



In The Matter Of
U.S. General Services Administration
Public Scoping Meeting
New Federal Courthouse Project

CASE

Meeting

Date

6-14-2023

Witness

Public

**Certified Original
Transcript**



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U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING
NEW FEDERAL COURTHOUSE PROJECT

June 14, 2023

Mac Avenue Event Space
1304 McCallie Avenue
Suite A
Chattanooga, TN 37404

6:00 p.m.

Reported by: MELISSA M. SMITH, RPR, LCR, CCR

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A P P E A R A N C E S

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Audience

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(WHEREUPON, the following proceedings were had:)

MS. BROWN: Good evening, everyone. Welcome. It's nice to be in Chattanooga.

My name is Danita Brown. I'm the Regional Historic Preservation & Fine Arts Officer for Region 4 of the U.S. General Services Administration, and we are so glad to see everyone here for this public scoping meeting for our new federal courthouse here in Chattanooga.

On behalf of GSA and our valued federal partner, the U.S. Courts, thank you all joining us here tonight for this public meeting on the new federal courthouse here in Chattanooga.

The purpose of tonight's meeting is important in that we will be sharing our National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA process with you that we are engaged in at this initial stage of the siting and construction of the new courthouse. This meeting allows for early public involvement to help determine which NEPA issues

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1 will need to be addressed.

2 So I just share the purpose of this
3 meeting. We hope in three parts to share at
4 least these three elements with you: Describe
5 the NEPA process, which is the National
6 Environmental Policy Act; share project
7 information with you on the new courthouse; and
8 let you know what the next steps are in the NEPA
9 process.

10 More importantly too we have a chance
11 to hear your comments tonight. So, as we go
12 through the meeting, if you determine that you
13 have some comments -- this would not be a Q-and-A
14 session, but we will be updating you on our
15 public website as we go through, and there will
16 be other spaces for that type of activity. So
17 tonight is mainly for to share information with
18 you and to gather initial comments.

19 Scoping is an early public
20 involvement process to obtain feedback on
21 alternatives particularly related to the sites of
22 consideration and issues that the NEPA analysis
23 will address. So, as I described earlier, we are
24 going to look at the NEPA process, we're going to
25 share project information with you, and inform

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1 you of the next steps in the process.

2 GSA welcomes public comment during
3 this phase and throughout the process.

4 My colleagues at GSA are here.

5 I want to introduce you to Ash Desai, who is our
6 NEPA project manager; Shawn Kelly, who is the
7 project manger; and Sheri DeMartino, who is the
8 site program manager.

9 We also have with us today our
10 environmental contractor that's with Potomac
11 Hudson Engineering, Erin Kouvousis, and Diego
12 Santaella, environmental scientist with PHE.

13 So I want to remind you, if you do
14 have a cell phone, if you can please mute or
15 vibrate it.

16 As I mentioned earlier, we are in the
17 early stages of a long and complex process.
18 There will be time for questions and answers in
19 another space. Tonight is primarily for hearing
20 your comments either related to the site,
21 community issues, environmental issues, those
22 things that might affect our site selection. We
23 want to make sure we record it. We do have
24 someone here who is recording every comment.

25 Again, on behalf of GSA, welcome, and

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1 we'll get started. I'll turn it over to Ash to
2 begin the NEPA process.

3 MR. DESAI: Good evening, everyone.
4 First off, thank you for coming to this public
5 scoping meeting. My name is Ashish Desai. I'm
6 the Regional Environmental Specialist in GSA in
7 Region 4.

8 So our headquarters is in Atlanta.
9 So Region 4 encompasses eight states throughout
10 the southeast region. So I'm responsible for
11 implementing the NEPA requirements in those eight
12 states of the southeast region.

13 So I'm going to provide you a brief
14 overview of what is NEPA and how we're going to
15 apply the NEPA process to the Chattanooga
16 courthouse project.

17 So NEPA is the National Environmental
18 Policy Act. It's NEPA. NEPA establishes
19 national federal policy. In that case, whenever
20 federal agencies implement any proposed action,
21 we have to disclose the impacts to the public on
22 the human environment. So we have to consider
23 the impact, the environmental impact on the human
24 environment, and disclose those impacts to the
25 public. That is the basic purpose of the NEPA

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1 regulation.

2 So, NEPA, when we go through the
3 process of NEPA, we also automatically comply
4 with several environmental regulations. So in
5 order to determine impact on the environment, we
6 have to collect the environmental data on each of
7 the three sites under consideration.

8 Our contractor, Potomac Hudson
9 Engineering, is already in the process of
10 collecting the environmental data of the three
11 sites. So they're already talking to the
12 property owners, they're already talking to the
13 city folks, they're already talking to several
14 other agencies and will be collecting the
15 environmental data on each of the three sites
16 so -- in order to determine the significance of
17 the impact on the environmental resources.

18 So it is also -- if you do -- if
19 there is some impact on the resources, then we
20 will do some mitigation, mitigation actions, if
21 needed, to reduce the impact on the environment.

22 So, as part of the NEPA process, we
23 will be preparing a document called Environmental
24 Assessment Document. So this document will
25 actually identify the impacts on all the

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1 resources, how the major impacts, minor impacts,
2 what level of impacts are there and how -- the
3 mitigation measures GSA will take, if needed, in
4 order to reduce the impact on the environment.
5 So, this EA, we will talk a little bit about that
6 later.

7 So in this forum we want to collect
8 your input. We want to collect your feedback on
9 the three sites that we are considering under
10 this NEPA process.

11 We also -- a lot of times you may be
12 aware of environmental issues that we may not be
13 aware of. So if you are aware of any
14 environmental issues that you would like us to
15 consider on these three proposed sites, then,
16 please, let us know so we can analyze those
17 issues in detail in the environmental assessment
18 process.

19 So, like I mentioned, that we -- when
20 we implement the NEPA process, we're
21 automatically complying with several regulations
22 because we have to make sure we comply with
23 Historic Preservation Act, Clean Air Act, Clean
24 Water Act, Archeological Resources Act,
25 Endangered Species, Environmental Justice. So

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1 all those requirements are there to make sure we
2 comply. So when we implement this process, we
3 are automatically complying with these
4 requirements by collecting the data.

5 So these are some examples of
6 environmental resources that will be considered.
7 For example, so what is the impact on air
8 quality, what is the impact on climate change,
9 for example, when we implement proposed actions.

10 So in this case the proposed action
11 is to build a courthouse, right? So what is the
12 impact on the air quality and climate change when
13 we implement, when we build the courthouse at
14 each of the three sites?

15 Same thing:
16 What is the impact on socioeconomics?
17 What is the impact on the surrounding
18 community when we build the courthouse at each of
19 the three sites?

20 What is the impact on the
21 environmental justice?

22 What is the impact on noise?

23 Are there any contamination on the
24 properties?

25 What is the impact on historic

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1 properties, cultural resources?

2 What is the impact on endangered
3 species, impact on wetland, floodplain?

4 So those are the resources that we
5 consider. So we'll be looking at the impact of
6 all those resources when we implement the
7 proposed action to build the courthouse on each
8 of the three sites. So those things are a big
9 part of the Environmental Assessment document.

10 So this is the overview of the NEPA
11 process. So as part of the NEPA process we need
12 your input. We need your feedback. So -- and
13 the public involvement process started when we
14 sent out the public announcement on May 31st and
15 also sent out -- the stakeholders, we sent out an
16 e-mail to all the interested parties that may
17 have an interest on this project. So we already
18 sent out that e-mail and also the public
19 announcement on May 31st. That's when the public
20 involvement process started.

21 And I already got back quite a few
22 comments from the public, so we'll be considering
23 all those comments. And this is also, again, the
24 public involvement process. That's why we are
25 here right now. This public scoping is the stage

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1 of the process right now. So you still have some
2 time to provide your comments or feedback on
3 these three sites. Any of the issues you may be
4 aware of the three sites, please let us know so
5 we can analyze those issues in detail.

6 So there is -- we do have another
7 opportunity to provide comments on the NEPA
8 process. So, like I mentioned, Potomac Hudson
9 Engineering's collecting data, environmental
10 data, right now, so developing the document
11 called Environmental Assessment which will
12 analyze the impact on all the resources that
13 I mentioned and if the impacts are significant,
14 not significant. And they'll also -- if any
15 mitigation measures are required or not, so all
16 those things will be -- will be outlined, will be
17 described in the document called Environmental
18 Assessment document.

19 So once that document goes through
20 the internal review process, it will go through
21 the legal process. And after the internal review
22 and legal process it will be available for your
23 review as well.

24 So that is the second time you will
25 have a chance to provide comments on the NEPA

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1 process. So that document will also be available
2 for 30-day review. And, if you would like -- if
3 you would like to receive a copy of the
4 Environmental Assessment document, please sign up
5 at the very -- where you entered on the sign-in
6 sheet, and we will make sure that you're added to
7 the stakeholders list, interested party list.
8 And then we can send you a copy of the
9 Environmental Assessment document for your review
10 as well.

11 So once we get your comments back on
12 the assessment, Environmental Assessment
13 document, then depending on the comments we will
14 finalize the EA. And based on our experience,
15 based on whatever -- we have done a lot of
16 courthouses in the past. We have done the
17 Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, courthouse in the past,
18 we have done the Miami FBI building, done EA in
19 the past, Anniston, a lot of others in the past.
20 And based on our experience we believe that it
21 will be no significant impact. So we believe --
22 even if there is some impact, we will try to
23 mitigate the impact using identified mitigation
24 measures and will reduce the impact on the
25 environment.

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1 So most likely we believe that the
2 NEPA process will result in a finding of no
3 significant impact, and -- yeah.

4 And if we do need to do more studies,
5 we will do more studies. The Environmental
6 Assessment will consider four alternatives. Like
7 I mentioned before, the three action alternatives
8 and one no-action alternative.

9 So the three action alternatives are
10 the three sites under consideration. So, like,
11 the three sites under consideration will be the
12 action alternatives that will be evaluated under
13 the EA. And we have to include a no-action
14 alternative also because that gives us a
15 comparison, that gives us a baseline, a baseline
16 for comparing the action alternatives with the
17 no-action alternatives.

18 So, like I mentioned, Potomac Hudson
19 Engineering is in the process of collecting all
20 the environmental data right now. And, once they
21 collect all the data, they will be analyzing the
22 data to determine the significance of impacts --
23 major and minor -- and then identify any
24 mitigation measures, if required, if needed. And
25 then the document will be developed, and the

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1 document, EA document, will go to the internal
2 review process and go through legal process, and
3 then it will be available for your review.

4 That is available through public
5 notice and through the stakeholders list. So
6 once we get through that process, then we will
7 develop the Finding of No Significant Impact.
8 It's a document called Finding of No Significant
9 impact. And at that time that will conclude the
10 NEPA process. So in case if we do need to do any
11 studies, further studies based on your feedback,
12 based on your comments, we will do that.

13 I think that's basically the overview
14 of the NEPA process and how we're going to apply
15 the NEPA process to the Chattanooga courthouse
16 project.

17 So I think I would like to turn over
18 to the project manager, Shawn Kelly. He will
19 give you the background information, what the
20 courthouse would look like, and the -- project
21 information.

22 Shawn.

23 MR. KELLY: Thank you, Ash.

24 And thank you everyone for being here
25 tonight.

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1 My name is Shawn Kelly, GSA project
2 manager, managing the construction of the
3 project. I will be partnering with Laura Shadix
4 to deliver this project. Combined we have almost
5 30 years of new construction courthouse
6 experience with the federal government.

7 A couple of recently completed
8 projects that we have done, Laura has recently
9 completed the new federal courthouse in
10 Greenville, South Carolina, which is a very
11 similar footprint to what we're looking to
12 deliver here in Chattanooga. And that is down at
13 the bottom of the page to the left.

14 And I recently completed the new
15 annex addition and modernization of the Charlotte
16 federal courthouse, which is to the right of
17 bottom of the page.

18 Together we're very excited to start
19 this new project and bring a new courthouse here
20 to Chattanooga.

21 A little bit about the past. The
22 courts currently reside in the Joel W. Solomon
23 Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse as well as
24 occupied lease space in the Old Post Office
25 Custom House Building in Chattanooga.

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1 The Joel W. Solomon Federal Building
2 was constructed in 1931, and our studies have
3 found numerous functional challenges related to
4 circulation, operational, and safety needs
5 required to operate the existing courthouse. Our
6 findings have also shown the current courthouse
7 does not meet existing projected needs for the
8 court space, functionality, security, and
9 building systems.

10 The Court's long-term planning
11 studies concluded that a new freestanding
12 courthouse is needed to meet the long-term needs
13 of the courts and provide improved circulation
14 for the public, judges, and prisoners, and
15 thereby improve the security and efficiency of
16 court operations.

17 GSA also has tentative plans for the
18 reuse of the Joel W. Solomon Federal Building and
19 Courthouse upon the completion of the new
20 Chattanooga courthouse. However, these plans are
21 not included in our current project.

22 So what has Congress authorized GSA
23 to do? Obviously, acquire land in the city of
24 Chattanooga and design and construct a new
25 186,000 gross square foot courthouse. That

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1 courthouse will include seven courtrooms, nine
2 judges chambers, and offices for various federal
3 agency tenants as well as include 39 secure
4 parking spaces.

5 The project should take approximately
6 six to seven years. We're currently in the site
7 selection and acquisition phase of the project.
8 Upon completion of this phase, we will move into
9 the design phase, which approximate duration is
10 two to two and a half years, and then move
11 through that into the construction phase, which
12 is approximately three years.

13 So this is a long, long process and a
14 long project, but one we hope will have positive
15 impacts on the city of Chattanooga.

16 Having said that, I'm going to turn
17 it over to Sheri DeMartino to talk to you more
18 about site selection and acquisition.

19 MS. DeMARTINO: Thank you, Shawn.

20 For those of you that I haven't met
21 previously, I'm Sheri. My coworker Tammy Sadler
22 and I are responsible for the site selection and
23 acquisition phase of the new courthouse project.

24 This evening I'd like to start by
25 reviewing the work that we've done so far on this

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1 important project.

2 We began by establishing a site
3 selections team, which is made up of GSA and the
4 courts' representatives. That team is also
5 supported by various GSA subject matter experts
6 in fields such as real estate, environmental
7 design and construction, historic preservation,
8 and urban planning, to name a few. Those
9 individuals are assisting us in our analysis of
10 the sites.

11 Once our team was established, our
12 first task was to identify the minimum
13 requirements for the new site, and those are
14 relative to the location of the site and the size
15 of the site.

16 Court must be held in the city limits
17 of Chattanooga, and the site must accommodate a
18 building, as Shawn mentioned, of 166,000 gross
19 square feet. From our experience, we know that
20 is generally a site size of approximately 3 to
21 5 acres, but not less than 2 acres. That would
22 be the minimum that we could consider.

23 We started our market research in
24 December of 2021, and we kicked that off by
25 releasing a request for expressions of interest,

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1 which we refer to also as REOI. The purpose of
2 that effort is to ask property owners to submit
3 sites that we could consider as options for the
4 new courthouse.

5 In addition that, we met with the
6 City to discuss any suitable sites that they
7 might be aware of, and we conducted additional
8 research over a period of months with the goal of
9 generating as large a pool of sites as possible
10 to consider.

11 We reviewed and researched each site
12 and toured the locations in person. And during
13 this phase in April of 2022 we also received
14 Congressional authorization for the project. So
15 by this past January, January of 2023, we had
16 identified what we felt were the three top sites,
17 and we refer to those as "the short list of
18 sites."

19 At this point I want to take a moment
20 and refer back to a slide that Ash spoke to
21 previously regarding project alternatives and
22 just tie this back to what I mentioned
23 previously.

24 As Ash explained, the Environmental
25 Assessment will consider four alternatives. One

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1 is the no-action alternative, and three are what
2 we refer to as action alternatives. And those
3 correspond to the three short-listed sites. Each
4 of those will be considered one of the action
5 alternatives.

6 The three short-listed sites are
7 listed on this slide in order from north to
8 south. They are the Hawk Hill Stadium Site, the
9 Eighth Street site, and the TVA site.

10 For those of you that remember that
11 I said 3 to 5 acres is the site size we're
12 looking for, you will realize that the stadium
13 site and the TVA site are larger sites. So
14 relative to those sites, while we'll be studying
15 the entire site as part of our process, if either
16 of those were selected as the preferred
17 alternative, the entire site would not be
18 required for the new courthouse.

19 This map shows the location of the
20 three short-listed sites as well as the Solomon
21 Building. The stadium site is shown in yellow,
22 the Eighth Street site is shown in blue, the
23 Solomon building appears in red, and the TVA site
24 is furthest south, and that appears in green.

25 And the next slide will provide a

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1 closer look at each of the properties on the
2 short list.

3 The stadium site is over 6 acres in
4 size and is located near the Aquarium. It's
5 bordered on the west by 29 and on the east by
6 Power Alley.

7 The Eighth Street site contains
8 properties that total just under 3 acres. It's
9 bordered on the north by East Eighth Street, on
10 the east by Houston, on the west by Lindsey, and
11 it extends south to and includes the surface
12 parking lot located at 814 Lindsey.

13 The TVA site is over 8 acres located
14 near the convention center, and it's bisected by
15 Broad Street. It's bordered on the north by West
16 11th Street, on the west by Chestnut, on the east
17 by Market, and on the south by West 12th Street.

18 Our team is really excited about
19 these sites and about the opportunity to
20 construct a new courthouse that will serve the
21 City of Chattanooga for the next 100 years. We
22 appreciate your interest in this landmark
23 project, and I'd like to thank you for your
24 joining us this evening.

25 So at this point I'll turn it back to

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1 Danita for the verbal comments portion of our
2 segment.

3 MS. BROWN: Thank you, Sheri and
4 Shawn and Ash.

5 I think we got a great overview of
6 the NEPA process. We understand what the new
7 courthouse is to address for our federal partner,
8 the U.S. courts. And then we also presented to
9 you the three site alternatives that we're
10 exploring.

11 So now is our chance to hear from you
12 in terms of your comments regarding the
13 environmental and site conditions that these
14 three sites may pose in your community.

15 So I want to share -- there are three
16 ways that you can comment on this process. One
17 is in person tonight. And some of you have
18 indicated that you would like to speak tonight so
19 we'll be calling upon you for that purpose.

20 Another way is through e-mail and
21 sending an e-mail through my colleague Ash
22 Desai -- his e-mail address is here -- ensuring
23 that in the subject-line "Chattanooga Courthouse
24 Comment EA" is there so we can properly record
25 your comment.

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1 And then, thirdly, through mail by
2 sending correspondence to Ash at the GSA regional
3 offices in Atlanta.

4 All of these by July 1st. So that is
5 the cut-off date for our NEPA process for
6 receiving public comment.

7 So let's get started. Let's review
8 some of the ways that we are going to engage and
9 comment.

10 When your name is called, we ask that
11 you please stand and wait for someone to bring a
12 mic to you.

13 We ask that you please state and
14 spell your first and last name as we are
15 recording the comments.

16 Of course, we're going to be
17 respectful of participants and presenters.

18 Verbal comments will be limited to
19 two minutes, and so you will get a warning at one
20 minute, a minute and a half. At two minutes you
21 can start wrapping up your comments.

22 If time allows -- we would like for
23 everyone to have a chance to comment. If you
24 find that you'd like to speak again, let's make
25 sure we go through everyone on our list, and then

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1 you're welcome to make a second comment.

2 And, again, you always have e-mail
3 and mail to make additional comments.

4 So with that, I have a list here, and
5 I'm just going to call the first name here that
6 has indicated they would like to speak during
7 today's open comment session.

8 Ann Pierce.

9 Is Ann pierce in the room?

10 MS. PIERRE: Pierre.

11 MS. BROWN: Oh, Pierre. Yes.

12 MS. PIERRE: I'll use e-mail.

13 MS. BROWN: Okay. You'll use e-mail.

14 Thank you so much.

15 The next name I have here is Stephen
16 Hinkle and Todd Morgan. Did I get that correct?
17 You can correct me when the mic comes to you.
18 Thank you.

19 MR. MORGAN: Thank you.

20 My name is Todd Morgan, so T-O-D-D
21 M-O-R-G-A-N. I'm the Executive Director of
22 Preserve Chattanooga, which is the historic
23 preservation nonprofit serving Chattanooga.

24 And we actually have sent a formal
25 letter here on behalf of our board of directors

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1 who just want to note that we do oppose the site
2 on Eighth Avenue because of the historic
3 resources that are there. We're very supportive
4 of the TVA site and the stadium site, but we
5 particularly feel like the TVA site would be a
6 good place to, you know, really integrate with
7 the existing infrastructure and the walkability
8 of our downtown area. Thank you.

9 MS. BROWN: Thank you very much,
10 Mr. Morgan.

11 I next have Happy Baker.

12 MS. BAKER: Thank you. I'm Happy
13 Baker, H-A-P-P-Y B-A-K-E-R.

14 And I reiterate what Todd said in
15 that as an historic preservationist I feel that
16 to tear down perfectly good buildings on Eighth
17 Street would be a shame, rather than to save
18 them.

19 And I also agree that the walkability
20 of the TVA site is wonderful. I think it would
21 be more the center of town, as it is now going,
22 rather than having it up on the hill.

23 And I also don't think Hawk Hill
24 would be a great place for it either. It's a
25 6-acre site. If you only need 2 to 3 acres, it

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1 seems a shame to have to think what else you have
2 to do.

3 With TVA, yes, it's 8 acres, but it
4 would be a distinct portion of that property that
5 could be taken and developed for the courthouse
6 without an adverse impact on any other buildings
7 around it, and it would be exciting to have it
8 there. That's what I -- and, also, I don't like
9 Eighth Street and I don't like Hawk Hill.

10 So I'm hoping that y'all will choose
11 the TVA site. It would also mean we have some
12 tenants in the TVA building when they are gone.
13 Thank you.

14 MS. BROWN: Thank you. Appreciate
15 it.

16 Okay. I have a "maybe" here, Craig
17 Cronenberg.

18 MR. CRONENBERG: Craig Cronenberg.
19 C-R-A-I-G C-R-O-N-E-N-B-E-R-G.

20 I have some observations about the
21 TVA site, and it has to do with the environmental
22 impact of the evident, probably, demolition of
23 the entire project, because of the vacation of
24 the TVA to another site which just became aware
25 to the general public a couple days ago.

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1 So we have a massive void that's
2 going to occur within the city, replaced in part,
3 perhaps, by a federal courthouse building, and
4 then either a remaining independent building or a
5 cleared site.

6 This may contradict the federal
7 sustainability guidelines because this is going
8 to create a massive export of demolition
9 material, and also it will create a void in the
10 city that really will require the City to do some
11 careful study about what do they want to fill
12 this void with.

13 So I would urge that your NEPA would
14 study the possibility, if TVA is a viable site,
15 of the re-purposing of the existing building as
16 opposed to demolishing it and building new.

17 MS. BROWN: Thank you very much.

18 Okay. I now have another "maybe,"
19 David Hammel.

20 MR. HAMMEL: Hello. My name is Dave
21 Hammel. I was with Raines Brothers for years,
22 and I've always liked keeping track of what's
23 going on in the city.

24 I really don't like any of the sites.

25 I want to post out there that there is a site

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1 right there that was sold to the county. It's
2 right across from the interstate right by the
3 BlueCross building. You can tear it down, put
4 whatever you want. Plenty of room, and you avoid
5 a lot of the issues that you're talking about
6 here. You don't have any history. You don't
7 have any existing buildings of any significance.

8 And opportunities come along, and
9 this opportunity for that site was not available
10 until recently. The City bought it -- the City
11 or County bought it. I'd like to have it added
12 to your consideration, your site consideration.
13 I think it would be an easy one.

14 I don't like Hawk Hill because,
15 driving north, it's just -- I just can't imagine
16 a courthouse sitting up there all by itself.

17 Thank you.

18 I'd like it to be beautiful too.

19 MR. DESAI: Thank you. Can you spell
20 your first and last name for us for the record,
21 please.

22 MR. HAMMEL: David Hammel,
23 H-A-M-M-E-L.

24 MS. BROWN: Thank you, sir. Thank
25 you so much.

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1 So I have next a Garnet Chapin.

2 MR. CHAPIN: That would be me, Garnet
3 Chapin. I've been practicing preservation
4 architecture here and elsewhere for most of my
5 life.

6 And I've got to agree with what every
7 one of them said. I think the TVA site --
8 I never knew, until Craig just said, they planned
9 to demolish that building. What craziness is
10 that after all of the energy that went into
11 building the dam in the middle of town.

12 But to use some of that space for a
13 truly urban factor like the federal courthouse,
14 I think, is a good idea. I go along with
15 Preserve Chattanooga and Happy.

16 I think Craig's insight is very
17 important. Why destroy a perfectly good building
18 just because the federal government doesn't need
19 it anymore? Well, they may need it for part of
20 the courthouse structure.

21 One minute remaining. Well, I won't
22 take that long.

23 I think y'all know I love
24 Chattanooga. And I think these public meetings
25 where everyone has an opportunity to speak their

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1 mind and vet all of these different proposals is
2 the way it's been developed here in Chattanooga
3 for the last 40 years, and it's great. I trust
4 the outcome of the process.

5 MS. BROWN: Thank you for your
6 comments.

7 Those are the official listing of
8 folks I have that wanted to speak.

9 Are there any others that would like
10 to offer a comment here? Please.

11 Again, if you would, say your first
12 and last name and spell it for the reporter.

13 MR. MARTIN: My name is Joe Martin,
14 J-O-E M-A-R-T-I-N.

15 Just like to echo, reinforce what
16 everyone else has said about the TVA site.
17 I didn't know they were going to demolish it
18 actually. That wasn't a thought. So clearly
19 it's substantial, and it needs -- although I know
20 they put a lot of effort into making it more
21 energy efficient, it's not going to meet up to
22 today's standards. So my hope would be that --
23 Ash, particularly you were talking about issues
24 with climate change and all that sort of stuff --
25 that entire complex be brought up to some sort of

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1 net zero standard. That's got a lot of solar
2 exposure and a lot of potential for renewable
3 energy, et cetera, so to really enhance the
4 performance of that massive structure.

5 But I think in your NEPA process, I
6 guess, I'd like to hear -- I know NEPA has a lot
7 of -- the process has a lot of power over what
8 happens over the eventuality of this development.
9 So I'd like to hear from you about y'all's --
10 GSA's intent with regard to becoming a more
11 carbon neutral facility, net positive, et cetera.

12 So if you could maybe elaborate a
13 little bit on what the GSA's process is in that
14 regard.

15 MS. BROWN: So tonight we're not
16 entertaining a question-and-answer, but that is
17 something we can address on our website.

18 Let me go to the next slide.

19 This website is where we all can go
20 to get the latest updates, and this is only one
21 of several spaces we're going to have to receive
22 comment and engage more in Q-and-A.

23 But, tonight, I don't know, Ash, if
24 you want to just address a little bit of that.

25 But I know it's specifically designed for

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1 comment. And we're going to record it, so we
2 should keep track of what you said and others
3 have said about the three sites that we're
4 considering.

5 Any other comments?

6 Again, if you can state your first
7 and last name and spell it.

8 MS. NELSON: Alex Nelson, A-L-E-X
9 N-E-L-S-O-N.

10 I guess something I was curious
11 about, regardless of what site you choose and
12 ultimately move forward with, regarding the
13 assessments of the environmental impacts, the
14 soil and those sorts of things, I guess, I think
15 a lot of people would probably be interested to
16 know if they're done independently, if you are
17 bringing in multiple outside assessments, or is
18 it local, is it, you know, on the property owner,
19 or those things that the federal and state
20 government collaborate on.

21 And then, I guess, the last aspect of
22 that that I think people would probably be
23 interested to know, again regardless of what site
24 is selected, would be the current infrastructure
25 of water, plumbing, and any issues that may arise

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1 with that and who's responsible and liable for
2 those issues.

3 So thank you.

4 MS. BROWN: Thank you. Any other
5 comments?

6 REV. CARTER: Reverend J. David
7 Carter, from the Basilica of Saints Peter and
8 Paul, Roman Catholic.

9 And for the record we are a property
10 owner on the Eight Street site. I just want to
11 speak to the human impact or the society impact
12 to my congregation in the loss of parking lot and
13 a substantial building there if that site were
14 selected and wanted to just say we would be
15 averse to that site being chosen for that reason
16 because it would adversely affect our
17 congregation's ability to have convenient parking
18 to get people to the church. So we would be
19 opposed to the Eighth Street site for that human
20 reason.

21 MS. BROWN: Thank you very much.
22 Please re-state your name for us.

23 MS. BAKER: So far as the Eighth
24 Street site goes, another problem that I have
25 with it is that Eighth Street is a major street

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1 that has buildings of architectural importance,
2 including the Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul.
3 They're on Eighth Street, as well as the original
4 YWCA, the original school that was there when
5 I was a child and so on, as well as the historic
6 Baptist church, the Eighth Street Baptist Church,
7 which was built in 1885 and is one of the oldest
8 churches in town also. It's a historic
9 congregation.

10 And I think it would have a terrible
11 impact on the entire street to have that done.
12 I think it could also -- in doing the
13 construction, could have an adverse affect on the
14 Basilica. I mean, it worries me when you start
15 tearing down surrounding buildings and then doing
16 major construction around these older structures.
17 So that's the other reason I'm opposed to Eighth
18 Street. Thank you.

19 MS. BROWN: Thank you. Anyone else?
20 These are great comments. We really appreciate
21 them.

22 MR. SCHULSON: Hi. My name is Henry
23 Schulson, S-C-H-U-L-S-O-N. I'm the CEO of the
24 Creative Discovery Museum at 328 Chestnut Street,
25 which is at the base of Hawk Hill.

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1 I just wanted to say we would oppose
2 the courthouse at the stadium site. We're an
3 institution that attracts about 250,000 visitors
4 a year. The Riverfront District is primarily an
5 area for students, children, families, and
6 tourists. And it doesn't seem like that's -- the
7 courthouse would be a good complement to the
8 activities there, whereas in other parts of
9 downtown it would be more complementary and would
10 strengthen the neighborhood. But definitely in
11 that area I don't see how it would strengthen
12 that neighborhood.

13 And, in addition, River City Company
14 is doing a master plan for that entire site,
15 getting input from the greater community as well
16 as the stakeholders. So I hope that any decision
17 would respect the recommendations of that master
18 plan. Thank you.

19 MS. BROWN: We have a few more
20 moments. Are there any other comments, thoughts
21 on your mind regarding this public space?

22 State your name again please.

23 MR. HAMMEL: I'm Dave Hammel again.

24 I just wanted to ask -- I know this
25 isn't supposed to be question-and-answer -- but

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1 if the TVA site was used, is it your intent to
2 use the existing building and modify it or to
3 demolish it and start from scratch?

4 That's a question.

5 MS. BROWN: That's a question.

6 MR. HAMMEL: That is a question.

7 MR. KELLY: I apologize. Tonight,
8 we're not taking questions. We'll share
9 (inaudible)

10 MR. HAMMEL: That's all right. You
11 should have the answer to that.

12 MS. BROWN: It's very early in the
13 process. So this is one of many opportunities
14 that we're going to engage the community in this
15 NEPA process. So we appreciate you, you know,
16 coming here, showing -- at least helping us shape
17 what some of the comments and issues are in the
18 community. So this is very beneficial.

19 Any other thoughts or comments?

20 Well, what I'll do, since there is no
21 other comments, we'll go ahead and end our
22 meeting today.

23 Again, we can go to this website,
24 GSA.gov/ChattanoogaCourthouse. And the team here
25 will be making updates to it. Check it often.

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1 Again, I'll go back to the slide for
2 how you can submit comments by July 1st, tonight,
3 e-mail or mail.

4 So, again, thank you all for coming
5 out, and we look forward to engaging with you
6 again. Have a good evening.

7 (WHEREUPON, the proceedings were
8 concluded at 6:40 p.m.)

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
COUNTY OF HAMILTON

I, MELISSA M. SMITH, Court Reporter,
with offices in Chattanooga, Tennessee, hereby
certify that I reported the foregoing hearing by
machine shorthand to the best of my skills and
abilities, and thereafter the same was reduced to
typewritten form by me.

MELISSA M. SMITH, RPR, CCR, LCR
LCR # 122 - Expires: 6/30/2024

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Transcript Errata Sheet For

Date: 6/14/23

Case Number: Meeting

Case Name: U.S. General Services Administration Public Scoping Meeting

New Federal Courthouse Project

Deponent:

Erin Kouvousis

Page	Line	Now Reads	Should Read	Remove Therefore
<u>18</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>166,000</u>	<u>186,000</u>	
<u>21</u>	<u>10 & 12</u>	<u>Lindsey</u>	<u>Lindsay</u>	
<u>24</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>pierce</u>	<u>Pierce</u>	
<u>33</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>Eight</u>	<u>Eighth</u>	

Date: 8/1/23

Signature of the Deponent:

Erin J.M. Kouvousis

Please return via email within 30days to:

[Redacted]