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

July 25, 2024

SUBJECT: **Scoping for an Environmental Assessment for Proposed Tampa Spinal Cord Injury and Polytrauma Transitional Rehabilitation Program Facility and Related Improvements; VA NEPA ID #VHA-2024-0002**

Dear Valued Stakeholder:

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) proposes renovations and construction to improve the Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) and Polytrauma Transitional Rehabilitation Program (PTRP) facility and related infrastructure at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital, located at 13000 Bruce B. Downs Blvd. in Tampa, Hillsborough County, Florida (Exhibits 1 and 2).

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide one-bed private rooms for SCI and PTRP patients in four reconstructed wings to an existing building, improve the air handling system for the renovated area, provide outdoor space for SCI/PTRP patients, realign an adjacent road, and construct a new parking garage to replace one of two surface parking lots on the north side of the campus (Figure 2). The Proposed Action is needed to increase Veterans' access to healthcare, promote excellence of care and privacy, and meet current and future parking needs.

VA is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) to assess the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action. VA is preparing the EA in accordance with 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.

If you have comments on the scope of the EA, the range of alternatives, and environmental issues for in-depth analysis, please email your comments to vacoenvironment@va.gov with the subject line "Tampa SCI EA" by September 4, 2024.

VA anticipates publishing the Draft EA for a 30-day public review and comment period in summer 2024. VA will notify stakeholders, publish a notice of availability of the Draft EA in the *Tampa Bay Times*, and invite comments on the Draft EA at that time.

Respectfully,

GLENN ELLIOTT

Digitally signed by GLENN ELLIOTT
Date: 2024.07.25 13:35:19 -04'00'

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

Exhibit 1. Project Location

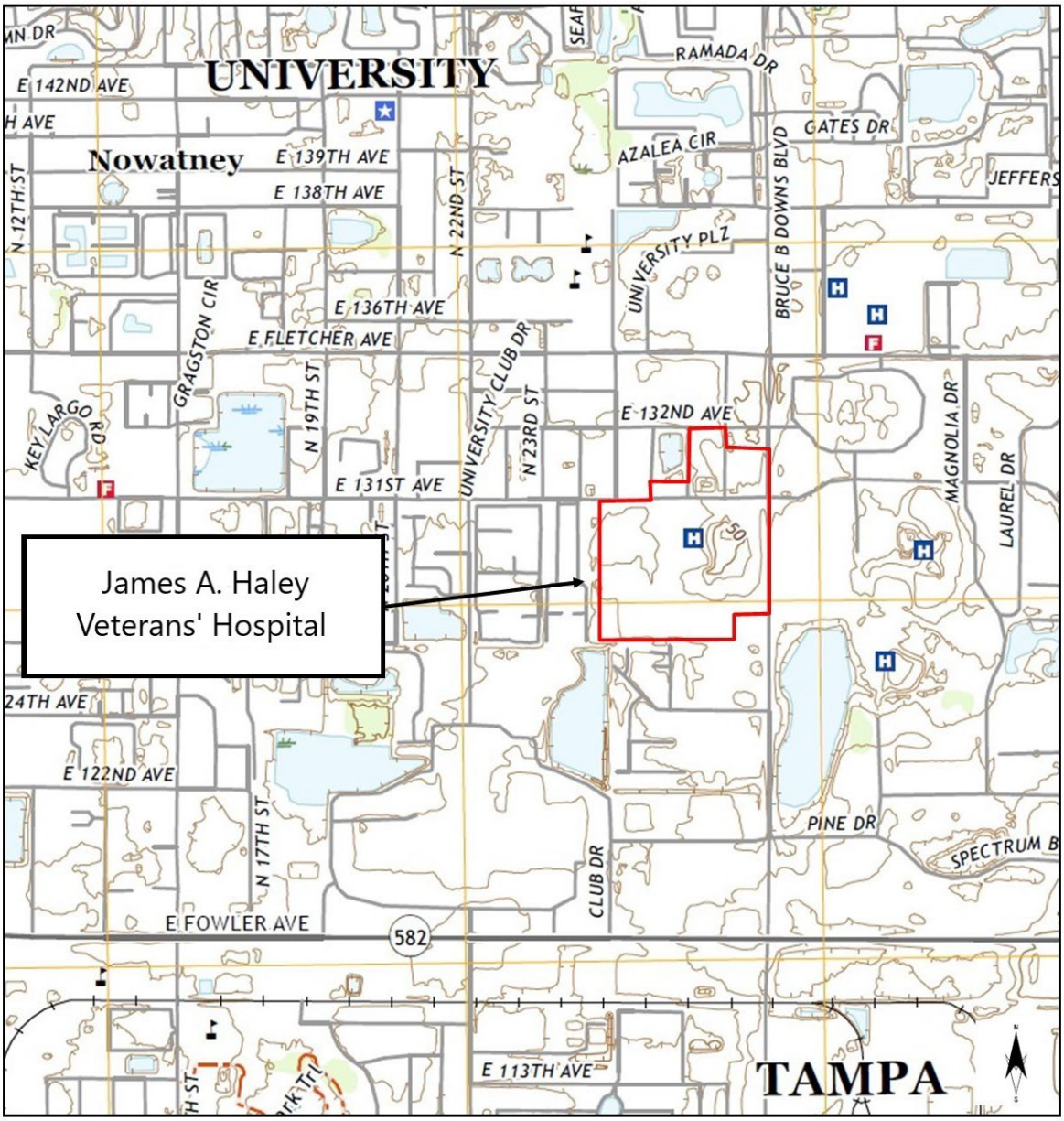


Exhibit 2. Proposed Project

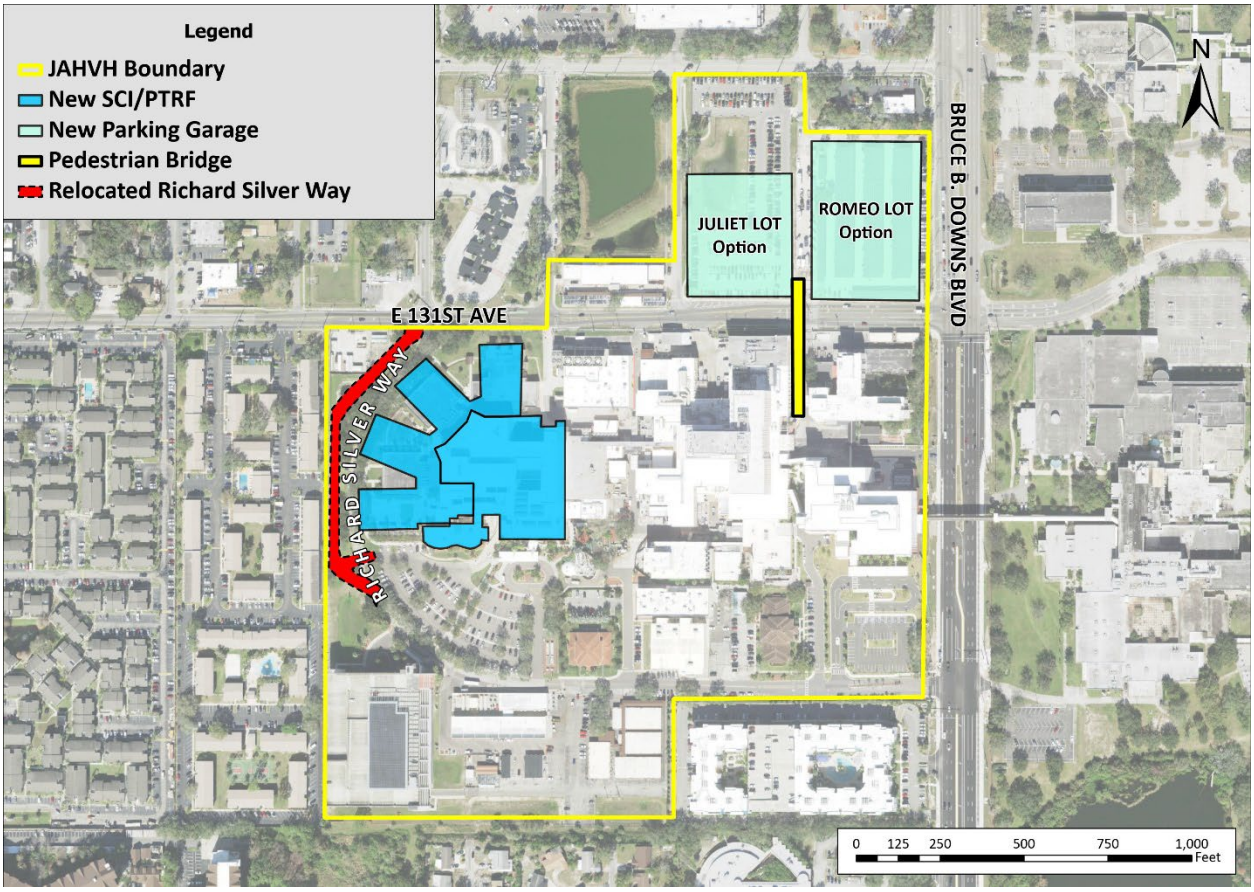


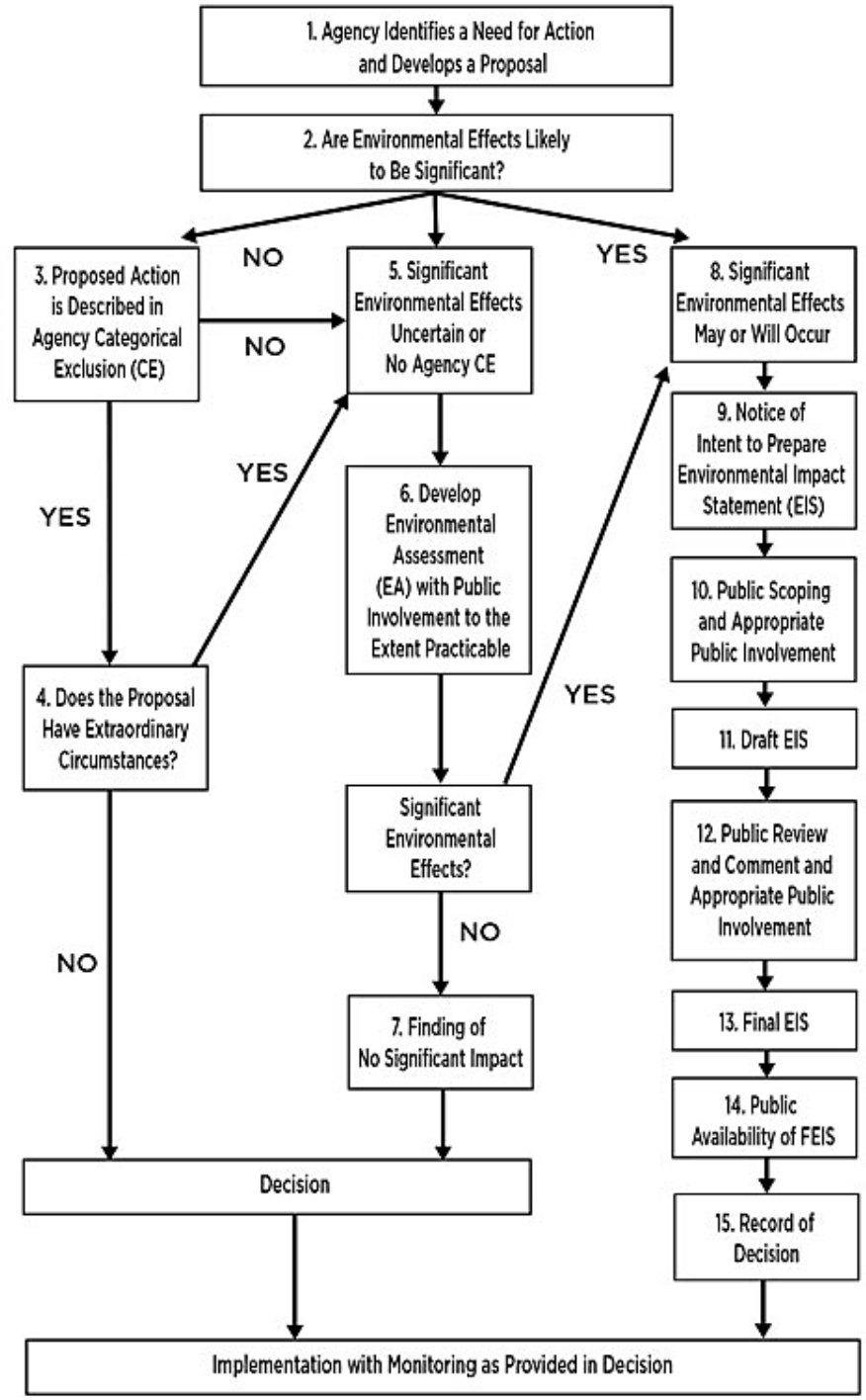
Exhibit 3. Overview of NEPA Process

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.