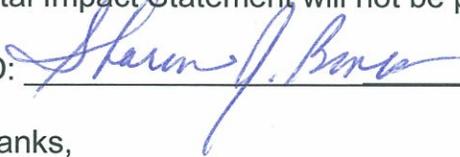


**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR LEASE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF A
CONSOLIDATED NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE CAMPUS
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD**

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508), U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) Order ADM 1095.1F: Environmental Considerations in Decision Making, and the Public Buildings Service NEPA Desk Guide, I find that the proposed lease construction and operation of a consolidated National Cancer Institute (NCI) campus, as described in the attached Environmental Assessment (EA), is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

APPROVED: _____



Date: _____

1-11-2000

Sharon J. Banks,
Acting Regional Administrator
U.S. General Services Administration
National Capital Region

This FONSI will become final 15 days after publication of its Notice of Availability in the Montgomery County Sentinel, provided that no information leading to a contrary finding is received or comes to light during the 15-day review period.

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BASIS FOR FINDING

GSA prepared an environmental assessment (EA) analyzing the environmental impacts that could result from lease construction and operation of a consolidated National Cancer Institute (NCI) campus. The EA was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, 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 three action alternatives and a no action alternative. The environmental issues addressed in the EA were identified through internal scoping and analysis; which included site visits, review of environmental documentation, and development approvals provided by the offerors. Based on this information, Checklist Categorical Exclusions were prepared for each of the offers, and one site resulted in a determination that an EA would need to be prepared. A Draft EA was distributed for a 30-day public review to local, state, and federal stakeholders and made available online, at GSA National Capital Region Headquarters and at local libraries. The Final EA responds to comments and concerns received during the 30-day public review. The Final EA is incorporated by reference into this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

GSA is seeking approximately 575,000 RSF to consolidate NCI's current leased spaces into a campus environment for use by NCI and other personnel. The delineated area for this solicitation is suburban Maryland, the GSA Solicitation for Offers 08-008 further refines the delineated area to the vicinity of Rockville, Maryland. The Proposed Action is a mission-enhancing project that would consolidate existing personnel currently operating in several different leased spaces located in Montgomery County, Maryland. The Proposed Action would create a more efficient and contiguous work environment for administrative staff in a consolidated office and support space.

II. DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

Four alternatives were considered in detail in this EA, three action alternatives and a no action alternative. These alternatives are summarized below.

Alternative I: The Preserve at Tower Oaks

The proposed site at The Preserve at Tower Oaks is a mostly undeveloped commercial/industrial park located in the southern portion of the City of Rockville, Montgomery County, Maryland. The site is approximately 18 highway miles northwest of central Washington, DC. Site topography can be described as gently rolling, with elevations ranging from 350 to 375 feet above mean sea level. The proposed site area for the consolidated NCI campus is currently forested.

Alternative II: WSC Campus

The WSC is an established office campus in North Bethesda. The WSC campus is located at the intersection of Montrose Parkway, Old Georgetown Road, and Executive Boulevard in southern Montgomery County, Maryland in North Bethesda. The site is approximately 16 highway miles northwest of central Washington, DC. The site is gently sloping from north to south, with elevations ranging from 370 to 390 feet above mean sea level. Currently, much of the proposed site area for the consolidated NCI campus consists of existing office buildings, parking lots, and landscaped areas. Approximately one quarter of the proposed site area is currently forested.

Alternative III: Shady Grove Life Sciences Center (LSC)

The Shady Grove LSC, an established business park zoned for life sciences and biotechnology, is located in south-central Montgomery County, Maryland. The Shady Grove LSC is just outside the northwest border of the City of Rockville, and approximately 22 highway miles northwest of central Washington, DC. The proposed site area within the LSC is bordered by Key West Avenue, Medical Center Drive, Blackwell Road, and existing Johns Hopkins University (JHU) buildings. The terrain can be described as flat to gently rolling with elevations ranging from 440 to 475 feet above mean sea level. The proposed site area for the consolidated NCI campus is a landscaped parking lot. A storm water management pond located at the north end of the site.

Alternative IV: No Action Alternative

Under the no action alternative, lease construction and operation of a consolidated NCI campus would not occur. NCI personnel would remain in their current leased locations in Montgomery County, MD. Implementation of the No Action alternative would not enhance NCI mission performance, or provide a consolidated and more efficient work environment.

III. SELECTED ALTERNATIVE

Based on the analysis in the EA, none of the alternatives would result in a significant impact to the environment. GSA selected Alternative III because it provides the best value to the Government as evaluated in accordance with the Solicitation for Offers and Source Selection Plan specific to this procurement action.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The following is a summary of the impacts associated with implementing Alternative III, the selected alternative. A full description of these impacts can be found the in the Final EA:

Land Use: The selected alternative substantially complies with Montgomery County's currently approved master plan for the site.

Climate: Impacts to climate are not anticipated under the selected alternative

Geology: .No impacts to geologic resources are anticipated.

Soils: The impact on disturbed and undisturbed soil resources resulting from construction of the NCI Consolidated Campus would be minor and will be mitigated through implementation of stormwater management best management practices (BMPs) for construction and compliance with Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) stormwater management and sediment and erosion control regulations.

Water Resources: Minor short and long-term impacts to surface and groundwater resources would result from lease construction and operation of the NCI consolidated campus at the selected site. Impacts would be mitigated through implementation of stormwater BMPs and compliance with MDE stormwater management and sediment and erosion control regulations.

Wetlands and Floodplains: No wetlands or floodplains exist at the Shady Grove LSC site; therefore, construction and operation activities related to the Proposed Action would have no impact on these resources.

Plant and Animal Ecology: Negligible short and long-term impacts to plant and animal resources due to construction and operation of the NCI campus are expected. In addition, federal or state protected species are not known to exist within the selected site.

Air Quality: All air emissions from the proposed NCI Campus would be within permit restrictions set forth by MDE, which are designed to be protective of human health. The air quality in the vicinity of the site could be impacted temporarily during construction by fugitive dust emissions from construction activities and by vehicular emissions of air pollutants from supplier deliveries and commuting activities of the workforce. Adherence to BMPs would mitigate fugitive dust emissions.

Impacts to air quality due to vehicle emissions from commuting activities of the workforce during operation of the NCI Campus would be negligible relative to the total emissions in the Rockville area. Because NCI employees currently commute to facilities in Montgomery County, Maryland, additional regional impacts to air quality are not expected and the action would be in conformance with the State Implementation Plan for the region.

Historical and Cultural Resources: The Maryland Historical Trust has concurred that there are no historic or cultural resources listed or eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places or of local significance in the Shady Grove LSC; therefore, further consultation under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act is not required for the selected alternative.

Socioeconomic Environment: Positive temporary and long-term impacts to the local economy would occur from the lease construction and operation of the proposed NCI Campus. The census block areas surrounding the selected alternative are not considered poverty areas and implementation of the selected alternative would not result in disproportionate impacts to minority and/or low-income communities.

Noise: Construction may temporarily increase the amount of noise at the site but any increase would be minor and adherence to city and state construction noise level regulations would mitigate this impact. All activities associated with the selected alternative would abide by the appropriate State of Maryland, OSHA and Montgomery County noise standards.

Transportation: Minor temporary and long-term adverse impacts to transportation are expected due to lease construction and operation of the consolidated NCI Campus. The developer is required to coordinate implementation of transportation mitigation measures with applicable local and/or state agencies.

Energy Resources: Natural gas is supplied to the Shady Grove LSC by Washington Gas and electrical service is provided by Potomac Electrical Power Company. The impacts related to the proposed NCI Campus on depletable energy resources during construction would be temporary and negligible relative to energy consumption in the Rockville area.

The NCI Campus would operate in a sustainable and energy efficient manner. The net impacts of the operation of the proposed NCI Campus on the regional supply of electricity and natural gas would be minor. Energy consumption from commuting of the workforce and transporting of materials to the campus in association with operation of the proposed NCI Campus is unlikely to significantly impact the total energy consumption of the Rockville area.

Waste Management: In accordance with sustainability objectives, the construction contractor would make every effort to reduce overall construction waste by recycling and reusing materials whenever possible. The contractor would be responsible for adhering to regulatory requirements for the disposal of wastewater, solid waste, hazardous waste, and construction and demolition debris and in accordance with Federal, state, and local regulatory requirements. Generation of these wastes during the construction phase of the selected alternative would have a negligible impact on the regional waste management infrastructure.

During operation of the proposed NCI Campus, the generation of municipal solid waste and recyclable material would have a minor net impact on the regional waste management infrastructure and would be collected and shipped off-site for processing. The operation of the consolidated NCI Campus is not expected to generate any hazardous waste.

Currently, the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission provides sanitary sewer services to the buildings currently located on the Shady Grove LSC. Due to the water conservation measures required for the project and the requirement for the consolidated NCI Campus to achieve LEED Silver certification, operation of the proposed consolidated NCI Campus would have a minor impact on the total wastewater generated in Montgomery County.

Human Health and Safety: The health and safety of construction workers and Federal workers in the proposed consolidated NCI Campus would be protected by adherence to accepted work standards and regulations set forth by Occupational Safety and Health Administration and State of Maryland regulations. Impact on both construction workers and public health and safety would be negligible. Operation of the NCI Campus would have negligible impacts to human health and safety.

Environmental Justice: The census block areas surrounding the selected alternative are not considered poverty areas. Therefore, it is not likely that the Proposed Action would have proportionately greater impact on disadvantaged (e.g., minority or low-income) populations.