FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

PROPOSED VA SPRING HILL RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTER

PASCO COUNTY, FLORIDA

Background

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze and document the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts associated with the Proposed Action to purchase 40 acres of land that includes an 11,047 square-foot building to operate as a residential treatment center (RTC) in the Spring Hill, Florida area (Pasco County). The EA was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 ([NEPA]; 42 United States Code 4321 *et seq*.), the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508), and *Environmental Effects of the Department of Veterans Affairs Actions* (38 CFR Part 26).

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to increase the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital's (JAHVH's) services and provide a much higher quality of care through a VA-operated RTC in the Tampa, Florida area. The proposed RTC would provide evidence-based psychotherapies, evidence-based residential programming (e.g., classes in nutrition and mindfulness exercises), medication assisted treatments, and inpatient detoxification services.

The Proposed Action is needed to address VA residential mental health space gaps and the shortage of Veteran residential care in the Tampa, Florida area. The Proposed Action will reduce the need to use community recovery centers and reduce costs that can be utilized for other Veteran treatment programs.

Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives

The Proposed Action is to purchase 40 acres of land that includes an 11,047 square-foot building to operate as a residential treatment center in Spring Hill, Florida, construct an addition to the facility (approximately 4,100 square feet), renovate and expand the parking area, and resurface Turner Loop (0.76 mile). Residential health care is currently provided on a limited basis in the Veterans Integrated Services Networks at JAHVH or by the private sector.

Under the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action would not be implemented. VA would continue to provide limited care at JAHVH and through community recovery centers in the area. The former RTC would remain vacant and may be developed by others for other commercial or residential use, in accordance with local zoning. This alternative would continue to limit VA's ability to provide a higher quality of care for the Veterans in the Tampa, Florida area for specific in-patient services.

Summary of Environmental Consequences

The Final EA concluded that the Proposed Action would result in short-term and/or long-term, less than significant potential adverse impacts to aesthetics, air quality, soils, hydrology and water quality, wildlife and habitat, noise, wetlands, solid waste and hazardous materials, and transportation. All these potential impacts are less than significant and would be further reduced through careful implementation of general best management practices (BMPs), management and minimization measures, and compliance with regulatory requirements, as identified in the Final EA. There would be short-term and beneficial impacts to socioeconomics.

Summary of Impact Analysis

Resource Area	Proposed Action Alternative	No Action Alternative
Aesthetics	Construction to expand the facility's footprint and renovate the parking area with additional spaces would reduce the existing green space and alter views from the surrounding area. Any visual effects would be minimized through attractive design. Construction activities would have short-term and minor impacts and would result in less than significant impacts.	None
Air Quality	Construction activities would have short-term and minor impacts from emissions and dust. Long-term minor emissions from the operation of the RTC and vehicle emissions would result in less than significant impacts.	None
Cultural Resources	No historic properties were identified. Less than significant impacts to cultural resources.	None
Geology and Soils	Construction activities from use of heavy equipment and paving would result in less than significant short-term and temporary impacts.	None
Hydrology and Water Quality	Implementation of best management practices and following permit requirements would result in less than significant temporary short-term impacts.	None
Wildlife and Habitat	There is a no effect determination based on the federally and state listed species that may occur on the site. Less than significant impact to vegetation and wildlife habitats.	None
Noise	Construction activities would have noticeable higher noise levels than current levels and would be short-term less than significant impacts. Operation of the RTC would result in negligible short-term and long-term impacts.	None

Resource Area	Proposed Action Alternative	No Action Alternative
Land Use	Construction and operation of the facility is consistent with local zoning and compatible with surrounding land use and would have negligible land use effects.	None
Wetlands, Floodplains, and Coastal Zone Management	Three wetlands are located on the property; however, construction and operation of the RTC Proposed Action would have no impact on wetlands or floodplains. Site is not in a Coastal High Hazard Area of coastal zone.	None
Socioeconomics	Construction would likely result in short-term and beneficial impacts to local employment and personal income. Operation would provide short-term and long-term socioeconomic benefit to the selected site area.	None
Community Services	No significant additional load is expected to be placed on the fire or police departments, increased use of other public or community services as a result of the proposed action. Less than significant impacts.	None
Solid Waste ad Hazardous Materials	No significant adverse short-term or long-term impacts during construction and operation of RTC are anticipated. Long-term operational solid wastes, hazardous materials, and medical wastes would be managed in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.	None
Transportation and Parking	Less than significant adverse short-term or long-term impacts during operation of RTC are anticipated. Minor short-term impacts from construction traffic during road resurfacing and construction activities. RTC would include adequate on-site parking by expanding the parking lot from 20 to 36 parking spaces.	None
Utilities	Long-term less than significant impacts for the operation of the RTC will occur due to increased consumption of utilities.	None
Environmental Justice	Site is not located in a disproportionately high minority or low-income population. No impact	None

Management, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

The BMPs, management and minimization measures, project-specific mitigation, and regulatory compliance measures summarized in Table 7 of the Final EA and attached here as Appendix A will be followed during construction and renovations to minimize and maintain adverse effects at less-than-significant levels.

Agency and Public Involvement

VA has consulted with appropriate federal, state, and local regulatory agencies, and federally recognized Native American Tribes identified as having possible ancestral ties to the Pasco County, Florida area. This consultation is documented in the Final EA. Comments and input submitted by regulatory agencies and Tribes have been addressed in the Final EA.

VA published and distributed the Draft EA for a 30-day public comment period, as announced by a Notice of Availability published in the Tampa Bay Times, a local newspaper of general circulation, on June 23 and 26, 2024. A copy of the Draft EA was also made available on the VA website.

VA emailed the Notice of Availability of the Draft EA for review and comment, with a link to the Draft EA on the VA website, to federal, state, and local agencies, elected officials, federally recognized Tribes, and other key stakeholders. One agency, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, provided comments regarding the Draft EA. The agency comments on the Draft EA were considered in preparing the Final EA, as appropriate.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Based on the analyses in the Final EA, which is summarized and incorporated by reference herein, VA concludes that implementing the proposed action would not generate significant controversy or have a significant impact on the quality of the natural or human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(C) of NEPA. Therefore, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required.

JASON STURM

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Jason Sturm
Environmental Engineer
Environmental Program Office
VA Office of Construction and Facilities Management

KATHY HENDRIX

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David K. Dunning
Medical Center Director
VA Tampa Healthcare System

Appendix A

Best Management Practices and Minimization Measures Incorporated in Proposed Action

Technical Resource Area	Best Management Practice/Minimization Measure
Aesthetics	Comply with the development standards of the Pasco County Land Development Code.
Air Quality	Use appropriate dust control measures/(BMPs) during construction and road resurfacing. Implement measures to reduce vehicle emissions from construction equipment, such as reducing idling time and using newer equipment with emissions controls. Comply with the applicable FDEP Division of Air Resource Management air quality regulations. Secure any required minor air emissions permits from FDEP prior to construction.
Cultural Resources	Should potentially historic or culturally significant items be discovered during construction, the construction contractor would immediately cease work until VA, a qualified archaeologist, Florida SHPO, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, and other consulting parties are contacted to properly identify and appropriately treat discovered items in accordance with applicable state and federal law(s).
Geology and Soils	Control soil erosion and sedimentation impacts during construction by implementing erosion prevention measures through appropriate BMPs and adherence to FDEP NPDES permit.
Hydrology and Water Quality	Control soil erosion and sedimentation impacts during construction by implementing erosion prevention measures through appropriate BMPs and adherence to FDEP NPDES Construction stormwater general permit.
Wildlife and Habitat	None Required
Noise	The impacts during implementation of the Proposed Action can be minimized by use of engineering and administrative controls. Engineering controls include: • Choosing low-noise machinery, • Maintaining and lubricating equipment and machinery, • Placing a barrier between the noise and sensitive receptor, and • Use of hearing protection for workers. Administrative controls include: • Operating noisy machinery during daytime hours as indicated in the Pasco County noise ordinance, • Limit the amount of time the noisy machinery is operating, and • Establish quiet areas where workers take their scheduled breaks. • Shut down noise-generating heavy equipment when it is not needed • Post proposed construction signage to let local residents know when the operations would be occurring. Mitigation strategies during the operational phase of the Proposed Action may include: • Site planning modifications to attenuate noise, • Relocate or reorient noise sources away from noise-sensitive uses,

Technical Resource Area	Best Management Practice/Minimization Measure
	• Eliminate a sound source (i.e., from emergency vehicles or maintenance vehicles), by installing looped driveways which would remove the need for backup alarms), • Relocate the sound source (i.e., move the driveway to the facility away from nearby receptors), • Engineer the reduction of the sound source (i.e., use higher grade mufflers for service vehicles, insulate enclosures of mechanical equipment, create sound berms, utilize sound blankets, and install sound mitigating walls and windows).
Land Use	None required
Wetlands, Floodplains, and Coastal Zone Management	None required
Socioeconomics	None required
Community Services	None required
Solid Waste	Prepare a Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan for use during construction activities. The VA anticipates no impact associated with hazardous materials used on site during construction activities if properly used, stored, and disposed.
Transportation and parking	Work with FDOT and Pasco County Department of Public Works and obtain FDEP permitting requirements to implement Turner Loop road resurfacing and construction activities.
Utilities	None required
Environmental Justice	None required