



***Draft Environmental Assessment
for the***

**Social Security Administration's
Metro West Facility Relocation**

Responsible Agency:
U.S. General Services Administration
Mid-Atlantic Region
20 North 8th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3191

October 2008

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FOR THE RELOCATION OF THE
SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION'S
METRO WEST FACILITY
Baltimore, Maryland**

LEAD AGENCY: U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)
Contact: Courtenay Hoernemann
20 North Eighth Street, 8th Floor
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107
Email: courtenay.hoernemann@gsa.gov

ABSTRACT: This document constitutes an Environmental Assessment prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. Probable environmental impacts and potential mitigation measures have been identified for alternatives to the site selection and relocation of the Social Security Administration Headquarters operations at the Metro West facility in the City of Baltimore, Maryland to either the Wabash Avenue Site, located at 6100 Wabash Avenue; or the Liberty Village Site, located at 2600 Liberty Heights Avenue. The new facility would house approximately 1,918 personnel and would consist of approximately 538,000 rentable square feet and 1,076 parking spaces.

GSA has identified the Wabash Avenue Site Alternative as the Preferred Alternative for the SSA's Metro West Facility Relocation. This alternative is the site, which GSA believes would best fulfill its statutory mission and responsibilities, giving consideration to economic, environmental, technical and other factors.

Two action alternatives for the proposed relocation of the Social Security Administration's Metro West facility in Baltimore, Maryland are analyzed in this EA: the Wabash Avenue Site and the Liberty Village Site. In addition, as required by NEPA, the No-Action Alternative is studied in detail.

This page left intentionally blank.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action	1
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Background	1
1.3	Purpose of the Action	1
1.4	Need for the Action	1
1.5	Scoping.....	2
1.6	Environmental Assessment Process, Procedures, and Schedule	3
2	Alternatives Including the Proposed Action.....	5
2.1	Description of the Proposed Action.....	5
2.2	Alternatives Considered and Dismissed	5
2.3	Alternatives Given Detailed Consideration	6
2.3.1	Alternative 1 - No-Action Alternative	6
2.3.2	Alternative 2 – Wabash Avenue Site	6
2.3.3	Alternative 3 – Liberty Village Site.....	7
2.3.4	GSA Preferred Alternative	7
3	Affected Environment	11
3.1	Impact Topics Dismissed From Further Analysis	11
3.2	Natural and Physical Environment	18
3.2.1	Water Resources.....	18
3.2.2	Vegetation and Wildlife	18
3.2.3	Air Quality	20
3.2.4	Noise	21
3.3	Social Environment	21

3.3.1	Land Use Planning and Zoning	21
3.3.2	Economy and Employment.....	27
3.3.3	Taxes and Revenue	28
3.3.4	Aesthetics and Visual Resources.....	28
3.4	Cultural Environment.....	29
3.4.1	Historic Resources.....	30
3.5	Infrastructure and Waste Management.....	32
3.5.1	Utilities	32
3.5.2	Transportation	33
3.5.2.1	Principal Roadways	33
3.5.2.2	Traffic Operations Analysis	36
3.5.2.3	Public Transportation.....	41
3.5.3	Waste Management	47
3.5.4	Environmental Contamination.....	48
4	Environmental Consequences and Mitigation	53
4.1	Natural and Physical Environment	53
4.1.1	Water Resources.....	53
4.1.1.1	Alternative 1-No-Action Alternative	53
4.1.1.2	Alternative 2 – Wabash Avenue Site	53
4.1.1.3	Alternative 3 – Liberty Village Site.....	54
4.1.1.4	Mitigation Measures for Water Resources Impacts	55
4.1.2	Vegetation and Wildlife	55
4.1.2.1	Alternative 1 - No-Action Alternative	55
4.1.2.2	Alternative 2 – Wabash Avenue Site	55

4.1.2.3 Alternative 3 – Liberty Village Site	56
4.1.2.4 Mitigation Measures for Vegetation and Wildlife Impacts	56
4.1.3 Air Quality	56
4.1.3.1 Alternative 1 - No-Action Alternative	56
4.1.3.2 Action Alternatives.....	57
4.1.3.3 Mitigation Measures for Air Quality Impacts	58
4.1.4 Noise	58
4.1.4.1 Alternative 1 - No-Action Alternative	58
4.1.4.2 Action Alternatives.....	58
4.1.4.3 Mitigation Measures for Noise Impacts	59
4.2 Social Environment	59
4.2.1 Land Use Planning and Zoning	59
4.2.1.1 Alternative 1 - No-Action Alternative	59
4.2.1.2 Alternative 2 - Wabash Avenue Site	59
4.2.1.3 Alternative 3 – Liberty Village Site	60
4.2.1.4 Mitigation Measures for Land Use & Planning Impacts	60
4.2.2 Economy and Employment.....	60
4.2.2.1 Alternative 1 - No-Action Alternative	60
4.2.2.2 Action Alternatives.....	61
4.2.2.3 Mitigation Measures for Economy and Employment Impacts	61
4.2.3 Taxes and Revenue	62
4.2.3.1 No-Action Alternative	62
4.2.3.2 Alternative 2 - Wabash Avenue Site	62
4.2.3.3 Alternative 3 - Liberty Village Site.....	62

4.2.3.4 Mitigation Measures for Taxes and Revenue Impacts	63
4.2.4 Aesthetics and Visual Resources.....	63
4.2.4.1 Alternative 1 - No-Action Alternative	63
4.2.4.2 Alternative 2 - Wabash Avenue Site	64
4.2.4.3 Alternative 3 – Liberty Village Site.....	64
4.2.4.4 Mitigation Measures for Visual and Aesthetic Impacts.....	64
4.3 Cultural Environment.....	64
4.3.1 Historic Resources.....	65
4.3.1.1 Alternative 1 – No-Action Alternative	65
4.3.1.2 Alternative 2 – Wabash Avenue Site	65
4.3.1.3 Alternative 3 – Liberty Village Site.....	65
4.3.1.4 Mitigation Measures for Historic Resource Impacts	66
4.4 Infrastructure	66
4.4.1.1 Alternative 1 - No-Action Alternative	66
4.4.1.2 Action Alternatives.....	66
4.4.1.3 Mitigation Measures for Utility Impacts.....	66
4.4.2 Transportation	66
4.4.2.1 Alternative 1 - No-Action Alternative	67
4.4.2.2 Alternative 2 - Wabash Avenue Site	73
4.4.2.3 Alternative 3 - Liberty Village Site.....	77
4.4.2.4 Public Transportation Analysis.....	81
4.4.2.5 Mitigation Measures for Transportation Impacts	83
4.4.3 Waste Management	84
4.4.3.1 No-Action Alternative	84

4.4.3.2 Action Alternatives.....	84
4.4.3.3 Mitigation Measures for Waste Management Impacts	85
4.4.4 Environmental Contamination.....	85
4.4.4.1 No-Action Alternative	85
4.4.4.2 Alternative 2: Wabash Avenue Site	85
4.4.4.3 Alternative 3: Liberty Village Site.....	85
4.4.4.4 Mitigation Measures for Environmental Contamination Impacts.....	86
4.5 Adverse Environmental Effects that Cannot be Avoided	86
4.6 Relationship between Short-Term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity	86
4.6.1 Alternative 1 - No-Action Alternative	86
4.6.2 Action Alternatives.....	86
4.7 Irreversible or Irretrievable Commitment of Resources	87
4.7.1 Alternative 1 - No-Action Alternative	87
4.7.2 Action Alternatives.....	87
5 References.....	89
6 List of Preparers.....	93
7 Environmental Assessment Distribution List	95
7.1 Federal Officials and Agencies	95
7.2 State Officials and Agencies.....	95
7.3 Local Officials and Agencies.....	97
Appendix A: Consultation Letters	
Appendix B: Public Scoping Meeting Written Comments	

List of Figures:

Figure 2-1: Site Location Map	8
Figure 2-2: Wabash Avenue Site Map.....	9
Figure 2-3: Liberty Village Site Map	10
Figure 3-1: Water Resources – Wabash Avenue Site	19
Figure 3-2: Planned Land Use – Wabash Avenue Site	23
Figure 3-3: Zoning – Wabash Avenue Site	24
Figure 3-4: Planned Land Use – Liberty Village Site.....	25
Figure 3-5: Zoning – Liberty Village Site.....	26
Figure 3-6: Roadway Network – Wabash Avenue Site	34
Figure 3-7: Roadway Network – Liberty Village Site.....	35
Figure 3-8: Existing AM & PM Peak Hour Traffic Volumes – Wabash Avenue Site	38
Figure 3-9: Existing AM & PM Peak Hour Traffic Volumes – Liberty Village Site.....	39
Figure 3-10: Metro Subway System	42
Figure 3-11: MARC System Map	43
Figure 3-12: Light Rail Map	45
Figure 3-13: Bus Routes in the Vicinity of the Wabash Avenue Site	16
Figure 3-14: Bus Routes in the Vicinity of the Liberty Village Site.....	47
Figure 4-1: No-Action Alternative Traffic Volume, Lane Geometry, and LOS – Wabash Avenue Site	71
Figure 4-2: No-Action Alternative Traffic Volume, Lane Geometry, and LOS – Liberty Village Site	72
Figure 4-3: Site Trip Distribution and Assignment – Wabash Avenue Site	75
Figure 4-4: Traffic Volume, Lane Geometry, and LOS – Wabash Avenue Site	76
Figure 4-5: Site Trip Distribution and Assignment – Liberty Village Site	79
Figure 4-6: Traffic Volume, Lane Geometry, and LOS – Liberty Village Site	82

List of Tables:

Table 3-1: Soil Classifications on the Wabash Avenue Site	12
Table 3-2: Soil Classifications on the Liberty Village Site	12
Table 3-3: 2000 Census Data (Employment).....	27
Table 3-4: Historic Structures Within One Mile of the Liberty Village Site	31
Table 3-5: Existing LOS – Wabash Avenue Site	40
Table 3-6: Existing LOS – Liberty Village Site	40
Table 4-1: Approved Background Developments – Wabash Avenue Site.....	67
Table 4-2: No-Action Alternative – Wabash Avenue Site	68
Table 4-3: Approved Background Developments – Liberty Village Site	69
Table 4-4: No-Action Alternative – Liberty Village Site.....	70
Table 4-5: Trip Generation – Wabash Avenue Site	73
Table 4-6: LOS at Intersections Serving the Wabash Avenue Site	74
Table 4-7: Trip Generation – Liberty Village Site	77
Table 4-8: LOS at Intersections Serving the Liberty Village Site80

This page intentionally left blank.
