U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Office of Construction & Facilities Management
Washington DC 20420

July 16, 2024

Sent via email

SUBJECT: Notice of Availability of Draft Environmental Assessment for Proposed Bakersfield Community-Based Outpatient Clinic, Bakersfield, CA

Dear Valued Stakeholder:

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the potential environmental impacts associated with a proposed action to construct and operate, under a long-term build-to-suit lease, a new community-based outpatient clinic (CBOC) in Bakersfield, California (see Exhibit 1, Project Location). The new CBOC is proposed to be constructed on an approximately 10-acre site that is currently undeveloped and will consist of an approximately 40,000-gross-square-foot building with associated parking and other site improvements (see Exhibit 2, Proposed Development).

VA prepared the Draft EA according to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S. Code 4321-4370) (NEPA) and the NEPA-implementing regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508) and VA (38 CFR Part 26). Exhibit 3 summarizes the NEPA process, including public engagement, for your reference in responding to this request. The Draft EA examines the potential environmental effects from implementing the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative.

The purpose of this Proposed Action is to provide a modern, state-of-the-art medical facility to serve Veterans in Bakersfield and surrounding communities. The Proposed Action is needed to address current and future projected health care needs of Veterans in Kern County.

Concurrent with this mailing, a Notice of Availability has been published in the Bakersfield Californian to inform and solicit input from the public. The Draft EA is available on the VA website at www.cfm.va.gov/environmental. A hard copy of the Draft EA is also available for public review at Beale Memorial Library, located at 701 Truxton Avenue, Bakersfield, California.

Please submit any requests for additional information, questions, or comments on the Draft EA via email to vacoenvironment@va.gov with the subject line “Bakersfield CBOC EA” no later than Tuesday, August 20, 2024. VA will summarize and address substantive comments in the Final EA.

Respectfully,

GLENN ELLIOTT

Digitally signed by GLENN ELLIOTT
Date: 2024.07.16 13:26:00 -04'00'

Glenn Elliott
Director, Project Development Services Division
Office of Construction & Facilities Management

Exhibit 1. Project Location

Exhibit 2. Proposed Development

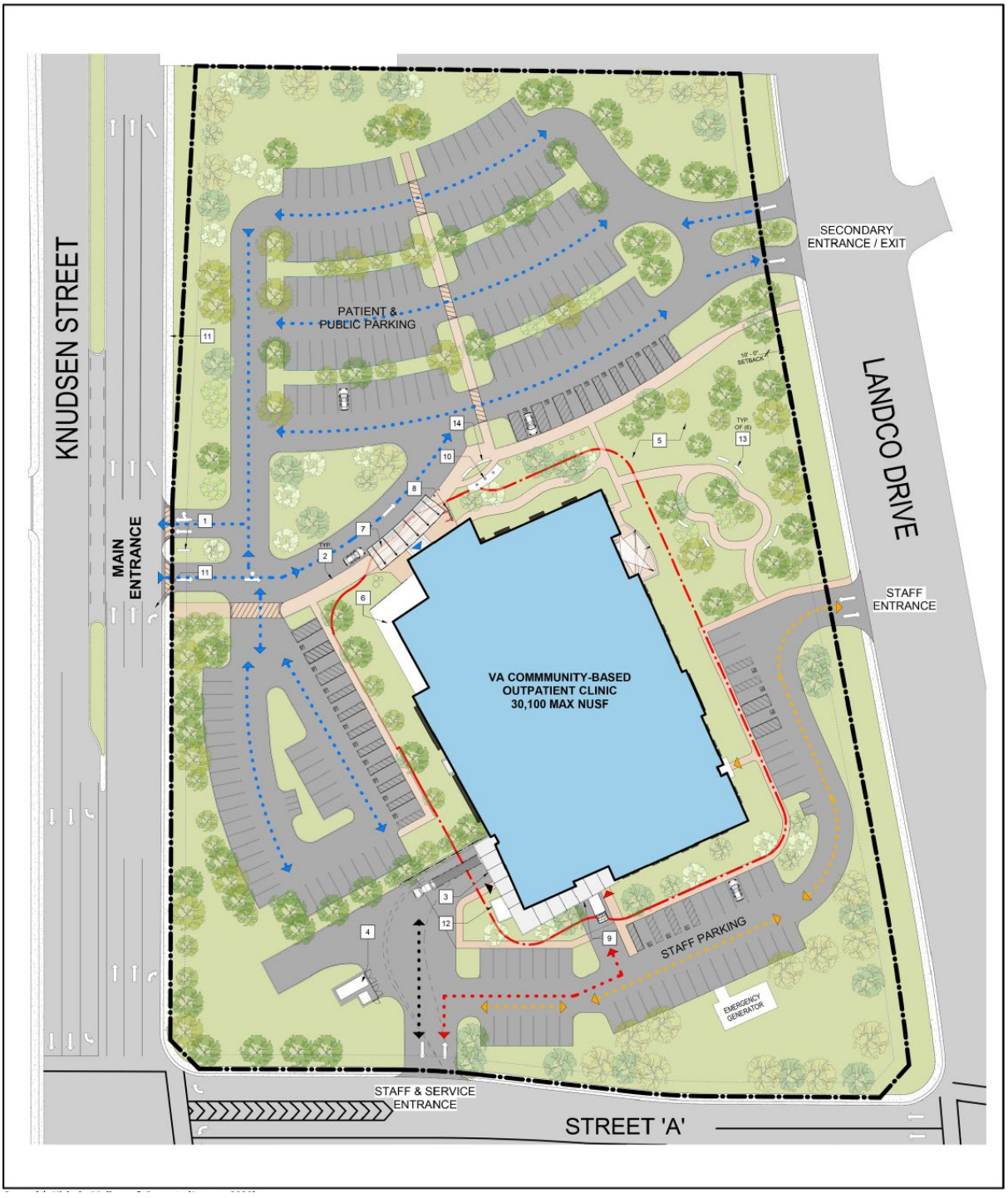


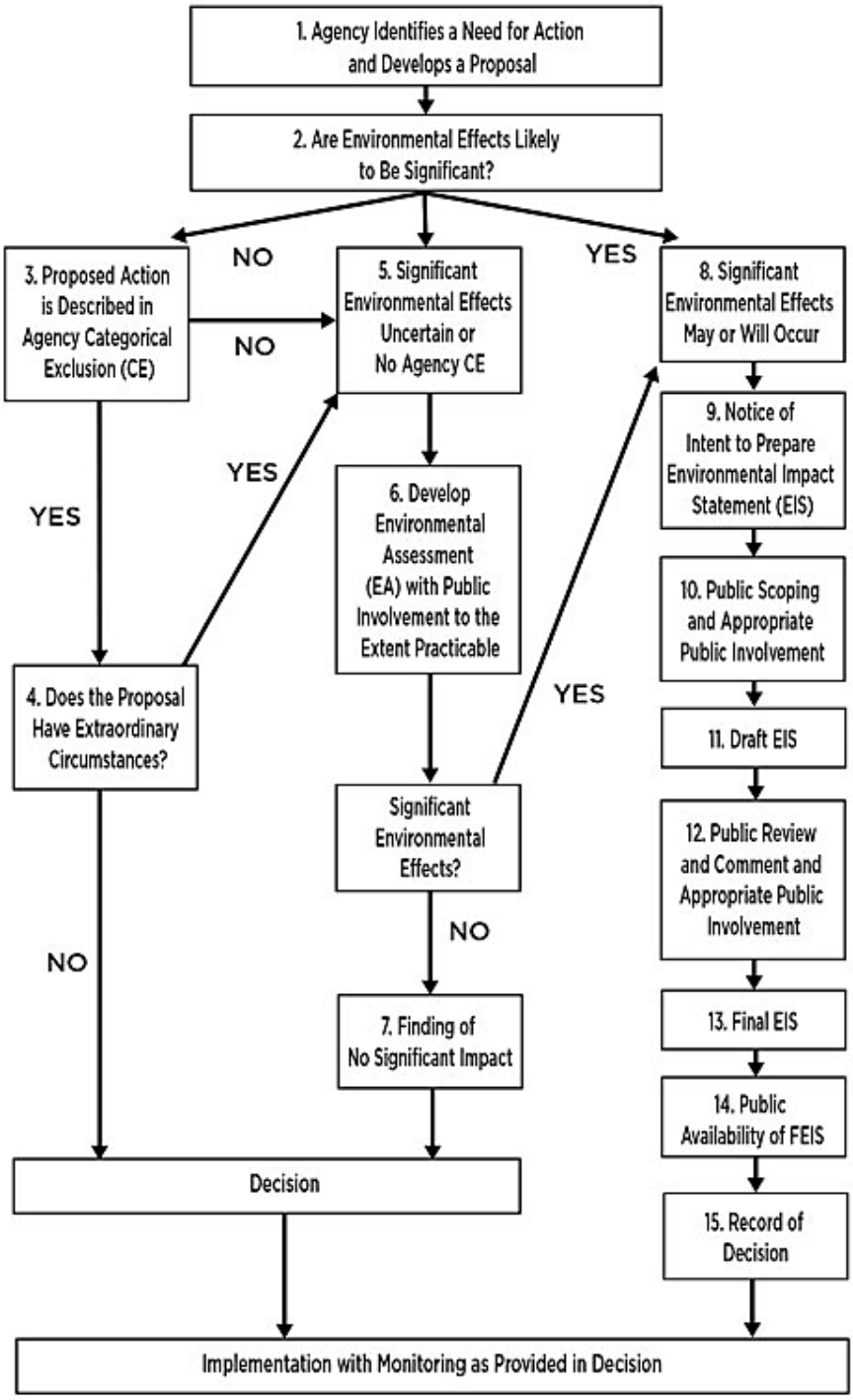
Exhibit 3. Overview of NEPA Process

This exhibit provides an overview of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. NEPA encourages better decisions by requiring federal agencies to consider the environmental effects of their proposed actions in making their decisions. NEPA also informs the public about federal agencies' decision making and, by way of invitations such as this one, requests your input and comments on these environmental reviews.

Federal agencies prepare environmental assessments (EAs) and environmental impact statements (EISs) to provide an opportunity to the public to learn about and be involved in the environmental reviews that are part of the federal agency decision-making process.

Comments may be the most important contribution from the public because they promote informed decision making. Comments should provide sufficient detail for the agency to understand the commenter's position and why the issues raised are important to the decision. Accordingly, comments should be clear, concise, relevant to the analysis of the proposed action, and submitted during the public comment periods.

It is important to understand that commenting on a proposal is not a "vote" on whether the proposed action should take place. Nonetheless, the information you provide during the EA and EIS process can influence the decision makers and their final decisions because NEPA requires that federal decision makers be informed of the environmental consequences of their decisions.



Source: *A Citizen's Guide to NEPA – Having Your Voice Heard* (https://ceq.doe.gov/get-involved/citizens_guide_to_nepa.html). Please see full document for more information.