



U.S. General Services Administration

# New Chattanooga Federal Courthouse Project

## National Environmental Policy Act - Public Scoping Meeting





# Meeting Agenda

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- Welcome and Introductions
- Purpose of the Meeting
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Process
- New Courthouse Project Overview
- New Courthouse Site Selection & Action Alternatives
- How and When to Submit Public Comments



# Introductions

- ❑ U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)
  - ❑ **Shawn Kelly** Project Manager
  - ❑ **Ash Desai** NEPA Project Manager
  - ❑ **Sheri DeMartino** Site Program Manager
  - ❑ **Danita Brown** Historic Preservation Officer
  
- ❑ Potomac Hudson Engineering (GSA's NEPA Contractor)
  - ❑ **Erin Kouvousis** Senior Environmental Scientist
  - ❑ **Diego Santaella** Environmental Scientist



# What is the purpose of this meeting?

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Scoping is an early public involvement process to obtain feedback on the alternatives (sites) and issues the NEPA analysis will address.

Today we will:

- Describe the NEPA Process
- Share project information with you
- Inform you of the next steps in the process

GSA welcomes public input on any site or environmental issues that are important to you.



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# New Chattanooga Federal Courthouse Project

National Environmental Policy Act Process





# What is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)?

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- NEPA is the National Environmental Policy Act which establishes a National Policy requiring all federal agencies to disclose and consider the impacts of their proposed action on the human environment.
- NEPA provides a means to comply with multiple environmental laws and regulations.
- Collect environmental data for the sites under consideration.



# What is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)?

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- ❑ Analyze environmental data to determine significance of impacts.
- ❑ As part of the NEPA process, GSA will prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) documenting environmental impacts that would result from implementing the proposed action at each site.
- ❑ GSA will consider public feedback or substantive written comments on the alternatives and any environmental resource areas to be considered in the analysis.

# The NEPA Umbrella



National Historic Preservation Act

Clean Air Act

Clean Water Act

Archeological Resources Protection Act

Endangered Species Act

Environmental Justice





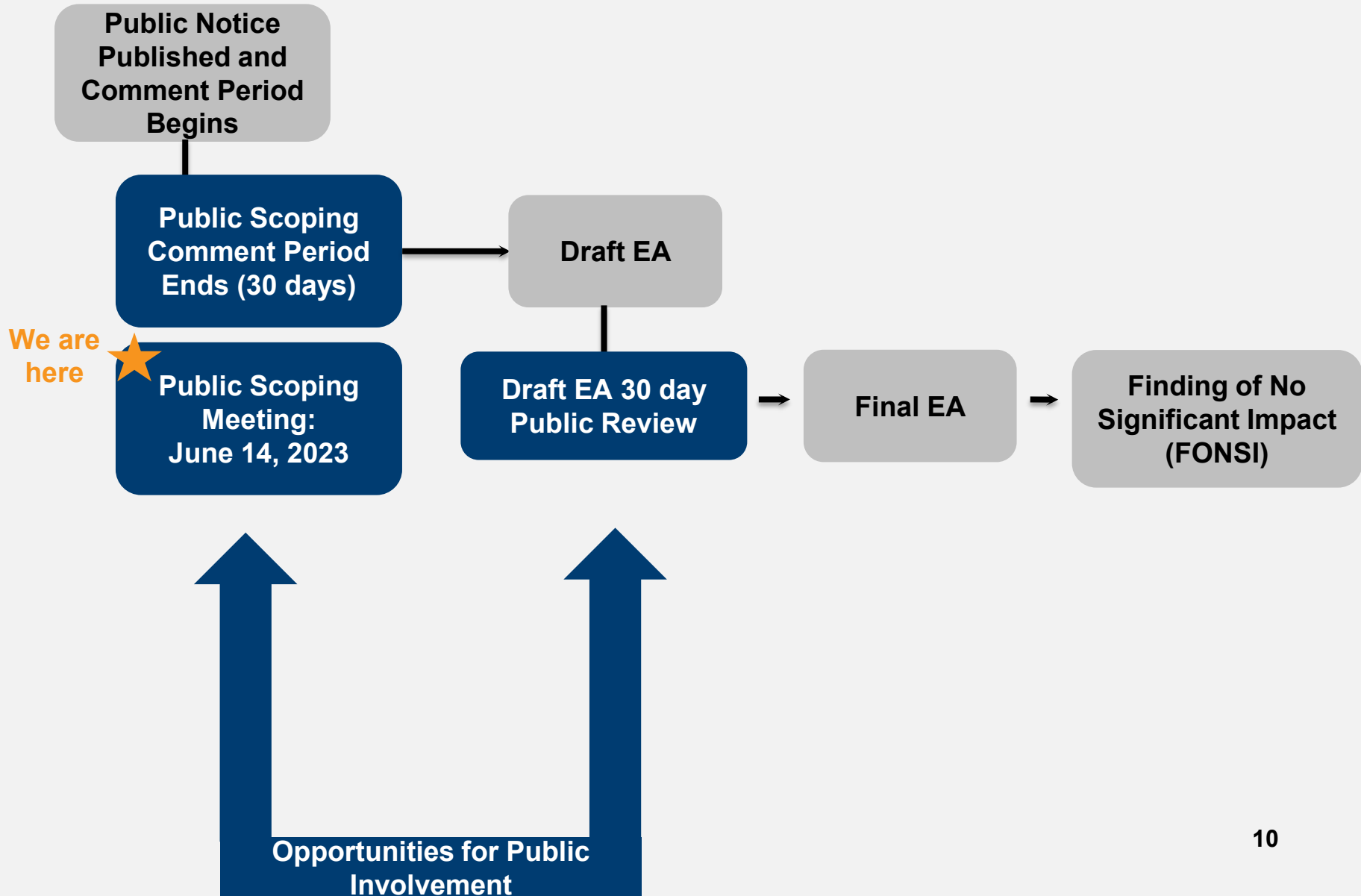
# Determining Impacts on the Environmental Resources

The analysis of the impacts on the environmental resources that may be impacted by the proposed action include resources such as:

- Air Quality & Climate Change
- Socioeconomics
- Environmental Justice
- Noise
- Solid & Hazardous Waste
- Human Health & Safety
- Cultural Resources
- Land Use
- Soils & Geology
- Biological Resources
- Water Resources
- Utilities
- Traffic & Public Transportation
- Visual Resources



# Environmental Assessment (EA) Process





# Project Alternatives

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The Environmental Assessment will consider four alternatives:

- ❑ Three “Action” Alternatives for design and construction of a New Courthouse.
  - ❑ Environmental impact analysis will be conducted for the design and construction of a new courthouse at each site.
- ❑ The “No Action” Alternative
  - ❑ No New Courthouse is built.
  - ❑ The Courts continue to operate under current conditions.
  - ❑ Provides a baseline for comparison to action alternatives.



# Next Steps in the NEPA Process

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**Develop the Draft EA** to analyze the effects of the Project on resource areas with the potential to be impacted.



**Publish Notice of Availability of the EA** to obtain public input on the document.



**Incorporate Comments** from the public, local government, and other interested and affected parties, as needed, in the development of the final EA.



**Finalize the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).** The FONSI summarizes the findings in the EA and the basis for the final decision. It marks the conclusion of the NEPA process.



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# New Chattanooga Federal Courthouse Project

## Project Overview





# Project Team Introduction

- ❑ GSA Project Management:
  - ❑ Laura Shadix and Shawn Kelly
  - ❑ Almost 30 Years of Courthouse Construction Experience
- ❑ Recently Completed Projects
  - ❑ Laura recently completed the Federal Courthouse in Greenville, SC.
  - ❑ Shawn recently completed the Annex Addition and Modernization of the Charlotte, NC Federal Courthouse.

Photos of  
Greenville, SC Federal U.S. Courthouse  
Charlotte, NC Federal U.S. Courthouse  
(Left to Right):







# Project Background

- ❑ The Courts currently reside in the Joel W. Solomon Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse as well as leased space in the Old Post Office Custom House Building in Chattanooga.
  - ❑ The Joel W. Solomon Federal Building and Courthouse was constructed in 1931
  - ❑ Studies have found numerous functional challenges related to circulation, operational and safety needs required to operate the existing courthouse.
  - ❑ Findings also showed the current building does not meet existing or projected needs for court space, functionality, security, and building systems.



The Joel W. Solomon  
Federal Building &  
U.S. Courthouse



# Project Purpose & Future

- ❑ The Court's long-term planning studies concluded a new free standing courthouse is needed to meet the long-term needs of the courts and provide improved circulation for the public, judges, and prisoners and thereby improve the security and efficiency of court operations.
- ❑ GSA has tentative plans for the reuse of the Joel W. Solomon Federal Building and Courthouse upon completion of the new Chattanooga courthouse.

Photos of Joel W. Solomon  
Federal Building &  
U.S. Courthouse  
(Left to Right):

Exterior | Interior | Exterior





# Project Description

Congress has authorized GSA to:

- ❑ Acquire land in the city of Chattanooga
- ❑ Design and construct a new Courthouse of approximately **186,000 gross square feet**
- ❑ The new Courthouse will include:
  - ❑ **7 courtrooms and 9 Judges chambers**
  - ❑ Offices for various federal agency tenants
  - ❑ 39 secure parking spaces



Photos of recently built U.S. Courthouses (*Top to Bottom*):  
San Antonio, TX | Nashville, TN | Springfield, MA



# Project Timeline

**A project of this size and scope takes approximately 6 - 7 years to complete:**

**We are here**



- Site Selection & Acquisition Phase
- Design Phase: Approximate Duration 2 - 2.5 Years
- Construction Phase: Approximate Duration 3 Years

Photos of recently built  
U.S. Courthouses  
(left - right):

San Antonio, TX  
Nashville, TN  
Springfield, MA







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# New Chattanooga Federal Courthouse Project

## Site Selection & Action Alternatives





# Site Selection & Acquisition Phase

## ❑ Established the Site Selection team

- ❑ GSA & Court representatives
- ❑ Subject matter experts such as real estate, design & construction, environmental, historic preservation, urban planning



## ❑ Identified the minimum Site requirements

- ❑ Accommodate a 186,000 GSF Courthouse - a minimum of approximately 2 acres
- ❑ Within the city limits of Chattanooga



Recently built U.S. Courthouses (Top to Bottom)  
San Antonio, TX | Nashville, TN | Springfield, MA





# Site Selection & Acquisition Phase

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## **December 2021: Market Research Began**

- Issued a Request for Expressions of Interest asking property owners to offer sites to be considered for a Courthouse
- Met with City officials to discuss potentially available and suitable sites
- Conducted research to identify additional sites
- Toured offered sites

## **January 2023: Short List of Sites Published**

- Three sites were identified as having the most potential



# Project Alternatives

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## **The Environmental Assessment will consider four alternatives:**

- Three “Action” Alternatives:
  - Acquire a site, and design and build a New Courthouse
  - Each of the three sites on the ‘short list’ will be studied as an alternative
  
- The “No Action” Alternative
  - No New Courthouse is built
  - The Courts continue to operate under current conditions
  - Provides a baseline for comparison to action alternatives



# Project “Action” Alternatives

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- ❑ Each “action” alternative corresponds to one of the potential sites for the Project (listed north to south):
  - ❑ **Hawk Hill Stadium Site\*** - 201, 203, 205, and 301 Power Alley.
  - ❑ **8th Street Site** - The improved site bordered by Lindsay Street, E. 8th Street, Houston Street, and extending south to and including the surface parking located at 814 Lindsay Street.
  - ❑ **Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) Site\*** - The improved site bordered by W. 11th Street, Market Street, W. 12th Street, and Chestnut Street.

*\* These sites contain more land area than required for the new courthouse. The entire site will be studied, but—if selected as the preferred alternative—only a portion of the site would be needed.*

# Project “Action” Alternatives



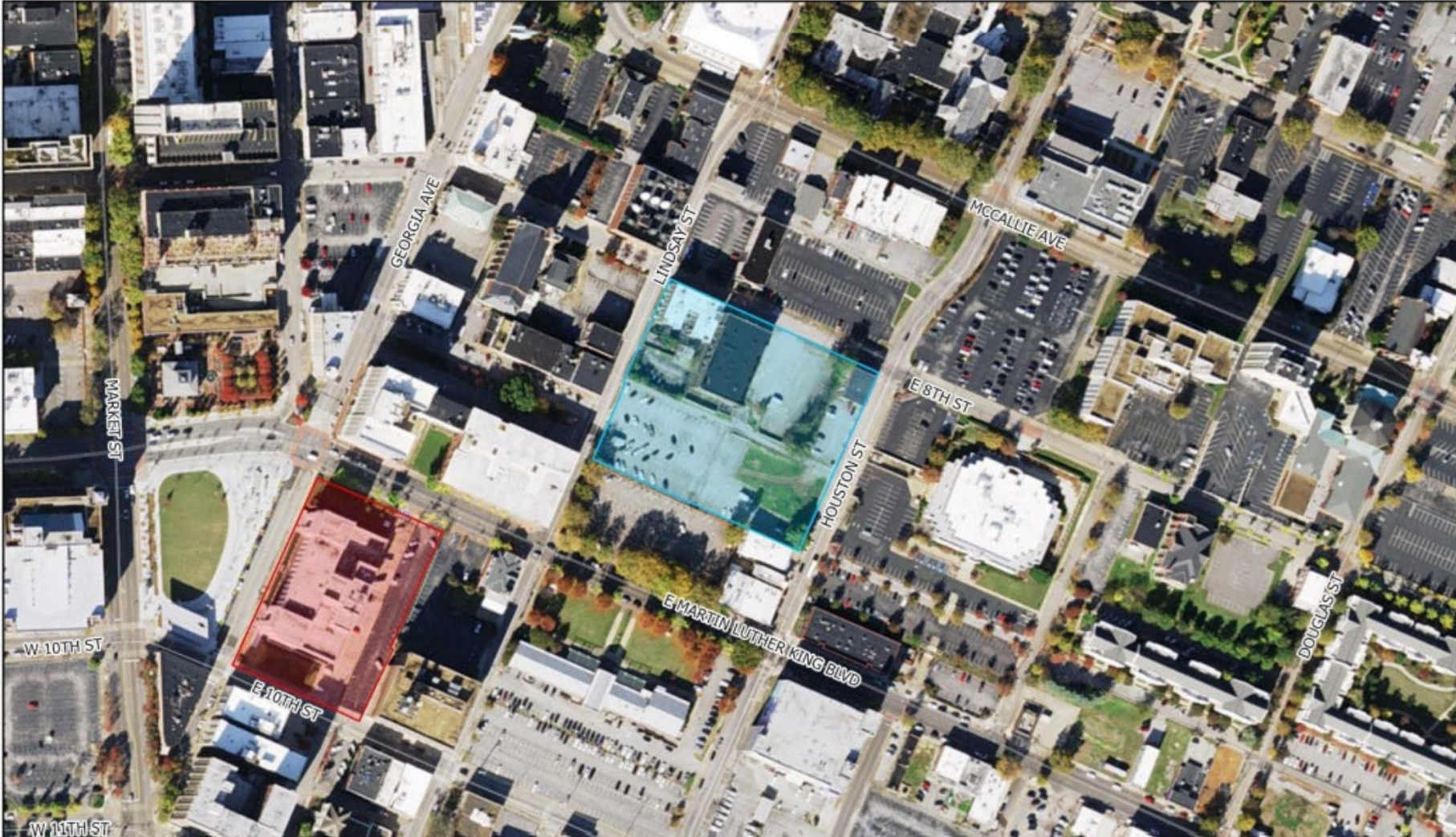


# Alternative: Hawk Hill Stadium Site



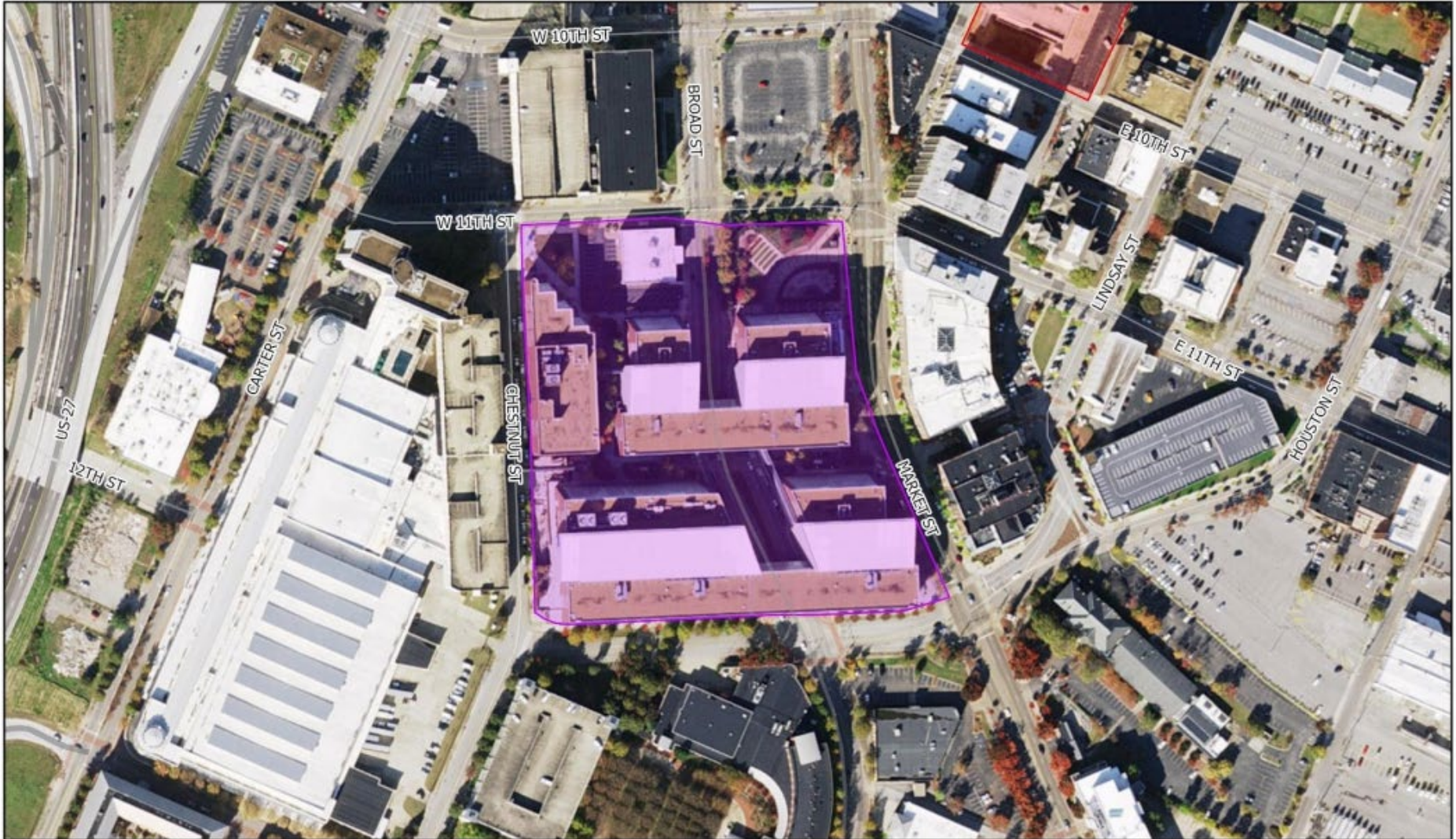


# Alternative: 8th Street Site





# Alternative: TVA Site







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# New Chattanooga Federal Courthouse Project

How to Comment





# Tell us what you think!

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## Written Comments must be postmarked by July 1, 2023

- In Person:** Make a verbal comment or fill out a comment form tonight
- Email:** Send an email to [ashish.desai@gsa.gov](mailto:ashish.desai@gsa.gov) with subject line “**Chattanooga Courthouse Comment EA**”
- Mail:** Send written comments to:
  - General Services Administration
  - Attn: Mr. Ashish Desai
  - GSA Region 4, Facilities Management Division
  - Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Building
  - 77 Forsyth Street, SW
  - Atlanta, GA 30303



# Commenting Etiquette

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- When your name is called, please stand and wait for a microphone.
- Say and spell your first and last name at the start of your comment.
- Be respectful of participants and presenters.
- Verbal comments will be limited to 2 minutes.
- Yellow card indicates speaker has 30 seconds left.
- Red card indicates the 2 minute limit has been reached.
- If time allows after all commenters have had the opportunity to speak, participants may be permitted to speak again.
- Additional comments can also be submitted in writing by the due date.

**THANK YOU!**



**Adjourn**

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**Thank you for joining us this evening!**

**Please remember to visit  
[gsa.gov/chattanooga courthouse](https://gsa.gov/chattanooga courthouse)  
often for project updates.**

