauren.E.Hayes@hud.gov; bj.howerton@bia.gov; achp@achp.gov; vhanvey@achp.gov; david_jacob@nps.gov; david.b.guldenzopf.civ@mail.mil; Justo.robles@fema.dhs.gov
Subject: Scoping for VA Build-to-Suit Lease Programmatic EA

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) proposes to construct, renovate, or repair leased medical and medically related facilities to care for our nation's Veterans in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and Tribal Lands. The VA Office of Real Property, a division within the VA Office of Construction & Facilities Management, supports VA's mission by acquiring land and leasing space for the construction of medical and medically related facilities to care for our nation's Veterans.

As part of the decision-making process, VA will undertake activities to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by preparing a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA). VA is seeking input on issues to be addressed during the NEPA process, including environmental concerns.

The Federal Register notice for the Leasing PEA was published on Friday, 17 November 2023. Although the Federal Register notice states that comments must be submitted by December 18, we will accept comments through December 29 due to the late release of this scoping notice.

Respectfully,

Jason Sturm
Environmental Engineer

From: VACO Environment <VACOEnvironment@va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 9:43 AM
To: public.affairs@adem.alabama.gov; dec.commissioner@alaska.gov; peters.karen@azdeq.gov; EEComms@adeq.state.ar.us; scott.morgan@opr.ca.gov; cdphe_ceos_support@state.co.us; DEEP.OPPD@ct.gov; micheale.smith@delaware.gov; State.Clearinghouse@FloridaDEP.gov; askEPD@gaepd.org; Cab.General@doh.hawaii.gov; anna.marron@deq.idaho.gov; anna.marron@deq.idaho.gov; info@idem.IN.gov; ted.petersen@dnr.iowa.gov; Erich.Glave@ks.gov; derek.bozzell@ky.gov; jason.meyers@la.gov; david.madore@maine.gov; jay.apperson@maryland.gov; edmund.coletta@mass.gov; McDiarmidJrH@Michigan.gov; eNOI@mdeq.ms.gov; andrea.cournoyer@state.mn.us; communications@dnr.mo.gov; DEQCommunicationsTeam@mt.gov; ndee.moreinfo@nebraska.gov; sfontaine@ndep.nv.gov; robert.scott@des.nh.gov; commissioner@dep.nj.gov; matthew.maez@env.nm.gov; contact@dec.ny.gov; state.clearinghouse@doa.nc.gov; dglatt@nd.gov; supora.hunter@epa.ohio.gov; jon.roberts@deq.ok.gov; harry.esteve@deq.oregon.gov; RA-epcontactus@pa.gov; susan.forcier@dem.ri.gov; state.clearinghouse@admin.sc.gov; DANRMail@state.sd.us; Jennifer.Tribble@tn.gov; info@tceq.texas.gov; ssumner@utah.gov; adam.miller@vermont.gov; Michael.Rolband@DEQ.Virginia.gov; andrew.wineke@ecy.wa.gov; clearinghouse@wv.gov; DNRPress@Wisconsin.gov; jody.paessler1@wyo.gov; doee@dc.gov; jamal.nielsen@dpnr.vi.gov; mnavon@drna.pr.gov; josh.santos@becq.gov.mp; nic.rupley@epa.guam.gov; info@epa.as.gov
Subject: Scoping for VA Build-to-Suit Lease Programmatic EA

Dear Valued Stakeholder:
The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) proposes to construct, renovate, or repair leased medical and medically related facilities to care for our nation's Veterans in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and Tribal Lands. The VA Office of Real Property, a division within the VA Office of Construction & Facilities Management, supports VA's mission by acquiring land and leasing space for the construction of medical and medically related facilities to care for our nation's Veterans.

As part of the decision-making process, VA will undertake activities to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by preparing a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA). VA is seeking input on issues to be addressed during the NEPA process, including environmental concerns.

The Federal Register notice for the Leasing PEA was published on Friday, 17 November 2023. Although the Federal Register notice states that comments must be submitted by December 18, we will accept comments through December 29 due to the late release of this scoping notice.

Respectfully,

Jason Sturm
Environmental Engineer

VA Leasing PEA SHPO Email Notification List (*56 total = all 50 states and District of Columbia, US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and American Samoa***)**

Lisa.Jones@ahc.alabama.gov; judy.bittner@alaska.gov; kleonard@azstateparks.gov; mike.mills@arkansas.gov; julianne.polanco@parks.ca.gov; dawn.diprince@state.co.us; jonathan.kinney@ct.gov; suzanne.savery@delaware.gov; alissa.lotane@dos.myflorida.com; Jennifer.Dixon@DCA.GA.gov; alan.s.downer@hawaii.gov; janet.gallimore@ishs.idaho.gov; colleen.callahan@Illinois.gov; dhpa@dnr.in.gov; heather.gibb@iowa.gov; patrick.zollner@ks.gov; craig.potts@ky.gov; ksanders@crt.la.gov; kirk.mohney@maine.gov; elizabeth.hughes@maryland.gov; Ed.Bell@sec.state.ma.us; faesm@michigan.gov; Alice.Roberts-Davis@state.mn.us; bwhite@mdah.ms.gov; toni.prawl@dnr.mo.gov; pebrown@mt.gov; Jill.Dolberg@nebraska.gov; rlpalmer@shpo.nv.gov; Benjamin.wilson@dncr.nh.gov; kate.marcopul@dep.nj.gov; jeff.pappas@state.nm.us; daniel.mackay@parks.ny.gov; darin.waters@ncdcr.gov; billpeterson@nd.gov; blogan@ohiohistory.org; lynda.ozan@history.ok.gov; chrissy.curran@oregon.gov; anlowery@pa.gov; Jeffrey.Emidy@preservation.ri.gov; eemerson@scdah.sc.gov; Jenna.CarlsonDietmeier@state.sd.us; patrick.mcintyre@tn.gov; Mark.wolfe@thc.texas.gov; cmerritt@utah.gov; laura.trieschmann@vermont.gov; julie.langan@dhr.virginia.gov; allyson.brooks@dahp.wa.gov; Susan.M.Pierce@wv.gov; daina.penkiunas@wisconsinhistory.org; sara.needles@wyo.gov; david.maloney@dc.gov; sean.krigger@dpnr.vi.gov; carubio@prshpo.pr.gov; cnmihpo@gmail.com; patrick.lujan@dpr.guam.gov; elviszodiacal@gmail.com

VA Leasing PEA SVH State Agency Notification List (*56 total = all 50 states, District of Columbia, US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, and Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa***)**

public.affairs@adem.alabama.gov; dec.commissioner@alaska.gov; peters.karen@azdeq.gov; EEComms@adeq.state.ar.us; scott.morgan@opr.ca.gov; cdphe_ceos_support@state.co.us; DEEP.OPPD@ct.gov; micheale.smith@delaware.gov; State.Clearinghouse@FloridaDEP.gov; askEPD@gaepd.org; Cab.General@doh.hawaii.gov; anna.marron@deq.idaho.gov; anna.marron@deq.idaho.gov; info@idem.IN.gov; ted.petersen@dnr.iowa.gov; Erich.Glave@ks.gov; derek.bozzell@ky.gov; jason.meyers@la.gov; david.madore@maine.gov; jay.apperson@maryland.gov; edmund.coletta@mass.gov; McDiarmidJrH@Michigan.gov; eNOI@mdeq.ms.gov; andrea.cournoyer@state.mn.us; communications@dnr.mo.gov; DEQCommunicationsTeam@mt.gov; ndee.moreinfo@nebraska.gov; sfontaine@ndep.nv.gov; robert.scott@des.nh.gov; commissioner@dep.nj.gov; matthew.maez@env.nm.gov; contact@dec.ny.gov; state.clearinghouse@doa.nc.gov; dglatt@nd.gov; supora.hunter@epa.ohio.gov; jon.roberts@deq.ok.gov; harry.esteve@deq.oregon.gov; RA-epcontactus@pa.gov; susan.forcier@dem.ri.gov; state.clearinghouse@admin.sc.gov; DANRMail@state.sd.us; Jennifer.Tribble@tn.gov; info@tceq.texas.gov; ssumner@utah.gov; adam.miller@vermont.gov; Michael.Rolband@DEQ.Virginia.gov; andrew.wineke@ecy.wa.gov; clearinghouse@wv.gov; DNRPress@Wisconsin.gov; kimberly.mazza1@wyo.gov; doee@dc.gov; jamal.nielsen@dpnr.vi.gov; mnavon@drna.pr.gov; josh.santos@becq.gov.mp; nic.rupley@epa.guam.gov; info@epa.as.gov

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Mr. Gib Owen
Assistant for Water Resources Legislation
703-695-4641
gib.a.owen.civ@mail.mil

Ms. Julie A. Alcon
Senior Environmental Policy Reviewer, Office of Water Project Review Policy and Planning Division
202-302-5864
julie.a.alcon@usace.army.mil

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Ms. Cindy Barger
Director, NEPA Compliance Division
Office of Federal Activities
202-564-3169
barger.cindy@epa.gov

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Alicia Logalbo
National NEPA Coordinator
703-358-2456
alicia_logalbo@fws.gov

U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service

Mr. Scott Blackburn
National NEPA Specialist
USDA NRCS
scott.blackburn@usda.gov

U.S. Department of Transportation

Ms. April Marchese
Director, Infrastructure Permitting Improvement Center
202-366- 2074
april.marchese@dot.gov

Ms. Colleen Vaughn
Environmental Policy Analyst/Federal Preservation Officer
Infrastructure Permitting Improvement Center
202-366-7098
colleen.vaughn@dot.gov

U.S. Department of Energy

Mr. Brian Costner
Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Compliance (GC-54)
202-586-9924

brian.costner@hq.doe.gov

Mr. William Ostrum
NEPA Compliance Officer, Office of Environmental Management (EM-4.31)
202-586-2513
william.ostrum@hq.doe.gov

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

CDR Leo Angelo Gumapas
U.S. Public Health Service
Environmental Engineering Program Chief Real Property Management Service
202-669-6942
leoangelo.gumapas@psc.hhs.gov

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Lauren Hayes Knutson
Environmental Planning Division Director
(202) 402-4270
Lauren.E.Hayes@hud.gov

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Dr. BJ Howerton
Branch Chief, Environmental and Cultural Resources Management
Office of Trust Services
505-563-3013
bj.howerton@bia.gov

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

Jaime Loichinger
Assistant Director
Phone:
202-517-0219
jloichinger@achp.gov

National Park Service

Mr. David Jacob
Chief, Environmental Planning and Compliance Branch
303-987-6970
david_jacob@nps.gov

U.S. Department of the Army (Cultural)

Dr. David Guldenzopf, Ph.D.
Director for Environmental Quality
Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and Environment
571-256-7822
david.b.guldenzopf.civ@mail.mil

EPA EJ Office

Matthew Tejada
Deputy Assistant Administrator for Environmental Justice
202-564-8047
Tejada.matthew@*Epa.gov*

FEMA intergovernmental affairs

Justo Robles
Intergovernmental Affairs
Justo.robles@fema.dhs.*gov*

Regional EPA Contacts should be here: https://www.epa.gov/nepa/regional-national-environmental-policy-act-contacts-and-environmental-impact

EPA Region 1
EPA Region 2
EPA Region 3
EPA Region 4
EPA Region 5
EPA Region 6
EPA Region 7
EPA Region 8
EPA Region 9
EPA Region 10

APPENDIX D. PEA VA NEPA CHECKLIST

Worksheet for Determination of Programmatic Environmental Assessment Adequacy for the U.S. Department Of Veterans Affairs Office Of Real Property Build-To-Suit Lease Program

Purpose

The *Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) for the U.S. Department Of Veterans Affairs Office Of Real Property Build-To-Suit Lease Program* was completed on [date placeholder]. The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed [date placeholder]. The PEA was completed in order to evaluate the potential environmental impacts from the construction, renovation, or repair of leased medical and medically related facilities.

Instructions

This worksheet shall be used to determine if your proposed action is consistent with the analysis and determinations in the PEA. Fill out the worksheet by answering the following questions and making a determination of adequacy.

Project Title:

Insert project title

Project Number:

Insert project number in this format: number_date. Date must be in this format: DDMMYY

Location of Proposed Action:

Identify the location of the proposed action

Description Of The Proposed Action:

Provide a thorough description of your proposed action

Adequacy Questions

1. *Is the proposed action an activity, or essentially similar to, the Proposed Action analyzed in the PEA?*

   Yes/No:

   Rationale:

2. *Is the proposed action within the same analysis area, or if the project location is different, are the geographic and resource conditions sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the PEA? If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial?*

   Yes/No:

   Rationale:

3. *Is the PEA analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (e.g., recent endangered species listings, recent surveys for sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that new information and new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action? If more than five years have passed since the FONSI was signed, the VA environmental engineer must consider if the resource-specific conditions and analysis are still valid.*

   Yes/No:

   Rationale:

4. *Are the effects that would result from implementation of the proposed action similar (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to those analyzed and identified in the PEA? Use the following resource table to make a determination using the following codes.*

   NC = actions and impacts consistent with those disclosed in the *Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) for the State Veterans Home Construction Grant Program.* The Rationale column may include NI and NP discussions.
   NP = not present in the area impacted by the proposed or alternative actions
   NI = present, but not affected to a degree that additional NEPA analysis is required
   PI = present with potential for impacts that require supplemental NEPA analysis

Determination	Resource	Rationale for Determination
	Aesthetics	
	Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases	
	Geology & Soils	
	Hydrology & Water Quality	
	Wildlife & Habitat	
	Noise	

Determination	Resource	Rationale for Determination
	Cultural Resources	
	Land Use	
	Floodplains, Wetlands, & Coastal Zone Management	
	Socioeconomics	
	Community Services	
	Solid Wastes & Hazardous Materials	
	Transportation & Parking	
	Utilities	

As part of Question 4, the following subsections provide resource area-specific review actions for those resource areas most commonly subject to scrutiny.

4.1 Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases

Would the proposed action be greater (in acreage) and/or longer in duration (months) than analyzed under the maximum disturbance scenario evaluated in this PEA?

Yes/No:

Rationale:

4.2 Geology and Soils

Would the proposed action impact "prime or unique" soil? To determine, use the Web Soil Survey tool (https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/). If not, then no further analysis would be needed. If prime or unique soils cannot be avoided, then additional NEPA analysis is required.

Yes/No:

Rationale:

4.3 Wildlife and Habitat

Utilizing the Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) database (https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/), identify potential impacts of the proposed action on federally listed species and their habitat. Are the findings consistent of the PEA?

Yes/No:

Rationale:

4.4 Cultural Resources

Are the impacts of the proposed action within the scope of the Program Alternative?

Yes/No:

Rationale:

4.5 Floodplains, Wetlands, and Coastal Zone Management

Would the proposed action involve activity within an area that may be designated as a floodplain or a wetland? If so, document the additional analysis and any related measures and/or mitigation that would be implemented, to include the 8-step process (https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3190/floodplain-management-8-step-decision-making-process/)

Yes/No:

Rationale:

5. *Is the proposed action likely to generate public controversy or concern? Is additional public outreach or stakeholder involvement necessary?*

   Yes/No:

   Rationale:

6. *Are there any state-specific requirements identified through scoping/public review that apply? (refer to Section 4.2 of the PEA)*

   Yes/No:

   Rationale:

Persons, Agencies, And VA Staff Consulted

Team members who participated in the preparation of this worksheet is provided below.

Name	Title/Agency	Resource Area(s) of Participation

Conclusion *(If you found that one or more of these criteria is not met, then you cannot conclude that the PEA fully covers the proposed action)*

Determination of PEA Adequacy:

☐Based on the review documented above, I conclude that the NEPA documentation fully covers this proposal and constitutes VA's compliance with the requirements of the NEPA.

☐The existing NEPA documentation does not fully cover the Proposed Action. Additional NEPA documentation is needed if the project is to be further considered.

Decision Documentation:

☐ The proposed action qualifies under the Leasing PEA FONSI signed on [placeholder for date]; therefore, no new decision needs to be prepared.

☐ The proposed action requires additional NEPA analysis; a new decision will be prepared.

Signature:_____

Date:_____

Note: *If it is determined that all the potential issues were adequately evaluated in the PEA, then the process is complete and this worksheet documentation is added to the file to demonstrate same.*