

Draft Environmental Assessment

Temporary Pedestrian Process Facility at Calexico West Port of Entry Calexico, California

Prepared for:



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 United States Code [USC] 4321 et seq.), as implemented by the regulations promulgated by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] §1500-1508). The principal objectives of NEPA are to ensure the careful consideration of environmental aspects of proposed actions in Federal decision-making processes and to make environmental information available to decision makers and the public before decisions are made and actions are taken. The intent of NEPA is to protect, restore, or enhance the environment through a well-informed decision making process. The CEQ was established under NEPA to implement and oversee federal policy in this process. To this end, the CEQ issued the Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA. The CEQ regulations declare that an EA serves to accomplish the following objectives:

- Briefly provide sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI);
- Aid in an agency's compliance with NEPA when an EIS is not necessary; and
- Facilitate preparation of an EIS when necessary.

The United States (US). General Services Administration (GSA) accomplishes adherence to this act through following the GSA NEPA guidelines, *GSA Public Buildings Service (PBS) NEPA Desk Guide, 1999*. These federal regulations establish both the administrative process and substantive scope of the environmental impact evaluation designed to ensure that deciding authorities have a proper understanding of the potential environmental consequences of a contemplated course of action. This EA has been prepared in accordance with the regulations and guidance documents.

The primary purpose of this Draft EA is to document and evaluate the potential effects to the human health and the environment associated with the implementation of the Proposed Action and Preferred Alternative as well as the ability of the alternatives to meet the purpose and need for the Proposed Action.

1.2 Location and Description of Project Area

The site is located at 340 East 1st Street in Calexico, Imperial County, California, and consists of an approximately 0.75-acre tract of land identified by Imperial County Assessors Number (APN): 058-535-002 and 0.16 acres of Heffernan Avenue. The site is currently composed of an approximately 16,000 square-foot, two-story office building (Old Customs House), maintenance

garage, and utilities; and includes approximately 40 feet of the roadway to the west of the building, Heffernan Avenue.

Figure 1-1 Site Location

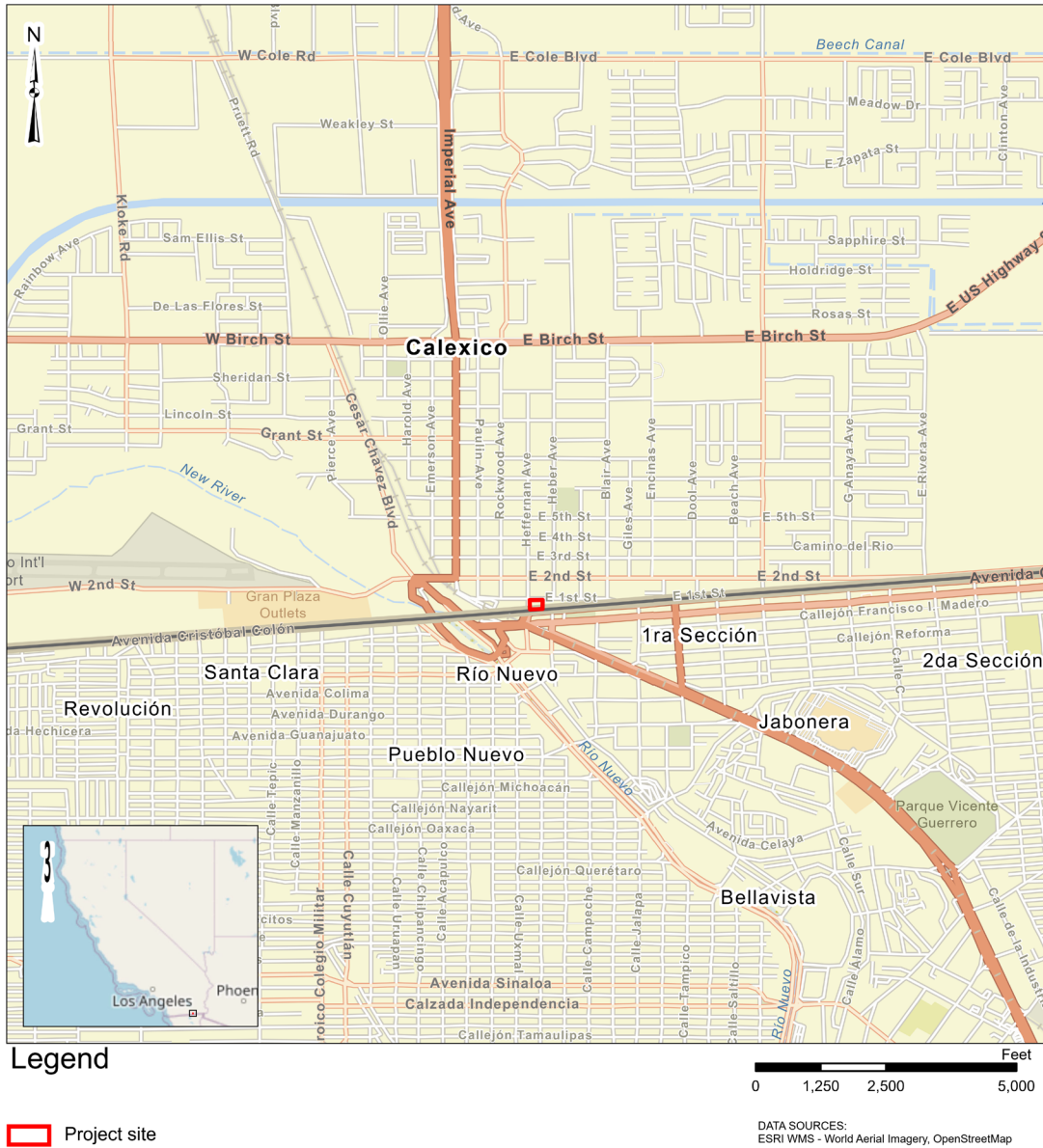
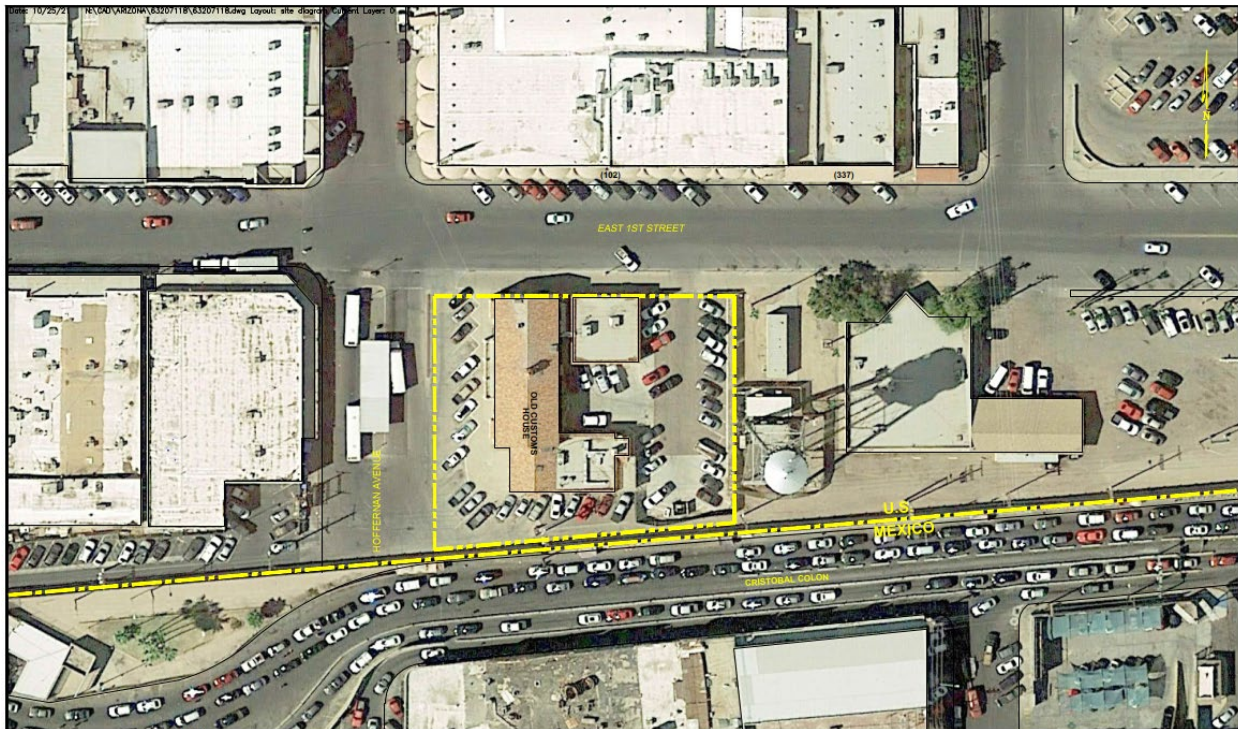


Figure 1-2 Project Location Overview



1.3 Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is to provide a temporary pedestrian processing facility to be used by the United States (CBP) and partner agencies in Calexico, California. This temporary facility will be utilized while the current Land Port of Entry (LPOE), existing structures are demolished, new structure installed for Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

1.4 Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to support in the expansion and reconfiguring of the LPOE as identified in the EIS and associated Record of Decision (ROD) dated May 2011. The need is due to the existing LPOE not meeting the Federal inspection services' minimum standards for processing time and overall efficiency. The GSA anticipates correcting these operational deficiencies, provide for more thorough inspections, improve safety for employees and the public, and reduce the delays experienced by the public.

1.5 Federal Decision to be Made

The GSA is the federal decision-maker concerning this Proposed Action and controls the federal funds that would be used for its implementation, as this is a federally Proposed Action. The purpose of this EA is to inform decision-makers of the potential environmental effects of the

Proposed Action and alternatives prior to making a federal decision to move forward with any action. In this manner, federal decision-makers can make a fully informed decision, aware of the potential environmental effects of their Proposed Action. Overall, the purpose of this EA is to:

- Document the NEPA process;
- Inform decision-makers of the possible environmental effects of the Proposed Action and its considered alternatives, as well as methods to reduce these effects;
- Allow for public, regulatory agency and tribal input into the decision-making process; and
- Allow for informed decision-making by the federal government.

This decision-making includes identifying the actions that the federal government will commit to undertake to minimize environmental effects, as required under the NEPA and associated CEQ Regulations.

The decision to be made is whether, having taken potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic effects into account, GSA should implement the Proposed Action and, as appropriate, carry out mitigation measures to reduce effects on resources. Based upon the analysis, no potentially significant adverse impacts have been identified. GSA will ultimately decide if the action is funded and constructed.

GSA, as the federal proponent of the Proposed Action, will document their decision in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), if appropriate. The GSA will carefully consider comments received from the public, regulatory agencies and tribes in this decision-making process.

2.0 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

This section of the EA provides a brief history of the formulation of alternatives, identification of alternatives eliminated from further consideration, a description of the Proposed Action, and a description of the No Action Alternative. The screening criteria and process developed and applied by GSA to hone the number of reasonable alternatives for the Proposed Action are described, providing the reader with an understanding of GSA's rationale in ultimately analyzing one Action Alternative, the Proposed Action.

2.1 Development of Alternatives

This section discusses the alternatives selection process and defines the alternatives that were considered. The implementing procedures for NEPA establish a number of policies for federal agencies to follow in order to avoid or minimize the adverse effects of their actions. Among these policies is the use of the NEPA process to identify and assess reasonable alternatives to the proposed project that would avoid or minimize adverse impacts (40 CFR 1500.2(e)). The alternatives must be explored rigorously and evaluated objectively. Alternatives that are eliminated from detailed analysis must be identified, along with a brief discussion of the reasons for eliminating them.

For the purposes of analysis, an alternative was considered "reasonable" only if it would enable GSA to accomplish the ultimate objective at this Land Port of Entry (LPOE), to provide an expanded and reconfigured LPOE as identified in the EIS and associated Record of Decision, May 2011, in support of improve the safety, security, and operations of the LPOE; reduce vehicle and pedestrian queues; and enable the installation of technologically-advanced inspection devices. Alternatives considered included: no action (maintaining the Status Quo) and construction of the temporary facility and renovation to the interior of the existing Old Customs House.

2.2 Alternatives Retained for Detailed Analysis

2.2.1 Proposed Action

GSA proposes to install temporary structures which will house a pedestrian processing facility and to renovate the existing two story building located at the Calexico West LPOE in Calexico, California, located at 340 East 1st.

Activities would include:

- Construction of new one-story pre-manufactured modular building for pedestrian primary, benefit, and secondary processing. Work includes pre-manufactured ramps.
- Taking of 7,040 square feet of Heffernan Avenue, between East 1st Street and the border boundary between the United States and Mexico.

- Renovation of existing two story over basement building to house administration offices for CBP and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agencies. No change in occupancy, use, and floor area. The existing building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Construction of new one-story pre-manufactured modular building for detention, including a secured sally port and secured outdoor detention yard.
- Construction of new secured covered pedestrian walkway for northbound and southbound travels at border crossing. Work includes pre-manufactured ramps.
- Construction of new one-story pre-manufactured modular building for contract security consultant at border crossing.
- Construction of new concrete masonry unit trash enclosure.
- Construction of new shade structures for pedestrian walkways and detention yard.
- Site work includes grading improvements, new paving, new utilities and new fencing & gates.
- Off-site work includes driveway/curb cut at public right of way on 1st street.

Figure 2-1 Proposed Building Rendering
(Temporary Buildings Outlined in Red)

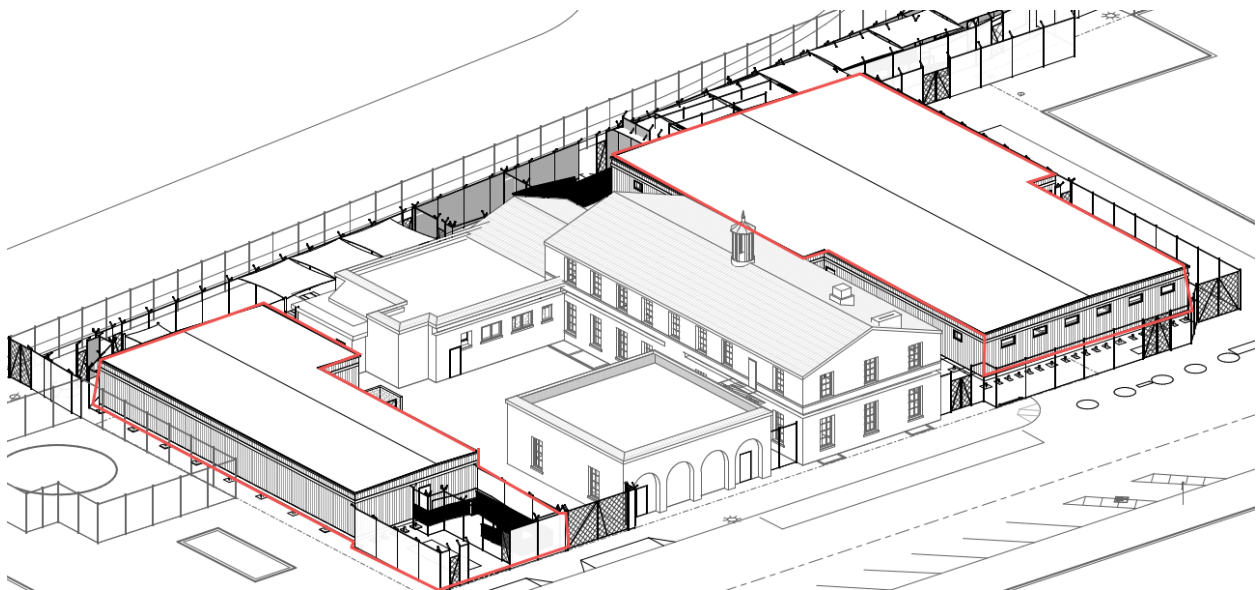
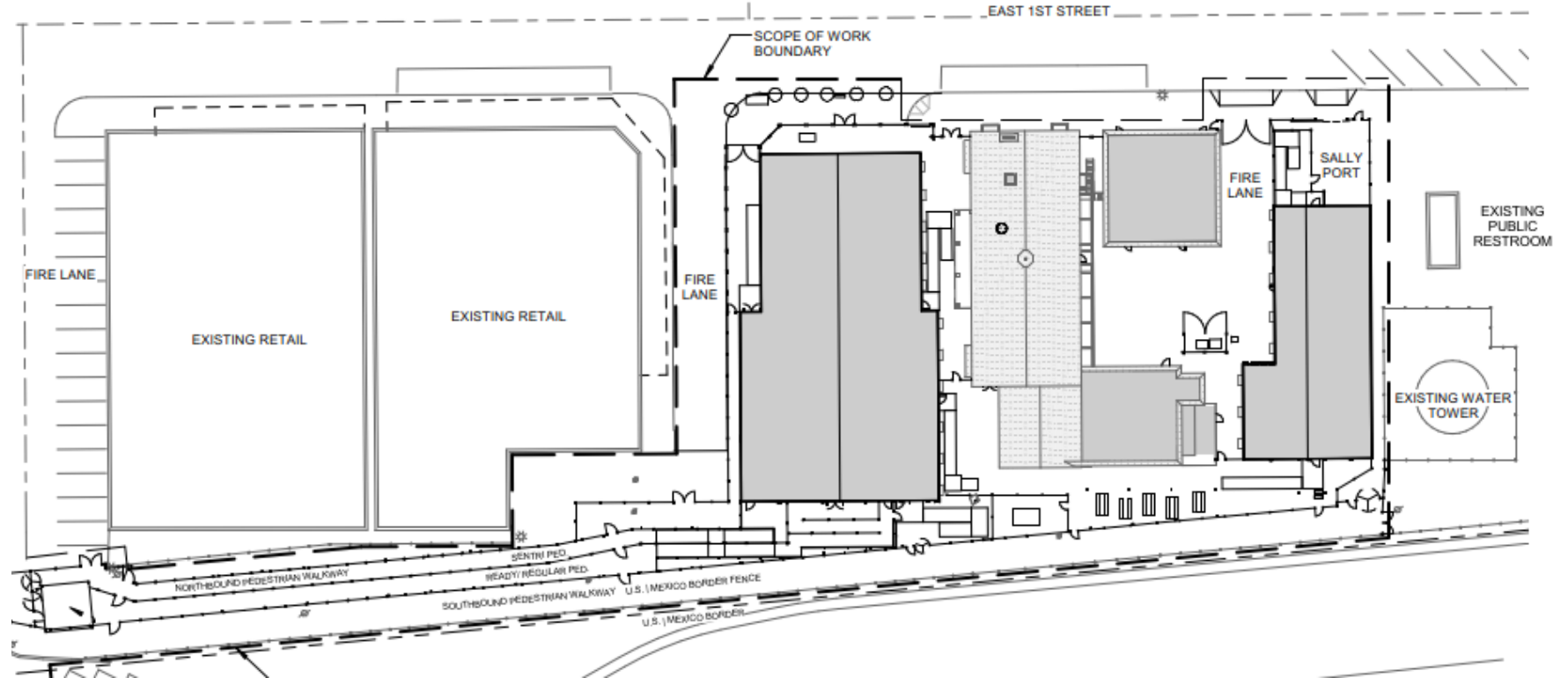


Figure 2-2 Proposed Site Plan



2.2.2 No-Action Alternative

Under this alternative operation of the Calexico West LPOE would continue at the present facility and no construction or renovations would occur within the CBH. This alternative would not require the acquisition of the approximately 7,040 square feet of Heffernan Avenue. Under the No-Action Alternative, the GSA could not meet its goal to provide support in the expansion and reconfiguring of the LPOE in the as well as satisfy the purpose and need for the Proposed Action; however this alternative was retained to provide a comparative baseline, against which to analyze the effects of the Proposed Action, as required under CEQ Regulations (40 CFR Part 1502.14).

2.3 Comparison of the Potential Effects of the Analysis

The existing condition of the environmental resources at the LPOE and its vicinity that are potentially impacted are presented in Section 3. Section 3 also presents an analysis of each alternative's potential effects on the Resource Areas that were analyzed fully.

In accordance with CEQ Regulations at 40 CFR Part 1502.14, Table 2-1 presents “the environmental impacts of the proposal and the alternatives in comparative form, thus sharply defining the issues and providing a clear basis for choice among options by the decision-maker and the public.”

Table 2- 1 Comparison of the Potential Effects of the Analyzed Alternatives

Resource	Proposed Action	No Alternative
Land Resources	Short-term, direct, and adverse impact is anticipated since Heffernan Avenues use will be modified from transportation to facility. Impact is less than significant.	No change - therefore, no impact
Water Resources	Short-term, direct adverse impacts are anticipated on surface water resources; During construction, soils will be disturbed, potentially increasing the opportunity for sediment to leave the construction site and enter surface waters. These impacts are less than significant.	No change - therefore, no impact
Air Quality	Short-term, direct adverse impacts due to the increase emissions from heavy equipment used during the construction. These impacts are less than significant.	No change - therefore, no impact
Cultural Resources	No impact anticipated based upon response received from the California State Historic Preservation Office.	No change - therefore, no impact
Socio-Economic Impact Assessment /	Short-term, indirect, beneficial impact has a result of renovation activities via incidental spending by	No change - therefore, no impact

Environmental Justice	renovation workers / craftsmen and the purchase of locally available materials. These impacts are less than significant.	
Traffic	Short-term, direct, adverse impacts due to the loss of Heffernan Avenue to traffic departing the commercial building to the west and use by transit company. These impacts are less than significant.	No change - therefore, no impact
Noise	Short-term, direct, adverse impacts due to the noise associated with construction equipment. These impacts are less than significant.	No change - therefore, no impact
Climate Change	Short-term, direct adverse impacts due to the increase emissions from heavy equipment used during the construction. These impacts are less than significant.	No change - therefore, no impact

3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES, AND MITIGATION/MANAGEMENT MEASURES

This chapter describes the current conditions of the environmental resources, either manmade or natural, that would be affected by implementation of the Proposed Action or alternatives. This chapter also describes the potential environmental impacts that are likely to occur as a result of implementation of the Proposed Action. The No Action Alternative provides a baseline against which the impacts of the Proposed Action can be compared.

3.1 Criteria of Analysis of Impacts

After each description of the relevant baseline conditions of each considered Technical Resource Area, the potential direct and indirect effects of the Preferred Action and No Action Alternative are analyzed. The significance of an action is also measured in terms of its context and intensity. For the purposes of this analysis, the potential environmental impacts are described in terms of duration, whether they are direct or indirect, the magnitude of the impact, and whether they are adverse or beneficial, as summarized in the following paragraphs:

Short-term or long-term. In general, short-term impacts are those that would occur only with respect to a particular time-lined activity, for a finite period, or only during the time required for construction or installation activities. Long-term impacts are those that are more likely to be persistent and chronic.

Direct or indirect. A direct impact is caused by an action and occurs around the same time at or near the location of the action. An indirect impact is caused by an action and might occur later in time or be farther removed in distance but still be a reasonably foreseeable outcome of the action.

Adverse or beneficial. An adverse impact is one having unfavorable or undesirable outcomes on the man-made or natural environment. A beneficial impact is one having positive outcomes on the man-made or natural environment.

3.2 Significance Criteria

Significance is based on the twin criteria of context and intensity (40 CFR 1508.27). Context means the affected environment in which a proposed action would occur; it can be local, regional, national, or all three, depending upon the circumstances. Context means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human/national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. For instance, in the case of a site-specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short- and long-term effects are relevant. Intensity refers to the severity of impact, ranging from negligible, minor, or moderate.

Negligible impacts are generally those that might be perceptible but are at the lower level of detection. A minor impact is slight, but detectable. A moderate impact is readily apparent. Significant impacts are those that, in their context and due to their magnitude (severity), have the potential to meet the thresholds for significance set forth in the CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1508.27) and, thus, warrant heightened attention and examination for potential means for mitigation to fulfill the policies set forth in NEPA. Significance criteria by resource area are presented below.

Land Resources. The potential for conversion of current land use of property that would impact use and viability of adjacent properties by current and future land owners.

Water Resources. The potential to result in major disturbances in the natural flow, discharge, and recharge of water resources within the project or adjacent areas. This includes the potential for a substantial loss, degradation, or fragmentation of wetland habitat.

Air Quality. The potential for emissions to result in a considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant within the Imperial County Non-Attainment Area that is not in compliance with the State Implementation Plan.

Cultural Resources. The potential to result in ground disturbing activities that may adversely affect known or unidentified cultural resources within the project area.

Socio-Economic. Disproportionate impacts to either low-income, minority, or individuals with limited English proficiency including limited access to social services, community resources, transportation, and economic advancement as well as impacts directly or indirectly to their health.

Traffic. Modification or increase of traffic that would cause a substantial decrease in mobility, increase commuting time, or decrease safety.

Noise. The potential to result in noise levels in excess of 65 decibels (dB) for a prolonged duration of time, impacting the quality of life of those within the residential areas.

Climate Change. The potential for emissions to result in a considerable net increase of greenhouse gases in such a quantity that the purpose and need of a project will be impacted or other resources (ex: threatened and endangered species, water resources, etc.)

3.3 Environmental Resources Not Carried Forward for Detailed Analysis

The determination of environmental resources to be analyzed versus those not carried forward for detailed analysis is part of the EA scoping process. CEQ and regulations (40 CFR §1501.7[a][3]) encourage project proponents to identify and eliminate from detailed study the resource areas that are not important or have no potential to be impacted through implementation of their respective proposed actions. Some resource areas or some aspects of resource areas would not be affected by the proposed or alternative actions. Resource areas that have been eliminated from further study in this document and the rationale for eliminating them are presented below:

Coastal Resources: The project area is not located within a state identified in the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 or Coastal Barriers Resources Act; therefore, there are no impacts to coastal resources. No further analysis is required.

Community Services: Additional community services, including police, fire, and medical, are not anticipated to be needed during the construction and upon completion of the Proposed Action. The area is currently serviced by these agencies. No adverse impacts to these services or to the site from these services are anticipated.

Aesthetics: Buildings and associated structures will be constructed in accordance with GSA Design Criteria and match the equipment aesthetics of the existing structure; therefore no impact to aesthetics is anticipated.

Biological Resources: The project area is devoid of flora or fauna, including landscaped/non-native plants. The Proposed Action is not anticipated to include the addition of flora or fauna therefore no impact to biological resources are anticipated.

Threatened and Endangered Species: Two federally listed species are listed to be potentially located within the project area, the Yuma Ridgways (clapper) Rail *Rallus (obsoletus [=longirostris] yumanensis)*, endangered, and the Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), candidate. Due to the nature of the project area, fully constructed and devoid of any habitat, federally listed species are not anticipated to be present nor use the project area for habitat during migration or in pursuit of food.

Floodplain: Executive Order (E.O.) 11988, "Floodplain Management", requires Federal agencies to avoid actions, to the extent practicable that will result in the location of facilities in floodplains and/or affect floodplain values. no Facilities located in a floodplain may be damaged or destroyed by a flood or may change the flood handle capability of the floodplain, or the pattern, or magnitude of the flood flow. The project area is located within an area designated outside of a 100-or 500-year floodplain, per a Flood Insurance Rate Map, effective September 26, 2008. The Proposed Action will not increase or decrease the amount of impervious cover within the area since the project area includes 100% impervious cover. Since the Proposed Action will not increase or decrease impervious cover, no additional/decrease in surface water runoff during rain events is anticipated; therefore no impact to the immediate area as well as the stormwater system and watershed is anticipated.

Hazardous Materials: A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was performed in accordance with American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) E1527-13, Standard Practice for Environmental Site Assessments: Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Process. The Phase I ESA was prepared on February 3, 2022. The Phase I ESA did not identify Recognized Environmental Conditions or Controlled Recognized Environmental Conditions; therefore no known hazardous materials are present within or under the site. Additionally, under

the Proposed Action, no hazardous materials will be utilized or generated during the construction or operation of the temporary facility; therefore no impact is anticipated.

3.4 Land Resources

3.4.1 Affected Environment

Land use refers to the use of land for various activities, including commercial, industrial, recreational, agricultural, and residential. Adopted plans and development regulations control the type of land use and the intensity of development or activities permitted. Changes in land use patterns that result from development can affect the character of an area and result in physical impacts to the environment. This section describes the land use and ownership resources occurring in the project area and the potential impacts to those resources due to project implementation.

General Land Use and Zoning

The project area real property is currently owned by the US government and consists of approximately 0.75-acre tract of land fully developed with office building, maintenance garage, utilities, and parking areas. Heffernan Avenue is currently owned and maintained by the City of Calexico. The tract of land is identified by Imperial County APN: 058-535-002. East 1st Street abuts the site to the north, followed by Sam Ellis Department Store (102 Heffernan Avenue) and vacant commercial structure (337 East 1st Street). The eastern adjoining property is developed with a water/cell tower compound that includes a diesel-powered electrical generator and associated facility. Cristobal Colon (four-laned road) abuts the property to the south with commercial development that includes a hotel, bank, barber shop, parking garage, pharmacy, dental office, and currency exchange facility beyond Cristobal Colon. La Mejor Clothing Store (225 East 1st Street) abut Heffernan Avenue to the west.

The project area is zoned by the City of Calexico as Commercial Specialty (CS) (Calexico 2016). This zoning designation mirrors those properties to the east, west, and north. CS permitted uses include: administrative offices; financial institutions, accounting and auditing services; clerical and legal services; counseling services; public utility company offices; medical, dental and related health services; retail; hotels and motels with meeting rooms; janitorial services and supplies; food stores and supermarkets; nurseries and garden supply stores; residential and apartment use; and public facilities (Calexico 2021).

All roads surrounding the project area are owned and maintained by the City of Calexico.

Formally Classified Lands

Formally Classified Lands (FCLs) are properties administered either by federal, state, or local agencies, or properties that have been given special protection through formal legislative designation. FCLs may cover a broad spectrum of agency oversight, so documentation entails referencing multiple agency databases. FCL may include the following:

1. National Parks
2. National Reserves
3. Battlefields and Military Parks
4. National Lakeshores
5. National Parkways
6. National Conservation Areas
7. Forest Reserves
8. Wilderness Study Areas
9. Wild and Scenic Rivers
10. National Grasslands
11. Coordination Areas
12. Coastal Zones
13. Coastal Barriers Resource System
14. National Monuments
15. Recreation Areas
16. National Seashores
17. National Natural Landmarks
18. Cooperative Management and Protection Areas
19. Outstanding Natural Areas
20. Wilderness
21. National Scenic and Historic Trails
22. National Forest
23. National Wildlife Refuges
24. Waterfowl Production Areas
25. Areas of State and Local Interest

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) Protected Lands Database of the U.S. (PAD-US) combines a number of agency databases into a single source documenting lands with some level of federal, state, local, and private protection.

Based on a review of the applicable maps and resource management agencies for each of the above-listed land areas, none were identified on the project site or adjacent properties. The nearest FCL is Border Park which is owned and maintained by the City of Calexico. The park is approximately 871 feet to the west, northwest of the project area (USGS 2022).

3.4.2 Environmental Consequences

No Action Alternative

Under the no action alternative, existing conditions would be maintained and no change in land use anticipated. No adverse impacts are anticipated.

Preferred Alternative

Under the Proposed Action, the current land use of the parcel will not be changed since the activities are associated with its current use. Heffernan Avenue will no longer be utilized as a roadway to access southern facing doors of the commercial properties to the west of the project area; however, the land use for these properties will not be modified under this action long-term. Upon completion of the LPOE expansion and renovation; the temporary facilities will be removed and Heffernan Avenue could be reopened. An adverse, short term and direct impact to the land use of the project area is anticipated since the land use for Heffernan Avenue; the impact is less than significant since the roadway is not used for through traffic. No impact is anticipated to adjacent properties is anticipated since the uses will not be modified or impaired.

The Proposed Action will be conducted occurring on federal property; however, it is not classified as an FCL and the nearest FCL is over 800 feet to the west northwest; therefore no adverse, short/long term, and direct/indirect impact is anticipated.

3.4.3 Mitigation / Management Measures

No mitigation or management measures are anticipated to be needed.

3.5 Water Resources

3.5.1 Affected Environment

The *US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Wetland Delineation Manual* defines wetlands as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. An area is wetland if, under normal circumstances, (1) the area has continuous or recurrent saturation of the upper substrate caused by groundwater, or shallow surface water, or both; (2) the duration of such saturation is sufficient to cause anaerobic conditions in the upper substrate; and (3) the area either lacks vegetation or the vegetation is dominated by hydrophytes.

The definition of a Waters of the US is: (1) waters used in interstate or foreign commerce, including all waters subject to the ebb and flow of tides; (2) all interstate waters including interstate wetlands; (3) all other waters such as intrastate lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent and ephemeral streams), mudflats, sandflats, *wetlands*, sloughs, prairie potholes, wet meadows, playa lakes, or natural ponds, etc., which the use, degradation, or destruction of could affect interstate/foreign commerce; (4) all impoundments of waters otherwise defined as Waters of the US, (5) tributaries of waters identified in 1 through 4 above; (6) the territorial seas; and (7) wetlands adjacent to waters identified in 1 through 6 above. Within non-tidal waters that meet the definition given above, and in the absence of adjacent wetlands, the indicator used by the USACE to determine the lateral extent of its jurisdiction is the ordinary high water mark (OHWM), which is defined as the line on the shore established by fluctuations of water and indicated by a clear, natural line impressed on the bank, shelving, changes in soil character, destruction of terrestrial vegetation, and/or the presence of litter and debris.

Typically, the USACE and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will assert jurisdiction over the following waters:

- Traditional navigable waters (TNWs),
- Wetlands adjacent to TNWs,

- Non-navigable tributaries of TNWs that are relatively permanent where the tributaries typically flow year-round or have continuous flow at least seasonally (e.g., typically three months), and Wetlands directly abutting such tributaries.

The agencies will decide jurisdiction over the following waters based on a fact-specific analysis to determine whether they have a significant nexus (a significant nexus analysis will assess the flow characteristics and functions of the tributary itself and the functions performed by all wetlands adjacent to the tributary to determine if they significantly affect the chemical, physical and biological integrity of downstream traditional navigable waters) with a TNW.

- Non-navigable tributaries that are not relatively permanent,
- Wetlands adjacent to non-navigable tributaries that are not relatively permanent, and
- Wetlands adjacent to do not directly abutting a relatively permanent non-navigable tributary.

The agencies generally will not assert jurisdiction over the following features:

- Swales or erosional features (e.g., gullies, small washes characterized by low volume, infrequent, or short duration flow), and
- Ditches (including roadside ditches) excavated wholly in and draining only uplands and that do not carry a relatively permanent flow of water.

Any person, firm, or agency planning to alter or work in waters of the US, including the discharge of dredged or fill material, must first obtain authorization from the USACE under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA; 33 USC 1344). Permits, licenses, variances, or similar authorization may also be required by other federal, state, and local statutes. Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 prohibits the obstruction or alteration of navigable waters of the U.S. without a permit from the USACE (33 USC 403).

The LPOE is not located within or adjacent to a known wetland as identified by the United States Fish and Wildlife Services National Wetland Inventory Map, see Figure 3-1.

Construction projects within California are required to obtain coverage under the General Permit for Discharges of Storm Water Associated with Construction Activity, Construction General Permit Order 2009-0009_DWQ if projects disturb one or more acre of land or whose projects disturb less than one acre but are part of a larger common plan of development that in total disturbs one or more acres. Construction activities subject to this permit includes clearing, grading and disturbances to the ground such as stockpiling, or excavation, but does not include regular maintenance activities performed to restore the original line, grade, or capacity of the facility. As

part of the coverage a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) by a certified Qualified SWPPP Developer must be prepared and implemented.

Figure 3-1 Wetlands With/Adjacent Project Area



Legend:

-  Project Site
-  Wetlands

0 420 840 1,680
Feet

DATA SOURCES:
ESRI WMS - World Aerial Imagery, OpenStreetMap

3.5.2 Environmental Consequences

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the site will remain in its current condition and no ground disturbance activities will take place; therefore no impacts to water resources are anticipated.

Preferred Alternative

Under the Proposed Action, construction and operation activities would not occur in a since the project area is not within or adjacent to a water resource; therefore no long/short term, direct, and adverse impact is anticipated. No additional impervious cover associated with the addition of the buildings is anticipated since the areas are current paved; however, ground disturbance is anticipated during construction activities allowing for a potential increase sediment loading and pollutants entering existing stormwater system. This impact would be considered short-term, direct and adverse; however not significant. The ground disturbance is anticipated to occur within the areas of Heffernan Avenue and surrounding the Historic Customs House (HCH), approximately 0.62 acres. The area to be disturbed is less than one acre; therefore coverage under the Construction General Permit Order 2009-0009_DWQ is not required but to mitigate potential impairments to stormwater BMPs should be implemented.

3.5.3 Mitigation / Management Measures

As part of the construction planning, GSA will ensure that none of the existing stormwater inlets will be modified and/or covered ensuring stormwater runoff will continue to be discharged within impairment into the Imperial Irrigation District storm water system (Calexico 2018).

3.6 Air Quality

3.6.1 Affected Environment

Air quality at the project area is regulated by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), which administers federal and state air quality standards. The US EPA has set national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) under the Clean Air Act (CAA) and its associated Amendments. The CAA was signed December 31, 1970 and amended August 7, 1977 and September 14, 1990. The CAA Amendments also set emission limits for certain air pollutants from specific sources, set new source performance standards based on best demonstrated technologies, and established national emission standards for hazardous air pollutants. Federal air quality standards have been established for six criteria pollutants; ozone (O₃), particulate matter (PM 2.5 and 10), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and lead (Pb). Although O₃ is considered a criteria pollutant and is measurable in the atmosphere, it is often not considered as a pollutant when reporting emissions from specific sources, because O₃ is not typically emitted directly from most emissions sources. Ozone is formed in the atmosphere from its precursors – nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) – that are directly emitted from various sources. Thus, emissions of NO_x and VOCs are commonly reported instead of O₃.

The CARB has established more stringent California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) for the six criteria pollutants through the California Clean Air Act of 1988 (CCAA), and also established CAAQS for additional pollutants including sulfates, Hydrogen sulfide (H₂S), vinyl chloride, and visibility-reducing particles. Areas that do not meet the NAAQS or the CAAQS for a particular pollutant are considered to be “nonattainment areas” for the pollutant. Those areas in accordance with the standards are designated as “attainment areas”; areas or regions that have been re-designated from nonattainment to attainment are called “maintenance areas”. “Unclassified” indicates that air quality in the area cannot be classified and the area is treated as attainment. An area may have all three classifications for different criteria pollutants. The CCAA also requires that districts implement regulations to reduce emissions from mobile sources through the adoption and enforcement of transportation control measures.

Table 3-1 National Ambient Air Quality Standards

Pollutant	Averaging Time	California Standards	National Standards	
			Primary	Secondary
Ozone	1 Hour	0.09 ppm	-	Same as Primary Standard
	8 Hour	0.070 ppm	0.70 ppm	
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀)	24 Hour	50 µg/m ³	150 µg/m ³	Same as Primary Standard
	Annual Arithmetic Mean	20 µg/m ³	-	
Fine Particulate Matter (PM _{2.5})	24 Hour	-	35 µg/m ³	Same as Primary Standard
	Annual Arithmetic Mean	12 µg/m ³	12.0 µg/m ³	15 µg/m ³
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	1 Hour	20 ppm (23 mg/m ³)	35 ppm (40 mg/m ³)	-
	8 Hour	9.0 ppm (10 mg/m ³)	9 ppm (10 mg/m ³)	-
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO ₂)	1 Hour	0.18 ppm (339 µg/m ³)	100 ppb (188 µg/m ³)	-
	Annual Arithmetic Mean	0.030 ppm (57 µg/m ³)	0.053 ppm (100 µg/m ³)	Same as Primary Standard
Sulfur Dioxide (SO ₂)	1 Hour	0.25 ppm (655 µg/m ³)	75 ppb (196 µg/m ³)	-
	3 Hour	-	-	0.5 ppm (1300 µg/m ³)
	24 Hour	0.04 ppm (105 µg/m ³)	0.14 ppm (for certain areas)	-
	Annual Arithmetic Mean	-	0.030 ppm (for certain areas)	-
Lead	30 Day Average	1.5 µg/m ³	-	-
	Calendar Quarte	-	1.5 µg/m ³ (for certain areas)	Same as Primary Standard

Pollutant	Averaging Time	California Standards	National Standards	
			Primary	Secondary
	Rolling 3-Month Average	-	0.15 µg/m ³	Same as Primary Standard
Visibility Reducing Particles	8 Hour	10-mile visibility standard	N/A	
Sulfates	24 Hour	25 µg/m ³		
Hydrogen Sulfide	1 Hour	0.03 ppm (42 µg/m ³)		
Vinyl Chloride	24 Hour	0.01 ppm (26 µg/m ³)		

Source: CARB 2020.

µg/m³ – microgram per cubic meter

ppm – part per million

The CAA requires federal actions to conform to any applicable state implementation plan (SIP). USEPA has promulgated regulations implementing this requirement under *40 CFR Part 93*. A SIP must be developed to achieve the NAAQS in non-attainment areas (i.e., areas not currently attaining the NAAQS for any pollutant) or to maintain attainment of the NAAQS in maintenance areas (i.e., areas that were non-attainment areas but are currently attaining that NAAQS). General conformity refers to federal actions other than those conducted according to specified transportation plans (which are subject to the Transportation Conformity Rule). Therefore, the General Conformity rule applies to non-transportation actions in non-attainment or maintenance areas. Such actions must perform a determination of conformity with the SIP if the emissions resulting from the action exceed applicability thresholds specified for each pollutant and classification of nonattainment. Both direct emissions from the action itself and indirect emissions that may occur at a different time or place but are an anticipated consequence of the action must be considered.

Imperial County is currently designated as a moderate non-attainment area for 8-hour ozone (2008), and a marginal non-attainment area for 8-Hour ozone (2015). Imperial County is also listed as a moderate for PM_{2.5} for 2006 and 2012. As such, the GSA must demonstrate that a proposed action would not cause or contribute to any new violations of the NAAQS, would not interfere with provisions in the SIP, would not increase the frequency or severity of existing violations, or would not delay timely attainment of any standard. The federal agency must provide documentation that the total of direct and indirect emissions from such future actions would be below the conformity determination emission rates that are established in 40 CFR 93.153.

3.6.2 Environmental Consequences

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, existing conditions would be maintained, and air quality would not be affected.

Preferred Alternative

Under the Proposed Action, construction activities would generate minor amounts of fugitive dust (PM₁₀) and gaseous emissions of CO, VOC, NO_x, SO₂, and PM_{2.5} from the combustion of fuel by construction equipment and vehicles. These quantities would be below the Applicability for Conformity as noted in Table 3-1.

A federal agency must demonstrate that a proposed action would not cause or contribute to any new violations of the NAAQS, would not interfere with provisions in the SIP, would not increase the frequency or severity of existing violations, or would not delay timely attainment of any standard. The federal agency must provide documentation that the total of direct and indirect emissions from such future actions would be below the conformity determination emission rates that are established in *40 CFR 93.153*.

During implementation and construction of the project components, the Proposed Action would cause low levels of particulate matter (dust generated during construction) and vehicle exhaust emissions from construction vehicles. Both types of emissions would have a temporary minor impact on air quality in the local area. Operation of the construction equipment would add to exhaust-related air pollutants, such as nitrogen oxide, carbon monoxide, and ozone, within the local area. Increased concentrations of these air pollutants would be localized, temporary, and have a minor effect on local air quality. The quantity of uncontrolled fugitive dust emissions from a construction site is proportional to the area of land being worked on and the level of construction activity. These emissions would produce slightly elevated short-term PM₁₀ ambient air concentrations. The US EPA estimates that the effects of fugitive dust from construction activities would be reduced significantly with an effective watering program.

Combustive emissions from construction equipment exhaust, including CO, VOCs/ROG reactive organic gases, NO_x, and SO₂, were estimated using US EPA-approved emissions factors for heavy-duty diesel-powered construction, along with the emission factors for the estimated types and numbers of equipment expected to be used during construction of the Build Alternative. Table 3-2 below shows these emission estimates based upon complete disturbance of the areas to the east and west of the existing customs house (approximately 0.16 acres). As with fugitive dust emissions, construction equipment emissions would be de minimis. All calculations were prepared utilizing the California Emissions Estimator Model.

The quantity of uncontrolled fugitive dust emissions from a construction site is proportional to the area of land worked on and the level of construction activity. US EPA estimates that ground-disturbing activities emit uncontrolled fugitive dust emissions at a rate of 80 pounds (lbs.) of total suspended particulate (TSP) per acre day of disturbance. In a US EPA study of air sampling data at a distance of 164 feet downwind from construction activities, PM₁₀ emissions from various open dust sources were determined based on the ratio of PM₁₀ to TSP sampling data. The average PM₁₀ to TSP ratios for topsoil removal, aggregate hauling, and cut and fill operation are reported as 0.27, 0.23, and 0.22, respectively.²⁹ Using 0.24 as the average ratio for purposes of this

analysis, the emission factor for PM₁₀ dust emissions becomes 19.2 lbs. TSP per acre per day of disturbance. During construction, fugitive dust emissions would increase because construction would involve disturbance of 0.16 acres. However, US EPA estimates that an effective watering program would reduce the effects of fugitive dust from construction activities. Watering the disturbed area of the construction site twice per day with approximately 218.75 gallons per day would reduce TSP emissions as much as 50%.³⁰ Therefore, watering would be required during construction to minimize particulate and fugitive dust emissions. With mitigation, the impact would not be significant.

Table 3-2 Build Alternative Estimated Construction Emissions – Pounds per Day

	CO	ROG	NO _x	SO ₂	PM ₁₀ Fugitive	PM ₁₀ Exhaust	PM _{2.5} Fugitive	PM _{2.5} Exhaust
Proposed Action	15.38	2.0037	17	0.0301	7.1140	0.8383	3.4	0.78
Estimated Quantity During Construction (100 days)	1,538	200.3	1700	3.01	711.40	83.83	340	78
Applicability for Conformity (tons per year)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Notes: CO = carbon monoxide NO _x = nitrogen oxides PM ₁₀ = particulate matter equal or less than 10 micrometers in diameter SO ₂ = sulfur dioxide tpy = tons per year ROG = reactive organic gas								

Within Imperial County, the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District requires completion of a Imperial County Air Pollution Control District Construction Notification Form as well as obtain authorization under the Air Pollution Control District for new construction. Due to the size of the Proposed Action, less than five acres, submittal of a Dust Control Plan is not required (ICAPCD 2022).

There would be a short-term, adverse, direct impact in air quality due to the increase emissions from heavy equipment used during the placement of the temporary buildings and the construction of the walkway as well as those used during the operation of the facility. It is assumed that the number of vehicles utilizing the LPOE would remain unchanged to operate the activities as well as entering/exiting the port; therefore, no impact to air quality during the operation is anticipated.

Based upon the estimated construction emissions and the assumption that the level of emissions associated with operating the facility will remain consistent, the Proposed Action would not have negative significant long-term operational impacts on local air quality; therefore, no mitigative actions would be required. However, to mitigate short-term impacts, best management practices (BMPs) should be implemented to reduce emissions during the construction.

3.6.3 Mitigation / Management Measures

To mitigate short-term impacts, BMPs should be implemented to reduce emissions during the construction (CO, VOC, NOx, SO₂). These BMPs could include:

- Use appropriate dust suppression methods during on-site construction activities. Available methods include application of water, dust palliative, or soil stabilizers; use of enclosures, covers, silt fences, or wheel washers; and suspension of earth-moving activities during high wind conditions.
- Shut off equipment when it is not in use.
- Visually monitor all construction activities regularly and particularly during extended periods of dry weather and implement dust control measures in addition to scheduled period when needed.

3.7 Cultural Resources

3.7.1 Affected Environment

The cultural environment includes those aspects of the physical environment that relate to human culture and society, along with the social institutions that form and maintain communities and link them to their surroundings. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106) requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their “undertakings” on historic properties that are within the proposal’s “area of potential effect” (APE) and to provide the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) with a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings. The regulations implementing Section 106 establish the process through which federal agencies meet this statutory requirement. Notwithstanding the above statement, in most cases Agency actions will not be reviewed by the ACHP but rather by State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO) and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) on and off tribal land. Federal agencies must consider whether their activities could affect historic properties that are already listed, determined eligible, or not yet evaluated under the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) criteria. Properties that are either listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP are provided the same measure of consideration under Section 106.

Criteria have been established as guidance for evaluating potential entries to the NRHP. “Significance” in American history, architecture, archaeology, and culture is granted to districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and that meet at least one of the following criteria:

- an association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history (Criterion A);
- an association with the lives of persons significant in history (Criterion B);
- embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction;
- represent the work of a master; possess high artistic value; or represent a significant and distinguished entity whose components may lack individual distinction (Criterion C); or
- have yielded, or may likely yield, information important in prehistory or history (Criterion D).

In association with the EIS for the expansion and reconfiguration of the LPOE systematic inventories that included an archaeological survey and structures inventory were conducted. The Area of Potential Effects for the survey included the LPOE and half-mile radius for archeological resources and a two-block radius for historic structures, around the LPOE.

The archeological survey included a review of the area's prehistory and history, documentation of previously recorded resources, and visual inspection of the ground surface. No evidence of archaeological materials or deposits was located during the survey. The historic resources survey included reviewing County Assessor records to identify building dates and histories and conducting a field visit to record visual observations of the buildings. The APE included the historic US Inspection Station, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1991, and two buildings were determined potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places - the Zapateria Dane shoe store at 101 East First Street and the Kids Supercenter at 102 East Second Street. In a separate Section 106 process a determination of "no historic properties affected" was made by GSA and concurred by the California State Historic Preservation Officer.

3.7.2 Environmental Consequences

No Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, no ground disturbance would occur and potential to excavate an artifact is not present. Additionally, no activities would occur within the Historic Customs House. No impacts are anticipated.

Preferred Alternative

In a separate Section 106 process, a determination of "no historic properties affected" for the proposed project was made by GSA and concurred by the California SHPO per Section 106 on July 26, 2011.

Under the Proposed Action, the interior of the HCH would be modified to allow the space to be used for temporary office space and processing of pedestrians and create connectivity to the

temporary structures. None of the work would be conducted on the façade of the building and no permanent modifications to the building would be conducted. In addition, temporary buildings would be placed on the east and west side of the building along with a walk way. The placement of the temporary buildings would take place in areas that have already been developed and disturbed; therefore the potential to disturb archeological resources is minor.

Section 106 consultation associated with the Proposed Action was initiated on January 26, 2017, by the GSA Regional Historic Preservation Officer. The California SHPO concurred with the GSA's recommendation of "no adverse effect to historic properties" on February 24, 2017. Based upon the findings from the California State Historic Preservation Office, no significant adverse, short/long term, and direct/indirect impact is anticipated.

3.7.3 Mitigation / Management Measures

No Mitigation or Management Measures are anticipated to be required to reduce negative impacts to less than significant levels. If artifacts are identified during ground disturbing activities or the HCH will be impacted in an unanticipated manner, work should cease, and the California SHPO Office contacted.

3.8 Socio-Economic Impact Assessment/Environmental Justice

3.8.1 Affected Environment

EO 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations", provides that "each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations." The EO makes clear that its provisions apply fully to programs involving Native Americans.

According to CEQ environmental justice guidance (CEQ, 1997a), low income populations should be identified with the annual statistical poverty thresholds from the Bureau of the Census' Current Population Reports, Series P-60 on Income and Poverty. In identifying low-income populations, agencies may consider as a community either a group of individuals living in geographic proximity to one another, or a set of individuals (such as migrant workers or Native Americans), where either type of group experiences common conditions of environmental exposure or effect.

The CEQ guidance identifies a minority as Individual(s) who are members of the following population groups: American Indian or Alaskan Natives; Asian or Pacific Islanders; Black, not of Hispanic origin; or Hispanic. Minority populations should be identified where either the minority population of the affected area exceeds 50 percent, or the minority population percentage of the affected area is meaningfully greater than the minority population percentage in the general

population or other appropriate unit of geographic analysis. In identifying minority communities, agencies may consider as a community either a group of individuals living in geographic proximity to one another, or a geographically dispersed/transient set of individuals (such as migrant workers or Native American), where either type of group experiences common conditions of environmental exposure or effect. The selection of the appropriate unit of geographic analysis may be a governing body's jurisdiction, a neighborhood, census tract, or other similar unit that is to be chosen so as to not artificially dilute or inflate the affected minority population. A minority population also exists if there is more than one minority group present and the minority percentage, as calculated by aggregating all minority persons, meets one of the above-stated thresholds.

EO 12898 requires federal agencies to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations. As defined by the EPA, environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

There are no individuals residing adjacent to the project site. Within a 0.5-mile radius of the project site, the population is approximately 2,565 with 100 percent identifying themselves as a minority and 67 percent low-income. An environmental justice community is present (EPA 2021).

EO 13166 requires agencies to examine the services they provide, identify need for services to those with limited English proficiency (LEP), and develop and implement a system to provide those services so that LEP persons can have meaningful access to them. The proposed project area is located in an area in which approximately 65 percent (n=3) of the residents speak English less than very well.

According to the 2015-2019 Census Data, the population of Imperial County, California is 179,702 with a median household income of \$47,622 with 18% of the population in poverty. The economy of Imperial County, California employs 31,174 people. The largest industries in Imperial County, Health Care & Social Assistance (9,569 people), Retail Trade (7,614 people), Educational Services (6,102 people) and the highest paying industries are Utilities (\$81,783), Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas Extraction (\$78,899), and Public Administration (\$67,751) (US Census 2021). For economic demographic comparisons, Table 3-3 below compares the median household income, poverty rates, and unemployment rates between Calexico, Imperial County, California, and a 0.5-mile radius surrounding the proposed project area.

Table 3-3 Population, Economic and Employment Demographics

Geographic Area	Total Population	Median Household Income¹	Poverty Rate²	Percent Minority Population
Proposed Project Site 0.5-mile Radius ³	2,565	N/A	N/A	100%
Calexico	14,364	43,592	22.8%	99%
Imperial County ⁴	200,186	47,622	18.1%	89%
California	331,400,000	75,235	11.5%	62%
¹ U.S. Census QuickFacts, 2020 Census Data ² Based on Census Bureau money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition 2020. ³ EJSCREEN ACS Summary Report, accessed January 2022 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2014-2018. ⁴ ACS 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates				

According to the State of California Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, the primary employing industry sector in Imperial County for the second quarter of 2021 was service providing. Table 3-4 below shows the number of industry establishments, number of employees, and wages by industry sector in Imperial County.

Table 3-4 Imperial County Industry Sector Employment

Industry Sector	Number of Employees in Imperial County	Percent of Employees by Industry Sector
Total Farm	11,000	17.27
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,700	2.67
Manufacturing	2,300	3.61
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	12,700	19.94
Information	200	0.31
Financial Activities	1,100	1.73
Professional & Business Services	2,600	4.08
Educational & Health Services	8,500	13.34
Leisure & Hospitality	3,700	5.81
Other Services	900	1.41
Government	19,000	29.83
State of California Employment of Development Department (Imperial County Employment by Industry Data. December 2021)		

3.8.2 Environmental Consequences

No Action Alternative

There would be no change to the current conditions, and no impact to socioeconomics/environmental justice would occur with implementation of this alternative. No impacts are anticipated.

Preferred Alternative

The Proposed Action could have a minor, short-term beneficial impact on the local economy as a result of renovation activities via incidental spending by renovation workers / craftsmen and the purchase of locally available materials. Temporary jobs would be created for renovation workers/craftsmen during renovation and construction activities. The operation of the Proposed Action could result in a social benefit to the residents of Imperial County by improving the existing facility for more efficient operation.

The area in a 0.5-mile radius surrounding the site has a minority and low-income population higher than Calexico, Imperial County, and the State of California. An environmental justice community is present; however, the project site is representative of a much larger area. Any impact has the potential to be beneficial; however not significant. The proposed action would be to renovate the existing facility to increase efficiency in order to better serve the community. As documented in other sections of this document, the implementation of the preferred alternative would not likely lead to adverse human health or environmental effects to the general public as a whole or low income or minority populations specifically. No adverse, long term, and direct/indirect impact is anticipated; however, a beneficial short term, direct impact is anticipated.

3.8.3 Mitigation / Management Measures

No Mitigation or Management Measures are anticipated to be required to reduce negative impacts to less than significant levels. It is expected that the Proposed Action will have short-term positive impacts to the community in the affected environment.

3.9 Traffic

3.9.1 Affected Environment

The region of influence for transportation is defined as the roads in the vicinity of the project area that would be used for traffic bound for the LPOE or traffic impacted by the LPOE. Also considered are roads used for delivery of construction equipment, and construction worker access.

The Project Area is bound by East 1st Street to the north, Heffernan Avenue to the west, and Cristobal Colon to the south; these roadways are considered to be within the region of influence. A Traffic Impact Study was conducted for the EIS in November 2009. The study did not include the region of influence. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) collects annual

average daily traffic (AADT) counts for roadways within the state. The most recent Caltrans data collected was in 2020 and the organization collected data for East 2nd Street, one block north of the LPOE. This is the only roadway near the region of influence with data. The peak monthly traffic east bound was 32,000 vehicles per day (peak of 2,300 per hour) and west bound was 30,500 vehicles per day (peak of 2,300 per hour). East 2nd street run east / west and connects the Calexico International Airport on the west side of the city to the east side of the city and travels along the border of Mexico and the US.

Heffernan Avenue to the west of the project area is currently utilized as a pickup/drop off area for those utilizing the pedestrian access at the existing LPOE. The area is used by the Calexico Transit System (CTS), a private transit operator that operates two routes within the City of Calexico. Per the Calexico Transit Needs Assessment Study, CTS staff report that a high percentage of its riders are Mexican nationals who enter Calexico on foot through the LPOE and use the service to reach various employment, shopping and medical destinations. CTS buses lack air conditioning and wheelchair lifts. CTS does not maintain a website or publish a phone number (Calexico 2017).

3.9.2 Environmental Consequences

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative Heffernan Avenue would not be utilized for the placement of a temporary building and existing employees of the LPOE would not need to travel to the temporary facility; therefore no impacts are anticipated.

Preferred Alternative

The Proposed Action would remove the ability for traffic to utilize Heffernan Avenue as an outlet to East 1st Street. Currently personal vehicles park behind the retail building, to the west of the project area, and upon exiting the parking spaces, they drive along a roadway behind the building that transitions into Heffernan Avenue to access East 1st Street. Upon removal of this access to East 1st Street, drivers will need to depart the spaces and travel west along the roadway to access 1st Street. The roadway appears to be 20 feet in width, standard for an urban two lane width (NACTO 2022). Traffic is not anticipated to be impacted since East 1st Street will be accessible and allow the same volume of traffic to follow along E 1st street also for the existing businesses to retain the parking in the rear.

Under the Proposed Action, during the operation of the temporary facility, some employees at the existing LPOE, would report to the temporary facility during the duration of the expansion and renovation activities. The LPOE is approximately 340 feet to the west, one block, of the project area. It is assumed that employees from the LPOE who would report to the temporary facility would park at the existing LPOE or additional off-site parking; therefore an increase in traffic associated with the operation of the temporary facility is not anticipated.

CTS would be required to utilize an alternative location for their transit facility since Heffernan Avenue will no longer be accessible to the public during the construction and operation of the temporary facility. CTS does not own the property since the roadway is owned and maintained by the City of Calexico. The proposed action will have an adverse, short-term, and direct impact to the accessibility to the CTS facility; however the impact can be mitigated as there are other city owned locations within the area, for example the Imperial Valley Transit stop at Paulin Avenue and 3rd Street, where the vehicles can service riders. Upon completion of the LPOE expansion and reconstruction, the temporary building would be removed from Heffernan Avenue and the roadway reopened, allowing for no significant adverse, long-term, direct/indirect impact.

3.9.3 Mitigation / Management Measures

No Mitigation or Management Measures are anticipated to be required to reduce negative impacts to less than significant levels.

3.10 Noise

3.10.1 Affected Environment

Noise is generally defined as unwanted sound. Sound is most commonly measured in decibels (dB) on the A-weighted scale, which is the scale most similar to the range of sounds that the human ear can hear. The Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) is an average measure of sound. The DNL descriptor is accepted by federal agencies as a standard for estimating sound impacts and establishing guidelines for compatible land uses. The Noise Control Act of 1972 (Public Law 92-574) and Quiet Communities Act of 1978 directs federal agencies to comply with applicable federal, state, interstate, and local noise control regulations. US EPA and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development have identified noise levels to protect public health and welfare with an adequate margin of safety. These levels are considered acceptable guidelines for assessing noise conditions in an environmental setting. EPA guidelines, and those of many other federal agencies, state that outdoor sound levels in excess of 55 dB DNL are “normally unacceptable” for noise-sensitive land uses such as residences, schools, or hospitals.

Potential sensitive noise receptors include Calexico Mission School, a kindergarten to 12th grade private school, located approximately 1,180 feet to the east and Our Lady of Guadalupe Academy, a private elementary school, approximately 1,850 to the north. There are no sensitive receptors immediately adjacent to the project area, land use includes retail/light commercial and transportation.

3.10.2 Environmental Consequences

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, existing conditions would be maintained, and noise would be generated during the construction and placement of structures. No adverse noise impacts are anticipated.

Preferred Alternative

Increases in noise levels would occur in the immediate vicinity of the proposed project site during the construction phase. However, adherence to appropriate Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards would protect the workforce from excessive noise (29 CFR 1926.52). Noise impacts during construction of the proposed project would be short-term in duration and limited to daytime hours. Construction would involve grading and excavating portions of Heffernan Avenue as needed. Equipment used for would include bulldozers, excavators, cranes (for temporary building placement) and large transportation trucks. Construction-related noise impacts are temporary in nature and would not expose people residing or working in the area to noise levels significantly above background.

Noise levels for heavy equipment used during construction are anticipated to be in the 85 to 88 decibel range at a distance of 50 feet. Noise levels reduce considerably based on distances from the source. Based on distance from receptors and the presence of applicable buffers (commercial buildings), noise is not expected to be a concern except for workers present at the site. Additionally, since the number of employees or use of the project area will not be modified, an increase in noise associated with the Proposed Action is not anticipated. Short-term direct adverse impacts are anticipated during the construction of the Proposed Action; however these impacts can be mitigated and since no noise receptors are within the range in which noise would be an impact, the impacts are less than significant.

3.10.3 Mitigation / Management Measures

To minimize increases in noise levels during construction activities, all equipment would be fitted with noise reducing features (e.g., mufflers) and construction activities would be limited to daytime hours (7 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the summer months and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. during winter months). No mitigation or management measures are anticipated beyond Occupational Safety and Health Administration mandated hearing protection for workers on site.

3.11 Climate Change

3.11.1 Affected Environment

Climate change refers to any significant changes in average climatic conditions (such as mean temperature, precipitation, or wind) or variability (such as seasonality, storm frequency, etc.)

lasting for an extended period (decades or longer). Recent reports by the US Climate Change Science Program, the National Academy of Sciences, and the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change provide evidence that climate change is occurring and may accelerate in the coming decades. Strong evidence supports global climate change being driven by human activities worldwide, primarily the burning of fossil fuels and tropical deforestation. These activities release carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases, commonly called “greenhouse gases,” into the atmosphere (IPCC 2014).

The CEQ has released final guidance for Federal agencies on how to consider the impacts of their actions on global climate change in their NEPA reviews. Guidance on the review of this resource is based upon the rescission of the 2019 draft guidance document and the implementation of EO 13990, Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis.

3.11.2 Environmental Consequences

No Action Alternative

Under the no action alternative, no additional contributors to climate change are anticipated.

Preferred Alternative

The proposed action will not include the installation or use of a point-source air emissions source (generator and refrigerants) and is not anticipated to increase transportation related emissions associated with long-term use of the facilities. It is assumed that the increase in square footage, from the temporary facilities, would require an increase in the demand of electricity. In 2018, the Imperial Valley no longer utilized coal burning power plants and of the eight power plants that provide electricity to the Imperial Valley and in 2020, the Imperial Irrigation District has a net lifecycle green house gas reduction of 74,333 tons (NCPA 2021).

The greenhouse gasses associated with construction equipment may cause a temporary increase in local emissions during the construction phase. While directly combating climate change, including slowing the rate of sea level rise, is beyond the resources of the proposed project, evaluating impacts on the agricultural education industry, energy consumption, and using management actions to mitigate for those impacts are valid management issues/endeavors. There are no anticipated significant no adverse, short/long term, and direct/indirect impacts to climate change or greenhouse gas generation are anticipated.

3.11.3 Mitigation / Management Measures

No Mitigation or Management Measures are anticipated to be required to reduce impacts to less than significant levels. Implementing BMPs associated with reducing the emissions of vehicles and equipment during the construction phase of the proposed undertaking such as properly maintaining engines and limiting idle time is recommended.

4.0 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The consideration of cumulative impacts consists of an assessment of the total effect on a resource, ecosystem, or community from past, present and future actions that have altered the quantity, quality, or context of those resources within a broad geographic scope. The CEQ regulations define cumulative effects as "...the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or nonfederal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time." (40 CFR 1508.7) The cumulative effects analysis considers the aggregate effects of direct and indirect impacts from federal, nonfederal, public, and private actions on the quality or quantity of a resource.

The intent of the cumulative-effects analysis is to determine the magnitude and significance of cumulative effects, both beneficial and adverse, and to determine the contribution of the proposed action to those aggregate effects.

The City of Calexico anticipates revitalizing city owned parks through Proposition 68 Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program; however, Border Pak has not been identified as a park to be revitalized. The city commenced and is currently constructing a multiphase project associated with the New River. The current phase of project focuses construction of a 12-foot wide paved asphalt path with landscaped overlook, concrete wingwalls, irrigation and minor drainage improvements, and a bicycle path with separate rights of way for bikes and pedestrians. Other phases will include construction of an automated trash-screen diversion structure south of the Second Street bridge where the river crosses the international border, the encasement of the river from north of the bridge to where the river reaches the All-American Canal, and a pumpback system/force main that will tie into the city's wastewater treatment plant (Calexico Chronical 2020). The Second Street bridge is located approximately 0.5 miles to the west, northwest of the Proposed Action.

The City is estimated to have a population of 90,860 people by the year 2040, creating a need for an 16,629 square feet of building space by the year 2040. As the City continues to grow, the City of Calexico will explore a nine-acre site in the northeast area of the City for a Public Safety Center that could house both the Calexico Police Department and Fire Department. Future commercial growth in the western portion of Calexico, along the New River and west of Cesar Chavez Boulevard may have minor operational impacts on the facility due to the potential increase of those who would utilize the crossing/pedestrian facility. To meet future demand, the region is pursuing large water system improvements projects (Calexico 2018).

Caltrans anticipates repairing/maintaining Imperial Avenue (East 1st street), from Paulin Avenue to East Birch. The project was scheduled for 2020/ 2021; however has not occurred at the time in which this EA is being prepared (Caltrans 2021).

The expansion and reconfiguration of the existing LPOE to a site to the west of East 1st street, by the GSA, is anticipated to commenced upon completion of the construction activities, Proposed Action in FY 2025. The commencement of this project is dependent upon the temporary buildings being able to house activities currently conducted within the existing LPOE.

The above actions are all subject to individual environmental review and analysis and except for the LPOE expansion and reconfiguration, are not connected or within close proximity geographically to the Proposed Action. This Proposed Action would not affect sensitive or critical resources, lead to a wide range of effects, induce population growth, lead to further development, or require expansion of infrastructure. Impacts from implementation of the Proposed Action is expected to be negligible on a cumulative basis, except for the minor localized effects on air quality, traffic, and noise during construction.

5.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

5.1 Agency Coordination

Federal, state, and local agencies with jurisdiction that could be affected by the proposed or alternative actions have been notified and consulted. A complete listing of the agencies consulted may be found in Table 5-1. The scoping letters and associated responses, as well as the Draft EA Coordination letters and responses are presented in Appendix A. This coordination fulfills EO 12372, *Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs* (superseded by EO 12416 and subsequently supplemented by EO 13132), which require federal agencies to cooperate with and consider federal, state, and local views in implementing a proposal.

Federal agencies are required to consult with federally recognized Native American tribes in accordance with the NEPA, the NHPA, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), and EO 13175, *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*, 6 November 2000. As part of this NEPA process, the GSA requested consultation with sixteen federally recognized tribes that are associated with lands within Imperial County, California, in accordance with applicable regulations. The consultation was conducted pursuant to the Section 106 process for the expansion and rehabilitation of the existing LPOE.

Table 5-1 Consulting Agencies

Consulting Entity	Consultation Initiation Date	Response
Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians - The Honorable Richard Milanovich, Chairman	7/25/2011	None
Barona Band of Mission Indians - The Honorable Rhonda Welch-Sealco, Chairwoman	7/25/2011	None
Cabazon Band of Mission Indians - The Honorable John James, Chairman	7/25/2011	None
Campo Band of Kumeyaay Indians - The Honorable H. Paul Cuero, Chairman	7/25/2011	None
Cuyapaipe Band of Mission Indians - The Honorable Harlan Pinto, Chairman	7/25/2011	None
Jamul Band of Mission Indians - The Honorable Leon Acebedo, Chairman	7/25/2011	None
La Posta Band of Mission Indians - The Honorable Gwendolyn Parada, Chairwoman	7/25/2011	None
Los Coyotes Band of Mission Indians - The Honorable Catherine Saubel, Spokeswoman	7/25/2011	None
Manzanita Band of Mission Indians - The Honorable Leroy Elliot, Chairman	7/25/2011	None

Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians - The Honorable Mark Romero, Chairman	7/25/2011	None
San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians - The Honorable Allen E. Lawson, Chairman	7/25/2011	None
Santa Ysabel Band of Mission Indians - The Honorable Johnny Hernandez, Spokesman	7/25/2011	None
Sycuan Band of Mission Indians - The Honorable Daniel J. Tucker, Chairman	7/25/2011	None
Torres-Martinez Band of Desert Cahuilla Indians - The Honorable Raymond Torres, Chairman	7/25/2011	None
Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians - The Honorable Darrell Mike, Chairman	7/25/2011	None
Viejas Band of Mission Indians - The Honorable Bobby L. Barrett, Chairman	7/25/2011	None
California State Historic Preservation Office	1/26/2017	2/24/2017 - No adverse effect to historic properties

5.2 Public Involvement/Scoping

Public participation opportunities with respect to the EA, as well as decision making on the Proposed Action, are guided by 40 CFR 1500 and the GSA NEPA Desk Guide. Letters of Intent (NOI) and Notice of Availability (NOA) were sent to various stakeholders including, but not limited to, the following:

- Centro de Enseñanza Técnica y Superior (CETYS University)
- Imperial County Transportation Commission
- Imperial Valley Community Foundation
- City of Calexico
- Consejo de Desarrollo Económico de Mexicali (CDEM – Mexicali)
- Imperial County
- Imperial County Community and Economic Development
- Leonard Transportation Center / California State University, San Bernardino (LTC/CSUSB)
- Imperial County Air Pollution Control District
- Imperial Valley Economic Development Council/CaliBaja Mega Region
- Municipal Institute for Research and Planning (IMIP)
- Sistema Municipal de Transporte
- San Diego Association of Governments
- State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- Calexico Chamber of Commerce
- Consul de Mexico – Calexico
- Viceconsul del Consulado de USA en Tijuana
- Assemblyman Eduardo Garcia

- Municipio de Mexicali
- Congressman Juan Vargas
- San Diego State University Imperial Valley College
- Cluster de Turismo Medico
- Desarrollo Urbano y Reordenación Territorial del Estado de Baja California (SIDURT State of Baja California)
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection
- Northern Arizona University

The NOI was published within the Federal Register on June 29, 2021 and in the Calexico Chronical on July 8, 2021. The NOI included a date, time, and link to a virtual public scoping meeting hosted by the GSA. Stakeholders were also informed by email on July 6, 2021. The virtual scoping meeting was held via Teams on July 13, 2021. The event was held from 4:30 to 6:00 pm pacific; however, due to limited attendance the meeting concluded at 5:02 pm after three questions were asked and answered. Nine stakeholders attended.

The GSA was invited to attend the Imperial/Mexicali Air Quality Task Force monthly meeting. The virtual meeting was held on September 9, 2021. Comments received were associated with the wait times that commuters must spend awaiting entry through the LPOE, which increases air emissions to the region as well directly impacts the pedestrians utilizing the entry. Additional questions were associated with activities conducted within Mexico. The GSA representative informed the attendees that the Proposed Action's purpose and need is not associated with the operations of vehicular crossings and no GSA funded activities will occur on Mexican property. The representative directed the attendees to visit the GSA website for information regarding the EIS, since the Proposed Action and purpose and need are associated with vehicular traffic.

An NOA, of the Draft EA, will be provided to stakeholders as well as published within the Federal Register and in the Calexico Chronical.

This section will be updated upon receipt of comments.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This Draft EA evaluates GSA's Proposed Action to provide a temporary pedestrian processing facility to be used by the US CBP and partner agencies in Calexico, California. This EA analyzes the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative of the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action includes placement of temporary buildings, renovation of the interior of the Historic Customs House, and the placement of a new secured covered pedestrian walkway for northbound and southbound travels at border crossing. The activities associated with the Proposed Action should require no more than disturbing 0.91 acres of disturbance (including Heffernan Avenue). The No Action Alternative would not include the renovation of the HCH or the placement of any additional structures within the project area. Evaluation of the alternatives includes analyzing the following resources: land, water, air quality, cultural, socio-economic, traffic, and noise.

This Draft EA concludes there would be no significant impact or cumulative adverse impact to the human health and the environment associated with either the Proposed Action or No-Action Alternative as long as the GSA implements the routine management measures, regulatory compliance measures, BMPs and mitigation measures specified in this EA. Therefore, this EA concludes that a FONSI is appropriate and that an EIS is not required.

6.1 Summary of Mitigation

Mitigation measures will be implemented prior to and during the design and construction of this project to reduce potential negative environmental impacts below the level of significance. Additionally, a number of common design and/or construction management measures will be implemented in accordance with good practices. Mitigation and management measures are summarized below:

Air Quality: - BMPs should be implemented to reduce impacts associated with construction activities including combustion/engine emissions (CO, VOC, NO_x, SO₂ and PM₁₀). These BMPS could include:

- Use appropriate dust suppression methods during on-site construction activities. Available methods include application of water, dust palliative, or soil stabilizers; use of enclosures, covers, silt fences, or wheel washers; and suspension of earth-moving activities during high wind conditions.
- Shut off equipment when it is not in use.
- Visually monitor all construction activities regularly and particularly during extended periods of dry weather and implement dust control measures in additional to scheduled period when needed.

Cultural: If artifacts are identified during ground disturbing activities or the HCH will be impacted in an unanticipated manner, work should cease, and the California SHPO Office contacted.

Noise: To minimize increases in noise levels during construction activities, all equipment would be fitted with noise reducing features (e.g., mufflers) and construction activities would be limited to daytime hours (7 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the summer months and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. during winter months). No mitigation or management measures are anticipated beyond Occupational Safety and Health Administration mandated hearing protection for workers on site.

Climate Change: Implementing BMPs associated with reducing the emissions of vehicles and equipment during the construction phase of the proposed undertaking such as properly maintaining engines and limiting idle time is recommended.

7.0 LIST OF PREPARERS

Table 7-1 lists preparers of this environmental assessment.

Table 7-1 Preparers of the Environmental Assessment

Name	Agency/Organization	Resource Area
Osmahn Anthony Kadri	GSA	NEPA Program Manager
Jennifer Trombley Peters	Terracon	Project Manager and Resource Lead
Kayla Espinoza	Terracon	Resource Lead / Socio-economics and GIS
Juan Morlock	Terracon	Resource Lead / Archaeologist
Alyssa Arguijo	Terracon	Resource Lead / Air Quality, Traffic, Cumulative Impacts
Vanessa Yohe	Terracon	Public Involvement
Derek Koller	Terracon	Project Support
Nicolle Martinez	Terracon	Administrative Assistant
Jeremy Hanzlik	Terracon	Approved Project Reviewer

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9.0 LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AADT	annual average daily traffic
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
APE	area of potential effect
APN	Assessors Number
AQCR	Air Quality Control Region
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
BMPs	best management practices
CAA	Clean Air Act
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CBP	Customs and Border Protection
CCAA	California Clean Air Act of 1988
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CO	carbon monoxide
CTS	Calexico Transit System
CWA	Clean Water Act
dB	decibels
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
E.O.	Executive Order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Environmental Site Assessment
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
GSA	General Services Administration
HCH	Historic Customs House
H ₂ S	Hydrogen sulfide
ICE	Immigration and Customs Enforcement
lbs	pounds
LPOE	Land Port of Entry
NAAQS	national ambient air quality standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NO ₂	nitrogen dioxide
NOA	Notice of Availability
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
O ₃	ozone
OHWM	ordinary high water mark
Pb	lead
PBS	Public Buildings Service

PM	particulate matter
ROD	Record of Decision
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officers
SIP	state implementation plan
SO ₂	sulfur dioxide
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
THPOs	Tribal Historic Preservation Officers
TNWs	Traditional navigable waters
TSP	total suspended particulate
US	United States
USACE	US Army Corps of Engineers
USC	United States Code

