



U.S. General Services Administration

## National Environmental Policy Act - Public Scoping Meeting





# Meeting Agenda

---

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



# What is the purpose of this meeting?

---

Scoping is an early public involvement process to help determine which issues the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will address.

Today we will:

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

GSA welcomes public input on what resources and issues are important to you



# Introductions

---

- ❑ U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)
  - ❑ Bob Herman, Project Manager
  - ❑ Carey Bergeron, NEPA Project Manager
  - ❑ Sara Massarello, Site Program Manager
- ❑ U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut
  - ❑ Honorable Michael P. Shea, Chief Judge
- ❑ Solv, Inc. (GSA's NEPA Contractor)
  - ❑ Oshin Paranjape
  - ❑ Leon Kolankiewicz



U.S. General Services Administration

# New Federal Courthouse Project - Hartford

## National Environmental Policy Act Process





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

---

NEPA requires Federal agencies (GSA) to consider the potential impacts to the natural and human environment from their proposed action and disclose the potential impacts in a document that is circulated for public review.

GSA will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to document potential impacts from the proposed action (the New Courthouse Project).

Throughout the NEPA process, the public has opportunities to submit written comments to GSA about the New Courthouse Project including the Scoping period (now), and public reviews of the Draft and Final EIS.

GSA will review all written comments and consider substantive comments in the preparation of the EIS. All comments will be part of the administrative record and be included in the EIS.



# The NEPA Umbrella



National Historic Preservation Act

Clean Air Act

Clean Water Act

Archeological Resources Protection Act

Endangered Species Act

Environmental Justice



# Documenting Existing Conditions (the Affected Environment)

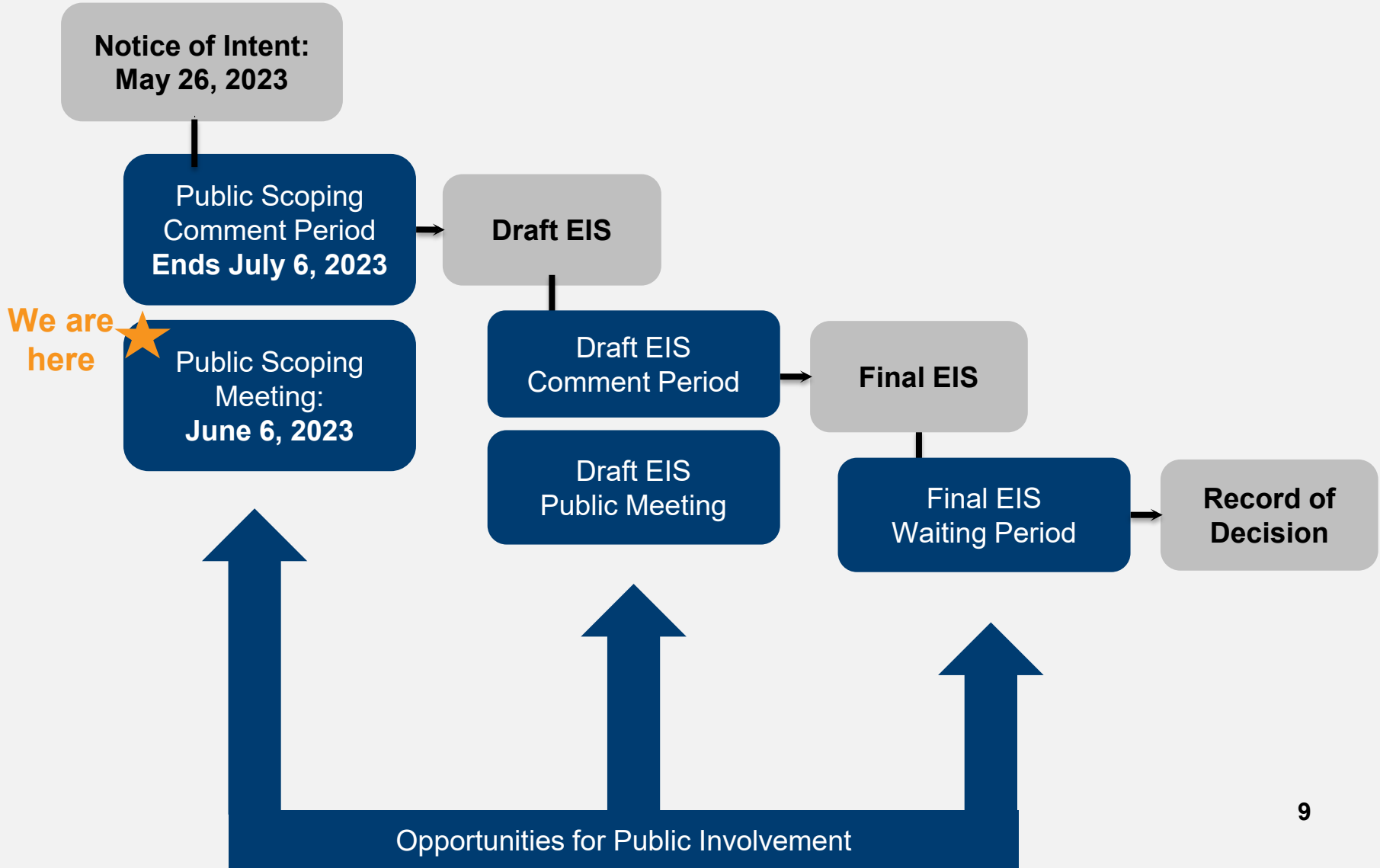
The affected environment section includes an analysis of the resources that may be impacted by the proposed action including the following resource areas:

- 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 Impact Statement (EIS) Timeline



# Public Outreach (Scoping)

---

- ❑ The purpose of the public outreach process is to obtain comments from the public, local government, and other interested and affected parties on the proposed New Courthouse Project.
- ❑ These comments will help guide the development of Project alternatives, and the selection of resource areas to be analyzed in the EIS.





# Project Alternatives

---


The EIS will consider four alternatives:

- ❑ Three (3) “action” alternatives to build a New Courthouse
  - ❑ Three (3) separate sites in the city of Hartford will be studied as alternatives
- ❑ One (1) “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

---

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



**Host a Public Meeting** after the release of the Draft EIS to obtain public input on the document.



**Incorporate Comments** of the public, local government, and other interested and affected parties in the development of the EIS.



**Publish Final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD).** The ROD summarizes the findings in the EIS and the basis for the final decision. It marks the conclusion of the NEPA process.



U.S. General Services Administration

# New Federal Courthouse Project - Hartford

## New Courthouse: Project Background





# Project Background

- ❑ The U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut (the Court) operates at the Richard C. Lee U.S. Courthouse in New Haven, and Abraham A. Ribicoff Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse (the Ribicoff) in Hartford and the Brien McMahon Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in Bridgeport
- ❑ The Court's long-term planning studies concluded that all three locations' operations will continue to increase, and the Court's existing headquarters in New Haven should relocate to Hartford

Photos of U.S. District Court Courthouses in Connecticut (left to right):

Bridgeport, CT  
New Haven, CT  
Hartford, CT



# Project Background





# Project Background

- ❑ The Ribicoff in Hartford was built in 1963
  - ❑ Has numerous functional challenges related to circulation, operational and safety needs
  - ❑ Does not meet current and projected needs for space, functionality, security, and building systems
- ❑ GSA and the Court conducted studies to analyze potential long-term options for the projected increased operations in Hartford:
  - ❑ Renovate the Ribicoff?
  - ❑ Move Court operations to a New Courthouse?

The Ribicoff, Hartford





**Purpose:** To accommodate the current and long-term functional and operational needs of the U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut

**Need:** The Ribicoff lacks the space, functionality, security, and building systems to meet the current and projected needs of the Court in Hartford. Numerous functional challenges related to circulation, operational and safety needs exist.



U.S. General Services Administration

# New Federal Courthouse Project - Hartford

## New Courthouse: Project Description





# Project Description

## Congress has approved the New Courthouse Project:

- Site Selection
- Acquire property in the city of Hartford
- Design a new Courthouse - following GSA Design Excellence Procedures
- Construction of Courthouse - Construction Excellence
- Management and Inspection

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

San Antonio, TX  
Nashville, TN  
Springfield, MA





# Project Description

## Key Features of the new Courthouse:

- Courthouse - 281,000 square feet
- 11 courtrooms and 18 Judges chambers
- Offices for various federal agency tenants
- 66 secure parking spaces
- US Green Building Council - LEED Gold, Site Silver
- GSA Sustainability Program

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

San Antonio, TX  
Nashville, TN  
Springfield, MA





U.S. General Services Administration

# New Federal Courthouse Project - Hartford

New Courthouse: Site Selection





# Site Selection

---

- ❑ **Established the Site Selection team**
  - ❑ GSA & Court representatives
  - ❑ Subject matter experts such as real estate, design & construction, historic preservation, urban planning
- ❑ **Determined the minimum Site requirements**
  - ❑ Accommodate a 281,000 GSF Courthouse - a minimum of approximately 2 acres
  - ❑ Within the city limits of Hartford



- ❑ **Began market research: Dec. 2021**
  - ❑ Issued a Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) asking property owners to offer sites to GSA to consider for a Courthouse (Dec. 2021 - May 2022)
    - Accommodate a 281,000 GSF Courthouse - a minimum of approximately 2 acres
    - Within the city limits of Hartford
  - ❑ Met with officials from the City of Hartford and State of Connecticut to discuss potential available & suitable sites
  - ❑ Conducted research to identify additional sites
  - ❑ Visited sites



# Site Selection

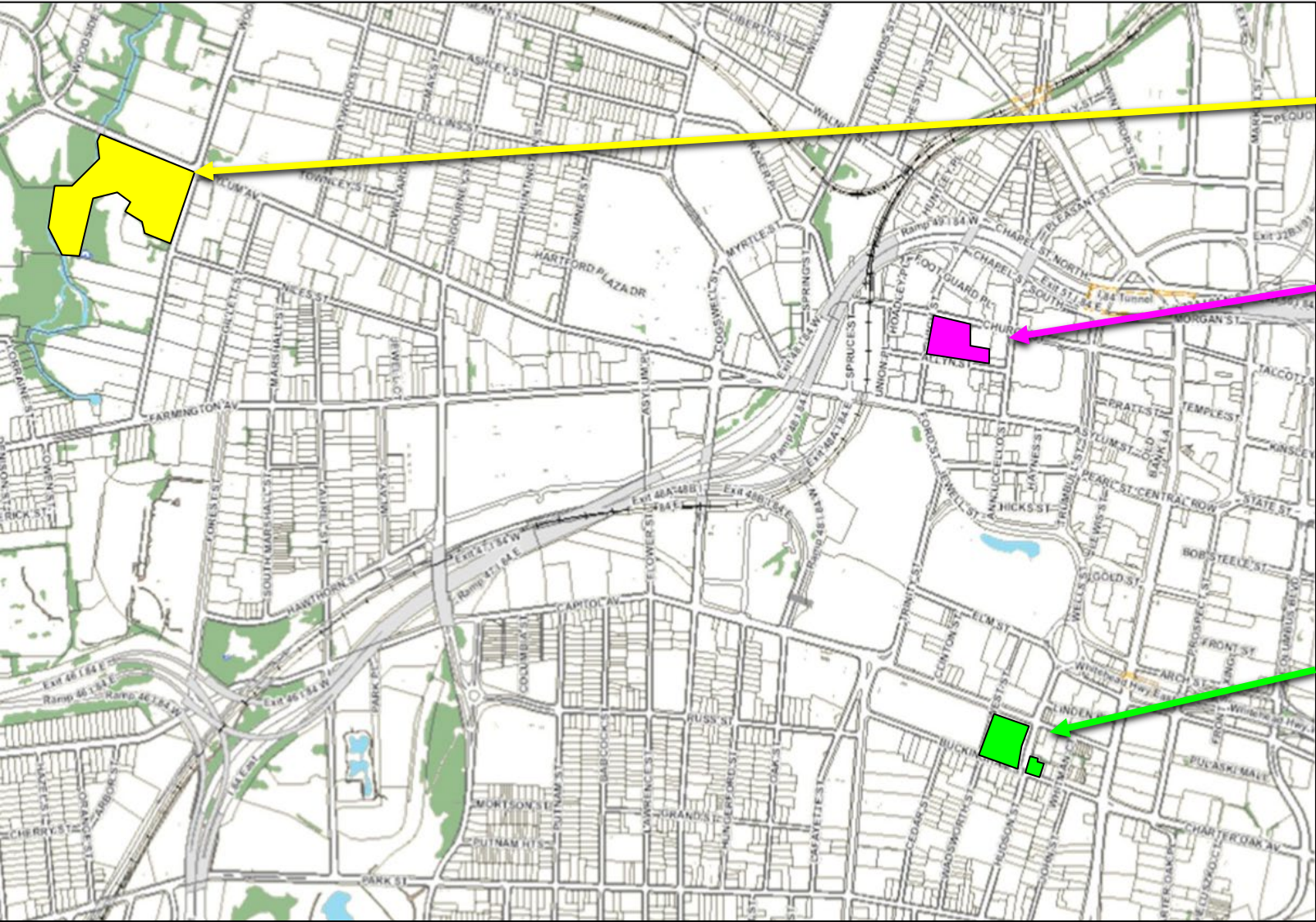
---

- ❑ **Identified Sites for further analysis: Oct. 2022 - Apr. 2023**
  - ❑ Three (3) sites were initially identified as being the most advantageous to the Government (Oct. 2022)
    - One (1) site was rescinded by the owner
  - ❑ GSA had more discussions with City and State officials, and other stakeholders as part of a renewed market research effort
  - ❑ One (1) additional site was identified as being advantageous to the Government for further analysis





# Project “Action” Alternatives



**Woodland Site**

**Allyn Site**

**Hudson Site**



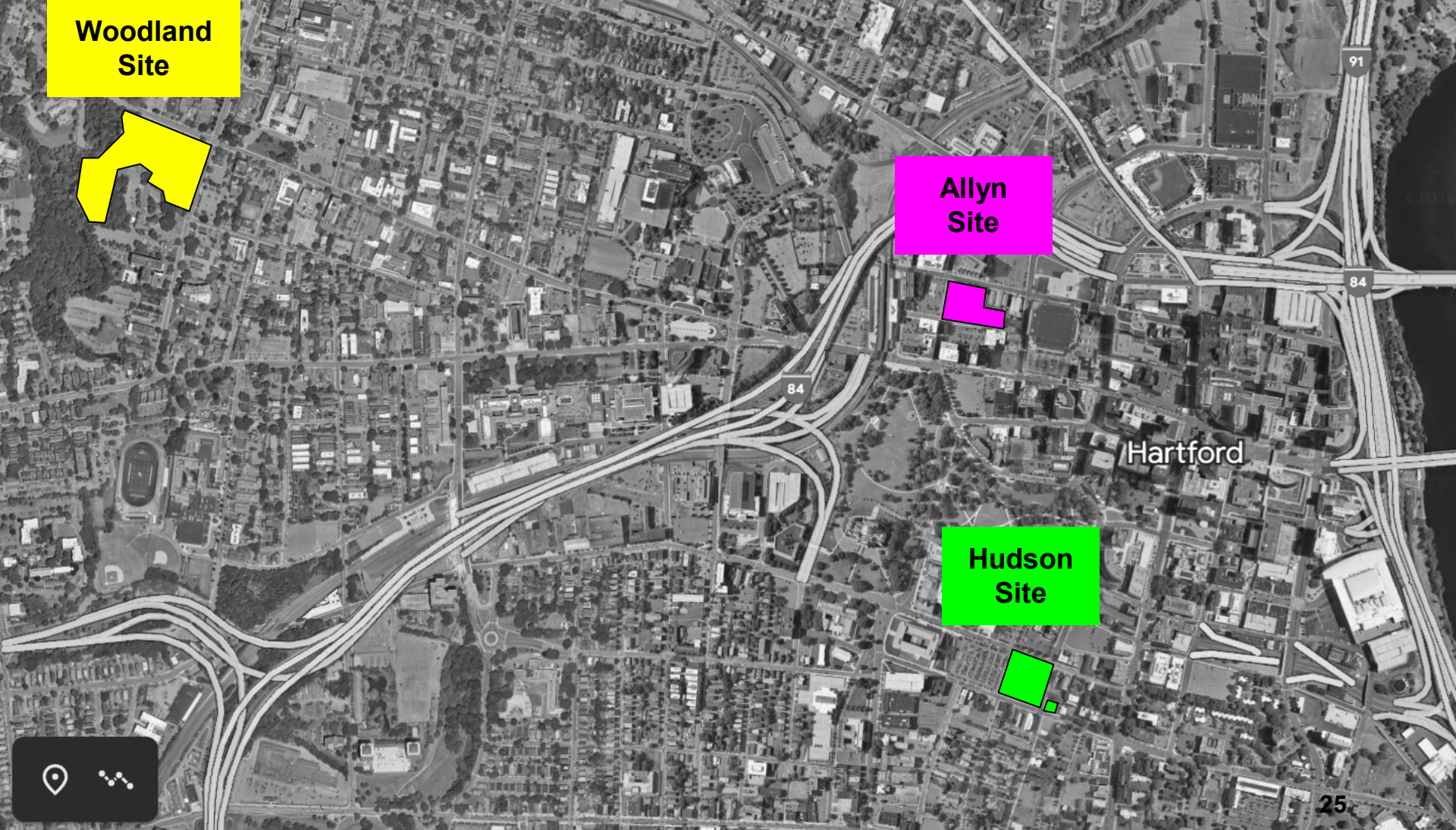
# Project “Action” Alternatives

---

- ❑ Each “action” alternative corresponds to one of the potential sites for the Project (listed north to south):
  - ❑ **Woodland Site** - A State office building on 10.1 acres in Asylum Hill. South of Saint Francis Hospital, bordered by Asylum Ave, Woodland St, and the Park River
  - ❑ **Allyn Site** - A surface parking lot on 2.19 acres in Downtown. West of the XL Center, and east of Union Station, bordered by Allyn St, Church St, and High St
  - ❑ **Hudson Site** - Surface parking lots with an auto detailing shop on 2.54 acres in Downtown. South of Bushnell Park, bordered by Hudson St, Buckingham St, West St and Capitol Ave



# Project "Action" Alternatives



**Woodland Site**

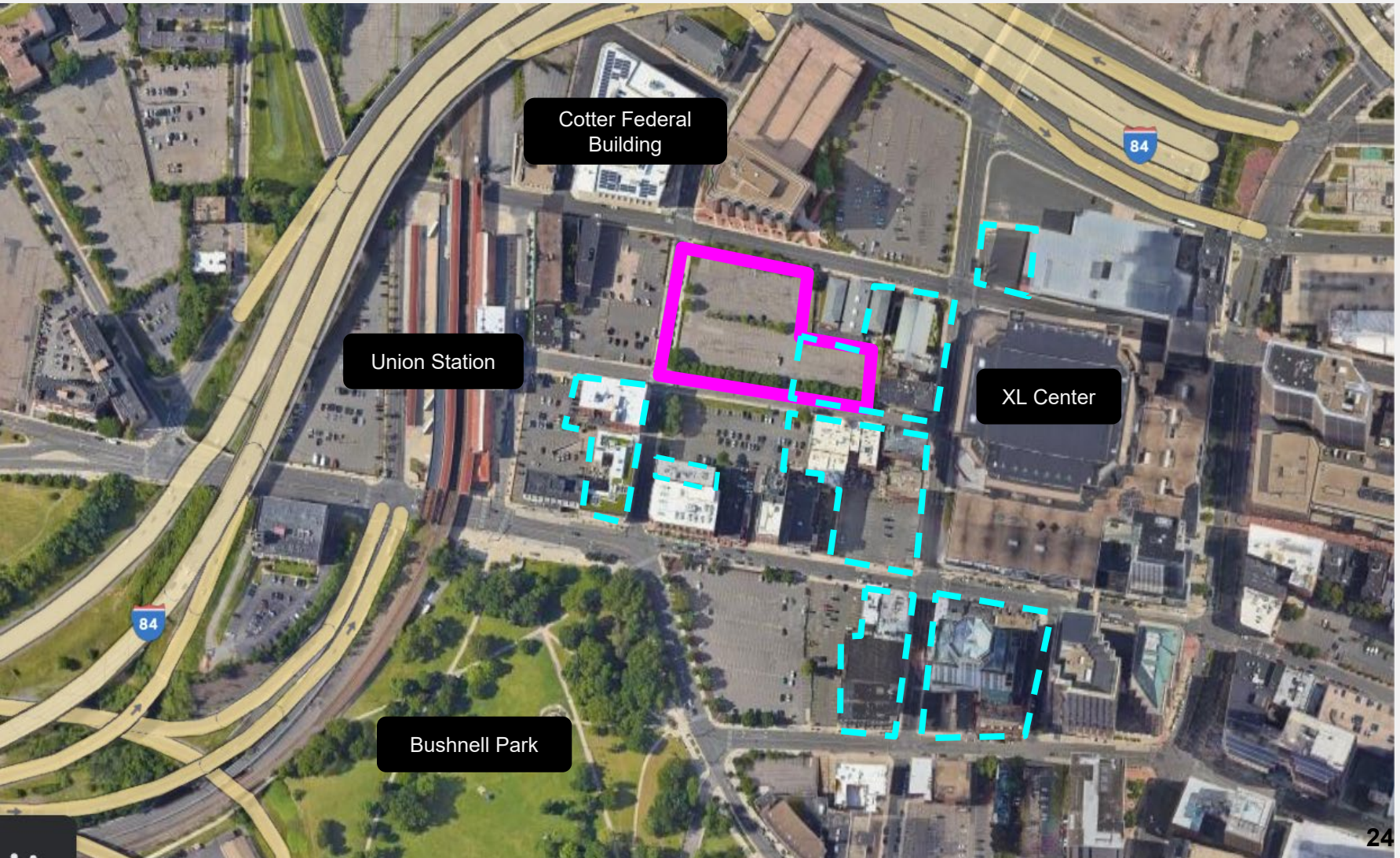
**Allyn Site**

**Hudson Site**

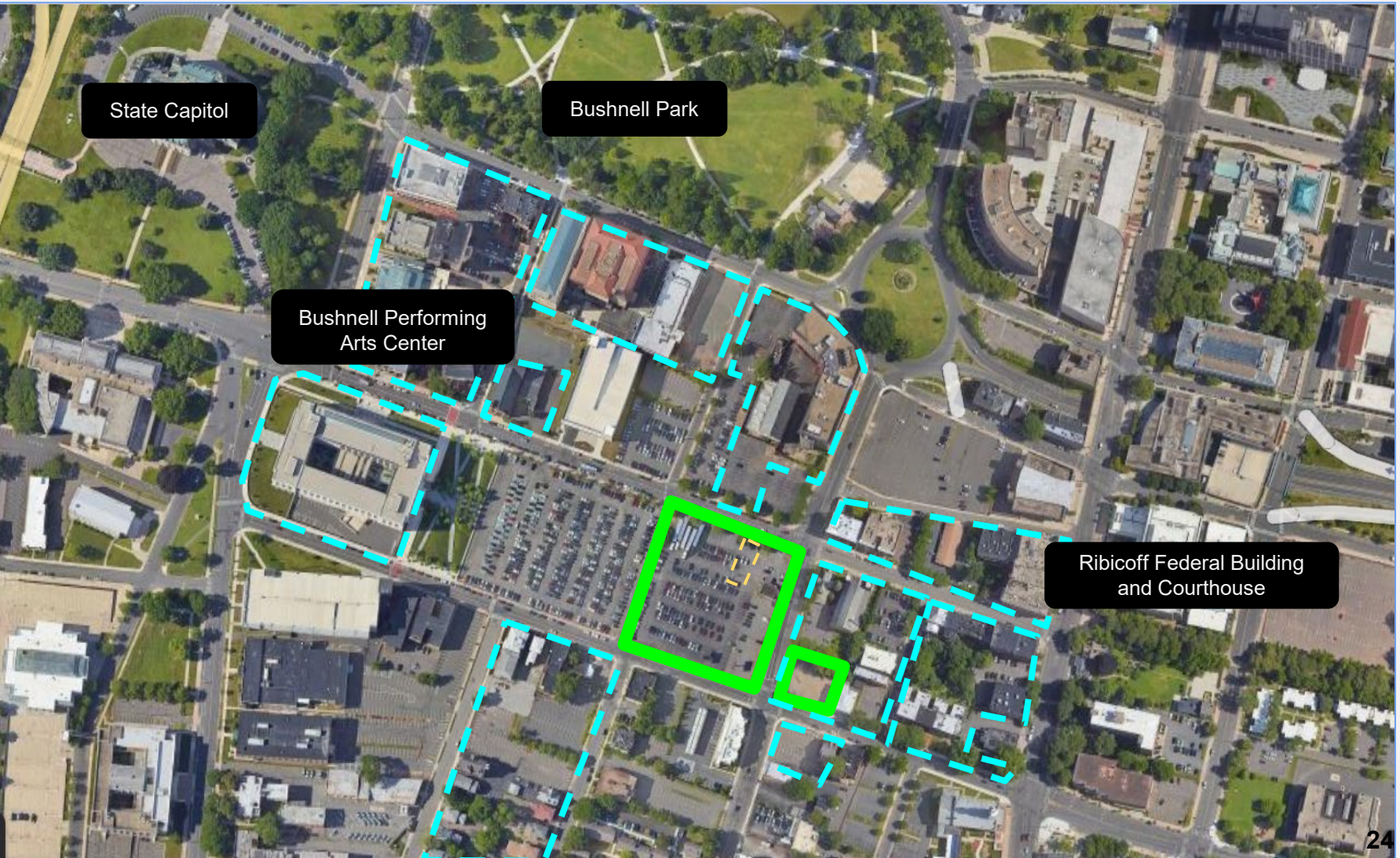
# Alternative: Woodland Site



# Alternative: Allyn Site



# Alternative: Hudson Site





U.S. General Services Administration

# New Federal Courthouse Project - Hartford

New Courthouse: Submitting Public Comments





# Tell us what you think!

---

## Written Comments must be submitted by July 6, 2023

- In Person:** Fill out a comment form and leave it here with us tonight
- Email:** Send an email to [HartfordCourthouse@gsa.gov](mailto:HartfordCourthouse@gsa.gov) with subject line “**Hartford Courthouse EIS**”
- Mail:** Send written comments to:
  - General Services Administration
  - Attention: Robert Herman, Project Manager
  - Abraham A. Ribicoff U.S. Courthouse
  - 450 Main St., Suite 435
  - Hartford, CT 06103
- Dropbox:** Place written comments in the dropbox at the main entrance of the Ribicoff Courthouse at 450 Main Street.





# Commenting Etiquette

---

- Once called please step up to the Microphone.
- Say and spell your first and last name at the start of your comment.
- Be respectful of participants and presenters.
- Remain quiet while others are speaking.
- Verbal comments will be held to a 2-minute time limit.
- If time allows, participants may be permitted to speak again after all commenters have had the opportunity to speak. Additional comments can also be submitted in writing.
- A recording of the meeting will be made available, and your comments will be included in the administrative record.

THANK YOU!

