

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
for
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
for
**CONSTRUCTION AND CONSOLIDATION OF THE OFFICE OF SECURE TRANSPORTATION CAMPUS AT
PANTEX**

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF SECURE TRANSPORTATION

BACKGROUND

Pantex is the primary assembly, disassembly, retrofit, and life-extension center for nuclear weapons in the nation and is located approximately 30 miles east of Amarillo, Texas in Carson County. The facility is owned by the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy. The Office of Secure Transportation (OST), a sub-branch of the NNSA, is responsible for the safe and secure transport of government-owned special nuclear materials in the contiguous United States. OST currently operates out of Agent Operations Central Command (AOCC) at Pantex, a complex of transportation and administrative facilities tailored to OST operations. In order to meet urgent mission needs and increase logistical efficiency, OST proposes eight future construction projects occurring within the next 10 years to consolidate and modernize facilities at a location adjacent to Pantex's secure site (hereafter the Proposed Action).

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 United States Code [U.S.C.] 4321 et seq.), NEPA regulations at 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 1500-1508, and other relevant federal and state laws and regulations, as well as the Department of Energy NEPA implementing regulations (10 CFR § 1021), and NNSA Policy NAP-451.1, NEPA Compliance Program, NNSA OST has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) of its Proposed Action. The Final EA discloses the environmental impacts that would result from the Proposed Action and alternatives.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The project's purpose is to maintain AOCC's ability to fulfill OST transportation mission goals for the foreseeable future in addition to enhancing the efficiency of OST operations at Pantex. The existing AOCC Vehicle maintenance facility (VMF) cannot currently accommodate the Mobile Guardian Transport (MGT), an updated transportation platform for special nuclear materials currently in development. The existing VMF also cannot be renovated to meet the needs of the MGT without disruption to ongoing critical mission activities. Access coordination requirements between OST and Pantex are also currently time- and labor-intensive and impede the efficiency of OST operations. The proposed project would ensure that adequate facility and infrastructure resources are available for OST mission operations as well as improving overall operation efficiency through consolidation of site access requirements.

The need for the Proposed Action is to fulfill OST's mission in the Central Region by allowing the continued and uninterrupted mission operations at AOCC during the construction of new facilities at an adjacent site.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Proposed Action – Modernization and Consolidation of AOCC Facilities at an Adjacent Parcel

Under the Proposed Action, OST would complete eight future development projects over a 10-year period of analysis at an adjacent parcel of land acquired from Pantex. Pantex site utilities would immediately be extended to the new OST campus. The new utilities to be extended include water, electrical, and natural gas. The site would use local septic tanks for sewage treatment and a decentralized wastewater treatment system for vehicle wash water rather than extending existing sewer lines. In addition to the extension of utilities from the Pantex site, the immediate preparation of the campus infrastructure would include the erection of fencing and the construction of an entrance road and a guard shack. In order of completion, the following facilities would be constructed after the initial site preparation:

- Vehicle Maintenance Facility (VMF; 49,500 square foot [sf]). The proposed VMF consists of up to 10 vehicle maintenance bays for the OST tractor trailers, along with storage space for vehicle parts and tires, and administrative areas. Development of the VMF includes construction of the facility along with an adjacent paved parking lot, a decentralized wastewater treatment system, a new fence line with security lights around the perimeter entry/exit roads and a 1,150-sf guard shack. Design and construction are planned to be funded in 2023.
- Federal Agent Facility (FAF; 30,000 sf). This facility is primarily administrative and would serve as the primary office and meeting space for the OST Federal Agents. In addition to administrative office and conference room space the facility would house a weapons armory, weapons cleaning, locker space, bullpen office space, and an auditorium. The proposed facility also includes a drive-through canopy for loading/unloading vehicles.
- Physical Training/Intermediate Use of Force Facility (13,125 sf). This gym facility would facilitate physical fitness training of Federal Agents required to meet physical fitness standards. The facility includes two large, open areas for physical fitness workout equipment and a large mat area for Intermediate Use of Force man/man training. The proposed facility includes office space for training personnel, locker rooms, and showers. After the Physical Training/Intermediate Use of Force Facility is built, an on-site outdoor 400m running track with artificial turf interior would be constructed surrounding the facility.
- Shipping/Receiving Facility (13,125 sf). This facility would contain administrative space as well as storage space for supplies and for maintenance personnel to store materials and equipment. The proposed facility also includes a loading dock for delivery of materials by outside entities, and would allow third-party delivery trucks to perform deliveries without having to access the secured limited area.
- Live Fire Shoothouse (60,000 sf). This facility would consist of a covered open building with movable walls to use for basic and sustainment training for special response forces (SRFs). The proposed building would be constructed as a large concrete slab with a canopy tall enough for two stories and a catwalk overtop for instructor observation. The movable walls would be constructed of ballistic panels.

- Indoor Shooting Range (225,000 sf). This facility is needed to maximize range operations during inclement weather and will allow for primacy and privacy of OST firearm training activities, particularly during inclement weather. The proposed building would consist of multiple lanes for indoor shooting with ballistic protection as well as specialized insulation to reduce noise.
- Vehicle Wash Rack (2,600 sf). This on-site wash rack will allow cleaning the exterior of OST vehicles all at a single location.
- Ammunition Storage Magazines and Buffer Zone (6,585,522 sf). This facility includes an ammunition storage facility and revetment as well as the required clear explosive zone. Ammunition would likely be contained in four, reinforced-steel, Armag explosive ammunition storage magazines. Storage magazines would be covered by revetment material in order to minimize the required clear zone.

The limited security area of the proposed OST campus would include only the VMF, FAF, Vehicle Wash Rack, and Ammunition Storage Magazines; all other campus facilities would occur in the general property protection area, which allows for greater operational efficiency.

Although site preparation and construction of the VMF would begin immediately upon completion of the NEPA process, overall campus construction would take place over a 10-year period. Employees and vehicles would move between the new VMF and existing facilities on an as-needed basis until the full campus buildout is completed. Projects would be completed on a priority basis dependent on mission importance and funding availability. Work would involve grading and excavation, framing and finishing, and paving. Staging areas will be designated in the vicinity of project sites and will not be larger than a half-acre in size.

The Proposed Action was the only action alternative considered for detailed analysis as it is the only action alternative which allows for consolidation and modernization of OST facilities without disruption of mission critical activities, thereby meeting the purpose and need for action.

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative assumes that no construction, extension of utility infrastructure, or consolidation of OST operations would occur at Pantex. No new land parcel would be acquired under the No Action Alternative. Minor repairs would occur as needed, and the operation of the existing facilities would continue using current protocols and procedures. This alternative would not meet the purpose and need of the project as the current VMF cannot accommodate the MGT and renovations cannot be undertaken without compromising current mission operations. The No Action Alternative would not allow for successful completion of the long-term OST mission. Although the No Action Alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the proposed project, this alternative was carried forward for analysis and comparison, as required by Commission of Environmental Quality NEPA regulations.

Alternatives Considered but Dismissed from Detailed Analysis

Two additional alternatives to the action alternatives were considered and dismissed from detailed analysis:

- NNSA considered demolition and construction of required facilities on the initial OST campus along with increased support from Pantex management. Existing facilities would be updated onsite over a 10-year period and the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between

OST and the NNSA production Office would be reviewed and revised to better reflect mission priorities.

- NNSA considered acquisition of a 400-acre parcel located east of the Pantex main gate across Farm to Market Road 2372 for the construction and consolidation of the new OST campus facility. Facilities and construction phasing under this alternative would be identical to those discussed under the Preferred Alternative

The construction in place alternative was dismissed due to unallowable disruptions to OST transportation operations. Renovations to the current VMF could not occur concurrently with current operations and any disruption to OST services is incompatible with the OST mission and the purpose and need of the project.

The acquisition of the eastern parcel was dismissed due to planned and ongoing remediation efforts at the parcel. Surface irrigation systems are planned at this location for disposition of treated groundwater in accordance with Department of Energy agreements with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Construction of an updated OST campus at this location was not compatible with planned surface irrigation systems and long-term groundwater remediation goals within the parcel. Pantex requested this alternative be removed from further consideration.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Proposed Action was selected because it best satisfies the purpose and need while minimizing environmental impact. The No Action Alternative was not selected because it fails to satisfy the purpose and need of the Proposed Action.

ISSUES STUDIED IN DETAIL

Land Use and Visual Resources: No significant impacts. Impacts to land use and visual resources under the Proposed Action would be minor to moderate in the short term during construction and minor and permanent once construction is complete. All short-term and permanent impacts would be localized, and high in likelihood. Construction activities and a newly-built campus would consist of alterations to land use patterns and the viewshed, but would not be expected to attract attention or dominate the landscape. Impacts would likely be minimal due to the limited number of observers in the area, the limited visibility that would exist due to the distance between the highway observation area and the project area, and the human-made modifications that already exist in the landscape.

Geology, Topography, and Soils: No significant impacts. Impacts to geology, topography, and soils within the 374-acre project area and vicinity would be minor to moderate, adverse, localized, and long-term to permanent, with a high likelihood of occurrence mainly due to disturbance of soils and installation of impervious surface. Soil erosion, soil compaction, and increased impervious surface coverage would occur but would be minimized with Best Management Practices (BMPs) and a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan. The Natural Resource Conservation Service determined during Farmland Protection Policy Act consultation that further consideration or protection of prime farmland is not necessary. Topography would not noticeably change from current conditions and minimal grading would be required. Geological resources would not be impacted by any activities under the Proposed Action.

Water Resources: No significant impacts. Impacts to water resources during construction would be minor, short-term, medium in extent, and with high likelihood of occurrence due to soil disturbance and runoff during construction. Impacts to water resources during day-to-day operation of the facilities would be

minor, long-term, medium in extent, and with high likelihood of occurrence and are primarily due to runoff during site operations. Construction-related activities associated with the Proposed Action would expose soils and sediments, and any materials spilled during construction, to possible erosion and transport by heavy rainfall. Implementation of BMPs, including soil erosion and sediment control measures and spill prevention and waste management practices, would minimize any suspended sediment and pollutant transport that could result in potential water quality impacts (i.e., additional sedimentation and/or water quality impacts to the on-site playa). The detailed design phase will elucidate the requirements and strategies to collect, manage and treat additional wastewater generated from the facilities, including the Vehicle Wash Rack. This includes the installation of On-Site Sewage Facilities and a decentralized wastewater treatment system for the treatment of vehicle wash water. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality concurred during project review that impacts to water resources would not be significant.

Biological Resources: No significant impacts. Impacts to biological resources would be recurring, short-term and permanent, minor, localized, adverse impacts to with a high likelihood of occurrence primarily due to disturbance of local wildlife from construction activities and site operations as well as the removal of 65 acres of wildlife habitat including native grassland and cultivated cropland. BMPs such as time of the year work restrictions, passive relocations of burrowing owls (*Athene cunicularia*), and stop work orders upon observation of Texas horned lizards (*Phrynosoma conutum*) would be implemented for avoidance of impacts to special status species during construction. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department concurred during the project review that impacts to fish and wildlife would not be significant. There would be no effect to Endangered Species Act-listed species as they are not likely to occur onsite and no further consultation with the US Fish & Wildlife Service is required.

Utilities and Infrastructure: No significant impacts. Impacts to utilities and infrastructure would be minor, long-term, beneficial and adverse, and localized, with a high likelihood of occurrence primarily from the installation of new site infrastructure and increased utility demand. Utility demands from construction activities would decrease once the projects are complete, and utility demands during facility operations would be offset by the decommissioning of older, inefficient buildings and by proposed utility upgrades and facility expansions. Onsite utilities would be designed and constructed to meet all relevant state, local, and federal requirements.

Cultural Resources: No significant impacts. It is not anticipated that there would be any effects on cultural resources because no cultural resources were determined to be present at the project site during Class III Intensive Archaeological Surveys. The determination of no historic properties affected received official concurrence from the Texas Historical Commission during Section 106 consultation. However, if cultural materials are discovered during project activities, all earth-moving activity within and around the immediate discovery area would be stopped until a qualified archeologist could assess the nature and significance of the find.

Climate Change: No significant impacts. Impacts on climate change would be long-term, localized, negligible, and adverse, with a high likelihood of occurrence due to emissions of greenhouse gases during the construction and operation phases. Operation of construction equipment and increased vehicle transit of employees would contribute marginally to the greenhouse gas emissions profile of the region. However, it is expected that construction or daily operations would only minimally exceed current greenhouse gas levels at the both the OST facility and offsite at power generation facilities.

Transportation and Traffic: No significant impacts. The effects of construction-related traffic would be negligible to minor in the short term as there would be little effects to existing traffic patterns on US 60

and for employee traffic within the construction site, medium in extent as construction-related traffic would affect the transit corridors surrounding construction site, and high in likelihood. Effects of shipments and deliveries would be negligible, long term, large, and with a high likelihood of occurrence. Effects of traffic after the facility is constructed would be minor, long-term, medium, and with high likelihood due to increased employee traffic as a result of regular transit between the updated site and Pantex. Given the expected phasing and duration of construction events, it is unlikely that traffic patterns would be substantially impacted by the transit of workers, equipment, and heavy machinery. Employee traffic during the 10-year implementation period would minorly increase due to transit between the existing AOCC and the updated OST campus facility. External shipments to OST would continue to occur at current rates and are not expected to affect traffic patterns.

Noise: No significant impacts. Impacts from noise would be minor to moderate, adverse, and localized in the short and long term with a high likelihood of occurrence. Increased noise levels would primarily occur within the construction period and would persist beyond the completion of individual construction projects. Increased capacity and use of the new dormitory building could result in some increased noise from vehicle traffic to the OST facility and from its operations; however, such noise would not be distinguished from the existing noise already occurring at the project site. Operations of the proposed live fire shoothouse would be audible to employees at the facility and nearby residences, but would likely not serve more than a minor annoyance during training activities.

Socioeconomics: No significant impacts. Impacts on socioeconomics would be beneficial and adverse, negligible to minor in magnitude, short- and long-term in duration, with a high in likelihood of occurrence. Construction of OST facilities would marginally increase revenues and expenditures which could potentially result in the creation of a small number of construction jobs and increase revenues at local establishments during the construction period. Short-term, negligible adverse impacts to the health and wellbeing of construction personnel would also occur due to increased air emissions and noise levels, but would not persist beyond the construction period. In the long-term, a small number of permanent jobs would be created at the facility and these workers would indirectly contribute to the local economy.

Environmental Justice: No significant impacts. Impacts to environmental justice communities would be beneficial and adverse, short and long term, minor in magnitude, and high in likelihood. The short- and long-term creation of direct, indirect, and induced jobs from construction activities would create minor health benefits for environmental justice communities; however, the majority of these benefits would only persist for the duration of the construction phases with only a small number of permanent jobs created. The use of heavy equipment would cause negligible to minor short-term adverse noise and air quality impacts to the construction personnel hired to work at the project area and workers at the neighboring Pantex facility.

Waste Management and Hazardous Materials: No significant impacts. Impacts from hazardous waste and materials would be adverse, short-term, and minor, with a localized extent and a low likelihood of occurrence. There would be an increased risk of accidental spills or releases of hazardous materials, pollutants, contaminants, or petroleum products during construction; however, following appropriate BMPs would result in a low likelihood of adverse impacts occurring. The storage, containment, or disposal of any trash, debris, soils, universal waste, and potentially hazardous waste generated during construction would be addressed in accordance with applicable federal, local, and state regulations. The Texas Commission of Environmental Quality concurred during project review that there would be no significant impacts to environmental resources as a result of waste management associated with the project.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPs)

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and the EA describe BMPs that would be implemented during construction and consolidation of OST facilities under the Preferred Alternative. The BMPs that would be implemented are described below:

- Erosion and sediment control measures would be implemented at the project sites to minimize adverse effects. These measures may include the installation of silt fencing, sediment traps, installation of rock/riprap for construction vehicle transit, and the application of water to soil to reduce dust.
- A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan would be developed and implemented and would include BMPs to minimize the discharge of pollutants and erosion and sediment controls to minimize erosion.
- In the event of an accidental leak or spill of fuel, cleaning chemicals, surfactants, oils or lubricants, or other materials, a spill kit would be used to clean up the spilled material to prevent contamination of soils within the project area.
- Potential contact with hazardous waste and materials during implementation of the Proposed Action would be largely minimized or avoided by conducting regular vehicle inspections and maintenance, and usage of drop cloths, proper storage, and maintaining a clean working environment.
- Precautions would be taken to avoid harming special status species onsite. Prairie dog control and disturbance of colony areas would only occur outside of burrowing owl nesting season. Occupied burrows would not be disturbed until occupants had left their burrows or were passively translocated. Destruction of burrows would not occur without confirmation that burrows are unoccupied using video probes or excavation with hand tools. Observation of Texas horned lizards would immediately halt construction activities until the lizard had exited the project area. TPWD would be contacted immediately if Texas Horned Lizard relocation services are required.
- The possibility of unanticipated discovery of cultural materials always exists. If cultural materials are discovered during project activities, all earth-moving activity within and around the immediate discovery area would be stopped until the Texas Historical Commission was contacted and a qualified archeologist could assess the nature and significance of the find.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A letter regarding the purpose and need, Proposed Action, No Action Alternative, and decision to be made was sent to Tribal entities and other stakeholders on November 4, 2022. No comments were received during this period.

A notice of availability of the Draft EA was published on January 6, 2023 in the Amarillo Globe News. The notice of availability and Draft EA were also emailed to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas Historical Commission, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, Comanche Nation of Oklahoma, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Kiowa Indian Tribe of Oklahoma, and the Tonkawa Tribe of Oklahoma for consultation, coordination, and review. The notice of availability provided instructions as to where the public and other interested parties could review the Draft EA, and it provided instructions for submitting comments. The Draft EA was made available on the NNSA NEPA website (<https://www.energy.gov/nnsa/nnsa-nepa-reading-room>). Comments were accepted through

February 6, 2021. No public comments were received. Three responses during consultation and coordination were received and did not require revisions to the EA.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would not result in significant impacts on any of the resources analyzed within the EA, and no further analysis or documentation, such as the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, is required. NNSA does not anticipate receiving further information that would change its assessment of no significant impact to any resource area. In the event unexpected issues arise, NNSA may issue follow-up NEPA documentation as appropriate. All practicable and reasonable means will be employed by NNSA to minimize potential adverse impacts on the human and natural environment. Therefore, a FONSI is warranted.

Approved:

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5/19/23

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