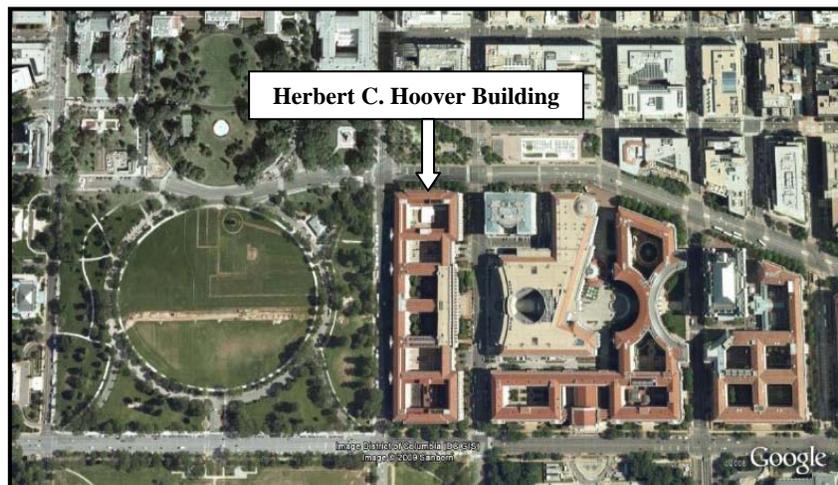


Dear Interested Party:

Please be advised that the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for exterior improvements at the Department of Commerce – Herbert C. Hoover Building, located at 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC. The actions to be analyzed in the EA include relocating the visitor entrance of the National Aquarium to Constitution Avenue; installing new base building utilities; replacing temporary perimeter security with permanent perimeter security which could intrude on public space; and upgrading entrance ramps to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations.



Aerial View of Department of Commerce – Herbert C. Hoover Building

The proposed actions are needed for the following reasons:

- Improvement of site utilities would alleviate problems and risks posed by outdated building systems.
- New entrance ramps would be installed to meet ADA regulations.
- Excavation of the sidewalk and yard for installation of new utilities would need to be coordinated with the construction of the new aquarium entrance and other site work.
- A new entrance to the National Aquarium would improve accessibility and visibility.
- Upgraded security elements are needed to enhance the safety of building occupants.

The EA is being prepared in accordance with Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA requires a Federal agency to provide the public with an opportunity to participate in the process of analyzing the impacts of Federal actions on the human environment. The purpose of this letter is to notify members of the community and other stakeholders of the opportunity to assist GSA in identifying potential impacts that may occur as a result of the proposed Federal action. Your participation in this process is greatly appreciated.

GSA is accepting comments concerning the scope of the EA for 30 calendar days from the date stamped on this letter. GSA has identified the following as preliminary impact issues for analysis in the EA: Historic Resources; Trees; Visual Resources; and Pedestrian Access and Circulation. GSA is also soliciting comments regarding the design and location of the exterior improvements, including perimeter security elements. Comments received during the scoping period will be used to refine alternatives and issues analyzed in the EA.

Pursuant to NEPA regulations, a no action alternative will also be analyzed.

Upon completion, the Draft EA will be made available to the public for review and comment for a period of 30 days. Availability of the Draft EA will be advertised in the Washington Post. The Draft EA will also be made available via the internet at: www.gsa.gov/ncrnepea. The Draft EA is scheduled for availability in Spring 2009.

Written comments concerning the scope should be submitted to:

Ms. Suzanne Hill
U.S. General Services Administration
NCR/NEPA Lead
301 7th Street, SW
Room 7600
Washington, DC 20407
Fax Number: (202) 708-7671
Email: suzanne.hill@gsa.gov

Should you have any questions, please contact Suzanne Hill at (202) 205-5821.

Sincerely,

Bart Bush
Assistant Regional Administrator
Public Buildings Service