



*Final 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

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GSA

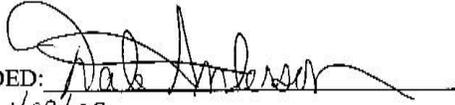
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**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR
CONSTRUCTION OF THE
SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION'S
METRO WEST FACILITY RELOCATION**

FINDING

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq. (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508), GSA Order ADM 1095.1F: Environmental Considerations in Decision Making, and the GSA PBS NEPA Desk Guide, I find that the project described in the Environmental Assessment (EA) dated December 2008, attached hereto and made a part hereof, is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the human environment. Therefore, no Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared.

RECOMMENDED: 

DATE: 1/29/09

Dale Anderson
Acting Assistant Regional Administrator, Public Buildings Service
Mid-Atlantic Region

APPROVED: 

DATE: 1/30/09

Linda C. Chero
Acting Regional Administrator
Mid-Atlantic Region

The FONSI will become final 15 days after publication of its Notice of Availability in local newspapers provided no information leading to a contrary finding is received or comes to light during the 15-day review period.

BASIS FOR FINDING

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzing the environmental effects from the relocation of the Social Security Administration (SSA) 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 EA was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq. (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508), GSA Order ADM 1095.1F: Environmental Considerations in Decision Making, and the Public Buildings Service NEPA Desk Guide. The EA documents the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts for the build alternatives.

The environmental issues addressed in the EA were identified through scoping; through consultations with Federal, State, and City Agencies; and by the project team, which includes GSA, and contractor personnel who have had experience with projects of similar scope.

The EA is incorporated by reference into this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

I. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide space for the SSA to more efficiently and effectively meet the needs of the SSA as well as provide SSA flexibility in their long-term space planning. Recent studies have shown that many of the Metro West systems are functionally obsolete and that a complete renovation would be cost prohibitive and would not fully meet the changing needs of the SSA. The building systems are difficult and costly to maintain and in many cases have reached the end of their useful life. In addition, the facility includes a sky bridge located over a major highway and lacks security setbacks from surrounding streets, which pose security risks to building occupants.

Furthermore, over the past five years the SSA has experienced improvements in automation that enabled the agency to process increasingly large workloads more efficiently with fewer employees. Due to these improvements, the Metro West facility, which was designed to accommodate over 5,000 people, currently houses 1,987 employees.

To meet the needs of the SSA, space is required that will efficiently and effectively support the agency's mission, as well as provide flexibility in long-term space planning. Part of this efficiency can be obtained by co-locating the Teleservices division with the Earnings and Wages division in a new facility, and relocating the Disability division into existing leased space at Woodlawn.

II. DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

Three alternatives were analyzed in detail in the EA: the No-Action Alternative and two Build Alternatives.

ALTERNATIVE 1 – NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the No-Action Alternative, GSA would not utilize the sites studied in the EA for the proposed relocation of the Metro West facility. The SSA Headquarters would continue to use the Metro West facility located at 300 North Greene Street in Baltimore, Maryland and a new facility would not be constructed on the Wabash Avenue or Liberty Village Sites.

ALTERNATIVE 2 – WABASH AVENUE SITE

Under Alternative 2, the Metro West facility would be relocated to the Wabash Avenue Site. The Wabash Avenue Site consists of approximately 15 acres in the City of Baltimore, Maryland. The site contains two asphalt-paved parking lots and one building at the northwestern corner housing the Maryland Transit Authority (MTA) Police Training Facility.

ALTERNATIVE 3 – LIBERTY VILLAGE SITE

Under Alternative 3, the Metro West facility would be relocated to the Liberty Village Site. The Liberty Village Site is approximately 20 acres located in the City of Baltimore, Maryland. The site consists of three parcels associated with the Bon Secours Liberty Village Hospital Campus.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

An impact analysis of all alternatives is contained in Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences, of the EA.

Alternative 2 – Wabash Avenue Site is the selected alternative and best meets GSA's and the SSA's long-range needs. No significant impacts to the human, natural, or cultural environment would occur under the selected alternative. Please refer to Chapter 4 of the attached EA for more specific information on the impacts.

Mitigation required for the project is limited to improvements to roadway intersections that would operate at unacceptable conditions after the relocation of SSA employees, therefore, creating a significant impact. In order to reduce the impact below the significance threshold, geometric/signal timing improvements will be needed to mitigate these impacts. These improvements were determined from a traffic impact study as part of the EA analysis:

- Wabash Avenue/Vincennes Avenue/Patterson Avenue: Provide an exclusive right-turn lane from Patterson Avenue to Wabash Avenue. The right turn movement would be free

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flow. With this improvement, this intersection is expected to operate at LOS D in the AM Peak and LOS E in the PM Peak.

- Liberty Road/Patterson Avenue: Modify the signal timing at this intersection such that the westbound right turn movement from Patterson Avenue operates under a permitted/overlap phasing. With this improvement, this intersection is expected to operate at LOS C in the AM Peak and LOS D in the PM Peak.
- Site Access/Patterson Avenue: This intersection may meet the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) signal warrants. Volumes at this intersection will be monitored and a signal warrant study would be conducted to see if it meets the criteria to warrant a traffic signal at this intersection once the SSA employees have moved. As a signalized intersection, this intersection is expected to operate at LOS B in the AM Peak and LOS C in the PM Peak.

As part of any development plans, GSA or the developer will coordinate with the City of Baltimore with regards to traffic and transportation systems. In addition, development plans will promote the important sidewalk and pedestrian connectivity to the proposed site from both the adjoining roads and metro station.

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

LEAD AGENCY: U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)
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ABSTRACT: This document constitutes an Environmental Assessment (EA) 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 (SSA) 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 that GSA believes would best fulfill its statutory mission and responsibilities, considering economic, environmental, technical, and other factors.

Two action alternatives for the proposed relocation of the SSA'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.

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