

Public Meeting
Draft Programmatic Environmental Assessment
Proposed Replacement Louisville VA Medical Center
Louisville, Kentucky
April 18, 2012

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) completed a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Draft Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) that evaluates the possible physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic effects associated with its Proposed Action to select and acquire a site for the construction and operation of a replacement Louisville VA Medical Center (VAMC). Once a site is selected and acquired, VA would prepare a subsequent, site-specific EA (SEA) in conjunction with the design of the replacement VAMC.

PROPOSED ACTION

VA's Proposed Action is to select and acquire a site for the construction and operation of a minimum of 800,000 gross square feet, full service (inpatient and outpatient) replacement VAMC, including required parking (approximately 2,400 parking spaces), access, and other required site amenities and improvements, within an approximate 15-mile radius of the existing University of Louisville Healthcare Center in Louisville, Kentucky.

PURPOSE AND NEED

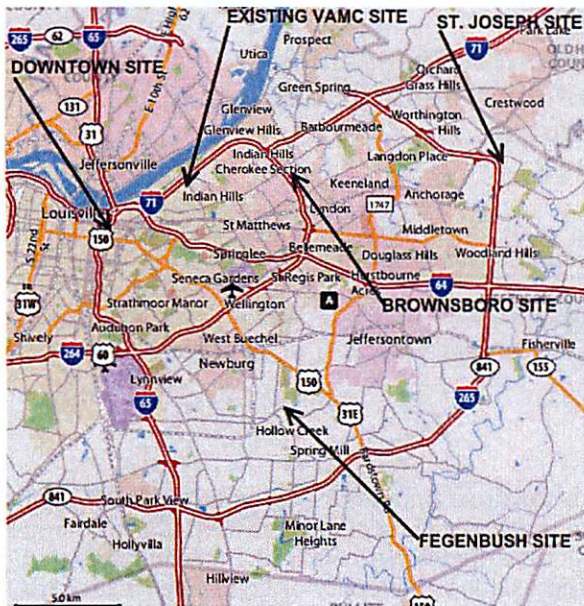
The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide a replacement, full-service hospital of sufficient capacity to service the current and projected future healthcare needs of US Veterans requiring services from the Louisville VAMC catchment area, primarily in western Kentucky and southern Indiana. The proposed facility would accommodate an anticipated 65,000 or more patients per year.

The Proposed Action is needed to replace the existing Louisville VA medical facilities that have reached the end of their serviceable lives. The conditions at the existing facilities, as well as the configuration of the existing facilities, are inadequate to effectively and efficiently meet the needs of VA's healthcare mission in the region.

ALTERNATIVES

VA began developing alternatives for the Proposed Action ranging from reconfiguring the existing (Zorn Avenue) Louisville VAMC site through new construction and/or renovation, to constructing a replacement VAMC at the existing VAMC site or at some new site in the Louisville area (Downtown Site or an undefined mostly undeveloped site). In 2009, VA commissioned a feasibility study. That feasibility study concluded that each alternative was feasible, but identified that each alternative presented various challenges or advantages. The feasibility study did not attempt to identify any particular new site, but rather evaluated a generic new site's feasibility compared to reconfiguring the current Zorn Avenue facility.

VA then published a request for expressions of interest from potential offerors for an acceptable site for the potential development of a new VAMC in April 2010. VA received numerous responses to the request, a number of which met the initial screening criteria. Through a comprehensive screening process, including a visit to each site, VA further narrowed the number of reasonable sites based on a more refined analysis of site-specific aspects, issues, and concerns. These included an analysis of: surrounding land uses; proximity to local hospitals; current zoning; accessibility to transportation, shopping, restaurants, and other features; utility availability; overall site condition; and visible environmental issues/constraints/features. As a result of this screening, VA identified three mostly undeveloped sites that appeared to best meet all of the VA's criteria. These sites are referred to in the PEA as the Brownsboro, Fegenbush, and St. Joseph Sites. VA also identified the Downtown Site and the potential to reconfigure the existing Louisville VAMC site as candidate sites for the replacement VAMC.



In 2011, VA completed an initial environmental screening of these five alternative sites as part of the NEPA process. Through this screening process, potential environmental issues/significant adverse effects were identified for several of the five initially considered sites. Through this screening process, VA determined that only the Brownsboro Site and the St. Joseph Site were reasonable alternatives based on potential environmental impacts, time for completion of the replacement VAMC, and cost. The remaining three sites initially considered by VA (i.e., the Fegenbush, Downtown, and Existing VAMC Sites) were eliminated from further consideration for the Proposed Action.

The two Action Alternatives analyzed in depth within the PEA are the Preferred Action Alternative (Brownsboro Site) and the Alternate Action Alternative (St. Joseph Site).

CONCLUSIONS

The PEA concludes that there would be no significant impact to the local environment or quality of life associated with implementing either Action Alternative, provided that the mitigation measures and best management practices identified in the PEA are implemented. Site-specific impacts would be further evaluated in the SEA once a site has been selected, acquired, and the proposed VAMC design process has been initiated. The proposed mitigation measures and management practices identified in the PEA would be incorporated into that future process and analysis. Therefore, the PEA concludes that a mitigated Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is appropriate, and that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Draft PEA was published on March 29, 2012 for a 30-day public comment period, as announced in legal notice published in The Courier-Journal between March 30 and April 1, 2012. The public comment period ends April 29, 2012.

Copies of the Draft PEA are available for review at:

- The Existing Robley Rex VAMC at 800 Zorn Avenue
- The Louisville Free Public Library – Westport Branch at 8100 Westport Road
- <http://downloads.va.gov/files/CFM-AcqDocs/LouisvilleNEPA/>

Comments received regarding VA's Proposed Action (the selection of a site for the construction of the replacement VAMC) will be addressed in the Final PEA. Comments can be provided:

- Verbally tonight following the presentation
- In writing tonight using the attached form
- Via email at LouisvilleReplacementHospitalComments@va.gov
- In writing to: Robley Rex VA Medical Center, Director's Office, 800 Zorn Avenue, Louisville, KY 40206

All comments must be received by April 29, 2012.