

## **RECORD OF DECISION**

### **FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE CHET HOLIFIELD FEDERAL BUILDING TENANT RELOCATION LAGUNA NIGUEL, CALIFORNIA**

#### **ACTION**

This Record of Decision (ROD) documents the decision related to project alternatives considered for the Chet Holifield Federal Building (CHFb) Tenant Relocation (the Project) in Laguna Niguel, CA. This ROD documents the specific components and rationale of GSA's decision. This decision is based on information and analyses contained in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) issued in March 2021 (which can be found at <http://www.gsa.gov/ChetHNEPA>), as well as comments received during the public comment period for the EIS. In accordance with the provisions outlined in the FEIS, GSA selects the Preferred Alternative, identified in the FEIS as the Lease Relocation Alternative that would relocate all tenants of the CHFb to Class A lease space primarily within Orange County, CA. The entire CHFb site will then be reported as excess and disposed of in accordance with Federal policy. The Preferred Alternative is also the Environmentally Preferred Alternative.

#### **PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT**

The CHFb is located in Laguna Niguel, CA, a community located in Orange County between Los Angeles and San Diego, and approximately 4 miles from the Pacific coastline. The property is owned by GSA and the building is home to a variety of Federal agency tenants with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) serving as the largest tenant.

The Project's purpose is to accommodate the long-term office space requirements for the current tenants located at the CHFb that would meet applicable building, accessibility, and security standards. The purpose is also to make such accommodations primarily within the Orange County market in a cost-effective manner that would minimize personnel relocations and disruptions to the Federal tenants and their agency missions. The Project would also dispose of any excess Federal property within the 92-acre CHFb site.

The Project is needed because the current working space does not meet GSA's current Federal building, accessibility, and security standards. The Project is also needed to address the Public Buildings Reform Board (PBRB) recommendations under P.L. 114-287, the Federal Assets Sale & Transfer Act of 2016 (FASTA) which made a recommendation of disposal of the CHFb.

#### **PROJECT ALTERNATIVES EVALUATED IN THE FINAL EIS**

The Project entails relocation of current tenants located at the CHFb to long-term office space primarily within the Orange County market that would meet applicable building code, accessibility, and security standards, and disposal of some or all of the CHFb site. The alternatives described and evaluated in the FEIS include the Preferred (Lease Relocation), the Hybrid Lease/Construction, and the No Action Alternatives. Under all of the alternatives evaluated, any future disposal action, including any further NEPA analysis can be tiered from this EIS and ROD in accordance with CEQ 40 CFR 1501.11.

## **Hybrid Lease/Construction Alternative (Alternative 1)**

The Hybrid Lease/Construction Alternative would include construction of a new Federal building on a portion of the existing 92-acre site to house the USCIS (approximately 2,000 staff) while relocating all other tenants into existing Class A lease space primarily within Orange County. The current building would be vacated by current tenants, and the rest of the property not used for construction of the new Federal building would be reported as excess in accordance with Federal policy and disposed of.

The new building concept would be approximately 380,000 square feet across four levels, and would include a parking lot, day care facility, cafeteria, guard booths, and loading dock. The overall footprint for this new space would encompass 27.15 acres of the existing 92-acre site. The facility would be designed with Anti-Terrorism Force Protection (ATFP) measures for proper security. In addition, the new Federal building would have at a minimum Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Gold certification, but may achieve up to Platinum certification, which is the highest LEED® certification. Technologically sound and proven methods would be implemented to meet the applicable energy and sustainability requirements of the LEED® certification process and to minimize energy use, water use, and waste generation.

### ***Future Redevelopment (Under Alternative 1)***

Any future use of the CHF B following disposal is not a part of GSA's Proposed Action; however, considering the large size and desirable location of the parcel, it is foreseeable that some level of redevelopment or reuse of the site is likely to occur following disposal. Therefore, a range of potential future reuse scenarios of the site are considered in the FEIS analysis as indirect impacts, including renovation of the existing CHF B or demolition of the existing CHF B and construction of new mixed-use space. Because a developer is not known at this time, GSA is not aware of any detailed plan for redevelopment of the property. This includes unknown density and composition of future commercial, residential, or mixed-use development which may occur.

If the property does not remain in Federal ownership after going through the Federal disposal process, future use of the portion of the site that is disposed (i.e., 64.85 acres) would be the responsibility of the new owner and impacted by the City of Laguna Niguel rezoning process (as applicable). The City of Laguna Niguel may require the new owner to complete the appropriate level of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation, and obtain certain land use approvals for any proposed development or reuse.

If the property remains in Federal ownership, additional NEPA analysis may be required by a future Federal proponent.

## **Preferred Alternative - Lease Relocation Alternative (Alternative 2)**

Under the Lease Relocation Alternative, all tenants would relocate to existing Class A lease space primarily within Orange County. USCIS would likely be relocated to Irvine, Santa Ana, or Anaheim, where greater office space availability exists to accommodate the number of staff and the agency's specific security requirements. The entire CHF B site would be reported as excess in accordance with Federal policy and disposed of.

### ***Future Redevelopment (Under Alternative 2)***

Future development of the existing parcel under the Lease Relocation Alternative would be similar to Alternative 1 but include development of the entire 92-acre site. Similar to Alternative 1, GSA is not aware of any detailed plan for redevelopment of the property, but the City of Laguna Niguel would likely require the future owner to complete the appropriate level of CEQA documentation if the property does

not remain in Federal ownership after going through the Federal disposal process. If the property remains in Federal ownership, additional NEPA analysis may be required by a future Federal proponent.

### **No Action Alternative**

The No Action Alternative assumes that tenants would remain within the existing CHFB and no tenant relocation, or relocation-related construction, would occur. Capital Funding is not sufficient to correct all of the deficiencies. Minor repairs would occur as needed and maintenance and operation of the existing facilities would continue. However, this alternative would not meet the basic requirements of the Government, as tenants would continue to occupy office space that does not meet applicable building, accessibility, and security standards.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

Resources analyzed in the FEIS included cultural resources; air quality and greenhouse gas emissions; socioeconomics; geology, seismicity, and soils; land use; visual resources and aesthetics; water resources; biological resources; transportation and traffic; hazardous waste and materials; noise; environmental justice and protection of children's health and safety; and utilities and infrastructure. Impacts were assessed both in the context of GSA tenant relocation and site disposal under Alternatives 1 and 2; future redevelopment of the portion of the CHFB property disposed by GSA under both Alternatives 1 and 2 was considered for indirect impacts. As discussed throughout the FEIS for each resource, follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses may be required (depending on who acquires the site) for any proposed redevelopment plans presented by a future developer. This ROD incorporates by reference Table 2-2 in the FEIS for a summary of environmental consequences for each alternative. Chapter 3 of the FEIS provides additional detailed analysis.

### **AVOIDANCE, MINIMIZATION, AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

GSA's planning with respect to compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act is being addressed through the Section 106 process. This process is proceeding and would address historical mitigation measures, if required, that GSA would adopt. Approval of this ROD adopts any forthcoming mitigation measures that may result from the Section 106 process. Implementation of the Project cannot occur until all regulatory processes are complete, including the Section 106 process.

No other avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures were identified in the EIS for the Preferred Alternative.

### **DECISION**

It is GSA's decision to select the Preferred Alternative.

### **ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE**

The Environmentally Preferable Alternative is the alternative that best promotes the national environmental policy expressed within NEPA. In general, this refers to the alternative that will result in the least damage to the environment and best protects the natural and cultural resources. Based on the FEIS, the Preferred Alternative has been determined to be the Environmentally Preferable Alternative due to the construction and operational effects of the Project. GSA selected the Preferred Alternative because it will result in the fewest substantial, adverse environmental consequences.

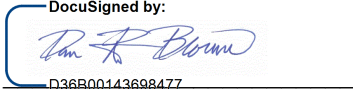
### **RATIONALE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**

GSA's decision to select the Preferred Alternative is based on balancing the likely adverse impacts to the Laguna Niguel community with the need to relocate the existing CHFB tenants. This decision takes into account resource concerns, the various missions of CHFB tenant organizations, and public interests, as analyzed in the FEIS. GSA reached this decision after careful consideration of the environmental analysis of the two leasing alternatives, and the No Action Alternative, in concert with the needs of the Federal Government and the recommendation, made by the PBRB under P.L. 114-287, FASTA, to dispose of the CHFB.

The following GSA mission considerations were weighed in reaching this decision:

- Providing office space for CHFB tenants that meets GSA's current building, accessibility, and security standards.
- Meeting long-term relocated Federal agency office requirements primarily within the Orange County, California market, requiring minimal personnel relocation, or general disruption to Federal tenants and their agency missions.

Record of Decision Approval:

Signature:	 D36B00143698477...	9/22/2021
	Dan R. Brown Regional Commissioner Public Buildings Service (9P) General Services Administration	Date