



U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)

## **GSA Order: Floodplain Management**

PBS 1095.8B

The Office of Engineering, Engineering Services Division  
oaeceneng@gsa.gov

### **Purpose:**

This Order establishes policy and assigns responsibility within the General Services Administration (GSA) concerning GSA actions that may affect floodplains by issuing the attached PBS Floodplain Management Desk Guide, November 2025.

### **Background:**

Flooding can severely damage federally owned and leased structures and facilities, resulting in costs and impacts to agency mission and continuity of operations. Floodplain compliance is a component of responsible property management that can reduce the risk of property loss and protect federal agency resources. Executive Order (E.O.) 11988, "Floodplain Management" (May 24, 1977), requires Federal agencies to take action to reduce the risk of flood loss and to avoid, to the extent possible, the long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains and the direct or indirect support of floodplain development wherever there is a practicable alternative.

### **Applicability:**

This Order and the companion Desk Guide apply to all real property management and operation activities for federal buildings under GSA's jurisdiction, custody, or control, including all buildings delegated to other federal agencies by the GSA Administrator. This Order and Desk Guide applies to all projects as of the effective date.

This Order applies to all GSA employees and contractors as they perform their duties, with the following exception:

The Office of Inspector General (OIG), given its independence under the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008 (5 U.S.C. §§ 401-424).

### **Cancellation:**

This Order cancels PBS 1095.8A, Floodplain Management, and the companion PBS Desk Guide for Floodplain Management issued in November 2023.

### **Summary of Changes:**

1. To provide updated floodplain management guidance in accordance with E.O. 14148 (January 20, 2025), Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions, that revoked E.O. 14030 (May 20, 2021), thereby leaving E.O. 11988 (May 24, 1977), Floodplain Management, as the primary source of direction on floodplain management for Federal agencies.
2. The updated Desk Guide maintains two subsets of action: Actions; and Specific Actions and Certain Disposal Actions.
3. The updated Desk Guide removes the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) for federally funded projects.

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

1. The Office of Engineering, the Chief Architect, is responsible for the program office that maintains and updates this floodplain policy.
2. Implementation of this policy is a shared responsibility among PBS offices who are responsible for incorporating applicable elements into operations, planning activities, management decisions, and policy development.
3. The following offices or teams have responsibility for executing the policy described in this Order: Office of Engineering (PA); Office of Project and Project Management (PX); Office of Facilities Management (PM); Office of Acquisition Management (PQ); Office of Portfolio Management (PT); Office of Leasing (PR).

### **Signature**

/S/ \_\_\_\_\_  
Andrew Heller  
Acting Commissioner  
Public Buildings Service

11/26/2025 \_\_\_\_\_  
Date



U.S. General Services Administration



# PBS FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT DESK GUIDE

COMPANION TO GSA ORDER PBS 1095.8B

PBS OFFICE OF ENGINEERING

November 2025

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**1. SUMMARY OF REVISIONS**

The previous version of this Public Buildings Service (PBS) Desk Guide for Floodplain Management (November 2023) was issued in accordance with Executive Order (E.O.) 14030, “Climate-Related Financial Risk” (May 20, 2021), which revoked E.O. 13807, “Establishing Discipline and Accountability in the Environmental Review and Permitting Process for Infrastructure Projects” (August 15, 2017), and reinstated E.O. 13690, “Establishing a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard and a Process for Further Soliciting and Considering Stakeholder Input” (January 30, 2015). The purpose of this revision is to provide updated floodplain management guidance in accordance with E.O. 14148, “Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions” (January 20, 2025), that revoked E.O. 14030 (May 20, 2021), thereby leaving E.O. 11988, “Floodplain Management” (May 24, 1977), as the primary source of direction on floodplain management for federal agencies. This revision and policy are being maintained by the PBS Office of Engineering (OE).

This revised Floodplain Management Desk Guide continues to require the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) to evaluate potential impacts of any actions taken in a floodplain, and to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts associated with occupancy, modification, or development in floodplains. The significant revisions to GSA’s floodplain management compliance requirements, established through the Floodplain Management Order (PBS 1095.8B) and this Desk Guide, are summarized in the table below. It describes the two subsets of actions and the associated floodplain standard and decision-making process that must be applied to each.

<b>Table 1.0 – Summary of The Two Subsets of Actions</b>	
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Specific Actions and Certain Disposal Actions</b>
See Section 4; Appendix A	See Section 5; Appendix B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal activities and programs affecting land use, that are federally funded or financed, including but no limited to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ New construction and lease construction.</li> <li>○ Site acquisition tied with improvements.</li> <li>○ Substantial improvements.</li> <li>○ Repair and alteration project.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GSA National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Automatic Categorical Exclusions (CATEX)<sup>1</sup>, including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lease actions (extensions, renewals, or succeeding leases).</li> <li>○ Small projects (repair and alteration projects below the prospectus threshold).</li> <li>○ Operations and maintenance.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Certain Disposal Actions.</li> </ul>
Use the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-percent annual chance floodplain<sup>2</sup> &amp; elevation for non-critical actions; or</li> <li>• 0.2-percent annual chance floodplain<sup>3</sup> &amp; elevation for critical actions.</li> </ul>	Use the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-percent annual chance floodplain &amp; elevation for non-critical actions; or</li> <li>• 0.2-percent annual chance floodplain &amp; elevation for critical actions.</li> </ul>
8-Steps	4-Steps

<sup>1</sup> Refer to the latest GSA PBS NEPA Desk Guide for the most up-to-date list of automatic CATEXs.

<sup>2</sup> The 1% annual chance floodplain, also known as the 100-year floodplain.

<sup>3</sup> The 0.2% annual chance floodplain, also known as the 500-year floodplain.

### 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Floodplain Management Desk Guide is to provide updated floodplain management guidance, in accordance with E.O. 11988 (May 24, 1977), in compliance with E.O. 14148 (January 20, 2025). This Desk Guide provides procedures and guidance to implement GSA Order PBS 1095.8B, Floodplain Management. This Desk Guide applies to structures and facilities under GSA jurisdiction, custody, or control, including structures and facilities that have been delegated to other federal agencies by the GSA Administrator, and structures and facilities leased by GSA.

### 3. BACKGROUND ON FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT POLICY

Flooding can severely damage federally owned and leased structures and facilities, resulting in costs and impacts to agency mission and continuity of operations. Floodplain compliance is a component of responsible property management that can reduce the risk of property loss and protect federal agency resources. E.O. 11988 (May 24, 1977) require federal agencies to take action to reduce the risk of flood loss and to avoid, to the extent possible, the long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains and the direct or indirect support of floodplain development wherever there is a practicable alternative.

The Office of Facilities Management (OFM) developed the Floodplain Management Order and companion Desk Guide, implemented on December 22, 2016 (PBS 1095.7). On August 15, 2017, E.O. 13690 (January 30, 2015) was revoked by E.O. 13807. As a result, PBS canceled the December 22, 2016, Desk Guide and The Office of Portfolio Management and Customer Engagement (PMCE) issued a revised order and Desk Guide in September of 2019 (PBS 1095.8 Floodplain Management Order and the Floodplain Management Desk Guide).

On May 20, 2021, E.O. 14030 reinstated E.O. 13690 (January 30, 2015). As a result, PBS canceled its previous Desk Guide, and the Office of Architecture and Engineering issued a revised order and Desk Guide in November 2023 (PBS 1095.8A Floodplain Management Order and the Floodplain Management Desk Guide).

On January 20, 2025, E.O. 14148 revoked E.O. 14030 (May 20, 2021). To comply with E.O. 14148, PBS issued Floodplain Management Order 1095.8B and this companion Desk Guide on November 26, 2025.

#### 3.1 DISTINCTION BETWEEN SUBSETS OF ACTIONS

This Desk Guide makes a distinction between ‘Actions’ and ‘Specific Actions and Certain Disposal Actions’ and the requirements and approaches that must be applied for each.

##### 3.1.1 ACTIONS

Actions may be any of the following federal activities: acquiring, managing, and disposing of federal lands and structures and facilities; providing federally undertaken, financed, or assisted construction and improvements; and conducting federal activities and programs affecting land use, including but not limited to water and related land resources planning, regulating, and licensing activities. The floodplain must be established by one of the following approaches:

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- a) 1-percent annual chance floodplain for non-critical actions; or
- b) 0.2-percent annual chance floodplain for critical actions.

### **3.1.2 SPECIFIC ACTIONS AND CERTAIN DISPOSAL ACTIONS**

A shortened floodplain decision-making process may be applied to Specific Actions and Certain Disposal Actions, further described in Section 5, which GSA has determined will likely have insignificant developmental impacts on floodplains. The floodplain for Specific Actions and Certain Disposal Actions is determined by using the:

- a) 1-percent annual chance floodplain for non-critical actions; or
- b) 0.2-percent annual chance floodplain for critical actions.

### **3.2 CRITICAL ACTIONS**

Federal agencies must use higher standards when they determine their action to be critical. This Desk Guide explains how to determine whether an action is 'critical.' The minimum floodplain of concern for critical actions is the area subject to the inundation from the 0.2-percent annual chance floodplain.

### **3.3 NATURAL AND BENEFICIAL FLOODPLAIN VALUES**

E.O. 11988 requires that the decision-making by federal agencies clearly recognizes that floodplains have unique and significant public values. Consideration must be given, therefore, to natural and beneficial floodplain values and to the public benefit to be derived from their restoration or preservation.

### **3.4 EXCEPTIONS**

The Guidelines for Implementing E.O. 11988 allow for limited exceptions, including actions taken in support of national security, further described in Section 6.

## **4. DECISION-MAKING PROCESS FOR ACTIONS**

The 8-Step decision-making process outlined in Appendix A is required for proposed Actions. The requirements in this decision-making process should be coordinated with NEPA studies and conducted as part of the NEPA review process, where possible.

### **4.1 STEP 1 - DETERMINE IF THE PROPOSED ACTION IS IN A FLOODPLAIN**

First, determine if the proposed Action is a critical action. The critical action determination is made by the federal customer agency based on mission requirements. Refer to Appendix C. If the Action is not a critical action, then use the 1-percent annual chance floodplain. If the action is a critical action, then use the 0.2-percent annual chance floodplain.

- 1) To determine if the proposed Action is located in a floodplain, the data sources that may be used include:

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- a) The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Map Service Center (MSC) allows a user to view and download preliminary, effective and historic Flood Insurance Study (FIS), Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), and other data.<sup>4</sup>
  - b) The Multi-Asset Planning (MAP) Tool is a GSA platform that allows users to visualize geographic data and perform basic spatial analyses, combining information about the PBS inventory with third-party data such as FEMA floodplains.
  - c) FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) Viewer.<sup>5</sup>
  - d) GSA may use any flood hazard related mapping that is readily available and is from a reputable, professional source. This can include, but is not limited to: FEMA mapping, local jurisdictional mapping (such as a State Flood Tool website), the USGS's elevation tool, other federal agencies (NOAA, USACE, USDA, USDOT...etc.), as well as proprietary services such as Flood Insights.
  - e) GSA could have its own flood mapping and/or hazard assessment conducted by a professional engineer. Floodplains in many rural or developed areas may not have been studied in detail or may have outdated flood hazard studies that are more than 15 years old. Flood hazard data obtained from independent sources must meet the criteria of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) mapping standards.<sup>6</sup>
- 2) If the proposed Action is located within a floodplain but a practicable alternative exists, as identified through an internal review, that places the proposed Action outside of a floodplain, then that practicable alternative should normally be selected. If the proposed Action is located in the floodplain,<sup>7</sup> as described below, then GSA must proceed with the 8-Step decision-making process to identify practicable alternatives.
    - a) 1-percent annual chance floodplain for Non-critical Actions. The minimum standard for non-critical actions is the 1-percent annual chance flood elevation and corresponding horizontal floodplain (1-percent annual chance floodplain). If an Action is located in a 1-percent annual chance floodplain, proceed to Step 2.
    - b) 0.2-percent annual chance floodplain for Critical Actions. The minimum standard for critical actions is the 0.2-percent annual chance flood elevation and corresponding horizontal floodplain. If a critical action is located in a 1- or 0.2-percent annual chance floodplain, proceed to Step 2.
  - 3) If the proposed Action is located outside of the floodplain, but may stimulate development in a floodplain, then proceed to Step 4. Conversely, if the proposed Action is located outside of the floodplain and the Action will not stimulate development in a floodplain, then such an Action requires no further analysis and may be implemented.

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<sup>4</sup> [FEMA Map Service Center](#)

<sup>5</sup> [FEMA NFHL Viewer](#)

<sup>6</sup> [FEMA Guidelines & Standards](#)

<sup>7</sup> Generally, where the existing grade or lowest adjacent grade (pre-construction or pre-damage disturbance) touching the structure or facility is below the flood elevation.

### 4.2 STEP 2 - INVOLVE PUBLIC IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESS (PUBLIC REVIEW)

Consider implementing public engagement approaches that most effectively reach the community in question, which may include local newspapers, stakeholder letters, email, press releases, social media sites, GSA.gov project website, and other outlets, as appropriate. If completing an EA or EIS, include floodplain notice during scoping announcement or Draft EA/EIS public comment period. Refer to Appendix F, Sample Public Notice for Actions.

### 4.3 STEP 3 - IDENTIFY AND EVALUATE PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVES TO LOCATING IN THE FLOODPLAIN

GSA should use input from public comments and internal discussions to determine practicable alternatives. Where possible, develop alternatives using nature-based approaches. Practicable alternatives are those that are available to GSA and capable of being implemented within existing constraints such as cost, existing technology, and logistics, considering pertinent natural (topography, habitat, hazards, etc.), social (aesthetics, historic and cultural values, land use patterns, etc.), economic (cost of space, construction, services, relocation, etc.), and legal (deeds, leases, etc.) factors. GSA should consult with the federal customer agency to determine what is practicable for a given project considering impacts to schedule, budget and environment. Identify and evaluate practicable alternatives, including, when possible:

- 1) Alternative actions outside of the floodplain. For alternatives located outside of the floodplain that may stimulate floodplain development, GSA should proceed with the decision-making process to identify these impacts and to minimize ensuing harm to the floodplain if the Action is taken as proposed.
- 2) Alternative actions which would perform the intended function but would minimize harm to or within the floodplain. GSA should proceed with the decision-making process to identify impacts if the alternative actions are in the floodplain.
- 3) Alternative of taking “no action.”

### 4.4 STEP 4 - IDENTIFY ADVERSE AND BENEFICIAL IMPACTS

Identify adverse and beneficial impacts, including stimulating floodplain development, which may result from the project. Analyze the following factors:

- 1) Natural environment (water resources, hydrology, topography, habitat);
- 2) Social concerns (visual quality/aesthetics, historic and cultural values, land use patterns);
- 3) Economic aspects (costs of construction, transportation and relocation, natural features and ecosystem processes); and
- 4) Legal considerations (deeds, leases).

This should be included as part of any NEPA analysis.

### 4.5 STEP 5 - MITIGATE ADVERSE IMPACTS

Minimize the impacts identified, including the restoration and preservation of the beneficial values served by floodplains and wetlands. The PBS Core Building Standards (CBS) Memorandum (February 2025) lists the laws, E.O.s, codes, regulations, and standards for use by contracting officers, project teams, and others involved with developing contract documents for design, construction, renovation, or maintenance projects. They summarize key aspects of laws and regulations that are of particular relevance to projects, such as new buildings, repairs and alterations, modernizations, lease construction buildings with government option to purchase, and work in historic structures for PBS.

GSA will design and construct federal structures and facilities in accordance with the latest editions of the International Building Code (IBC), the American Society of Civil Engineers Standard 24, Flood Resistant Design and Construction (ASCE 24), and the American Society of Civil Engineers Standard 7, Minimum Design Loads and Associated Criteria for Buildings and Other Structures (ASCE 7), including its published supplements. These standards are recognized by FEMA as meeting or exceeding NFIP requirements. If these standards are demonstrably inappropriate for a given type of structure or facility, or if the local jurisdiction has adopted a higher standard, GSA will determine whether following the community's standard is appropriate or is demonstrably inappropriate for the action.

The building and site amenities must be brought up to floodplain management standards which incorporate the expected flood risk over the intended service life of the federal asset. For building and site amenities which are not in a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), GSA recognizes the change in intensity, duration, frequency and geographic distribution of extreme precipitation and follows the ASCE 24 due diligence guidance in site analysis.

### 4.6 STEP 6 - RE-EVALUATE ALTERNATIVES

Use any new information obtained from earlier steps to determine if the proposed Action is still practicable.

### 4.7 STEP 7 - ANNOUNCE AND EXPLAIN DECISION TO THE PUBLIC (NOTICE)

Consider implementing public engagement approaches that most effectively reach the community in question, which may include local newspapers, stakeholder letters, email, press releases, social media sites, GSA.gov project website, and other outlets, as appropriate.

- 1) If an EA/EIS was completed, floodplain compliance should be included in the FONSI/ROD. Signatures/concurrences for FONSI/RODs should be in accordance with the most recent GSA PBS Delegations of Authority Manual.
- 2) If an EA/EIS was not completed, a Justification for No Practicable Alternatives and Floodplain Memorandum for the record must be approved and saved to the project file. The Justification for No Practicable Alternatives outlines the process GSA uses to identify and evaluate sites and why these sites are not practicable. The NEPA Program Manager supports the project team (for example, Realty Specialist or Project Manager) with preparing the Justification for No Practicable Alternatives. GSA may request concurrence from the customer agency when preparing the Justification for No Practicable Alternatives. The Floodplain Memorandum is prepared by the NEPA Program Manager and is approved by the PBS Commissioner (or as delegated to the Assistant Commissioner). Refer to Appendix E, Sample Justification for No Practicable Alternatives, and Appendix D, Sample Floodplain Memorandum.

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If a floodplain site is the only practicable alternative, document the analysis with a floodplain map and narrative, leading to this conclusion. In the documented analysis, include discussion on the consideration of evacuation routes and evacuation plans for the proposed Action.

### **4.8 STEP 8 - IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSED ACTION**

Implement the proposed Action with appropriate mitigation and ensure mitigation measures are fully implemented.

GSA will design and construct federal structures and facilities in accordance with the latest editions of IBC, ASCE 24, and ASCE 7, including its published supplements. These standards are recognized by FEMA as meeting or exceeding NFIP requirements. If these standards are demonstrably inappropriate for a given type of structure or facility, or if the local jurisdiction has adopted a higher standard, GSA will determine whether following the community's standard is appropriate or is demonstrably inappropriate for the action.

## **5. SHORTENED DECISION-MAKING PROCESS FOR SPECIFIC ACTIONS AND CERTAIN DISPOSAL ACTIONS**

GSA's PBS NEPA Desk Guide identifies certain actions that are eligible for treatment as automatic CATEXs. These actions, as a matter of NEPA, are those that do not have a significant effect on the human environment. As a matter of floodplain analysis (as described in the Implementing Guidelines<sup>8</sup>), GSA has determined that these same actions will likely have insignificant developmental impacts on floodplains. To comply with E.O. 11988 actions of insignificant impact or actions of a short duration may allow for an altered or shortened decision-making process. Automatic CATEX actions are similarly minor in nature and are not expected to cause development within a floodplain.

The majority of real property disposal actions (Certain Disposal Actions) taken by GSA can follow the 4-Step process since typically there is no practicable alternative to the disposal of property that has been determined surplus to the mission needs of the Federal Government and future uses are subject to applicable Federal, State and local floodplain requirements. However, where GSA is directly conveying property with a requirement for a specific use or improvement upon conveyance, analysis under the 8-Step process may be required.

The 4-Step decision-making process described in this section and Appendix B should be used, at minimum, to document compliance with E.O. 11988. This process should be conducted as part of any NEPA analysis and results documented in subsequent NEPA documents. Project staff are responsible for consulting NEPA Program Managers to determine compliance.

It is GSA's goal to avoid the floodplain wherever practicable for all actions.

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<sup>8</sup> U.S. Water Resources Council, Floodplain Management Guidelines for Implementing E.O. 11988, February 10, 1978, 43 FR 6030.

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### **5.1 STEP 1 - DETERMINE IF THE 4-STEP DECISION-MAKING PROCESS APPLIES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION**

The 4-Step floodplain decision-making process may be applied to Specific Actions or Certain Disposal Actions as defined above.

### **5.2 STEP 2 - DETERMINE IF THE PROPOSED SPECIFIC ACTION OR CERTAIN DISPOSAL ACTION IS IN A FLOODPLAIN**

First, determine if the proposed Specific Action is a critical action. This determination is made by the federal customer agency based on mission requirements, in coordination with GSA. Refer to Appendix C.

Determine if the proposed Specific Action or Certain Disposal Action is located in a floodplain. If the Specific Action is not critical, use the 1-percent annual chance floodplain. If the Specific Action is critical, use the 0.2-percent annual chance floodplain.

- 1) If the proposed Specific Action or Certain Disposal Action is located in a floodplain,<sup>9</sup> further analysis is required.
  - a) 1-percent-annual-chance floodplain for Non-critical Actions. The minimum standard for non-critical actions is the 1-percent annual chance flood elevation and corresponding horizontal floodplain. If a Specific Action or Certain Disposal Action is located in a 1-percent annual chance floodplain, identify and evaluate practicable alternatives as part of Step 3.
  - b) 0.2-percent annual chance floodplain for Critical Actions. The minimum standard for critical actions is the 0.2-percent annual chance flood elevation and corresponding horizontal floodplain. If a critical action is located in a 1-percent- or 0.2-percent annual chance floodplain, identify and evaluate practicable alternatives as part of Step 3.
- 2) If the proposed Specific Action or Certain Disposal Action is located outside of a floodplain, then such an action requires no further analysis and may be implemented as part of Step 4.

### **5.3 STEP 3 - IDENTIFY AND EVALUATE PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVES TO LOCATING IN THE FLOODPLAIN**

Practicable alternatives are those that are available to GSA and capable of being implemented within existing constraints such as cost, existing technology, and logistics, considering pertinent natural (topography, habitat, hazards, etc.), social (aesthetics, historic and cultural values, land use patterns, etc.), economic (cost of space, construction, services, relocation, etc.), and legal (deeds, leases, etc.) factors. GSA should consult with the federal customer agency to determine what is practicable for a given project considering impacts to schedule, budget and environment.

Having determined that a proposed Specific Action is located in a floodplain, identify and evaluate practicable alternatives to locating in a floodplain. Alternatives to be evaluated include:

- a) Carrying out the proposed Specific Action at a location outside the floodplain (alternative sites);

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<sup>9</sup> Generally, where the existing grade or lowest adjacent grade (pre-construction or pre-damage disturbance) touching the structure or facility is below the flood elevation.

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- b) Other means which accomplish the same purpose as the proposed Specific Action (alternative actions); and
- c) No action.

If a floodplain site is the only practicable alternative, document the analysis with a floodplain map and narrative, leading to this conclusion. In the documented analysis, include discussion on the consideration of evacuation routes and evacuation plans for the proposed Specific Action. The Specific Action or Certain Disposal Action may be implemented as part of Step 4. A Justification for No Practicable Alternatives and Floodplain Memorandum must be approved and saved to the project file.

### 5.4 STEP 4 - IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSED SPECIFIC ACTION OR CERTAIN DISPOSAL ACTION

With the conclusion of this process, the proposed Specific Action or Certain Disposal Action can be implemented. Implementation should be done in accordance with all applicable policies and procedures, including the incorporation of any mitigation or minimization should it be required. Information on the compliance process should be included in the permanent project file and as applicable noted in the Automatic Categorical Exclusion – NEPA Memo to File).

## 6. EXCEPTIONS

In an emergency, such as life-threatening natural or human-caused disasters, activities essential to saving lives and protecting property and public health and safety, or in the interest of national security, the processes outlined above may not be appropriate to follow. The GSA Administrator may allow exceptions to GSA actions described in this section, or as further delegated.

NEPA Program Managers shall be consulted as soon as feasible, to help determine immediate actions necessary to secure lives and safety of citizens or to protect valuable resources.

Exceptions to the 8-Step decision-making process for Actions may be allowed, and a shortened decision-making process as described in Section 5 may be followed, where:

- 1) It is in the interest of national security;
- 2) The agency action is an emergency action;
- 3) Application to a federal facility or structure is demonstrably inappropriate; or
- 4) The agency action is a mission-critical requirement related to a national security interest or emergency action.

These exceptions may apply to actions involving federal real property as well as actions taking place in facilities or structures that are not federally owned.

This Desk Guide defines GSA actions that meet the “emergency action or national security” definition to be:

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- 1) Acquisition of land, easements, or space within an existing structure, either by purchase or lease, which is related to or in support of a national security interest or emergency action.
- 2) Repair and alteration projects related to a national security interest or emergency action, such as emergency structural stabilization work.

Nothing in E.O. 11988 or in this Desk Guide shall apply to assistance provided for emergency work essential to save lives and protect property and public health and safety, performed pursuant to Sections 403 and 502 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1988 (42 U.S.C. 5170b and 5192).

## 7. RESPONSIBILITIES

### 7.1 OFFICE OF THE PBS COMMISSIONER

The PBS Commissioner determines whether actions in or affecting floodplains are the only practicable alternatives and approve such actions when the actions affect GSA programs. The PBS Commissioner may further delegate this authority in accordance with applicable GSA Delegation Policy.

Implementation of this policy is a shared responsibility among PBS offices who are responsible for incorporating applicable elements into operations, planning activities, management decisions, and policy development.

## 8. DEFINITIONS

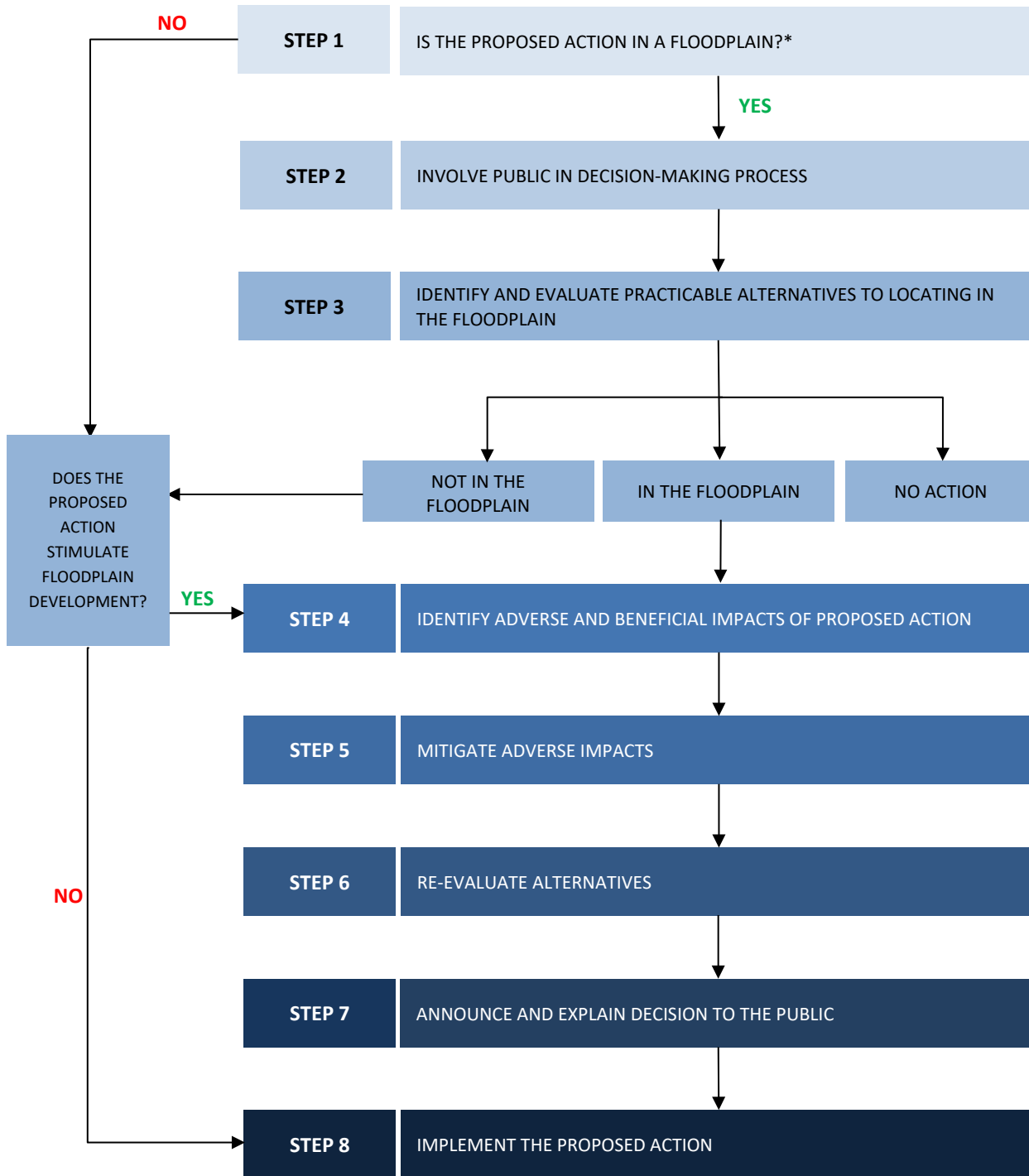
- a. **Action.** Any action or activity including: (1) acquiring, managing, or disposing of federal lands, structures, or facilities; (2) providing federally undertaken, financed, or assisted construction and improvements; or (3) conducting federal activities and programs affecting land use.
- b. **Base flood.** A flood that has a 1-percent annual chance of occurring in any given year (also formerly known as the 100-year flood).
- c. **Base flood elevation (BFE).** The elevation to which floodwater is anticipated to rise during the base flood (also known as 1-percent annual chance flood). Typically published in the FEMA FIS and FIRM.
- d. **Base floodplain.** An area that has a 1-percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year (also known as 1-percent annual chance floodplain).
- e. **Categorical Exclusions (CATEX).** A category of actions which do not have a significant effect on the human environment and which have been found to have no such effect in procedures adopted by a federal agency and for which, therefore, neither an Environmental Assessment nor an Environmental Impact Statement is required. Refer to the latest NEPA Desk Guide for the most up-to-date list of automatic CATEXs.
- f. **Critical Action.** Any activity or action for which even a slight chance of flooding would be too great. The minimum floodplain of concern for critical actions is the 0.2-percent annual chance floodplain (also known as the critical action floodplain). Examples of critical actions include, but are not limited to: storage of irreplaceable records; storage of volatile, toxic, or water-reactive materials; construction or operation of hospitals and schools; construction and operation of utilities and

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emergency services that would be inoperative if flooded; storage of national strategic and critical materials; acquisition of health facilities for client agencies; child care facilities; and public benefit conveyances for schools, prisons, and some other institutional uses.

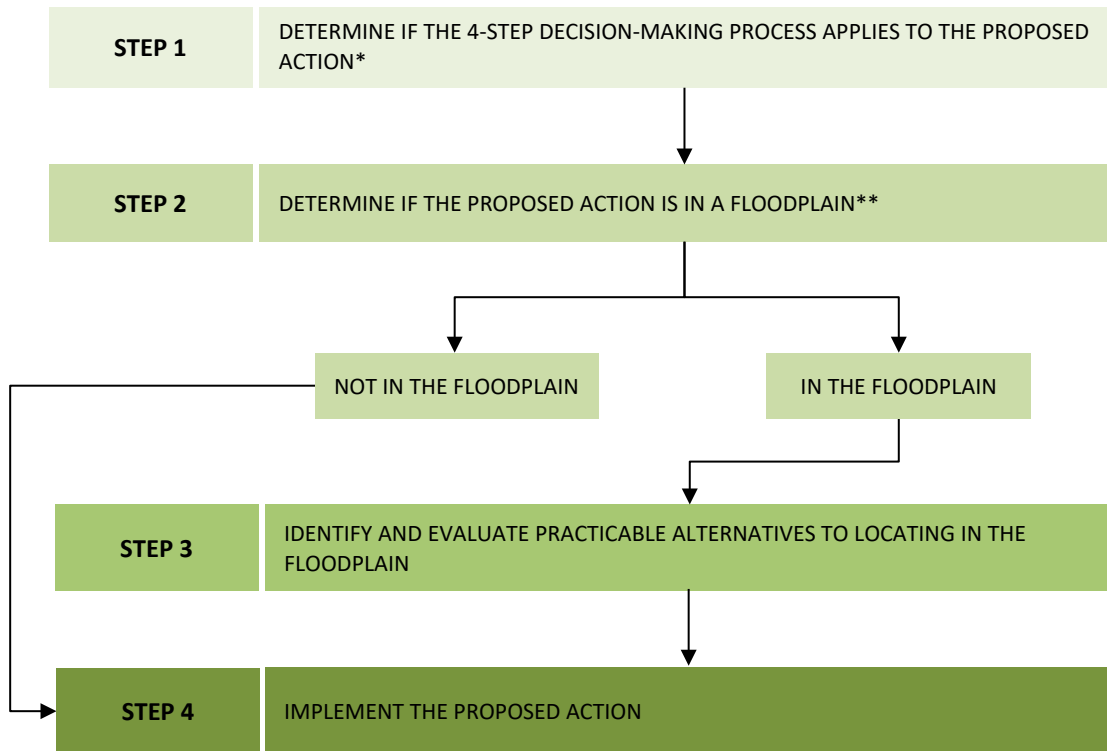
- g. **Floodplain.** A lowland and relatively flat area adjoining inland and coastal waters including tsunami and seiche inundation zones and flood-prone areas of offshore islands. The floodplain can be a base floodplain or a critical action floodplain. A floodplain may be, but is not necessarily, a wetland area. The floodplain as documented on the maps will consist of the floodway containing the stream channel and two adjacent flood fringes that if completely encroached upon will result in a surcharge of 1 foot added to the flood elevation for existing conditions.
- h. **Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA).** An official amendment, by letter, to an effective NFIP map. A LOMA establishes a property's location in relation to the SFHA.
- i. **Letter of Map Revision (LOMR).** A Letter of Map Revision is FEMA's modification to an effective Flood Insurance Rate Map, or Flood Boundary and Floodway Map, or both.
- j. **National Security.** A collective term that encompasses both national defense and foreign relations of the United States. Specifically, national security is a condition that is provided by either (a) a military or defense advantage over any foreign nation or group of nations; (b) a favorable foreign relations position; or (c) a defense posture capable of successfully resisting hostile or destructive action from within or without, overt or covert.
- k. **New Construction.** Construction associated with new structures and facilities including lease construction, reconstruction (total replacement) of existing structures and facilities following damage caused by fire, flood or other hazard, and additions and annexes to existing structures or facilities.
- l. **Practicable Alternatives.** A practicable alternative is context specific and would be available to GSA and capable of being implemented within existing constraints and consideration of factors such as: technology; logistics; environment (topography, habitat, hazards); social factors (aesthetics, historic and cultural values, land use patterns); economic factors (cost of space, construction, services, relocation), and legal requirements (deeds, leases).
- m. **Preserve.** With reference to a floodplain, "preserve" means to prevent modification of the natural environment or to maintain its flood control function.
- n. **Restore.** With reference to a floodplain, "restore" means to re-establish a condition, setting, or environment in which the natural functions of the floodplain can operate.
- o. **Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA).** A FEMA SFHA is the area that will be inundated by the flood event having a 1-percent annual chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. The 1-percent annual chance flood is also referred to as the base flood and formerly known as the 100-year flood.

APPENDIX A. 8-STEP DECISION-MAKING PROCESS FOR ACTIONS AND FEDERALLY FUNDED PROJECTS



\* For critical actions, use the 0.2-percent annual chance floodplain. For non-critical actions, use the 1-percent annual chance floodplain.

### APPENDIX B. 4-STEP DECISION-MAKING PROCESS FOR SPECIFIC ACTIONS AND CERTAIN DISPOSAL ACTIONS



\*This 4-Step decision-making process may be applied to Specific Actions and Certain Disposal Actions

\*\*For critical actions, use the 0.2-percent annual chance floodplain. For non-critical actions, use the 1-percent annual chance floodplain.

**APPENDIX C. SAMPLE CRITICAL ACTION DETERMINATION LETTER**

[This is only a guide. It is recommended that you seek assistance from Counsel in drafting the appropriate notices and disclosures]

Date:

To: [insert customer agency]

Subject:Floodplain Compliance Regarding Your Proposed Action

Dear [insert customer POC]:

The use of your proposed facility, as described to the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is as follows: [insert description of required space]

The Government must consider alternative locations or mitigation methods if a potential property for purchase or lease is located in [modify the following floodplains per the appropriate action]: (1) a 1-percent annual chance floodplain; or (2) a 0.2-percent annual chance floodplain and is a “critical action.” The enclosure provides a definition of “critical actions.” This classification may impact the geographic location of your proposed agency facility or affect the conditions of your occupancy.

Based on the enclosed definition, does your agency consider the proposed use of the facility a “critical action”? If so, GSA will analyze the use as a critical action, as required by E.O. 11988 and the GSA Floodplain Management Policy.

Please use the enclosed form to designate whether or not your agency considers its proposed use to be a critical action, sign in the space provided, and return to me [by email, fax, or mail] no later than [month/day/year].

If you have any questions, please contact me at [phone number, email address].

Sincerely,

Name, Title<sup>10</sup>  
U.S. General Services Administration

Enclosure

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<sup>10</sup> The Lease Contracting Officer, the Leasing Specialist or Project Manager may sign for leasing actions.

### Enclosure to Sample Critical Action Determination Letter

Based on the definition of critical actions below, please have your agency's national or regional facilities representative or other designated official indicate their selection and sign in the space provided.

A **critical action** is any activity for which even a slight chance of flooding would be too great.

Examples of actions that may be critical actions include, but are not limited to:

- Storage of national strategic and critical material
- Storage of irreplaceable records
- Acquisition of health facilities for client agencies
- Child care facilities
- Public benefit conveyances for schools, prisons, and some other institutional uses
- Site acquisition and construction of new courthouses
- Storage of volatile, toxic, or water-reactive materials
- Construction or operation of hospitals and schools
- Construction or operation of utilities and emergency services that would be inoperative if flooded

Additional considerations for critical actions include:

- If flooded, would the proposed Action create an added dimension or consequence to the hazard?
  - Is the action a structure or facility producing or storing highly volatile, toxic, radioactive, or water-reactive materials?
- If the action involves structures or facilities such as hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, and schools, would occupants of these structures or facilities be sufficiently mobile and have available transport capability to avoid loss of life and injury given the flood warning lead times available?
  - Would emergency services functions be delayed or unavailable as a result of the location of the action?
  - Are there routes to and from the location of the action that would be inaccessible during a flood and hinder evacuation?
  - Would the location of the action result in unacceptable hazards to human safety, health, and welfare of the occupants?
- Would essential or irreplaceable resources, utilities, or other functions be damaged beyond repair, destroyed, or otherwise made unavailable?
  - Would utilities, critical equipment, systems, networks, or functions be damaged beyond repair or destroyed?
  - Would physical or electronic records without backups or copies be destroyed or made unavailable as a result of where these items are located in a structure or facility?
  - Would national laboratory research activities or items of significant value to research communities be damaged or destroyed as a result?
  - Would items or structures or facilities of substantial cultural significance be damaged, destroyed, or otherwise harmed?

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- Would the damage or disruption from a local flooding event lead to regional or national catastrophic impacts (e.g., a port being closed for a period following a storm event, which has an impact on transportation of goods nationally)?
- Would damage or disruption to a given facility or infrastructure component have potential for cascading damage or disruption to other facilities and infrastructure classes, some of which may already be stressed by flood conditions (e.g., electricity outage due to substation damage resulting in wastewater treatment facility shutdown or gasoline pump outage)?

On behalf of [insert customer agency name]:

\_\_\_ This agency DOES consider its proposed use (as described above and based on the definition) to be a Critical Action and cannot be located in the critical action floodplain.

\_\_\_ This agency DOES NOT consider its proposed use (as described above and based on the definition) to be a Critical Action and can be located the critical action floodplain.

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature  
Name and Title

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX D. SAMPLE FLOODPLAIN MEMORANDUM<sup>11</sup>**

[This is only a guide. It is recommended that you seek assistance from Counsel in drafting the appropriate notices and disclosures]

Federal Agency  
Lease Renewal, Project No. XXX####  
ABC Building  
123 State Street, Little Town, Small State, USA

The Federal Agency is currently located in 7,559 ANSI/BOMA square feet of space (8,693 rentable) in Little Town, Small State, which is in the 1-percent annual chance floodplain. The current lease expires June 2, 2012, and contains a 5-year renewal option, which GSA would like to exercise.

In accordance with Executive Order (E.O.) 11988 (Floodplain Management) and the GSA Floodplain Management Policy, GSA is required to review the project for practicable alternatives to locating in the floodplain.

After researching the market, GSA concluded there are no alternative sites in the Little Town area that meet the Federal Agency's requirements. GSA has therefore determined there are no practicable alternatives to locating in the 1-percent annual chance floodplain. A Justification for No Practicable Alternatives has been prepared and is attached to this memorandum.

GSA has determined there would be no impacts to the floodplain as a result of the proposed lease renewal. Furthermore, a lease renewal at this location will not encourage further development in the floodplain. Accordingly, it is recommended that GSA complete the floodplain compliance, as outlined in the GSA Floodplain Management Policy, and implement the proposed Action.

RECOMMENDED:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Preparer

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
PBS Commissioner (or as delegated to the Assistant Commissioner)

Enclosure

<sup>11</sup> Additional levels of concurrence may be added.

**APPENDIX E. SAMPLE JUSTIFICATION FOR NO PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVES<sup>12</sup>**

[This is only a guide. It is recommended that you seek assistance from Counsel in drafting the appropriate notices and disclosures]

U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Justification for No Practicable Alternatives  
(GSA Project No. XXX####), ABC Building  
123 State Street, Little Town, Small State, USA

**1. Project Background and Agency Mission.**

[Answer the following questions:

- Who is the agency?
- Where are they currently located?
- What is the action?
- What is the agency mission?
- Are there special space requirements to consider?]

The Federal Agency is currently located in 2000 ANSI/BOMA Occupant Area (ABOA) square feet of office and related space at 850 North Main Street, Little Town, Small State, under GSA Lease No. GS-XXB-XXXX; a 10-year succeeding lease awarded in 2006. Federal Agency is currently in year 2 of the 5-year firm term of the lease, which does not expire until July 2011.

Federal Agency has submitted their formal request for space and accompanying special requirements package to GSA indicating a need for approximately 4,425 ABOA square feet of space. Federal Agency's requirements for the space include: lab, conference room and library.

**2. Delineated Area.**

[Define the delineated area used for the procurement.]

The above information was used to construct the delineated area.

Point of Beginning: Intersection of I-78 and route 22. Follow I-78 southwest to route 66. Follow route 66 southeast to route 22. Follow route 22 north to I-78.

The delineated area for the Federal Agency new lease procurement was forwarded to Portfolio Management Division along with the addresses of the three properties identified for site visits during the market survey. The environmental planning team advised that 2 of the 3 properties identified for a site visit during the market survey were within the 1-percent annual chance floodplain. Specifically, 123 American Way and 567 American Way were in the 1-percent annual chance floodplain.

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<sup>12</sup> For leases, this is prepared before award and should be formatted by the applicable Office so that it is specific to the action, with appropriate signatories and levels of concurrence. This example provides appropriate levels of concurrence for a new lease.

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The delineated area for this procurement includes areas affected by the 1- and 0.2-percent annual chance floodplain. As previously stated, it is essential to the mission of the Federal Agency to be located within the delineated area identified for this procurement.

By expanding the delineated area, the Government would jeopardize the effectiveness of the Federal Agency in executing their mission by limiting access to major highways and roadways, thus adversely affecting response times.

Executive Order (E.O.) 11988 requires GSA to evaluate the potential effects of any actions GSA may take in a floodplain and ensure that the Government's plans consider flood hazards and floodplain management needs. Unless there is 'no practicable alternative', GSA must only seek space outside the 1-percent annual chance floodplain, or outside the 0.2-percent annual chance floodplain for 'critical actions' (i.e., those for which even a slight change of flooding would be too great).

### 3. Market Survey Results.

[Insert information regarding results of the Market Survey. Be as detailed and specific as possible for those sites not meeting space requirements.]

In order to maximize competition for the Federal Agency's space requirements, several steps were taken to find as many potential buildings as possible:

- Properties were surveyed online using LoopNet, a commercial real estate listing website.
- An advertisement was posted on SAM.gov website on May 20, 2009.
- Broker traveled to Little Town, Small State, and located three buildings that could potentially meet Federal Agency's needs.

In response to these efforts, three properties were determined to be potentially capable of meeting the Government's requirements. On June 10, 2009, a physical market survey was conducted, which included the following three properties within the delineated area in Little Town, Small State.

1. 3800 Sierra Street
2. 123 American Way
3. 567 American Way

3800 Sierra Street is not in a 1-percent annual chance floodplain but did not meet the space requirements outlined above. 123 American Way and 567 American Way are both in the 1-percent annual chance floodplain. 567 American Way also did not meet the agency's space requirements outline above.

### 4. Evaluation of Identified Alternatives.

[Insert narrative detailing the specific aspects of the sites which satisfy the needs of the government.]

Based on the research conducted to date which identified only one building potentially meeting the Government's needs for this procurement, it is unlikely that further research or another market survey would yield additional results more favorable for competition.

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### 5. Conclusion.

Based on the location analysis conducted by the Federal Agency, it is in Federal Agency's best interest to be located in Little Town, Small State, in order to accomplish their mission. Little Town is located in a heavily populated area of Federal Agency's jurisdiction. Additionally, this location is at the juncture of two major highways which will allow easy access for employees and visitors.

123 American Way is the only practicable alternative within the delineated area. Much of Little Town is located in a 1- or 0.2-percent annual chance floodplain. Efforts were made throughout the procurement to obtain all possible options for Federal Agency's requirement. However, there is only one option that will be able to fulfill the requirement, 123 American Way, which is located in the 1-percent annual chance floodplain.

Prepared by:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Leasing Specialist

Concurrence:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Lease Contracting Officer

Concurrence:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

PBS Commissioner (or as delegated to the Assistant Commissioner)

Concurrence:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Customer Agency Representative [official authorized to commit the agency]

**APPENDIX F. SAMPLE PUBLIC NOTICE FOR ACTIONS**

[This is only a guide. It is recommended that you seek assistance from Counsel in drafting the appropriate notices and disclosures]

Notification is hereby given to the public of the U.S. General Service Administration's (GSA) intent to [describe the proposed Action].

For example: providing additional courthouse space in Little City, Small Town. The existing Federal Courthouse is within the Central Business Area (CBA), and listed on the National Register of Historic Places (National Register).

The location of the project makes it susceptible to flooding at or above the 1-percent annual chance flood level. Under Executive Order (E.O.) 11988 (Floodplain Management), GSA is required to review the project for possible alternative solutions to the proposed Action. Alternatives considered included [describe alternatives].

In the description, include:

- why the proposed Action may be located within the floodplain;
- whether the action conforms to applicable State or local floodplain standards and/or other land use restrictions;
- why NFIP criteria are demonstrably inappropriate for the proposed Action;
- how the activity will be designed or modified to minimize harm to or within the floodplain; and
- how the action affects natural or beneficial floodplain values.

Agencies that have been contacted for input into the analysis of this project include [insert list of agencies; for example, USACE, FEMA Regional office, State, County, or City offices].

Public comment is invited on any of the alternatives listed or other possible alternatives. Comments about this project must be submitted in writing to [point of contact name, title] at the address above within 15 calendar days of this notice.

**APPENDIX G. SAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR DISPOSAL ACTIONS**

In many instances, in order to completely protect the Government’s interest, some type of notice and disclosure should be included in Notice of Availability, the Invitation for Bids (IFB) and conveyance and assignment documents. Below is an example of a clause that could be used. This is only a guide. It is recommended that you seek assistance from Counsel in drafting the appropriate notices and disclosures.

**SAMPLE NOTICE FOR NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY, IFB AND DEED**

*The property is located in the 1-percent annual chance floodplain and is subject to any and all Federal, State, and local laws, rules, and ordinances governing land use in floodplain areas.*

**APPENDIX H. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**1. When should floodplain compliance occur?**

Compliance with E.O. 11988 should start early in the project’s planning process before decisions have been made. Floodplain determinations should be made for realty actions as soon as the market survey stage. Floodplain sites should not be considered further if sites outside of the floodplain are identified as reasonable alternatives. Project Managers or project staff should coordinate with the NEPA Program Manager during the project planning phases. Where possible, floodplain compliance should occur as part of the NEPA compliance process.

**2. How do GSA customer agencies determine if an action is a “critical action”?**

GSA customer agencies determine if their actions are critical or not. The client agency should provide GSA with a written justification (signed by a senior representative with authority for approving decisions for the agency) of whether an action is or is not a “critical action”, including information about whether similar agency requests for space were also “critical actions”. Refer to Appendix C.

**3. Is floodplain compliance necessary if the proposed Action must occur in a location that is entirely within a floodplain?**

Yes. There are circumstances when the delineated area is situated in a floodplain and the agency’s mission requires that the delineated area not be changed. While there may not be a practicable alternative to locating in the floodplain, there are flood protection techniques that can be taken and areas within the floodplain that are lower risk (flood resilience measures). GSA also has the option of conducting a “general area review” or a “class action review.” The NEPA Program Manager must work with the appropriate FEMA regional office for guidance on developing a general area review or a class action review.

**4. What factors should I consider in the decision-making process if the proposed Action is located adjacent to a floodplain that may impact a federal agency’s mission (such as access, egress, or continuity of operations)?**

If a proposed Action is located outside of a floodplain, but is adjacent to a floodplain that may impact a federal agency’s mission, then such an action may require further analysis in the evaluation of practicable alternatives. The term ‘adjacent’ is intended to mean when federal real property, where the proposed Action will take place, shares a property line with a floodplain. In such cases, the NEPA Program Manager may consider the following:

- Whether the property where the proposed Action will take place will be completely unusable or inaccessible due to the presence of floodwater.
- Whether the presence of floodwater would greatly or unreasonably impinge on the use and enjoyment of the federal real property where the proposed Action will take place.
- Whether the proposed Action is a critical action.

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### **5. Is floodplain compliance necessary if the community participates in the NFIP?**

Yes. Communities are eligible to participate in the NFIP if they agree to adopt minimum standards to manage flood hazard areas. However, community participation in the NFIP does not meet GSA's requirement to comply with E.O. 11988 and cannot be substituted for floodplain compliance.

### **6. How should floodplain compliance be documented?**

In general, floodplain compliance should be documented through the existing internal NEPA procedures and documents, whenever possible. For Actions, floodplain compliance should be integrated into the NEPA process and documented through the EA/EIS and FONSI/ROD. For Specific Actions, identified as automatic CATEXs, information on the compliance process should be included in the permanent project file and noted in the Automatic Categorical Exclusion – NEPA Memo to File. As the PBS Commissioner (or as delegated to the Assistant Commissioner) is required to concur with all findings of no practicable alternatives, decision documents (Floodplain Memorandum; Justification for No Practicable Alternatives) must also be included in the project file.

### **7. Does disposal of federal real property require floodplain compliance?**

Disposal of federal real property is an action that requires compliance with E.O. 11988 and the Federal Management Regulation (FMR). Also, this desk guide describes a shortened decision-making process for floodplain compliance for Certain Disposal Actions. Each Report of Excess must include detailed information about any known flood hazards or flooding of the property, and a listing of any citations for restrictions under federal, state, or local regulations. PBS may decline to accept surplus real property for disposal until the holding agency has complied with E.O. 11988 and related guidance, or may condition its acceptance of property upon such compliance by the holding agency.

When property in a floodplain is proposed for lease, easement, right-of-way, or disposal to non-federal public or private parties, E.O. 11988 Section 3(d) directs federal agencies to:

- Reference the floodplain in the conveyance restrictions under identified federal, state or local floodplain regulations; and
- Attach other appropriate restrictions considered necessary to further the purposes of E.O. 11988, except where prohibited by law; or
- Withhold such properties from conveyance.

### **8. In cases of property disposal, should GSA inform potential buyers that the property is located in a floodplain?**

Yes. All potential recipients of the property should be told that the property is in a floodplain and that there may be restrictions on the property. For example:

- Identify in Notices of Availability and the Invitation for Bid (IFB) possible restrictions under federal, state and local floodplain regulations (restricted uses likely will be detailed in state floodplain regulations and local building codes and zoning ordinances). Attach to the IFB other

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appropriate restrictions that GSA has determined are necessary to further the purposes of E.O. 11988.

- Include information about the floodplain in the assignment letter if the property is being disposed of as a public benefit conveyance.

Appendix G contains sample language that should be included in Notices of Availability and the IFB and the conveyance and assignment documents.

### **9. How should floodplain compliance be coordinated with other Executive Orders?**

As a general rule, health, safety, and security issues always take precedence over issues relating to the conduct of business. Project Managers or project staff should coordinate with the NEPA Program Manager during the project planning phases to discuss consideration of all Executive Orders.

### **10. If locations outside the floodplain are much more expensive, can excessively high cost make a location not practicable?**

In some locations, restricting alternatives to areas outside a floodplain yet still within the CBA may severely restrict competition. 'Practicable alternatives' are those that are available to GSA and capable of being done within existing constraints such as cost. Project staff must coordinate with the customer agency, as well as the NEPA Program Manager, to determine what defines the project parameters. For example, if offers for locations outside the floodplain greatly exceed the prospectus authorized by Congress or GSA's prospectus threshold, then the sites are not affordable and they are not practicable alternatives. Additionally, in cases where land donations or land exchanges are a possibility, other practicable alternatives should still be identified and considered.

### **11. How should GSA balance the 8-Step process with the Procurement Integrity Act?**

The Procurement Integrity Act prohibits disclosure of source selection and contractor bid or proposal information. If violation of the Procurement Integrity Act is a concern, the public notice (Step 2) should discuss all proposed locations that are under consideration without defining a preferred alternative. Prior to issuing a final decision (Step 7 and Final EA/FONSI or Final EIS/ROD), GSA should obtain Final Proposal Revisions in accordance with the Procurement Integrity Act so that the decision can be announced simultaneously with contract award.

### **12. What do I do if the property owner disagrees with FEMA's floodplain determination?**

If a landowner disagrees with FEMA's determination regarding floodplains, it is the landowner's responsibility to consult with FEMA to request a change to the floodplain determination (LOMA or LOMR). GSA should not participate in this process as it is the landowner's responsibility. In addition, the LOMA or LOMR should account for the entire property that GSA is considering, not just part of it, such as just a building. If the LOMA or LOMR only accounts for the building, GSA must consider whether its action is still impacting the floodplain due to adjacency. GSA should also consider any schedule impacts if a landowner does not have a LOMA or LOMR readily available.

### **13. Are there other recommended Flood Hazard to be considered?**

Yes, consideration should be given to the impacts of dams that could be located upstream of a project site. Flooding can occur near dams in a variety of scenarios that are not necessarily related to a 1% or 0.2% annual chance storm event. Consideration should be given to the extent of a dam flood inundation, particularly for a Critical Action activity. Dam hazard information can be requested from the local State Dam Safety Agency and may require additional coordination with the dam operating entity. When available, relevant dam hazard information can also be found at the National Inventory of Dams (NID) website that is managed by USACE.

### **14. Should the floodplain elevation be used to verify floodplain inclusion or exclusion?**

Yes, the floodplain elevation should be used to determine if the project is within or outside the applicable floodplain. In general, if the existing grade or lowest adjacent grade (pre-construction or pre-damage disturbance) touching the structure or facility is below the flood elevation, then it would be considered within the floodplain.

In situations where the floodplain elevation is not readily available or the existing data is deemed outdated (study more than 15 years old), then a flood hazard study (hydrologic and hydraulics analysis) should be conducted and certified by a professional engineer to determine the applicable floodplain(s) and elevation(s). The study must meet the criteria of the NFIP mapping standards. In the event only the BFE is available and is deemed current, then the 0.2-percent annual chance flood elevation can be established at the BFE plus an additional 3 feet. Refer to Section 4.1,1) for the various data sources to determine the 1- and 0.2-percent annual chance floodplain and elevation.

### APPENDIX I. RELEVANT LAWS AND GUIDANCE

1. **Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA).** Section 307 of the CZMA gives coastal states (including the Great Lakes and U.S. territories) authority to review certain federal actions that may affect a State's coastal uses or resources.
2. **E.O. 11988, Floodplain Management, of May 24, 1977.** E.O. 11988 requires all federal agencies to avoid the long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains if practicable alternatives are available. Federal agencies are also required to avoid direct and indirect support of floodplain development wherever there is a practicable alternative. Federal agencies must take action to reduce the risk of flood loss, to minimize the impact of floods on human safety, health, and welfare, and to restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains whenever they: acquire (via purchase or lease), manage, and dispose of federal lands and facilities; provide federally undertaken, financed, or assisted construction and improvements; or conduct federal activities and programs affecting land use, including water and related land resources planning, regulation, and licensing activities. Federal agencies have worked since the issuance of E.O. 11988, in 1977, to develop processes to evaluate impacts of their actions on floodplains.
3. **Federal Advisory Committees Act (FACA).** The FACA (requires standards and uniform procedures for the establishment, operation, administration, and duration of advisory committees. FACA requires advisory committees to be advisory only; all matters under consideration are to be determined, in accordance with law, by the federal agency involved. Advisory committees also must be chartered by the federal agency. GSA must consider FACA requirements when participating in or coordinating public participation activities for federal agency decision-making.
4. **Floodplain Management Guidelines for Implementing E.O. 11988.** The implementing guidelines, issued on February 10, 1978, provide broad guidance and assist federal agencies in preparation of their regulations and procedures for implementing E.O. 11988
5. **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).** NEPA requires federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed Actions prior to making decisions.
6. **National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).** The NFIP was created to provide flood insurance and undertake a unified program for floodplain management and is administered by FEMA. FEMA is also responsible for creating and maintaining flood hazard maps, including FIRMs. The National Flood Insurance Act authorizes FEMA to develop comprehensive criteria designed to encourage, where necessary, the adoption of adequate State and local measures which, to the maximum extent feasible, assist in reducing damage caused by flood. Communities that voluntarily participate in the NFIP must implement and enforce local ordinances that contain protective floodplain development standards to reduce flood risks. These measures typically take the form of ordinances and design controls that require developers and property owners to protect those structures that must be constructed in SFHAs. Communities participating in the NFIP are listed in FEMA's "Community Status Book."

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7. **National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).** NHPA is the primary federal law governing the preservation of cultural and historic resources in the United States, and requires federal agencies to assess the effects of its actions on historic resources prior to implementation.
8. **GSA PBS National Environmental Policy (NEPA) Desk Guide.** The NEPA Desk Guide provides policies, requirements, checklists, and references to support GSA employees with applying NEPA requirements to federal actions, including leasing, acquiring, developing, managing, and disposing of real property.
9. **Procurement Integrity Act.** The Procurement Integrity Act prohibits disclosing or obtaining procurement-sensitive information, to include contractor bid or proposal information and source selection information.
10. **The Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA).** The CBRA encourages the conservation of storm-prone and dynamic coastal barriers by withdrawing the availability of federal funding and financial assistance within a designated set of units known as the Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS). Federal financial assistance includes federal flood insurance as well as loans, grants, and other forms of federal assistance.

**APPENDIX J. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

ABOA	ANSI/BOMA Occupant Area
ADM	Office of the Administrator
ANSI	American National Standards Institute
ASCE	American Society of Civil Engineers
BFE	Base Flood Elevation
BOMA	Building Owners and Managers Association International
CATEX	Categorical Exclusions
CBA	Central Business Area
CBRA	Coastal Barrier Resources Act
CBRS	Coastal Barrier Resources System
CBS	Core Building Standards
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CILP	Capital Investment and Leasing Program
CZMA	Coastal Zone Management Act
EA	Environmental Assessment
E.O.	Executive Order
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FACA	Federal Advisory Committees Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FIS	Flood Insurance Study
FMR	Federal Management Regulation
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
GSA	U.S. General Services Administration
HVAC	Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning
IBC	International Building Code
IFB	Invitation for Bids
LOMA	Letter of Map Amendment
LOMR	Letter of Map Revision
MAP	Multi-Asset Planning

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MSC	Map Service Center
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFHL	National Flood Hazard Layer
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NID	National Inventory of Dams
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OFM	Office of Facilities Management
PBS	Public Buildings Service
PMCE	Office of Portfolio Management and Customer Engagement
POC	Point of Contact
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RLP	Request for Lease Proposal
ROD	Record of Decision
SERDP	Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program
SFHA	Special Flood Hazard Areas
U.S.	United States
USA	United States of America
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey