

Denver Federal Center Site Plan Study

Environmental Impact Statement

Final Volume II of II—Supplemental Information and Response to Comments

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U.S. General Services Administration
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project Summary

The General Services Administration (GSA), as the Lead Agency, has prepared responses to comments received during the public review process of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Master Site Plan that will replace the existing 1997 Master Site Plan (GSA 1997b) and address new opportunities for site development at the Denver Federal Center in Lakewood, Colorado. The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 United States Code [USC] 4321 et seq.) requires federal agencies to consider alternatives to proposed actions and to analyze the impacts of those alternatives on the human and physical environment. NEPA is implemented through regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500–1508). GSA has, in turn, adopted procedures to comply with NEPA and CEQ regulations, as found in GSA Order ADM 1095.1F (Environmental Consideration in Decision Making), and in the GSA PBS NEPA Desk Guide, Final Guidance (October 1999).

The environmental effects associated with implementing the proposed Master Site Plan alternatives were evaluated in the DEIS. Following closure of the public comment period on the DEIS, GSA assessed its vision and goals for the site in light of the best available technical information; laws, policies, and guidelines; as well as the summary of public comment to make decisions regarding the proposed alternatives, including the identification a preferred alternative.

Responses to public comments and information that became available after the release of the DEIS, combined with revisions to the DEIS, comprise the Final EIS (FEIS), of which this is Volume II. A Record of Decision will summarize the Final Master Site Plan and FEIS decisions.

1.2 Organization of Volume I

Volume I of the FEIS presents the revised DEIS text and the DEIS technical appendices. Comments addressed by changing the text of the DEIS are indicated, in Volume I, as double-underlined text (insertions) or stricken text (deletions). Errata have also been marked in this manner. Simple capitalization and name changes made to be consistent with the Final Master Site Plan, however, have not been marked for reasons of legibility. These changes are as follows:

- The outline level of Subsection “4.4.5, Socioeconomic Impacts” was corrected to “4.5, Socioeconomic Impacts.”
- References to Seventh Street and Sixth Avenue have been changed to 7th Street and 6th Avenue.
- References to the “final Master Site Plan” have been changed to “Final Maser Site Plan.”

- References to the “city of Lakewood” have been changed to “City of Lakewood.”
- References to the “RTD transit station” have been changed to “RTD Intermodal Station.”
- References to “St. Anthony Central Hospital” have been changed to “St. Anthony Hospital.”

1.3 Organization of Volume II

Volume II of the FEIS provides a content analysis and summary of the public and agency comments received comment period and at public meetings. The topics are arranged by major headings, organized alphabetically and by subheadings that reflect the issues that were identified during the public comment period. These issues are further broken down into specific questions or concerns raised by the public. Substantive comments were addressed in the comment and response section (i.e., in this volume), the text of the DEIS, or both places.

1.4 Public Review Process

The Draft Master Site Plan and the DEIS were released as one document to the public on April 27, 2007; the comment review period ended on June 17, 2007. Comments were gathered at public meetings and through agency and public review of the DEIS and Draft Master Site Plan.

1.4.1 Public Meetings

GSA hosted three public meetings during the public comment period, each held using an open-house format:

- May 16, 2007, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Federal Center Building 41
- May 16, 2007, from 4 p.m to 8 p.m., Creighton Middle School, Lakewood
- May 17, 2007, from 11 a.m to 1 p.m., Federal Center Building 25

The public meetings were publicized in a variety of ways as follows:

- Mailed postcard invitations to approximately 2,250 area stakeholders, including residents, community leaders, city and county employees, elected officials, businesses in the area surrounding the Federal Center, schools, churches, federal agency managers and employees, members of the Federal Center Roundtable group, homeowner association presidents, and representatives from St. Anthony Hospital and the Regional Transportation District (RTD).
- Emails and mailed invitations to approximately 400 federal employees and 1,700 names from the RTD FasTracks West Corridor database. A follow-up reminder email was distributed to this group to announce the availability of the published draft document and its posting to the project website.

- Seventy-three homeowner associations were contacted to request inclusion in association newsletters, e-newsletters or email updates.
- Notice posted on the project website.
- Flyers posted on the Federal Center campus.
- Newspaper advertisement in the *Lakewood Sentinel* on Thursday, May 3, 2007.
- Notice posted on the Channel 8 community calendar.
- Press release (English and Spanish versions) to area media.
- Posting on the City of Lakewood and Jefferson County websites.
- Inclusion in weekly packets to Lakewood city council members.

Approximately 400 individuals attended the three meetings. Sign-in sheets reflect 368 names, and in the case of couples, just one person typically signed in:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Number Signed In</u>
May 16, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.:	145
May 16, 4 p.m.–8 p.m.:	134
May 17, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.:	89

Comments from those attending were received through comment forms provided at each meeting, flip-charts listing prompting questions to which people could write their responses, blank "post-it notes" were available at each of the development alternative display boards for people to leave comments on the boards, and anecdotal feedback from project team members and volunteers was collected and written down. Comments gathered through the flip charts and post-it notes were transcribed individually on to comment forms.

1.4.2 DEIS and Draft Master Site Plan Comments

Comments were solicited by GSA from the agencies, Federal Center tenants, city and county organizations, community organizations, and other stakeholders as listed in Chapter 6 of the FEIS, Volume I, to whom copies of the two documents were distributed.

1.4.3 Comment Analysis Methodology

At the close of the comment period, GSA began a content analysis of public responses to the DEIS and Draft Master Site Plan. Every document was read and sorted in terms of its subject matter and content. A number was assigned to each letter, electronic mail document, and comments provided at the meetings. This number was used for tracking purposes and was entered into a database. As each document was analyzed, codes were assigned to categorize the topic of each comment made in the letter. A complete side-by-side listing of each comment document with its corresponding response is provided in Appendix A.

Once each document was coded, a series of steps were taken to determine whether the individual comment was substantive or non-substantive according to the criteria set forth in

the CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1500–1508). Substantive comments are those that raise an issue regarding law or regulation, agency procedure or performance, compliance with stated objectives, validity of impact analyses, or other matters of practical or procedural importance. Non-substantive comments are those that offered opinions or provided information not directly related to issues or impact analyses. Substantive comments require a response or a corresponding revision in the EIS text; non-substantive comments are used as background information for the EIS team, but do not require a formal response.

The purpose of reading, coding, and analyzing the contents of the comment letters was to assist GSA in determining whether the substantive issues raised by the public warranted further modification and study of alternatives, issues, and impacts. With the information provided through the review process, GSA reconsidered the range of alternatives and, with modifications, has selected the Federal Quad Alternative as the preferred alternative for the Federal Center.

A summary of the analysis for public and agency comments is provided in Chapter 2. Following completion of the FEIS and publication of the Notice of the FEIS in the *Federal Register*, GSA will publish a Record of Decision on the Master Site Plan.

2.0 Content Analysis of Comments

Public and agency review of the DEIS helps ensure that the FEIS provides an accurate analysis of impacts of the proposed action and its alternatives.

On April 27, 2007, the DEIS for the Master Site Plan for the Denver Federal Center was released for a formal 60-day public review comment period. GSA is the lead federal agency. The DEIS examined two action alternatives, the Federal Quad Alternative and the Federal Mall Alternative from the Master Site Plan as concepts for the management of the Federal Center for the next 15 to 20 years. A No Action Alternative was also examined.

Comments were received by letter, electronic mail, and verbally at a series of public meetings held in three different locations either on the Federal Center site or in Lakewood, Colorado. A total of 199 letters or comment forms were received from various stakeholders, from which 359 separate comments were identified.

2.1 Public Meeting Comments

A total of 73 completed comment forms were received during the meetings, and additional comments were via the other response tools such as flip charts and posted notes. A summary of the comments follows, broken out by first by proposed action alternative and then by related issue, such as traffic or residential uses.

Federal Quad Alternative vs. Federal Mall Alternative

Of those who indicated a preference:

- Forty-four commenters preferred the Quad Alternative. The reasons cited included the following:
 - Internal focus for Federal operations
 - More space for activities of Federal employees
 - Use/preservation of open space
 - Preservation of wildlife habitat
 - Better transportation flow and access
 - More of a town center feel
 - Better security
 - Retail focal point
 - Less impact on surrounding area
 - Residential area close to light rail
- Eight commenters preferred the Mall alternative. The reasons cited included the following:
 - More visually attractive at ground level
 - Residential plan at Kipling and Alameda

- Grid concept, better flow
- Mixed use
- Ball parks
- Open space near light rail

Of those commenting, four had favorable opinions of both action alternative concepts with another four that did not like either concept. Thirteen commenters were specific about not supporting any alternative.

- What people did not like about the Federal Quad Alternative:
 - Residential area on south side (this comment may have been confused with the Mall concept)
 - RTD possibly not able to drive through Quad
- What people did not like about the Federal Mall Alternative:
 - Too much residential
 - Increased traffic on Kipling and Alameda
 - Fragments open space
 - Not enough security for federal tenants
 - Too much development, feels congested
 - Too far from light rail station
 - Not as visually attractive
 - Won't have future expansion capabilities
 - Choppy layout
 - Northeast gate needs to be moved

Residential Uses

People generally do not like the idea of single-family homes in the plan. People were more amenable to the higher density transit-oriented development near the RTD Intermodal Station. Consideration for low-income housing was mentioned.

Open Space

Preservation and enhancement of the open spaces along with accessible bike/walking paths continue to be a priority.

Traffic/Access

Issues relating to access, traffic flow, and potential traffic congestion on the primary arterials surrounding the Federal Center are a concern. Noise, congestion, compromised air quality, primary arterial upgrades, and access for employees were noted.

Security

Security is a leading concern for federal tenants, and most comments focused on how adequate security could be maintained within either of the plans. Individual building security and assessment of security levels for different agencies was mentioned.

Federal Tenant Issues

The tenant-specific issues that surfaced in the meetings in late 2005 and early 2006 have largely dissipated to blend with those of the general population, relating to more general issues such as traffic vs. building-specific concerns or tenancy costs. Some comments indicate that tenants feel their needs are being absorbed into the greater whole or “glossed over” as in lower levels of security or secure areas.

RTD/Intermodal Station

Connectivity is frequently mentioned. For example, a preference for a shuttle service to transport employees from the station to locations around the Federal Center or to nearby areas such as Belmar was expressed.

St. Anthony Hospital Central

Concerns about noise, flight patterns, and communication interference are mentioned among concerns. Several comments were complimentary about the addition of the hospital.

Wildlife

People continue to express concern about respect for existing wildlife and preservation of habitats.

Environmental Issue

Contamination from previous activities still surfaces as a concern along with recommendations to remove old federal buildings and the atomic reactor.

Other

- **Costs:** Who pays for cost of maintenance? Developers should pay their own way. How will the solar park be funded? What is the plan if there is not enough funding?
- **Utilities:** Will services be provided by the city; how will increased campus population affect utilities?
- **Addresses/Street Names:** Rename Center Avenue 2nd Avenue; don't want mail delivered to the Federal Center

2.2 Agency Comments

Comment letters on the Draft Master Site Plan and the DEIS were received from seven federal, state and local agencies. These letters contained 46 individual comments.

After reviewing the letters, GSA representatives contacted each agency regarding the specific comments within the letter. This clarification of questions and comments enabled GSA to make adjustments to the Master Site Plan or EIS text or provide a response within the comment and responses provided in this volume. In response to discussions with GSA, the U.S. Department of the Interior sent a second letter regarding its concerns in November 2007.

The 46 individual comments sorted into basic categories of traffic, security, and natural resources.

Traffic comments included off-site questions regarding possible loss of service at Lakewood intersection, possible widening of streets surrounding the Federal Center, future off-ramp needs related to proposed open space, and realignment of the gates into the Federal Center.

Suggestions for natural resources included a buffer space along McIntyre Gulch for a riparian corridor as well as preservation of open space. Questions related to air quality focused on travel demands and the potential impacts to local and regional air quality. Noise and vibration concerns focused on future construction.

Multiple security questions examined the topic from a tenant perspective including possible financial impacts associated with relocation or renovations related to building level security. Perimeter security and specific questions about certain buildings/zones and anticipated uses were also raised.

Table 2-1 is a summary listing of comment documents received on the Draft Master Site Plan and DEIS in the order they were received, and Table 2-2 is a cross-reference that lists the page the comment and response may be found in Appendix A.

TABLE 2-1:
 Summary Listing of Comment Documents Received on the Draft Master Site Plan and DEIS

Letter Number	Number of Comments	Name	Rec DEIS	Govt	Individual
001	4	Tom Carlton			X
002	2	David Williams			X
003	2	Ginny Pyles			X
004	6	Carolyn Visall			X
005	2	Jacob Smith			X
006	3	Sharon Mallory			X
007	2	Tim Tochtrop			X
008	2	Jonathan Harris			X
009	6	Jennifer Suggs			X
010	3	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
011	3	Mike Horbatko			X
012	2	Sally Cresci			X
013	3	Nolan Russell			X
014	1	Norman Winterowd			X
015	5	Teresa Sprung			X
016	1	Tim Wolfe			X
017	0	Sue Trujillo			X
018	1	Gary Huber (CDOT)		X	
019	1	Todd W. Leneau			X
020	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
021	1	Leon Pack			X
022	1	Jim Keiffer			X
023	2	Gary Gonzales			X
024	7	Alan Yehle			X
025	3	Lorna Fox			X
026	1	Margaret Turner			X
027	2	Robert McCullough			X
028	1	Linda Dietz			X
029	1	Kenneth Abromovitz	Yes		X
030	2	Troy Loveless			X
031	4	Johann Cohn			X
032	1	Carol Anderson			X
033	2	Doug Stiverson			X
034	3	Katheryn Zeeb			X
035	1	Jim Gurley			X
036	1	Neil Montagne			X
037	2	David Kadavy			X
038	3	Mary Farr			X
039	2	Sherry Evans			X
040	3	Kevin Gregory			X
041	3	David Rothenburger			X
042	3	Sharon Montague			X
043	2	John Fox			X

Letter Number	Number of Comments	Name	Rec DEIS	Govt	Individual
044	3	Melanie Hood			X
045	2	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
046	4	Jo Caldwell			X
047	1	Phill Foster			X
048	2	Ben Barnes			X
049	3	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
050	2	Will Phillips			X
051	3	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
052	1	Peggy Phillips			X
053	1	W.G. Bill Wagner			X
054	2	Bernard (Bernie) Nichler			X
055	2	Pat Wagner			X
056	2	Darlene Wheeler			X
057	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
058	1	Michael Turner			X
059	3	Jane Barnes			X
060	1	David Ruchman			X
061	2	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
062	1	Comment Form (5/17/07)			X
063	2	Leigh Ann Bunetta			X
064	2	Martha Reheis			X
065	1	Randy Schumann			X
066	2	Karen Knight			X
067	3	John Foster			X
068	2	Sandra Temple			X
069	2	Rusty Schuster			X
070	3	Ron Sutton			X
071	2	Jerry Shepard			X
072	2	Nichole Workman			X
073	1	Jack Fordham			X
074	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
075	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
076	2	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
077	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
078	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
079	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
080	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
081	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
082	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
083	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
084	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
085	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
086	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
087	2	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
088	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X

Letter Number	Number of Comments	Name	Rec DEIS	Govt	Individual
089	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
090	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
091	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
092	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
093	2	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
094	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
095	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
096	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
097	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
098	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
099	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
100	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
101	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
102	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
103	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
104	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
105	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
106	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
107	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
108	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
109	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
110	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
111	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
112	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
113	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
114	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
115	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
116	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
117	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
118	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
119	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
120	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
121	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
122	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
123	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
124	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
125	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
126	2	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
127	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
128	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
129	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
130	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
131	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
132	2	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
133	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X

Letter Number	Number of Comments	Name	Rec DEIS	Govt	Individual
134	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
135	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
136	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
137	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
138	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
139	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
140	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
141	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
142	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
143	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
144	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
145	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
146	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
147	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
148	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
149	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
150	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
151	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
152	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
153	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
154	1	Comment Form (5/16/07)			X
155	1	Comment Form (5/17/07)			X
156	1	Comment Form (5/17/07)			X
157	1	Comment Form (5/17/07)			X
158	1	Comment Form (5/17/07)			X
159	1	Comment From (5/17/07)			X
160	1	Comment Form (5/17/07)			X
161	1	Comment From (5/17/07)			X
162	1	Comment Form (5/17/07)			X
163	1	Comment Form (5/17/07)			X
164	1	Comment Form (5/17/07)			X
165	1	Comment Form (5/17/07)			X
166	1	Comment Form (5/17/07)			X
167	1	Comment Form (5/17/07)			X
168	1	Comment Form (5/17/07)			X
169	1	Comment Form (5/17/07)			X
170	1	Comment Form (5/17/07)			X
171	1	Comment Form (5/17/07)			X
172	2	Comment Form (5/17/07)			X
173	1	Colorado Historical Society (M. Wolfe for G. Contiguglia)		X	
174	4	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (T. Carey)		X	
175	1	Lisa Ramirez			X
176	5	Beth Gustas			X

Letter Number	Number of Comments	Name	Rec DEIS	Govt	Individual
177	4	Lisa Haddox			X
178	1	Theresa Edlin			X
179	4	Shirley Oscarson			X
180	2	Unidentified Resident			X
181	5	Lynn Yehle			X
182	3	Jeff McCoy			X
183	1	Dale Harrington			X
184	2	Darlene Harrington			X
185	3	Paige Merriman			X
186	12	U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance	Yes	X	
187	3	Martin T. Winkler			x
188	2	Anita Fincher			X
189	3	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (L Svoboda)	Yes	x	
190	1	Larry Varvel			x
191	2	Doug Hubka			x
192	2	Minnie and Dave Herring			x
193	1	Judith Streit			x
194	2	Roy Knight			x
195	1	Becky Redhorse			x
196	4	Denise Luepschen			x
197	14	State of Colorado, Department of Transportation, Region 6 (G. Huber)		x	
198	1	U.S. Fish and Wildlife (S. Linner)	Yes	x	
199 ^a	10	U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance	Yes	x	
359		TOTAL COMMENTS			

a The U.S. Department of the Interior sent a second letter regarding its concerns in November 2007.

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TABLE 2-2:
 Sorted Index to Comments and Responses

Name	Letter Number	Appendix Page Number
Agency		
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Colorado Department of Transportation, Region 6 (G. Huber, 7/10/07)	197	A-203
Colorado Historical Society (M. Wolfe for G. Contiguglia)	173	A-174
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Knight, Roy	194	A-200
Leneau, Todd W.	019	A-19
Loveless, Troy	030	A-30
Luepschen, Denise	196	A-202
Mallory, Sharon	006	A-6
McCoy, Jeff	182	A-184
McCullough, Robert	027	A-27
Merriman, Paige	185	A-187
Montagne, Neil	036	A-36
Montague, Sharon	042	A-42
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Oscarson, Shirley	179	A-181
Pack, Leon	021	A-21
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Pyles, Ginny	003	A-3
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Ruchman, David	060	A-61
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Schuster, Rusty	069	A-70
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Smith, Jacob	005	A-5
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3.0 New Information

3.1 City of Lakewood Traffic Study

After the Draft Master Site Plan and Environmental Impact Statement was released for public review and comment in April 2007, the City of Lakewood released the *Lakewood West Central Subarea Transportation Study* (City of Lakewood 2007). The study sought to examine the ability of the perimeter street system outside the Federal Center to accommodate future travel associated with projected future development within the site boundaries. The study assessed cumulative effects for all known proposed development on the transportation system outside the boundaries of the Federal Center, including projects such as the St. Anthony Hospital relocation and the Federal Center RTD Intermodal Station.

Even with no changes to the Federal Center, the study determined that one intersection in the AM peak hour and five intersections in the PM peak hour will be over capacity in 2030. By 2030, trips were projected to be six to seven times greater depending on the action alternative implemented at the Federal Center. These findings and recommendations from the study have been examined as new information and incorporated into Chapter 4 of the FEIS.

The complete study is provided in Appendix B of this volume.

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