

Preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Chet Holifield Federal Building Tenant Relocation Laguna Niguel, California

January 2020



Prepared for:
GSA Region 9

Prepared by:
Potomac-Hudson Engineering, Inc.

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COVER SHEET

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2 The United States (U.S.) General Services Administration (GSA) proposes to remove existing tenants
3 from the Chet Holifield Federal Building (CHFB) located in Laguna Niguel, California, and relocate them
4 to a newly constructed facility adjacent to the existing building and/or lease space in the Orange County
5 market. The CHFB, owned by GSA, is home to various federal agency tenants, with the United States
6 Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) serving as the largest tenant. Currently, the working space
7 for the tenants of CHFB does not meet applicable building code, accessibility, and security standards. The
8 GSA has prepared this Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which examines the purpose and
9 need for this project; alternatives considered; the existing environment that could be affected; the
10 potential impacts resulting from each of the alternatives; and proposes best management practices and/or
11 mitigation measures. Alternatives considered include a Hybrid Lease/Construction Alternative, a Lease
12 Relocation Alternative, and a No Action Alternative. The Draft EIS also discusses those alternatives that
13 GSA considered, but eliminated from consideration.

14 GSA is soliciting comments from interested persons and stakeholders on the DEIS during a 45-day
15 comment period. The public was notified of the CHFB DEIS public meeting through publication of a
16 Notice of Availability (NOA) in the *Federal Register*, as well as multiple other channels of
17 communication, including two newspaper ads, letters to interested parties, and social media posts.
18 Comments received during the 45-day comment period will be considered in preparation of the Final EIS
19 and will be made part of the Administrative Record.

20 Comments on the DEIS may be emailed to Osmahn.Kadri@gsa.gov or sent to:

21 General Services Administration
22 Attention: Osmahn Kadri, NEPA Project Manager
23 50 United Nations Plaza, 3345 Mailbox #9
24 San Francisco, California 94102

25 For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document can be made available in alternate formats. To
26 obtain a copy in an alternate format, receive special assistance to attend and participate in the DEIS public
27 meeting, or for further information concerning this DEIS, please contact Osmahn Kadri at the email or
28 address provided above or call 415-522-3617.

1 SUMMARY

2 The General Services Administration (GSA) proposes to remove the existing tenants from the Chet
3 Holifield Federal Building (CHFHB) located in Laguna Niguel, California, and relocate them to a newly
4 constructed facility adjacent to the existing building and/or lease space in the Orange County market. The
5 Proposed Action would accommodate the long-term office space requirements for the current tenants that
6 would meet all applicable building code, accessibility, and security standards. The Proposed Action would
7 also make such accommodations primarily within the Orange County, California market in a cost-effective
8 manner.

9 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

10 GSA prepared this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to analyze the potential impacts of the Proposed
11 Action: the relocation of tenants of the CHFHB to new office space that meets all appropriate and applicable
12 building code, accessibility, and security standards. The EIS was prepared in accordance with the National
13 Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 as amended (42 United States Code [USC] 4321 *et seq.*), GSA
14 Public Building Service (PBS) NEPA Desk Guide, and other relevant federal and state laws and regulations.

15 A Notice of Intent (NOI) for the EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on November 15, 2019. The
16 NOI listed the end of the public scoping comment period as December 10, 2019; however, GSA accepted
17 comments through December 17, 2019.

18 In advance of the NOI publication in the *Federal Register*, GSA published two advertisements in a local
19 newspaper the weeks preceding an October 2, 2019 public scoping meeting. The advertisements indicated
20 GSA's intent to prepare an EIS and conduct a scoping meeting; provided a brief description of the project;
21 identified the public scoping meeting time and location; and included instructions to submit a comment.
22 The advertisement was published in the Orange County Register on September 20 and 22, 2019.

23 INTRODUCTION

24 The CHFHB is located in Laguna Niguel, California, between Los Angeles and San Diego, and
25 approximately 4 miles from the Pacific coastline. The building, used primarily for federal office space, is
26 located on a 92-acre site and is the only federally-owned facility in south Orange County, California.
27 Construction of the building was completed in 1971. The CHFHB was designed by William L. Pereira, and
28 consists of six stories as well as a partial underground section and mechanical penthouse. The building is
29 multi-tiered, with the largest floor area on the first floor and building floors continually reducing in size
30 with each added level. Structures on the CHFHB site include a central utility plant to the north, two guard
31 stations, a Services Support Building, fire pump house, cooling tower, and thermal energy storage tank.
32 Amenities include a full-service cafeteria, health unit, credit union, fitness center, basketball courts, and a
33 day care center located in separate facilities on the same site.

34 The CHFHB is owned by GSA and home to various federal agency tenants, with the United States Citizenship
35 and Immigration Services (USCIS) serving as the largest tenant. As the agency responsible for lawful
36 immigration to the United States (U.S.), USCIS provides services that include citizenship, immigration of
37 family members, employment in the U.S., verification of authorized employment, humanitarian programs,
38 adoptions, civic integration and genealogy. The USCIS California Service Center (CSC) in the CHFHB is
39 one of five Service Centers in the nation. While much of the CSC includes aspects of typical office space,
40 the CSC has a number of security requirements that are not easily accommodated in a standard office space.

41 Other CHFHB tenants include the following: Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs
42 Enforcement (ICE); ICE Office of Human Capital; Defense Contract Management Agency; GSA Federal
43 Acquisition Service; GSA Office of Inspector General; GSA PBS, Office of Personnel Management;

1 International Group of Treasury Associations; Internal Revenue; U.S. Army, Army Recruiting; and
2 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

3 **PURPOSE AND NEED**

4 The purpose of the Proposed Action is to accommodate the long-term office space requirements for the
5 current tenants located at the CHFEB that would meet applicable building code, accessibility, and security
6 standards. The purpose is also to make such accommodations primarily within the Orange County,
7 California market in a cost-effective manner that would minimize personnel relocations and disruptions to
8 the federal tenants and their agency missions.

9 The project is needed because the current working space does not meet GSA's federal current building,
10 accessibility, and security standards. There have been no modifications to the CHFEB since the 1980s, other
11 than some energy-related modifications. Most of the building's infrastructure is beyond its useful life and
12 deficiencies have been documented in all major mechanical and electrical systems, including life-safety,
13 fire protection, and fire sprinkler systems. Additionally, numerous issues exist, including the presence of
14 asbestos containing materials and the need to improve the building's response to future seismic events. The
15 Proposed Action to remove existing tenants from the CHFEB and relocate them would meet this purpose and
16 need.

17 **SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES**

18 GSA evaluated three alternatives in this EIS: the Hybrid Lease/Construction (Alternative 1), the Lease
19 Relocation Alternative (Alternative 2), and the No Action Alternative.

20 **Hybrid Lease/Construction (Alternative 1)**

21 The Hybrid Lease/Construction Alternative would include construction of a new federal building on a
22 portion of the existing 92-acre site to house the USCIS (approximately 2,000 staff) while relocating all
23 other tenants into existing Class A lease space within the region. The current building would be vacated by
24 current tenants, and the rest of the property not used for construction of the new federal building would be
25 reported as excess and disposed in accordance with the federal disposal process.

26 The new building would be approximately 380,000 square feet across four levels, and would include a
27 parking lot, day care facility, cafeteria, guard booths, and loading dock. The overall footprint for this new
28 space would encompass 27.15 acres of the existing 92-acre site. The facility would be designed with Anti-
29 Terrorism Force Protection (ATFP) measures for proper security. In addition, the new federal building
30 would have a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Platinum certification, which is
31 the highest LEED® certification. Technologically sound and proven methods would be implemented to
32 meet the applicable energy and sustainability requirements of the LEED® certification process and to
33 minimize energy use, water use, and waste generation.

34 Aside from USCIS, who would stay on the property currently occupied by the CHFEB, the other tenants
35 would be relocated to existing Class A leased space primarily within Orange County. Relocation would be
36 based on the expressed geographic areas within which each agency has indicated it would like to operate.
37 The exact location of new leased office space is not currently known, but it is anticipated that at least 55
38 percent of the remaining tenants would relocate in south or central Orange County no farther north than
39 Irvine, with up to 45 percent relocating to areas north of Irvine such as Santa Ana, Anaheim, or Long Beach.

40 **Future Redevelopment**

41 If the property does not remain in federal ownership after going through the federal disposal process, future
42 use of the portion of the site that is disposed (i.e., 64.85 acres) would be dictated by the new owner and the
43 City of Laguna Niguel re-zoning process. Because a developer is not known at this time, no detailed plan
44 exists for redevelopment of the property. Future redevelopment is not a part of GSA's Proposed Action;

1 and GSA is not subject to any requirements associated with redevelopment. However, as development is
2 reasonably foreseeable, two future redevelopment scenarios are considered in this EIS, including:

- 3 • **Renovation of the existing CHFB.** The new owner would conduct repairs and alterations to
4 address known deficiencies in the existing building, including those to address code compliance,
5 security and seismic safety in the building; ACM abatement throughout the building; conducting
6 updates to the fire suppression and fire alarm systems along with modifications to fire life-safety
7 exiting pathways in the building; and removal of accessibility barriers throughout the building and
8 on the site which are required by federal law. It is assumed building occupancy would remain
9 similar to current conditions of approximately 3,000 personnel.
- 10 • **Demolition of the existing CHFB and construction of new mixed-use space.** The new owner
11 would demolish the existing CHFB and construct a new development in accordance with the City
12 of Laguna Niguel rezoning process. New development could include a mix of commercial and
13 residential development, with appropriate parking and support facilities.

14 If the property remained in federal ownership, the appropriate level of NEPA analysis would be required
15 by a future federal proponent. If the property is transferred out of federal ownership, the City of Laguna
16 Niguel would require the new owner to complete the appropriate level of California Environmental Quality
17 Act (CEQA) documentation, and all necessary land use approvals would be issued for any proposed
18 development.

19 **Lease Relocation Alternative (Alternative 2)**

20 Under the Lease Relocation Alternative, all tenants, including USCIS, would relocate to Class A lease space
21 primarily within Orange County. The entire CHFB site would then be reported as excess and disposed in
22 accordance with the federal disposal process.

23 Similar to Alternative 1, all tenants, with the exception of USCIS, would be relocated based on the
24 expressed delineated geographic areas within which each agency has indicated it would like to operate.
25 There are limited options for relocating USCIS within the County due to the number of tenants and the
26 specific security requirements for the agency office space. It would be assumed that USCIS would be
27 relocated to Irvine, Santa Ana, or Anaheim, where greater office space availability exists.

28 Relocation of tenants might require build out of special use spaces, dependent upon agency mission needs,
29 but these spaces would be accommodated in existing commercial space and would not require new land
30 disturbance.

31 **Future Redevelopment**

32 Future development of the existing parcel under Alternative 2 would be similar to as described for
33 Alternative 1, but for development of the entire 92-acre site. Similar to Alternative 1, the density and
34 composition of future commercial, residential or mixed-use development are unknown and the City of
35 Laguna Niguel would require the future owner to complete the appropriate level of NEPA or CEQA
36 documentation.

37 Differences from the Alternative 1 scenario include:

- 38 • **Renovation of the existing CHFB and new construction.** The new owner would conduct repairs
39 and alterations to address known deficiencies in the existing building similar to as described for
40 Alternative 1. In addition, development could occur on underutilized portions of the 92-acre site,
41 particularly on the south or western end of the site. Development could include commercial,
42 residential, office space, or a mix of land uses.
- 43 • **Demolition of the existing CHFB and new construction.** The new owner would demolish the
44 existing CHFB and construct a new mixed-use development similar to as described for Alternative
45 1, but for the entire 92-acre site.

1 **No Action Alternative**

2 The No Action Alternative assumes that tenants would remain within the existing CHFB and no new
3 construction or relocation would occur. Minor repairs would occur as needed and maintenance and
4 operation of the existing facilities would continue. However, this alternative would not meet the purpose
5 and need of the project, as tenants would continue to occupy office space that does not meet applicable
6 building code, accessibility, and security standards.

7 **IMPACT COMPARISON MATRIX**

8 This EIS evaluates the potential impact on the environmental conditions from implementing the Hybrid
9 Lease/Construction Alternative, Lease Relocation Alternative, or the No Action Alternative. For each
10 resource area analyzed in this EIS, the expected consequences of the alternatives are summarized in
11 Table ES-1.

Table ES-1. Summary Comparison of Alternatives

Hybrid/Lease Construction Alternative (Alternative 1)	Lease Relocation (Alternative 2)	No Action Alternative	Impact Reduction Measures
Cultural Resources			
Pending completion			
Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions			
<p>Construction: Minor impacts during construction of new building from use of equipment, vehicles, and earth moving. Emissions would not exceed <i>de minimis</i> thresholds for any criteria pollutants. Negligible increases in GHGs. No impacts from land transfer.</p> <p>Operation: Negligible to minor impacts during operations due to emissions generated from building electricity and heating uses.</p> <p>Pending traffic analysis.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Minor to moderate indirect impacts from construction activities, similar to construction of a USCIS building. Minor to moderate impacts during operations due to long term increases in vehicle trips to the current CHF B site.</p> <p>Pending traffic analysis.</p>	<p>Construction: Negligible impacts from emissions generated during build-outs for lease space. No impacts from land transfer.</p> <p>Operations: Pending traffic analysis.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Similar to Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment, but to a greater intensity.</p>	<p>Minor impacts from ongoing vehicle trips to site and periodic generator maintenance.</p>	<p>The following measures would be implemented during construction of a new USCIS building for Alternative 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting BMPs detailed in the SCAQMD Rule 403 for fugitive dust. • Stabilizing open storage piles and disturbed areas by covering and/or applying water or chemical/organic dust palliative where appropriate, including both inactive and active sites, during workdays, weekends, holidays, and windy conditions. • Installing wind fencing and phasing grading operations where appropriate, and using water trucks for stabilization of surfaces under windy conditions. • When hauling material and operating non-earthmoving equipment, preventing spillage and limiting speeds to 15 miles per hour. Earth-moving equipment would be limited to 10 miles per hour. • Paving roadways where necessary, and maintaining them in a clean condition by promptly removing spilled or tracked dirt or other materials. • Covering open equipment when conveying or transporting material likely to prevent material from becoming airborne. • Minimizing the use and number of trips of heavy equipment. • Maintaining and tuning all engines per manufacturer specifications to perform at USEPA certification levels, where applicable, and to perform at verified standards applicable to retrofit technologies. • Conducting periodic, unscheduled inspections to limit unnecessary idling and to ensure that construction

Hybrid/Lease Construction Alternative (Alternative 1)	Lease Relocation (Alternative 2)	No Action Alternative	Impact Reduction Measures
<p>Construction: Minor beneficial impacts during construction from increased jobs and spending.</p> <p>Operations: Moderate impacts to the local economy in Laguna Niguel due to shift of approximately 1,000 workers to new leased locations in the County. Long term beneficial impacts due to</p>	<p>Construction: Negligible to minor beneficial impacts during construction from increased jobs and spending.</p> <p>Operations: Moderate to significant impacts to local economy in Laguna Niguel due to the shift of approximately</p>	<p>Beneficial impacts of federal workforce remaining at CHF B in Laguna Niguel.</p>	<p>equipment is properly maintained, tuned, and modified consistent with established specifications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibiting construction vehicles both on- and off-site from excess idling, consistent with current CARB Regulations. Prohibiting tampering with engines and requiring continuing adherence to manufacturer's recommendations. Encouraging bids that include use of energy and fuel-efficient fleets and Best Available Control Technology, particularly those seeking to deploy zero-emission technologies. Using alternative fueled vehicles and construction equipment where feasible. Using energy efficient lighting systems, such as LED technology, where feasible. Using lighter-colored pavement where feasible. Recycling construction debris to the maximum extent feasible. Planting shade trees in or near construction projects where feasible. Developing a construction traffic and parking management plan to minimize traffic interference and maintains traffic flow. <p>Similar measures would likely be required and implemented for any future development on the site as part of Alternatives 1 and 2, regardless of ownership.</p>
Socioeconomics			
<p>Construction: Minor beneficial impacts during construction from increased jobs and spending.</p> <p>Operations: Moderate impacts to the local economy in Laguna Niguel due to shift of approximately 1,000 workers to new leased locations in the County. Long term beneficial impacts due to</p>	<p>Construction: Negligible to minor beneficial impacts during construction from increased jobs and spending.</p> <p>Operations: Moderate to significant impacts to local economy in Laguna Niguel due to the shift of approximately</p>	<p>Beneficial impacts of federal workforce remaining at CHF B in Laguna Niguel.</p>	<p>None identified.</p>

Hybrid/Lease Construction Alternative (Alternative 1)	Lease Relocation (Alternative 2)	No Action Alternative	Impact Reduction Measures
<p>increased tax revenue following land transfer.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Minor beneficial impacts during construction, similar to construction of a USCIS building. Moderate to significant impacts during operations from increased population in Laguna Niguel, strain on housing stock and community services. Moderate, long-term beneficial impacts from increased spending and tax revenue.</p>	<p>3,000 workers to new leased locations in the County. Long term beneficial impacts due to increased tax revenue following land transfer.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Similar to Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment, but to a greater intensity.</p>		
Geology, Seismicity, and Soils			
<p>Construction: Negligible impacts on geology and topography; minor impacts to soils from land disturbance; beneficial impacts to seismicity due to decreased risk of seismic hazards to building tenants.</p> <p>Operations: No impacts to geology, topography, or seismicity. Negligible impacts to soils due to increased impervious surfaces and runoff.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Minor to moderate impacts to soils, geology, and topography during construction due to excavation and earth work activities. During operations, no impacts geology, topography, or seismicity. Minor impacts to soils due to increased impervious surfaces and runoff.</p>	<p>Construction and Operations: No impacts to geology, seismicity, topography, or soils during construction or operations.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Similar to Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment, but to a greater intensity.</p>	<p>No short- or long-term impacts to geology or topography would be expected. Negligible impacts to soils could occur due to land disturbance and soil erosion from ongoing maintenance activities. Impacts to the building from seismic disturbance might occur, as it is not currently constructed to California Building Code for seismic safety.</p>	<p>Refer to Impact Reduction Measures for Water Resources.</p>
Land Use			
<p>Construction: Minor impacts to adjacent land uses from construction</p>	<p>Construction and Operations: No impacts to</p>	<p>No impacts to land use.</p>	<p>Refer to Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases; Transportation and Traffic, and Noise for measures to reduce construction</p>

Hybrid/Lease Construction Alternative (Alternative 1)	Lease Relocation (Alternative 2)	No Action Alternative	Impact Reduction Measures
<p>activities from dust, traffic, noise, and road closures.</p> <p>Operations: No impacts to land use.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Negligible impacts during construction, similar to construction of a USCSIS building. If the remaining parcel is transferred out of federal ownership, rezoning would be required.</p>	<p>land use during construction or operations.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Similar to Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment, but to a greater intensity.</p>		<p>impacts on land use-related concerns related to as fugitive dust, traffic, or noise.</p>

Visual Resources and Aesthetics

<p>Construction: Minor impacts from construction activities introduced into the visual landscape.</p> <p>Operations: Minor to moderate impacts from introduction of new building into viewshed.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Minor impacts from construction activities, similar to construction of a new USCSIS building. Moderate to significant impacts during operations from permanent alteration to the landscape with potential demolition of CHFB.</p>	<p>Construction and Operations: No impacts to visual resources during construction or operation.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Similar to Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment, but to a greater intensity.</p>	<p>No impacts to visual resources.</p>	<p>The following measures would be implemented during construction of a new USCSIS building for Alternative 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with local officials, consider local requirements for new building construction, and comply with state and local building codes to the maximum extent practicable. • Integrate programs of design/architecture and construction excellence into the new facility in order to optimize building performance and aesthetics, including adherence to P100 Standard which establishes design criteria and standards for new government buildings. • Design exterior lighting to meet physical security requirements but controlled to minimize light trespass (e.g., direct light downward and minimize glare). Fixtures for the security fence would be a similar style. Exterior lighting would be consistent with the local ordinance code for outdoor lighting (Supplemental nonresidential regulations 9-1-45-14). • Incorporate landscaping and screening (trees and vegetation) into the exterior design to provide aesthetic benefits to the surrounding community, consistent with GSA's Urban Development/Good Neighbor Program. <p>Similar measures regarding consulting with local officials, consideration of local requirements for new building construction, and compliance with state and local building codes would likely be required and implemented for any future development on the site as part of Alternatives 1 and 2; regardless of ownership.</p>
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Hybrid/Lease Construction Alternative (Alternative 1)	Lease Relocation (Alternative 2)	No Action Alternative	Impact Reduction Measures
Water Resources			
<p>Construction: Minor impacts to surface waters and wetlands from runoff, and disturbance of groundwater during excavation. Site is located outside of the 100-year floodplain.</p> <p>Operations: Minor impacts due to potential long term increases in stormwater runoff and decreases in groundwater recharge.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Minor impacts to surface waters, wetlands, and groundwater during construction, similar to construction of a new USCIS building. Minor impacts to surface waters and groundwater during operations, similar to operations of a new USCIS building.</p>	<p>Construction and Operations: No impacts to water resources during construction or operations.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Similar to Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment, but to a greater intensity.</p>	<p>Negligible impacts to surface waters due to runoff during ongoing maintenance activities.</p>	<p>The following measures would be implemented during construction of a new USCIS building for Alternative 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with State's Construction General Permit (if a construction project involving 1 acre or greater of soil disturbance). • Preparation of an Erosion and Sediment Control Plans showing all BMPs for construction, even for a project that disturb less than 1 acre of soil and are not covered by the Construction General Permit. • Implementation of BMPs detailed in the Orange County Stormwater Program's Construction Runoff Guidance Manual related to erosion control, sediment control, wind erosion control, tracking control, non-stormwater management, waste management and materials pollution control, and inspection and maintenance. • Preparation of a WQMP to identify measures to minimize the adverse effects of urbanization on site hydrology, runoff flow rates and pollutant loads. • Preparation of a HMP to reduce adverse changes to the magnitude and frequency of stream flows and associated sediment load due to urbanization or other changes in the watershed land use and hydrology. <p>Similar measures would likely be required and implemented for any future development on the site as part of Alternatives 1 and 2, regardless of ownership.</p>
Biological Resources			
<p>Construction: Negligible to minor impacts to wildlife and habitat due to increase noise and surface runoff.</p> <p>Operations: No impacts to biological resources.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Minor impacts to wildlife and habitat due to increase noise and surface runoff during construction, similar to</p>	<p>Construction and Operations: No impacts to biological resources during construction or operations.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Similar to Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment, but to a greater intensity.</p>	<p>Negligible indirect impacts on biological resources due to land disturbance and noise during ongoing maintenance activities.</p>	<p>The following measures would be implemented during construction of a new USCIS building for Alternative 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of approved species for revegetation. • Avoidance of introduction of invasive species. • Surveys for migratory birds would be conducted if ground disturbance is conducted within the nesting seasons. If necessary, such surveys would be conducted no more than 10 days prior to vegetation removal for project activities that occur within California bird breeding

Hybrid/Lease Construction Alternative (Alternative 1)	Lease Relocation (Alternative 2)	No Action Alternative	Impact Reduction Measures
<p>construction of a new USCIS building. No impacts during operation.</p>			<p>season, which extends from February 1 through August 31. Surveys would be conducted at any buildings or structures proposed for construction or demolition and in any natural areas directly affected by project activities. Surveys would include the disturbance area and a 500-foot buffer around the disturbed area, as feasible. Any nests, with the exception of eagles' nests, identified on the premises during the pre-breeding season surveys would be removed, as long as no eggs are present. If a nest with eggs is found, activities in the disturbance area and buffer area would be halted until the eggs hatched and the young fledged.</p> <p>Similar measures would likely be required and implemented for any future development on the site as part of Alternatives 1 and 2, regardless of ownership.</p>
Transportation and Traffic			
Pending completion			
Hazardous Waste and Materials			
<p>Construction: Negligible to minor impacts during construction activities due to use of hazardous materials and generation of hazardous waste. Operations: Negligible impacts due to use of hazardous materials on site. Future Redevelopment: Minor impacts during construction, similar to construction of a USCIS building. Negligible impacts during operations, similar to operations of a new USCIS building.</p>	<p>Construction: Negligible to minor impacts due to hazardous materials usage and generation of hazardous waste during build-out of lease space, and vacating of CHFB. Operations: Negligible impacts due to use of hazardous materials on site. Future Redevelopment: Similar to Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment, but to a greater intensity.</p>	<p>Minor impacts due to ongoing use of hazardous materials and generation of hazardous waste, as well as generation of hazardous wastes during maintenance activities.</p>	<p>The following measures would be implemented during construction of a new USCIS building for Alternative 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If PCB-containing materials are identified onsite, appropriate abatement actions for their disposal would be implemented in accordance with regulatory requirements, and soil beneath transformers would be evaluated for evidence of releases. If present in underlying soils, appropriate abatement actions for removal and disposal would be implemented in accordance with applicable regulatory requirements. • All spills or releases of petroleum oil lubricating products, hazardous materials, pollutants or contaminants would be handled in accordance with measures outlined in a Spill Prevention and Response Plan prepared for the construction project. • A Soil Management Plan would be prepared to address the potential for encountering areas of potential environmental concern during associated grading, excavation or other subsurface disturbance. The Soil

Hybrid/Lease Construction Alternative (Alternative 1)	Lease Relocation (Alternative 2)	No Action Alternative	Impact Reduction Measures
<p>Construction: Moderate impacts during construction from construction activities.</p> <p>Operations: Negligible noise impacts during operations of new USCS building and leased locations.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Moderate impacts during construction, similar to construction of a new USCS building. Negligible impacts during operations, similar to operations of a new USCS building.</p>	<p>Construction: Negligible impacts from office build-outs.</p> <p>Operations: Negligible to minor impacts from changes in traffic patterns. Pending transportation analysis.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Similar to Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment, but to a greater intensity</p>	<p>Minor, short-term noise may occur as a result of ongoing maintenance of the building.</p>	<p>Management Plan would identify specific measures to address hazardous waste and materials cleanup efforts including monitoring, handling, stockpiling, characterization, on-site reuse, export and disposal protocols for excavated soil.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prevent exposure to workers or the release of hazardous waste and materials to the environment, field surveys, soil sampling or laboratory testing would be conducted in any questionable areas prior to renovations, construction or demolition. These efforts would evaluate the potential occurrence of contaminants where known spills or contamination have occurred, followed by proper handling and disposal as necessary. <p>Similar measures would likely be required and implemented for any future development on the site as part of Alternatives 1 and 2; regardless of ownership.</p>
Noise			
<p>Construction: Moderate impacts during construction from construction activities.</p> <p>Operations: Negligible noise impacts during operations of new USCS building and leased locations.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Moderate impacts during construction, similar to construction of a new USCS building. Negligible impacts during operations, similar to operations of a new USCS building.</p>	<p>Construction: Negligible impacts from office build-outs.</p> <p>Operations: Negligible to minor impacts from changes in traffic patterns. Pending transportation analysis.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Similar to Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment, but to a greater intensity</p>	<p>The following measures would be implemented during construction of a new USCS building for Alternative 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of noise control measures, such as project scheduling, noise barriers, and using noise controls on equipment (e.g., mufflers). Conducting construction activities during normal business hours (i.e., between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday, excluding holidays). If a variation from normal construction hours a variance permit from the City of Laguna Niguel would be obtained. All construction activities would comply with the City of Laguna Niguel's noise ordinance. 	
Environmental Justice and Protection of Children's Safety			
<p>Construction: Minor impacts on environmental justice populations due to air, traffic, noise, construction impacts; minor to moderate impacts on children populations due to air and noise impacts.</p>	<p>Construction: No impacts during construction.</p> <p>Operations: Moderate impacts to environmental justice populations due to decreased economic activity in Laguna</p>	<p>No impacts to environmental justice or children populations.</p>	<p>Impact reduction measures for resources specific to environmental justice are discussed in the respective sections (i.e. Sections 3.3, Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases; Section 3.7, Visual Resources and Aesthetics; Section 3.10, Traffic and Transportation; and Section 3.12, Noise).</p>

Hybrid/Lease Construction Alternative (Alternative 1)	Lease Relocation (Alternative 2)	No Action Alternative	Impact Reduction Measures
<p>Operations: Minor to moderate impacts on environmental justice populations due to decreased economic activity in Laguna Niguel. No impacts to children populations.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Negligible to moderate impacts during construction on environmental justice and children populations, similar to construction of a new USCIS building. Moderate impacts during operations to environmental justice and children populations, similar to construction of a new USCIS building.</p>	<p>Niguel. No impacts to children populations.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Similar to Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment, but to a greater intensity.</p>		
Utilities and Infrastructure			
<p>Construction: Minor impacts due to increased water demand and wastewater generation during construction.</p> <p>Operations: Negligible beneficial impacts due to increased building efficiency and decreased utility needs.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Minor impacts during construction, similar to construction of a new USCIS building. Minor to moderate impacts during operations due to net increase in utility demands.</p>	<p>Construction: No impacts during construction.</p> <p>Operations: Beneficial impacts due to decreased utility demands from tenants occupying newer, more efficient buildings.</p> <p>Future Redevelopment: Similar to Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment, but to a greater intensity.</p>	<p>Ongoing demand for utilities during building operation, and increased need for maintenance as building systems continue to age.</p>	<p>The following measures would be implemented during construction of a new USCIS building for Alternative 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adherence to GSA P100 Standards including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Newly-constructed buildings must not exceed the energy intensity of 30,978 British Thermal Units per square foot per year. ○ Toilets must be dual-flush or low-flow (1.28 gallons per flush), urinals must be High Efficiency Urinals (0.5 liters per flush), and lavatory faucets must be metered-type with 0.25 gallons per cycle. • Using native or locally-adapted species, xeriscaping, and/or grey water reuse to reduce water consumption. • Any reuse of treated wastewater would comply with the water recycling criteria, permitted uses, and other applicable requirements in Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations. • Reviewing existing utility maps and contacting utility companies ahead of time to identify any locations where construction activities could potentially affect utility lines. • Coordinating with utility providers in advance of such activities to determine the best course of action to avoid or minimize impacts, either by implementing measures to

Hybrid/Lease Construction Alternative (Alternative 1)	Lease Relocation (Alternative 2)	No Action Alternative	Impact Reduction Measures
			protect utility lines or by arranging for their temporary or permanent relocation. Similar measures regarding review of utility maps and coordination with utility providers during future development planning would occur as part of Alternatives 1 and 2; regardless of ownership.

BMP = best management practice; CARB = California Air Resources Board; CHFB = Chet Holifield Federal Building; GSA = General Services Administration; HMP = Hydromodification Management Plan; PCB = Polychlorinated biphenyls; SCAQMD = South Coast Air Quality Management District; WQMP = Hydromodification Management Plan; USCIS = United States Citizenship and Immigration Services; USEPA = U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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ACRONYMS

Acronym	Definition
ACM	asbestos containing materials
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
AEA	Atomic Energy Act
ASCE	American Society of Civil Engineers
ASHRAE	American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers
ATFP	Anti-Terrorism Force Protection
BMPs	best management practices
CAA	Clean Air Act
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CBP	Customs and Border Protection
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CH ₄	methane
CHFB	Chet Holifield Federal Building
CNEL	Community Noise Equivalent Level
CO	carbon monoxide
CO ₂	carbon dioxide
CSC	California Service Center
CUP	Central Utility Plant
CWA	Clean Water Act
dB	decibel
dBA	A-weighted decibel
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DNL	Day-night Sound Level
DOJ	Department of Justice
EHR	Exceptionally High Risk
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EO	Executive Order

Acronym	Definition
ESA	Environmental Site Assessment
GHG	greenhouse gas
GSA	General Services Administration
GWP	global warming potential
HMP	Hydromodification Management Plan
ICE	Immigration and Customs Enforcement
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service
ISC	Interagency Security Committee
LBP	lead-based paint
LEED®	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MNWD	Moulton Niguel Water District
N ₂ O	nitrous oxide
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NESHAP	National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
NOA	Notice of Availability
NOI	Notice of Intent
NO ₂	nitrogen dioxide
NO _x	nitrogen oxide
O ₃	ozone
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Pb	lead
PBS	Public Building Service
PCB	Polychlorinated biphenyls
PCPI	per capita personal income
PHE	Potomac-Hudson Engineering, Inc.
PM _{2.5}	particulate matter of diameter 2.5 microns or less
PM ₁₀	particulate matter of diameter 10 microns or less
ppm	parts per million
PSD	Prevention of Significant Deterioration
PV	photovoltaic

Acronym	Definition
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
ROI	region of influence
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SFRM	spray-on fire-resistive material
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SO ₂	sulfur dioxide
SPCC	Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
U.S.	United States
USC	United States Code
USCIS	United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
UST	underground storage tank
VOCs	Volatile organic compounds
WQMP	Water Quality Management Plan

CHAPTER 1 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

The Chet Holifield Federal Building (CHFB) is located in Laguna Niguel, California, between Los Angeles and San Diego, and approximately 4 miles from the Pacific Ocean coastline (see Figure 1-1). Construction of the CHFB was completed in 1971. The General Services Administration (GSA) proposes to remove existing tenants from the CHFB and relocate them to a newly constructed facility adjacent to the existing building or lease space in the Orange County market. The GSA has prepared this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 United States Code [USC] 4321 *et seq.*), GSA Public Building Service (PBS) NEPA Desk Guide, and other relevant federal and state laws and regulations. This EIS discloses the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts that would result from the Proposed Action and alternatives.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The CHFB is located on a 92-acre site and is the sole federally-owned facility in south Orange County, California. The property is located in a high value real estate suburban area comprised of retail and residential zones and is primarily used for federal office space.

The CHFB is approximately 1 million square feet in size and located on an 86.5-acre parcel, with a 5.5-acre central utility plant parcel north of Avila Road. The building was designed by William L. Pereira, a significant California architect recognized for his contribution to notable works such as the Los Angeles County Museum, the Transamerica Pyramid, and the Theme Building at Los Angeles International Airport. The building has six stories as well as a partial underground section and mechanical penthouse. The building is multi-tiered, with the largest floor area on the first floor and building floors continually reducing in size with each added level. A central utility plant is located across the street to the north from the original building main entrance. A loading dock is located on the north end of the building. Two guard stations are located on the property; one of which is no longer in use. Additional structures include a Services Support Building, fire pump house, cooling tower, and thermal energy storage tank. Amenities include a full-service cafeteria, health unit, credit union, fitness center, basketball courts, and a day care center located in separate facilities on the same site. See Figure 1-2 for a layout of existing site facilities.

The CHFB is owned by GSA and home to various federal agency tenants, with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) serving as the largest tenant. The Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public Law No. 107-296, 116 Stat. 2135) dismantled the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and separated it into three components within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in March of 2003. This includes the creation of the largest tenant at CHFB, USCIS, to enhance the security and improve the efficiency of national immigration services by exclusively focusing on the administration of benefit applications. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) were established as sister agencies, handling immigration enforcement and border security functions, respectively.

As the agency responsible for lawful immigration to the United States (U.S.), USCIS provides services that include citizenship, immigration of family members, employment in the U.S., verification of authorized employment, humanitarian programs, adoptions, civic integration and genealogy. The USCIS California Service Center (CSC) is one of five Service Centers in the nation, along with the Vermont Service Center, the Texas Service Center, the Nebraska Service Center, and the Potomac Service Center. While much of the CSC includes aspects of typical office space, the CSC has a number of security requirements that are not easily accommodated in a standard office space.



Figure 1-2. Existing Chet Holifield Federal Building Property

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1 In addition to USCIS, other CHFB tenant agency mission requirements include the following:

- 2 • **Customs and Border Protection** – Charged with safeguarding America's borders and protecting
3 the public from dangerous people and materials while enhancing the Nation's global economic
4 competitiveness by enabling legitimate trade and travel.
- 5 • **Immigration and Customs Enforcement** – Protects America from the cross-border crime and
6 illegal immigration that threaten national security and public safety. This mission is executed
7 through the enforcement of more than 400 federal statutes and a focus on smart immigration
8 enforcement, preventing terrorism, and combating the illegal movement of people and goods.
- 9 • **ICE Office of Human Capital** – Provides strategic programs, client services and workforce
10 relations support to ICE employees; and provides oversight and guidance to ICE's managers,
11 ensuring compliance with human resources policies and practices.
- 12 • **Defense Contract Management Agency** – Provides contract administration services for the
13 Department of Defense and other federal organizations and international partners, and is an
14 essential part of the acquisition process from pre-award to sustainment.
- 15 • **GSA Federal Acquisition Service** – Delivers comprehensive products and services across the
16 government at the best value possible. Services cover the following areas: products and services;
17 technology; motor vehicle management; transportation; travel; and procurement and online
18 acquisition tools.
- 19 • **GSA Office of Inspector General** – Responsible for promoting economy, efficiency, and
20 effectiveness; and detecting and preventing fraud, waste, and mismanagement in GSA programs
21 and operations. This is accomplished primarily by performing: independent financial, program,
22 information technology, contract and compliance audits; criminal and civil investigations;
23 reviews of proposed legislation and regulations; and by providing other services to senior GSA,
24 Congressional, and law enforcement officials.
- 25 • **GSA Public Building Service** – Acquires space on behalf of the federal government through new
26 construction and leasing, and acts as a caretaker for federal properties across the country.
- 27 • **Office of Personnel Management (OPM)** – Serves as the chief human resources agency and
28 personnel policy manager for the federal government. OPM directs human resources and
29 employee management services, administers retirement benefits, manages healthcare and
30 insurance programs, oversees merit-based and inclusive hiring into the civil service, and provides
31 a secure employment process.
- 32 • **International Group of Treasury Associations** – Serves as a forum for National Treasurers
33 Associations to share views and information on issues that impact the treasury and finance
34 profession and association management.
- 35 • **Internal Revenue Service** – Serves as the Nation's tax collection agency and administers the
36 Internal Revenue Code enacted by Congress.
- 37 • **U.S. Army, Army Recruiting** – Provides recruiting services for the U.S. Army, reserves, and
38 Army National Guard.
- 39 • **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** – Provides engineering services to strengthen the Nation's
40 security by building and maintaining America's infrastructure and military facilities.

1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

1.2.1 Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to accommodate the long-term office space requirements for the current tenants located at the CHFB that would meet applicable building code, accessibility, and security standards. Furthermore, the purpose is to make such accommodations primarily within the Orange County, California market in a cost-effective manner that would not require substantial personnel relocations or majorly disrupt the federal tenants from achieving their agency mission.

1.2.2 Need for the Project

The proposed project is needed because the current working space for the tenants does not meet GSA's current building, accessibility, and security standards. Other than some energy-related modifications, there have been no modification to the CHFB since the 1980s. Most of the building's infrastructure is beyond its useful life and deficiencies have been documented in all major mechanical and electrical systems, including life-safety, fire protection, and fire sprinkler systems. Additionally, numerous issues exist, including the presence of asbestos containing materials (ACM) and the need to improve the building's response to future seismic events.

More specifically, the building does not meet the current standards outlined below:

- GSA Facilities Standards for the Public Buildings Service (P-100)
- American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE)-31, Seismic Evaluation of Existing Buildings, and ASCE-41, Seismic Rehabilitation of Existing Buildings
- Several National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards for Fire & Life Safety Requirements, (NFPA 1, NFPA 13, NFPA 70, NFPA 80, NFPA 92, NFPA 101, NFPA 105, NFPA 230, etc.)
- International Building Code 2015 and California Building Code 2016
- American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) 90, Energy Standard for Buildings
- Department of Justice's (DOJ) Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) 2010 Standards for Accessible Design
- Interagency Security Committee (ISC) Security Design Criteria

The CHFB was originally designed for use as a light manufacturing facility and was never designed to function as an office building. Much of the lower three floors have limited or no windows. Floor plates as deep as 400 feet from any exterior glazing make it difficult for light to reach office space areas per GSA best practices related to building occupants. Most existing office space does not meet modern office standards as defined for federal agencies and there are limited options available to make the spaces compliant.

The property is in various states of disrepair and has multiple functionality issues, as detailed below:

- **Structure.** The building, to include windows and doors, exhibits signs of age and deterioration. Many existing pre-cast concrete panels exhibit cracking or missing joint sealant throughout all elevations of the building. Additionally, the painted surface exhibits fading and loss of protective qualities.

- 1 • **Hazardous Materials.** Previous reports have outlined and documented that the building contains
2 hazardous materials. Areas with the potential for ACM include door frames, specific areas of
3 floor tile, catwalk areas, and pipe insulation (Tectonics 2017). Lead based paint applications have
4 also been noted from previous reports (Jonas & Associates Inc. and Earth Tech, Inc. 2005).
- 5 • **Seismic Deficiencies.** There are a number of critical seismic upgrades recommended for the
6 building (Degenkolb Structural Engineers 2006, 2017). The recommended upgrades are largely
7 the result of the increased understanding of seismic design and the subsequent evolution of code
8 over the last 48 years.
- 9 • **Building Code.** The building does not meet various provisions of the most recent 2017 building
10 code.
- 11 • **Accessibility.** The project site has accessibility issues in both interior and exterior areas. The site
12 does not include sufficient handicap and van parking on site. Exterior railing, stairs, and ramps
13 exhibit deterioration from age and use, and sidewalk and curbs exhibit cracks and potentially
14 dangerous tripping hazards. Pedestrian access points do not currently comply with accessibility
15 requirements.
- 16 • **Parking.** The existing parking areas on all sides of the building have deteriorated due to age and
17 wear. The condition of existing paving systems varies, with paving nearest the buildings in the
18 best condition and paving at the outlying/little-used parking areas in the poorest condition. On-
19 site roadways are damaged and require repair. Parking bollards throughout the site are loose and
20 do not provide adequate protection against vehicular threats.
21 The site also features more acreage for parking than is required. The outer ring of lots and drives
22 are essentially unused because of their advanced stage of deterioration. The current parking
23 design provides for poor circulation for both vehicles and pedestrians.
- 24 • **Landscaping.** The existing landscaping is in fair to poor condition. Trees along the perimeter of
25 the parking areas are missing, and bare slopes and soil erosion are noticeable around the site.

26 **1.3 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

27 The NEPA process provides several opportunities for public involvement. During these times, interested
28 and affected parties (stakeholders) may express their concerns and provide their views about:

- 29 • The project and its possible impacts on the natural and human environment;
- 30 • What should be addressed in the analysis and evaluation of the Proposed Action; and
- 31 • The adequacy of the NEPA analysis and documentation of potential impacts in the EIS.

32 Public participation with respect to decision-making on the Proposed Action is guided by GSA's
33 implementing procedures for compliance with NEPA (GSA Order ADM 1095.1F, *Environmental*
34 *Considerations in Decision Making*).

35 **1.3.1 Scoping Phase**

36 **1.3.1.1 Notification of a Public Scoping Meeting**

37 A Notice of Intent (NOI) for the EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on November 15, 2019. The
38 NOI listed the end of the public scoping comment period as December 10, 2019; however, GSA accepted
39 comments through December 17, 2019.

40

1 In advance of the NOI publication in the *Federal Register*, GSA published two advertisements in a local
2 newspaper the weeks preceding the October 2, 2019 public scoping meeting. The advertisements
3 indicated GSA’s intent to prepare an EIS and conduct a scoping meeting; provided a brief description of
4 the project; identified the public scoping meeting time and location; and included instructions to submit a
5 comment. The advertisement was published in the Orange County Register on September 20 and 22,
6 2019.

7 **1.3.1.2 Public Scoping Meeting**

8 A public meeting was held on Wednesday, October 2, 2019 from 4 to 6 PM at the Laguna Niguel City
9 Hall located at 30111 Crown Valley Pkwy, Laguna Niguel, California 92677. Forty people attended the
10 meeting.

11 An open house format was used to encourage discussion and information sharing and to ensure that the
12 public had opportunities to speak with representatives of the GSA. Informational posters about the
13 proposed alternatives, project background, purpose and need, and ways for submitting scoping comments
14 were provided at the meeting. Additional materials available at the public scoping meeting included a
15 sign-in sheet, a comment form, and a handout.

16 **1.3.1.3 Summary of Public Scoping Comments**

17 The GSA invited written comments to be submitted via mail or email on the CHFB EIS. More
18 specifically, the GSA invited comments on the key topics that should be covered in the EIS; examples of
19 potential adverse and beneficial impacts from the proposed project; and any other relevant information.
20 Comments were submitted using comment forms, letters and emails.

21 A total of 8 unique commenters provided input during the scoping period. Commenters provided
22 comment on a range of topics as shown in Table 1-1, with the majority of comments received concerning
23 air quality, project alternatives, and water resources. A total of 29 comments were received.

24 **Table 1-1. Commenters and Comments by Category**

25

Category	Number of Commenters	Number of Comments
Alternatives	5	5
Cultural Resources	3	4
Air Quality	2	6
Transportation and Traffic	2	2
Water Resources	2	5
Biological Resources	1	3
Hazardous Materials	1	1
Public Involvement	2	2
Cumulative Effects	1	1

26 The CHFB EIS Final Scoping Report includes a more detailed description of comments (see
27 Appendix A). Public Scoping Meeting materials and the Final Scoping Report are also available on the
28 project website at www.gsa.gov/ChetHNEPA.

29 **1.3.2 Draft EIS Phase**

30 **1.3.2.1 Notification of a DEIS Public Meeting**

31 GSA is soliciting comments from interested persons and stakeholders on the Draft EIS (DEIS) during a
32 45-day comment period. The public was notified of the CHFB DEIS public meeting through publication

1 of a Notice of Availability (NOA) in the *Federal Register*, as well as multiple other channels of
2 communication, including two newspaper ads, letters to interested parties, and social media posts.
3 Comments received during the 45-day comment period will be considered in preparation of the Final EIS
4 and will be made part of the Administrative Record.

5 **1.3.2.2 DEIS Public Meeting**

6 GSA invites public comment on the DEIS through a public meeting to be held during the DEIS public
7 comment period. An open house format will be used to encourage discussion and information sharing and
8 to ensure that the public has opportunities to speak with representatives of the GSA. Informational posters
9 and handouts regarding the project will be provided at the meeting.

CHAPTER 2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Per the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA at 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1502.14, the federal government must consider reasonable alternatives to a proposed action. Considering alternatives helps avoid unnecessary impacts and allows analysis of reasonable ways to achieve the stated purpose. To warrant detailed evaluation, an alternative must be reasonable. To be considered reasonable, an alternative must be ready for decision (any necessary preceding events must have taken place), affordable, capable of implementation, and must meet the purpose of and need for the action. Said otherwise, reasonable alternatives are practical or feasible from a common sense, technical and economic standpoint; and meet the project's purpose and need. The Proposed Action and reasonable alternatives are described in Sections 2.1 through 2.3. Alternatives considered but eliminated from further analysis are discussed briefly in Section 2.4.

2.1 PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The Proposed Action is defined as the relocation of tenants of the CHFEB to new office space that meets appropriate applicable building code, accessibility, and security standards. A feasibility study was prepared for the project to explore viable alternatives to accommodate the CHFEB tenants. Two project alternatives are considered in this EIS that would meet the project purpose and need. These alternatives were considered by a multidisciplinary team, following a scoping meeting and consultation with the community. The alternatives described and evaluated in this DEIS include an alternative to construct a new federal building for USCIS and relocate other tenants to leased office space in the region; an alternative in which all tenants relocate to leased office space; and the No Action Alternative.

2.1.1 Hybrid Lease/Construction (Alternative 1)

The Hybrid Lease/Construction Alternative would include construction of a new federal building on a portion of the existing 92-acre site to house the USCIS (approximately 2,000 staff) while relocating all other tenants into existing Class A lease space within the region. The existing building would be vacated by current tenants and the remainder of the property not retained for construction of the new federal building (i.e., 64.85 acres) would be reported as excess in accordance with federal policy and disposed (see Section 2.1.1.1).

The new building would be approximately 380,000 square feet across four levels and would include a 1,517-space parking lot. Figure 2-1 includes a representative rendering of the new structure and parking. The overall footprint would encompass 27.15 acres of the existing property (see Figure 2-2).

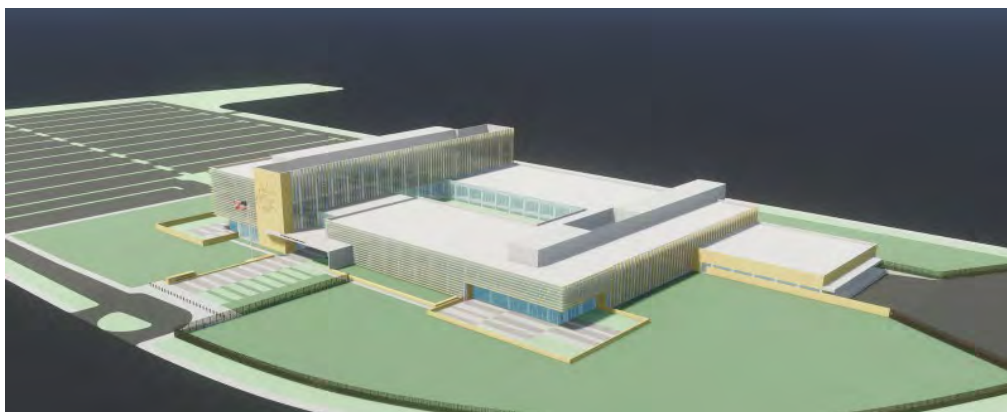


Figure 2-1. Rendering of New USCIS Building

1



2
3

Figure 2-2. Proposed Alternative 1 Site Layout

1 The new structure would also include special support functions including a day care facility, cafeteria,
2 and loading dock. Guard booths would be constructed at entrances and exits to parking areas as well as
3 the loading dock. The facility would be designed with appropriate Anti-Terrorism Force Protection
4 (ATFP) measures for security, to include appropriate structure design (e.g., blast resistant windows,
5 appropriate set-backs), facility entrance and interior security requirements, as well as surveillance system
6 requirements.

7 All construction activities, including staging/laydown, would remain within the 27.15-acre parcel (see
8 Figure 2-2). Construction activities would include utility tie-ins (potable water, wastewater, stormwater
9 and electricity), erection of structures, and finishing work. Construction equipment would be typical of
10 building construction, and would include trucks (cement and dump), backhoes, loaders, bulldozers,
11 cranes, concrete equipment, and pavers. Construction would take approximately 30 months to complete.
12 Peak construction could last for up to 15 months with a potential maximum of 300 construction workers
13 and 90 to 100 trucks per day for deliveries and waste removal. During non-peak construction, between 15
14 to 35 workers would be onsite. All construction and demolition waste would be disposed and recycled at
15 authorized facilities.

16 Excavation depth, foundation requirements, and other structural integrity requirements for new
17 construction would be dependent on the results of the geotechnical investigation and engineering report to
18 be prepared for the site per the requirements of P-100.

19 Construction would involve temporary road and pedestrian sidewalk closures. Road closures would be
20 periodic and temporary during the construction period. Pedestrian sidewalks along the perimeter of the
21 project site would be closed during the duration of construction. Pedestrians would be directed to utilize
22 the sidewalks on the other side of the street.

23 At a minimum, GSA requires that new construction of its facilities obtain a Leadership in Energy and
24 Environmental Design (LEED®) Gold certification. However, the GSA aims to obtain a Platinum
25 certification – the highest LEED® certification – at all of its facilities. Technologically sound and proven
26 methods would be implemented to meet the applicable energy and sustainability requirements of the
27 LEED® certification process and to minimize energy use, water use, and waste generation. Energy
28 conservation measures could include daylighting (i.e., using daylight to provide internal lighting); solar
29 orientation (i.e., positioning a building to take advantage of heating and lighting from the sun); and
30 installing more efficient insulation. Water conservation measures could include use of water efficient and
31 native/adaptive landscaping; use of low-flow fixtures; or implementation of water reuse, capture, and
32 treatment strategies. Stormwater infrastructure (e.g., bioswales) would be included in the site design to
33 manage runoff to at least the 95th percentile of regional/local rainfall events on site. Waste management
34 measures could include waste diversion requirements during construction and use of sustainable building
35 materials.

36 The balance of federal agencies would be relocated to existing Class A leased space primarily within
37 Orange County. Tenants would be relocated based on expressed delineated geographic areas within which
38 the agency has indicated it would like to operate. Agencies have primarily indicated a desire to remain in
39 south Orange County but have also expressed willingness to relocate to areas such as Irvine, Santa Ana,
40 Anaheim or other central or northern portions of the County. In some instances, tenants have expressed
41 willingness to relocate as far as Long Beach in Los Angeles County. The exact location of new leased
42 office space is not currently known; however, it is anticipated at least 55 percent of the remaining tenants
43 would relocate in south or central Orange County no farther north than Irvine, with as many as 45 percent
44 of the remaining tenants relocating to areas north of Irvine such as Santa Ana, Anaheim, or Long Beach.
45 A breakdown of tenants requiring relocation from the current CHFB site is provided in Table 2-1. It is
46 assumed all leased locations would have sufficient parking space to accommodate future tenants.

1

Table 2-1. Tenants Requiring Relocation from CHFB Site under Alternative 1

Agency	Personnel	
	Existing Conditions	To Be Relocated
Customs and Border Protection	91	91
ICE	360	360
ICE Office of Human Capital	70	70
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services	2,001	0
Department of Defense – Defense Contract Management Agency	–	–
GSA, Federal Acquisition Service	–	–
GSA Office of Inspector General	4	4
GSA Public Building Service	20	20
Office of Personnel Management	5	5
Treasury Department, International Group of Treasury Associations	19	19
Treasury Department, Internal Revenue Service	470	470
U.S. Army – Army Recruiting	–	–
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	–	–
TOTAL	3,040	1,039

2 GSA = General Services Administration, ICE = Immigration, Customs, and Enforcement, U.S. = United States

3 Alternative 1 has been designated as the Preferred Alternative as it would be much more difficult to find
4 lease space large enough in the area that would meet all of the requirements of a level IV security
5 building that USCIS requires than it would be to find leasable space for the balance of the tenants who are
6 smaller in size and do not have as high of security requirements. It is believed that this alternative would
7 provide the greatest opportunity for leasing and provide the best and overall use of funding dollars to
8 address all of the issues identified in this report related to the existing CHFB.

9 [GSA to confirm if Preferred Alternative should be identified in the Draft EIS. GSA NEPA Desk Guide
10 does not require a Preferred Alternative to be identified until the Final EIS.]

11 **2.1.1.1 Disposal Process**

12 Once a federal agency determines a property to be excess, the property must first be offered to other
13 federal agencies that may have a need for it. If there is no further need for the property within the federal
14 government, it is considered surplus property. The property is next evaluated by the Department of
15 Housing and Urban Development to determine if it is suitable for homeless use, as required under the
16 McKinney-Vento Act. If it is deemed unsuitable, it may be screened for potential Public Benefit
17 Conveyances or negotiated sale to a local municipality. Examples of a Public Benefit Conveyance include
18 public health or educational uses, public recreational areas, or wildlife conservation, among others. If it is
19 deemed suitable, it is screened in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act. If there is no homeless
20 interest or no successful homeless or other Public Benefit Conveyances/negotiated sale application for the
21 property, the property can proceed to public sale. This process is depicted graphically in Figure 2-3.

22 [GSA to confirm inclusion of Section 2.1.1.1, and advise if any text or figure revisions are needed to
23 address the possible “Fast Track” process.]



Figure 2-3. Federal Disposal Process

2.1.1.2 Future Development of the Existing Parcel

If the property does not remain in federal ownership, future use of the portion of the site that is disposed (i.e., 64.85 acres) would be dictated by the new owner and the City of Laguna Niguel re-zoning process. Because a developer is not known at this time, no detailed plan exists for redevelopment of the property. This includes unknown density and composition of future commercial, residential or mixed-use development which could occur. However, before redeveloping the 64.85 acre-parcel, two scenarios would apply. If the property remained in federal ownership, the appropriate level of NEPA analysis would be required by a future federal proponent. If the property is transferred out of federal ownership, the City of Laguna Niguel would require the new owner to complete the appropriate level of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation, and all necessary land use approvals would be issued for any proposed development. As part of the CEQA process, the City would identify the environmentally superior alternative, and the developer would have to adhere to measures to mitigate adverse impacts. Potential future development requirements are discussed in Chapter 3 for each resource, as applicable, for informational purposes; however, the GSA is not subject to these requirements nor are these requirements commitments of GSA. A project may not be approved as submitted under CEQA if mitigation measures are not able to substantially lessen any significant environmental effects associated with the project.

Although redevelopment is not considered under this Proposed Action, renovation and/or demolition, construction, and operation are considered foreseeable indirect impacts (see Section 3.1.1). Therefore, a range of potential future development scenarios are considered in this analysis, including:

- Renovation of the existing CHFB.** The new owner would conduct repairs and alterations to address known deficiencies in the existing building, including those to address code compliance, security and seismic safety in the building; ACM abatement throughout the building; conducting updates to the fire suppression and fire alarm systems along with modifications to fire life-safety exiting pathways in the building; and removal of accessibility barriers throughout the building

1 and on the site which are required by federal law. It is assumed building occupancy would remain
2 similar to current conditions of approximately 3,000 personnel.

- 3 • **Demolition of the existing CHFB and construction of new mixed-use space.** The new owner
4 would demolish the existing CHFB and construct a new development in accordance with the City
5 of Laguna Niguel rezoning process. New development could include a mix of commercial and
6 residential development, with appropriate parking and support facilities. Demolition of the
7 existing CHFB could require up to 44,000 haul trips over an approximate 36-month period, or
8 approximately 60 haul trips per day. Up to 300 workers would be on site during the demolition.

9 **2.1.2 Lease Relocation (Alternative 2)**

10 Alternative 2 would include relocation of all tenants to Class A lease space primarily within Orange
11 County, similar to as described under Alternative 1, but to also include a new location for USCIS outside
12 of the existing CHFB site. The entire CHFB site would be reported as excess in accordance with federal
13 policy. Leasing would begin approximately in 2022.

14 All tenants, with the exception of USCIS, would be relocated based on the expressed delineated
15 geographic areas within which the agency has indicated it would like to operate, as described in
16 Section 2.1.1. The relocation of USCIS provides limited options within the County given the number of
17 tenants (approximately 2,000 personnel) needed to be relocated and the specific security requirements for
18 agency office space. It is assumed that USCIS would be relocated within Orange County, but to Irvine,
19 Santa Ana, or Anaheim, where greater office space availability exists.

20 Relocation of all tenants may require build out of special use spaces to meet tenant agency mission needs
21 (e.g., evidence rooms, law enforcement, laboratories, warehouse storage); however, these spaces would
22 be accommodated in existing commercial space and would not require new land disturbance. Similar to
23 Alternative 1, it is assumed leased locations have sufficient parking space to accommodate future tenants.

24 **2.1.2.1 Future Development of the Existing Parcel**

25 Future development of the existing parcel under Alternative 2 would be similar to as described for
26 Alternative 1 under indirect impacts, but for development of the entire 92-acre site as shown in Figure 1-
27 2. Similar to Alternative 1, the density and composition of future commercial, residential or mixed-use
28 development are unknown and the City of Laguna Niguel would require the future owner to complete the
29 appropriate level of NEPA or CEQA documentation. All necessary land use approvals would be issued
30 for any proposed development.

31 Differences from the Alternative 1 scenario include:

- 32 • **Renovation of the existing CHFB and new construction.** The new owner would conduct
33 repairs and alterations to address known deficiencies in the existing building similar to as
34 described for Alternative 1. In addition, development could occur on underutilized portions of the
35 92-acre site, particularly on the south or western end of the site. Development could include
36 commercial, residential, office space, or a mix of land uses.
- 37 • **Demolition of the existing CHFB and new construction.** The new owner would demolish the
38 existing CHFB and construct a new mixed-use development similar to as described for
39 Alternative 1, but for the entire 92-acre site.

40 **2.2 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE**

41 The No Action Alternative is included and analyzed to provide a baseline for comparison with impacts
42 from the project and to also satisfy federal requirements for analyzing “no action” under NEPA
43 (40 CFR 1502.14(d)). The No Action Alternative assumes that tenants would remain within the existing
44 CHFB and no new construction or relocation would occur. Minor repairs would occur as needed and

1 maintenance and operation of the existing facilities would continue. This alternative would not meet the
2 purpose and need of the project (see Section 1.2) as tenants would continue to occupy office space that
3 does not meet applicable building code, accessibility, and security standards.

4 **2.3 COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES**

5 Table 2-2 compares the potential environmental impacts resulting from the alternatives. Potential impacts
6 are summarized for each resource area affected by the alternatives. Chapter 3 of this EIS contains a
7 detailed discussion of these potential impacts by resource area.

8 [Placeholder]

9 **Table 2-2. Summary Comparison of Alternatives**

Resource Area	Hybrid/Lease Construction Alternative (Alternative 1)	Lease Relocation (Alternative 2)	No Action Alternative
Cultural Resources			
Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions			
Socioeconomics			
Geology, Seismicity, and Soils			
Land Use			
Visual Resources and Aesthetics			
Water Resources			
Biological Resources			
Transportation and Traffic			
Hazardous Waste and Materials			
Noise			
Environmental Justice and Protection of Children's Safety			
Utilities and Infrastructure			

10 **2.4 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND DISMISSED FROM DETAILED ANALYSIS**

11 NEPA requires GSA to assess a range of reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Action. Several
12 alternatives were assessed to determine whether they were feasible and whether they would meet the
13 project's purpose and need.

14 **2.4.1 Repair and Alterations**

15 This alternative would include renovations required to eliminate seismic deficiencies; remediate and clean
16 all surfaces of ACM; replace or modernize portions of the existing mechanical, electrical and plumbing
17 systems that have come to the end of their functional life or are identified code deficiencies; make repairs
18 and modernizations to code-required life safety systems and provide Architectural Barriers Act
19 Accessibility Standards-based remodels throughout the building to eliminate any existing code-identified
20 barriers. Tenants would continue to occupy portions of the CHFB during renovations, and, as a result of

1 its many phases of construction, this alternative would require approximately 9 years to implement. As
2 such, this alternative would be disruptive to operations and affect each agency's ability to meet their
3 mission objectives. In addition, when finished, the building would still retain the industrial infrastructure
4 of a manufacturing facility that has been converted into office space. Given the large size of the existing
5 floor plates, a renovated CHFB would still not meet all the current construction guidelines for federal
6 tenant agencies, and securing additional tenants for current and future vacant spaces would continue to be
7 extremely difficult. Therefore, this alternative has been dismissed from further consideration.

8 **2.4.2 Reduction, Repair, and Alteration (New Entry Focus)**

9 This alternative would include removal of approximately 266,600 square feet of the basement and half of
10 the first floor, reconfiguration of the building entryway to conform to GSA entryway standards, and a full
11 upgrade of the entire building to meet GSA's current new construction standards similar to as described in
12 Section 2.4.1. Tenants would continue to occupy portions of the CHFB during renovations, and, as a
13 result of its many phases of construction, this alternative would require approximately 9 years to
14 implement. As such, this alternative would be disruptive to operations and affect each agency's ability to
15 meet their mission objectives. Additionally, this alternative would be cost prohibitive compared to other
16 alternatives considered; therefore, it has been dismissed from further consideration.

17 **2.4.3 Reduction, Repair, and Alteration (New Courtyard Focus)**

18 This alternative is similar to the New Entry Focus alternative in terms of upgrading the existing building
19 and creating a new entrance. Approximately 121,320 square feet of area would be removed from the first
20 three floors to create light wells and courtyards in lieu of removing the basement and first floor areas as
21 was considered under the New Entry Focus alternative. Tenants would continue to occupy portions of the
22 CHFB during renovations, and, as a result of its many phases of construction, this alternative would
23 require approximately 9 years to implement. As such, this alternative would be disruptive to operations
24 and affect each agency's ability to meet their mission objectives. Additionally, this alternative would be
25 cost prohibitive compared to other alternatives considered; therefore, it has been dismissed from further
26 consideration.

27 **2.4.4 New Construction for All Tenants**

28 This alternative would include new construction to replace the entire building program for each agency on
29 the existing CHFB site, to include a new parking structure, with remaining space and existing CHFB
30 being reported as excess in accordance with federal policy.

31 [GSA to provide justification for why a facility cannot be constructed for all tenants as Feasibility Study
32 is unclear in this regard. Page 6 of the Feasibility Study indicates that construction of a new federal
33 building to house all tenants would be \$141M more and take 0.75 years longer than the hybrid/lease
34 alternative. Total cost for full size federal building is \$797M and would take 4.25 years. The leasing
35 alternative considered under Alt 5 in the Feasibility Study (and Alternative 2 in this EIS) would cost
36 \$1.22B, or \$423M more than the full-sized construction building. Therefore, the full-size construction
37 alternative cannot be dismissed on cost alone. In addition, the Feasibility Study indicates the leasing
38 alternative would take longer than the full-sized construction alternative (5.25 years to 4.25 years). We
39 recommend including some discussion as to why this is not a viable alternative, in the event we receive
40 comments from the public asking why this alternative was not selected]

CHAPTER 3 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Chapter 3 describes the current environment for resource areas that may be affected by the Hybrid Lease/Construction Alternative (Alternative 1) and the Lease Relocation Alternative (Alternative 2), and the potential environmental consequences associated with each alternative. Resource areas analyzed include cultural resources; air quality and greenhouse gas emissions; socioeconomics; geology, seismicity, and soils; land use; visual resources and aesthetics; water resources; biological resources; transportation and traffic; hazardous waste and materials; noise; environmental justice and protection of children’s health and safety; and utilities and infrastructure.

3.1 METHODOLOGIES

3.1.1 Affected Environment Methodology

The affected environment summarizes the current physical, biological, social, and economic environments of the area within and surrounding the CHFEB 92-acre property and provides a regional description of resources, as applicable, to provide a baseline for potential off-site effects from tenant relocations within the region. As such, the discussion of each resource area within this chapter includes justification for the area for analysis (discussion of site-specific versus regional baseline conditions) that could be impacted by the Hybrid Lease/Construction Alternative and Lease Relocation Alternative.

3.1.2 Environmental Consequences Methodology

The impacts analysis considers effects to a resource for each alternative and describes the types of impacts that would occur (see Section 3.1.2.1) and assigns a significance criteria (see Section 3.1.2.2).

3.1.2.1 Types of Impacts

The terms “impacts” and “effects” are used interchangeably in this chapter. According to the CEQ NEPA Regulations at 40 CFR 1500-1508, direct and indirect effects are defined as:

- **Direct effects:** Effects that are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place (1508.8(a)).

Indirect effects: Effects that are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects also include “induced changes” in the human and natural environments (1508.8(b)).

Indirect impacts may also be caused by another action or actions that have an established relationship or connection to the project (connected actions). These actions are those that would not or could not occur unless the proposed project were implemented. These actions are often referred to as “but for” actions and generally occur at a later time or at some distance removed from the original action (FHWA, Caltrans, and USEPA 2006). For example, the Proposed Action does not involve any renovation or demolition of the existing CHFEB or additional construction on the site beyond construction of a new USCIS building. Under the Proposed Action, some or all of the CHFEB site would be reported as excess in accordance with federal policy and disposed, and no details on future development of the parcel exist. However, it is “reasonably foreseeable” that some form of office use, commercial, or mixed-used development could remain on site, and that potential renovation or demolition, construction, and operation of a new development could occur on the parcel. Therefore, impacts from demolition, construction, and operation are analyzed as indirect impacts of the Proposed Action Alternatives.

1 Identified impacts may be either adverse or beneficial. For the CHFEB EIS, the following definitions have
2 been used by NEPA analysts:

- 3 • **Adverse impacts:** Those impacts which, in the judgment of an expert resource area analyst, are
4 regarded by the general population as having a negative and harmful effect on the analyzed
5 resource area.
- 6 • **Beneficial impacts:** Those impacts which, in the judgment of an expert resource area analyst, are
7 regarded by the general population as having a positive and supportive effect on the analyzed
8 resource area.

9 **3.1.2.2 Significance Criteria**

10 Criteria were defined as a means of measuring the size of the impact and its significance. The significance
11 of impacts was determined systematically by assessing the magnitude (how much) and duration (how
12 long) of an impact. Table 3.1-1 summarizes how each parameter is categorized. Significance thresholds
13 are further defined for each resource within the respective sections.

14 **Table 3.1-1. Summary of Environmental Impact Parameters**

Magnitude	
Significant	Substantial impact or change in a resource area that is easily defined, noticeable and measurable, or exceeds a standard.
Moderate	Noticeable change in a resource area occurs, but the integrity of the resource area remains intact.
Minor	Change in a resource area occurs, but no substantial resource area impact results.
Negligible	The impact is at the lowest levels of detection – barely measurable but with perceptible consequences.
None	The impact is below the threshold of detection with no perceptible consequences.
Duration	
Permanent	Impact would last indefinitely.
Long-term	Impact would likely last the lifetime of the project, or for as long as any new construction is in operation.
Short-term	Impact would last the duration of the construction phase.
Temporary	Impact would be continuous and last for a portion of the construction phase.
Intermittent	Impact would not be constant or continuous but rather recurring or periodic. Intermittent impacts could occur temporarily or in the short or long-term.

15

16

3.2 CULTURAL RESOURCES

This section describes the cultural resources associated with the project area and potential effects on cultural resources from each of the alternatives. The discussion describes the regulatory framework, along with existing cultural resources throughout the project area and possible environmental impacts that may occur as the proposed project is implemented. Architectural descriptions and evaluations from previous reports are summarized.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires GSA to evaluate potential effects on properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) prior to an undertaking. An undertaking means a project, activity, or program funded in whole, or in part, under the direct or indirect jurisdiction of a federal agency, including, among other things, processes requiring a federal permit, license, or approval. In this case, the undertaking is federal (GSA) disposal of the CHFEB, a property potential eligible for the NRHP.

The EIS uses the following terms related to cultural resources:

- **Historic properties** are defined as any district, site, building, structure, or object that is included in or eligible for inclusion in the NRHP. In most cases, properties less than 50 years old are not considered eligible for the NRHP.
- **Traditional cultural properties** are a type of historic property eligible for the NRHP because of their association with cultural practices or beliefs of a living community that: (1) are rooted in that community's history or (2) are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community.
- **Cultural resources** include the remains and sites associated with human activities, such as prehistoric and ethno-historic Indian archaeological sites, historic archaeological sites, historic buildings and structures, and elements or areas of the natural landscape. Cultural resources determined to be NRHP- eligible or potentially eligible are historic properties.

Section 106 also requires that GSA seek concurrence with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on any finding involving effects or no effects on historic properties and allows the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) an opportunity to comment on any finding of effects on historic properties. If Native American properties have been identified, Section 106 also requires that GSA consult with interested Native American tribes who might attach religious or cultural significance to such properties.

The Section 106 regulations state that the transfer or sale of a historic property out of federal ownership or control constitutes an adverse effect when undertaken without adequate and legally enforceable restrictions or conditions to ensure the long-term preservation of the property's historic significance (36 CFR § 800.5(a)(2)(vii)).

GSA previously completed a determination of eligibility on the CHFEB in 2016 (Heritage Architecture and Planning) and prepared an historic structures report in 2019 (Architectural Resources Group 2019).

Table 3.2-1 below provides a summary of relevant federal regulations related to Cultural Resources.

Table 3.2-1. Federal Regulations Related to Evaluation of Cultural Resources

Federal Regulation	Citation	Relevance
Archaeological Resources Protection Act	United States Code, Title 16, Sections 470aa-mm	Regulates the protection of archaeological resources and sites that are on federal and Indian lands.
Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act	United States Code, Title 25, Sections 3001 et seq.	Provides a process for museums and federal agencies to return certain Native American cultural items, such as human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony, to

		lineal descendants and culturally affiliated Indian tribes.
National Historic Preservation Act of 1966	United States Code, Title 16, Sections 470 et seq.	Authorized the NRHP and coordinates public and private effort to identify, evaluate, and protect the nation's historic and archaeological resources.
National Register of Historic Places	Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, Chapter I, Part 60	Recognizes resources of local, state, and national significance that have been documented and evaluated according to uniform standards and criteria.

1 The NRHP is authorized by the NHPA. It is the nation’s official list of buildings, structures, objects, sites,
2 and districts worthy of preservation because of their significance in American history, architecture,
3 archeology, engineering, and culture. The NRHP recognizes resources of local, state, and national
4 significance that have been documented and evaluated according to uniform standards and criteria. The
5 NRHP is part of a national program managed by the National Park Service to coordinate and support
6 public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America’s historic and archaeological
7 resources.

8 The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is
9 present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity and:

- 10 A. are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our
11 history; or
- 12 B. are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- 13 C. embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent
14 the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and
15 distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- 16 D. have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

17 In order to be eligible for listing in the NRHP, a property must retain sufficient integrity to convey its
18 significance. The NRHP publication *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*,
19 National Register Bulletin 15, establishes how to evaluate the integrity of a property: “Integrity is the
20 ability of a property to convey its significance” (National Park Service, National Register of Historic
21 Places 1991). The evaluation of integrity must be grounded in an understanding of a property’s physical
22 features, and how they relate to the concept of integrity. Determining which of these aspects are most
23 important to a property requires knowing why, where, and when a property is significant. To retain
24 historic integrity, a property must possess several, and usually most, aspects of integrity:

- 25 1. **Location** is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic
26 event occurred.
- 27 2. **Design** is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a
28 property.
- 29 3. **Setting** is the physical environment of a historic property and refers to the character of the site
30 and the relationship to surrounding features and open space. Setting often refers to the basic
31 physical conditions under which a property was built and the functions it was intended to serve.
32 These features can be either natural or manmade, including vegetation, paths, fences, and
33 relationships between other features or open space.
- 34 4. **Materials** are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period or
35 time, and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.

- 1 5. **Workmanship** is the physical evidence of crafts of a particular culture or people during any
2 given period of history or prehistory and can be applied to the property as a whole, or to
3 individual components.
- 4 6. **Feeling** is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
5 It results from the presence of physical features that, when taken together, convey the property's
6 historic character.
- 7 7. **Association** is the direct link between the important historic event or person and a historic
8 property.

9 **3.2.1 Affected Environment**

10 For purposes of this analysis, the area of potential effect (APE) is limited to the project area only. The
11 CHFB is the only building/complex located within the APE. The GSA performed a records search
12 encompassing the project area and a 1-mile radius. This search was done at the South Central Coastal
13 Information Center (SCCIC) to determine whether previously recorded sites or resources exist within the
14 project area, or whether the project area has been subject to any previous cultural resources studies. A
15 request was submitted to the California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) for a search of
16 their Sacred Lands File to identify areas of Native American heritage significance that may be affected by
17 the project, as well as any individuals or tribal entities who may have interest in or information about the
18 project area. The NAHC responded with positive results and provided information on tribal entities who
19 may have additional information related to tribal values or resources related to the project site. GSA will
20 conduct tribal consultation per the requirements of Section 106 of the NHPA as part of this project.
21 [Flagged to update status and results of tribal consultation prior to Draft EIS publication].

22 Due to prior disturbance of the Project site, archeological investigation was limited to a review of the
23 records search and historic maps and aerial photographs of the project area and no archaeological field
24 survey was conducted. Two architectural historians conducted a reconnaissance-level survey of the CHFB
25 on January 31, 2020, targeted at confirming that the condition of the building is unchanged from the most
26 recent evaluation report prepared for the property (Architectural Resources Group 2019) and to assess the
27 potential for visual effects from the proposed undertaking. For purposes of this analysis, the APE is
28 limited to the project area only. The CHFB is the only building/complex located within the APE.

29 Appendix B contains a detailed discussion of potentially affected archaeological and architectural history
30 resources. Included are prehistoric and historical contexts, a site-specific history of the CHFB, an
31 architectural description of the building and the surrounding landscape, and professional backgrounds of
32 the architect and landscape architect.

33 **3.2.1.1 Archaeological Resources in APE**

34 A search of the records held by the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) was
35 conducted at the SCCIC in February 2020. CHRIS records identified 56 reports within 1 mile of the APE.
36 Some of these were large-scale overviews that included the APE, while many recount smaller projects
37 related to road or infrastructure improvements within the 1-mile search but outside of the APE. There is
38 no evidence that the APE itself had been subject to archaeological survey or investigation prior to the
39 construction of the CHFB. CHRIS records also indicate the presence of 22 previously recorded cultural
40 resources within the 1-mile search radius, all of which are prehistoric sites of various sizes and
41 complexities. None have been documented directly within the APE, but five are within 0.15 mile. These
42 resources include village sites with burials as well as smaller workshop sites or temporary campsites.

43 **3.2.1.2 Eligibility of the Chet Holifield Federal Building**

44 Per the *Determination of Eligibility* prepared by Heritage Architecture & Planning in 2016, the CHFB is
45 individually eligible for listing in the NRHP at the local level of significance under Criterion C, as an
46 excellent example of a Modern/Brutalist zigurat building designed by master architect William L.

1 Pereira. Although the building was less than 50 years old at the time of its evaluation, it was determined
2 to be of exceptional importance due to its architectural style and type, and its association with Pereira.

3 The subsequent *Historic Structures Report* prepared by Architectural Resources Group in 2019 concurs
4 with the recommendations of the Heritage Architecture & Planning report, offering the justification for
5 significance under Criterion C as follows:

6 “The Chet Holifield Federal Building is an excellent example of Late Modern/Brutalist
7 architecture executed on a monumental scale. Notable characteristics include its tiered
8 shape, pre-cast concrete panels with impressed pattern, and horizontal bands of windows
9 recessed under deep, angled eaves. The building’s unusual stepped ziggurat configuration
10 is very rare; as noted in the Determination of Eligibility, only seven ziggurat buildings
11 are known to exist nationwide, two of which are listed in the National Register. The
12 property was designed by master architect William L. Pereira, a prominent and prolific
13 leader of the Modernist movement whose iconic works include CBS Television City
14 (1952), the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (1965), Geisel Library at UC San Diego
15 (1970), San Francisco’s Transamerica Building (1972), and master plans for USC (1961)
16 and UC Irvine (1962). The building’s surrounding site and landscaping contribute to its
17 significance, with open space and complex topography enforcing a feel of
18 monumentality.”

19 Neither report recommends the property eligible under Criterion A, B, or D. Both of the previous
20 evaluations recommended the CHFB eligible under Criteria Consideration G for exceptional significance
21 attained in the past 50 years. At the time this EIS was prepared, the property has become 50 years old.
22 Thus, Criteria Consideration G is no longer applicable. [GSA to confirm whether the SHPO reviewed or
23 concurred with the findings of the previous evaluations]

24 [GSA to insert statement regarding current status of SHPO consultation]

25 **3.2.1.3 Character-Defining Features of the Chet Holifield Federal Building**

26 Despite previous alterations (see Appendix B), the character-defining features of the CHFB and grounds
27 are mostly intact and are as follows:

28 **Site**

- 29 • Large parcel with building situated at north end
- 30 • Designed topography integral to building: building partially built into the ground and surrounded
31 by berms and slopes
- 32 • Hardscaping around the building, including driveway configurations, walkways, original ramps,
33 and steps
- 34 • Extensive surface parking lots with trees lining the rows; rows arranged in a chevron-like pattern
35 that focuses on the building; lawn and drive at south in form of Rockwell logo

36 **Building Exterior**

- 37 • Monumental scale
- 38 • Overall massing: stepped ziggurat form; first and second stories as large stacked platforms
39 supporting smaller third to seventh stories
- 40 • Horizontal orientation
- 41 • Highly symmetrical north and south façades
- 42 • Asymmetrical but nearly identical east and west façades that mirror each other

- 1 • Flat roofs with broad, deep, mansard eaves with stucco soffits and angled, fin-like eave supports
- 2 of smooth concrete
- 3 • Cladding including textured (impressed cobble) precast concrete panels and smooth concrete
- 4 panels
- 5 • Horizontal bands of fixed aluminum windows (bronze color with dark-coated glazing)
- 6 • Smooth concrete angled entry volumes with roof decks at south, east, and west façades
- 7 • Wood slat ceiling at south façade entry

8 ***Building Interior***

- 9 • Main entry lobby at fourth floor (including space, configuration, and all original finishes)
- 10 • Wood slat ceilings at escalators and elevator lobbies
- 11 • Cross configuration of wide main corridors
- 12 • Original wood slab doors
- 13 • Original suspended T-bar ceilings with inset fluorescent lighting

14 **3.2.2 Environmental Consequences**

15 Per the NHPA and 36 CFR Part 800 of its implementing regulations, adverse effects to historic properties
16 occur when an undertaking may alter, directly or indirectly, any of the characteristics of a historic
17 property that qualify the property for inclusion in the NRHP in a manner that would diminish the integrity
18 of the property's location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association. Consideration
19 shall be given to all qualifying characteristics of a historic property, including those that may have been
20 identified subsequent to the original evaluation of the property's eligibility for the NRHP.

21 Adverse effects on historic properties include, but are not limited to:

- 22 (i) Physical destruction of or damage to all or part of the property;
- 23 (ii) Alteration of a property, including restoration, rehabilitation, repair, maintenance,
24 stabilization, hazardous material remediation and provision of handicapped access, that is not
25 consistent with the Secretary's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (36 CFR Part
26 68) and applicable guidelines;
- 27 (iii) Removal of the property from its historic location;
- 28 (iv) Change of the character of the property's use or of physical features within the property's
29 setting that contribute to its historic significance;
- 30 (v) Introduction of visual, atmospheric or audible elements that diminish the integrity of the
31 property's significant historic features;
- 32 (vi) Neglect of a property which causes its deterioration, except where such neglect and
33 deterioration are recognized qualities of a property of religious and cultural significance to an
34 Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization; and
- 35 (vii) Transfer, lease, or sale of property out of Federal ownership or control without adequate and
36 legally enforceable restrictions or conditions to ensure long-term preservation of the property's
37 historic significance.

3.2.2.1 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, GSA would not construct a new USCIS building or relocate tenants to new offsite locations. GSA would retain the existing historic property (i.e., the CHFB) without alterations and there would be no effect, either adverse or beneficial, on its significance.

3.2.2.2 Alternative 1

Alternative 1 would include construction of a new federal building on 27.15 acres at the southeast corner of the current 92-acre site. The portion of the property not used for new construction, including the existing building, would be reported as excess in accordance with federal policy and disposed. The new construction would include an approximately 380,000-square-foot four-story building and a 1,517-space parking lot (see Figures 2-1 and 2-2). Moderate permanent adverse effects on the historic property would occur under Alternative 1, ranging from partial demolition of the landscaping and site plan to visual impacts related to the loss of views to and from the historic property.

Additionally, Section 106 regulations state that the transfer or sale of a historic property out of federal ownership or control constitutes an adverse effect when undertaken without adequate and legally enforceable restrictions or conditions to ensure the long-term preservation of the property's historic significance. As such, the disposal of the property could result in significant and permanent adverse effects. To avoid a permanent significant adverse effect on the historic property, any transfer should include deed restrictions/covenants and/or easements that require future projects that would potentially affect the resource be done in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Standards)*.

Significant adverse effects could also occur due to a potential to encounter archaeological resources during construction.

Future Redevelopment

Any future renovation or demolition activities of the CHFB could result in significant adverse effects if either redevelopment action was conducted in a way that did not comply with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards*. If future redevelopment of the site was conducted in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards*, there would be no adverse effect to the historic property.

Follow-on NEPA, NHPA, or CEQA analyses would be required (depending on who acquires the site) for any proposed redevelopment plans presented by a future developer and would further address cultural resources. Consultation with the SHPO would be required if federal funds or agency involvement required compliance with NHPA and NEPA. Future owners could be financially responsible for conditions of the project including Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documentation, historic interpretative programs/products, and/or comprehensive surveys of similar resources in Orange County (such as all Pereira-designed buildings). Redevelopment of other areas of the site could result in moderate adverse effects to the landscape, viewshed, and setting of the historic property. These impacts would likely occur as a result of new construction.

3.2.2.3 Alternative 2

Under Alternative , the entire CHFB site would be reported as excess in accordance with federal policy and disposed. No construction would occur at the site in advance of disposal. Although no construction would occur at the site, there is the potential of adverse effects on the historic property. As with Alternative 1, Section 106 regulations state that the transfer or sale of a historic property out of federal ownership or control constitutes an adverse effect when undertaken without adequate and legally enforceable restrictions or conditions to ensure the long-term preservation of the property's historic significance. As such, the disposal of the property could result in significant and permanent adverse effects. To avoid a permanent significant adverse effect on the historic property, any transfer should

1 include deed restrictions/covenants and/or easements that require future projects that would potentially
2 affect the resource should be done in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards*.

3 **Future Redevelopment**

4 Similar to Alternative 1, any future renovation or demolition activities of the CHFB could result in
5 significant adverse effects if either redevelopment action was conducted in a way that did not comply
6 with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards*. If future redevelopment of the site was conducted in
7 accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards*, there would be no adverse effect to the historic
8 property.

9 Follow-on NEPA, NHPA, or CEQA analyses would be required (depending on who acquires the site) for
10 any proposed redevelopment plans presented by a future developer and would further address cultural
11 resources. Consultation with the SHPO would be required if federal funds or agency involvement
12 required compliance with NHPA and NEPA. Future owners could be financially responsible for
13 conditions of the project including Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documentation, historic
14 interpretative programs/products, and/or comprehensive surveys of similar resources in Orange County
15 (such as all Pereira-designed buildings). Redevelopment of other areas of the site could result in moderate
16 adverse effects to the landscape, viewshed, and setting of the historic property. These impacts would
17 likely occur as a result of new construction.

18 **3.2.2.4 Impact Reduction Measures**

19 Under Alternative 1, the project could be redesigned to change the height of the new construction to less
20 than 4 stories. The revised height could be determined by a study of the viewshed toward the CHFB that
21 would determine the maximum massing and height of the new construction that would retain the current
22 distant view of the historic resource. [Flagged for GSA to consider whether this measure is appropriate to
23 leave in document. If there is no chance this could happen, it would likely be better to delete.]

24 Under Alternatives 1 and 2, adverse effects could be eliminated by implementing deed restrictions in the
25 form of covenants stating that change of ownership would require any changes to the property that will
26 impact its character-defining features be done according to Secretary of the Interior's *Standards*.

27 In consideration of archaeological resources, the APE should be considered sensitive for prehistoric
28 resources and monitoring by a qualified archaeologist is recommended during any ground-disturbing
29 activities.

30

3.3 AIR QUALITY AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Air quality is the measure of the atmospheric concentration of defined pollutants in a specific area. An air pollutant is any substance in the air that can cause harm to humans or the environment. Pollutants may be natural or human-made and may take the form of solid particles, liquid droplets, or gases. Natural sources of air pollution include smoke from wildfires, dust, and wind erosion. Human-made sources of air pollution include emissions from vehicles; dust from unpaved roads, agriculture, or construction sites; and smoke from human-caused fires. Air quality is affected by pollutant emission sources, as well as the movement of pollutants in the air via wind and other weather patterns.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions released into the atmosphere as a result of human-induced fossil fuel combustion are widely believed to be contributing to changes in global climate. GHGs, which include carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), water vapor, and several trace gases, trap radiant heat reflected from the Earth in the atmosphere, causing the average temperature to rise. The predominant GHGs emitted in the U.S. are CO₂, CH₄, nitrous oxide (N₂O), hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride. In the U.S., anthropogenic GHG emissions come primarily from burning fossil fuels. Although GHG levels have varied for millennia (along with corresponding variations in climate conditions), recent and more dramatic increases have contributed to overall climate change.

3.3.1 Affected Environment

Because air quality is measured and regulated on a regional level, the air quality analysis in this EIS utilizes air quality data from the South Coast Air Quality Management District. The South Coast Air Quality Management District encompasses all of Orange County, as well as portions of Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties in California. For purposes of this analysis, and because air pollution dissipates throughout the atmosphere, the region of influence (ROI) for air quality is defined as the South Coast Air Quality Management District boundaries. The Proposed Action would take place primarily within Orange County, as well as some parts of Los Angeles County.

3.3.1.1 Air Quality

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Region 9 and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) regulate air quality in California. The Clean Air Act (CAA) (42 USC 7401-7671q), as amended, gives the USEPA the responsibility to establish the primary and secondary National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) (40 CFR Part 50) that set acceptable concentration levels for six criteria pollutants, which are compounds that cause or contribute to air pollution and which could endanger public health and the environment. The six criteria pollutants are: particulate matter (including fine particulate matter [PM₁₀] and very fine particulate matter [PM_{2.5}]), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), carbon monoxide (CO), NO_x, ozone (O₃) and lead (Pb). O₃ is a strong photochemical oxidant that is formed when nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) reacts with volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and oxygen in the presence of sunlight. O₃ is considered a secondary pollutant because it is not directly emitted from pollution sources but is formed in the ambient air.

Short-term standards (1-, 8-, and 24-hour periods) have been established for criteria pollutants that contribute to acute health effects, while long-term standards (annual averages) have been established for pollutants that contribute to chronic health effects. Each state has the authority to adopt standards stricter than those established under the federal program; California has adopted stricter standards for some criteria pollutants (see Table 3.3-1). Areas that exceed the NAAQS are designated as nonattainment areas, and those in accordance with the standards are designated as attainment areas. Areas that have been re-designated from nonattainment to attainment are called maintenance areas.

Because the project would occur in a nonattainment area, the General Conformity Rule requirements apply. The General Conformity Rule was established under the CAA and ensures that the actions taken by

federal agencies do not interfere with a state’s plans to attain and maintain the NAAQS. According to the rule, if a project takes place in an area that is in attainment, then the general conformity requirements do not apply to the project. The General Conformity Rule states that, if a project would result in a total net increase in direct and indirect emissions of nonattainment or maintenance area pollutants that are less than the applicable *de minimis* (i.e., negligible) thresholds established in 40 CFR 93.153(b), detailed conformity analyses are not required pursuant to 40 CFR 93.153(c).

The USEPA monitors levels of criteria pollutants at representative sites in each region throughout the U.S. For purposes of analysis, air monitoring data for Orange, Los Angeles, and Riverside counties were used to define the existing air quality at and around the CHFB. Table 3.3-1 shows the NAAQS, the California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS), the USEPA’s “design value” for each pollutant, and available monitoring data for each criteria pollutant. The design value is a statistic that is calculated in a manner consistent with the corresponding ambient air quality standard, using air quality monitoring data (USEPA 2020a). Therefore, the design value describes the air quality status of a given location relative to the NAAQS. Design values are computed and published annually by the USEPA.

As shown in Table 3.3-1, Orange County did not meet the 1-hour or 8-hour O₃ NAAQS and CAAQS, and the 24-hour and annual NAAQS and CAAQS for PM_{2.5}. The design values for these pollutants exceed the respective NAAQS and CAAQS. These data are consistent with the USEPA’s list of counties currently designated as nonattainment areas, which shows Orange County as a nonattainment area for O₃ and PM_{2.5} (USEPA 2020b). In addition, Orange County was previously in non-attainment for CO, NO₂, and PM₁₀ and is currently designated as a “maintenance” area for these pollutants.

Table 3.3-1. Ambient Air Quality Standards and Measured Criteria Pollutant Concentrations

Pollutant	Averaging Time	NAAQS ^a	CAAQS	Design Value ^b (2018)	Monitoring Data ^c (2018)
CO	1-hour	35 ppm	20 ppm	–	3.025 ppm
	8-hour	9 ppm	9 ppm	3.1 ppm	–
NO ₂	1-hour	100 ppb	180 ppb	–	67 ppb
	Annual arithmetic mean	53 ppb	30 ppb	30 ppb	–
O ₃	1-hour	–	0.09 ppm	0.149 ppm	0.121 ppm
	8-hour	0.070 ppm	0.070 ppm	0.111 ppm	0.088 ppm
SO ₂	1-hour	75 ppb	250 ppb	–	–
	24-hour	140 ppb	40 ppb	–	–
PM _{2.5}	24-hour	35 µg/m ³	–	38 µg/m ³	68.1 µg/m ³
	Annual arithmetic mean	12 µg/m ³	12 µg/m ³	14.7 µg/m ³	–
PM ₁₀	24-hour	150 µg/m ³	50 µg/m ³	–	130.1 µg/m ³
	Annual arithmetic mean	–	20 µg/m ³	–	–
Pb ^d	3-month average	0.15 µg/m ³	–	–	–
	30-day average	–	1.5 µg/m ³	–	–

µg = micrograms; CO = carbon monoxide; m³ = cubic meter; NO₂ = nitrogen dioxide; O₃ = ozone; Pb = lead; PM_{2.5} = particulate matter of diameter 2.5 microns or less; PM₁₀ = particulate matter of diameter 10 microns or less; ppb = parts per billion; SO₂ = sulfur trioxide

Source: USEPA 2020c; CARB 2020a; USEPA 2020d; CARB 2020b.

¹ Only the primary NAAQS are listed.

² Design values are published by USEPA only for areas designated non-attainment or maintenance for certain pollutants.

³ Monitoring data based on monitor locations with the highest reported value within the County.

1 ⁴ Lead is not considered further in this analysis because none of the project activities would generate lead emissions.

2 The CAA, as amended in 1990, mandates that states develop a State Implementation Plan (SIP) that
3 explains how the state will comply with the CAA and achieve and maintain attainment of the NAAQS.
4 The California SIP applies to industrial sources, commercial facilities, and residential development
5 activities. Regulation occurs primarily through a process of reviewing engineering documents and other
6 technical information, applying emission standards and regulations in the issuance of permits, performing
7 field inspections, and assisting industries in determining their compliance status.

8 CARB has the authority to issue permits for the construction and operation of new or modified stationary
9 source air emissions in California. CARB air permits are required for any facility that will emit or
10 currently emits regulated pollutants; these facilities must comply with the following regulations of the
11 CAA: New Source Review, Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD), Title V Permitting, National
12 Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP), and New Source Performance Standards.
13 There are also specific California state regulations that apply to activities likely to occur during
14 construction. These regulations are outlined in California Code of Regulations Title 17, Chapter 1 and
15 include the following:

- 16 • Mandatory Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reporting (Title 17.3.1.10); and
- 17 • Ambient Air Quality Standards (Title 17.3.1.1.5).

18 The South Coast Air Quality Management District has also codified rules related to air emissions control.
19 These include, among others, requirements for control of dust from construction and other sources, (Rule
20 403), prohibitions on discharge of certain gases (Rule 407), and permitting and registration requirements
21 of emissions sources (see, for example, Rules 201, 203, and 2100).

22 The CHFEB is located in downtown Laguna Niguel, in a developed and urban/suburban portion of Orange
23 County with residences located nearby. Sensitive receptors (e.g., daycares, hospitals, schools) and their
24 distance from the CHFEB are listed in Table 3.3-2. Daycares and schools within 1 mile of the CHFEB and
25 hospitals within 10 miles of the CHFEB are included.

Table 3.3-2. Sensitive Receptors and Distances from the CHFEB

Name	Distance (miles)
Schools/Daycares	
Aliso Niguel High School	0.2
Wood Canyon Elementary	0.3
Journey School	0.3
Laguna Niguel Elementary	0.4
Tutor Time	0.4
St. Mary's School	0.5
Aliso Viejo Christian School	0.6
St Mary and All Angels School	0.6
Mission Lutheran Preschool	0.6
Mission Lutheran School	0.7
Laguna Niguel Montessori Center	0.7
Vandamme Academy	0.8
Temple Beth El South Orange County ECC	0.8
Little Big Preschool	0.8
The Farm School	0.8
Kristin's Kiddieland	0.8

Table 3.3-2. Sensitive Receptors and Distances from the CHFB

Name	Distance (miles)
Academy on the Hills	1.0
Hospitals	
Saddleback Memorial Medical Center San Clemente	3.4
Saddleback Memorial Medical Center Laguna Hills	4.4
Hoag Hospital Irvine	4.9
CHOC Children's at Mission Hospital	5.5
Saint Joseph Health Mission Hospital	6.1
Hoag General Hospital	8.0
Mission Hospital Laguna Beach	9.0

Source: ORNL 2019a; ORNL 2019b; ORNL 2018a; ORNL 2018b; ORNL 2018c

CHFB = Chet Holifield Federal Building; CHOC = Children's Hospital of Orange County;

ECC = Early Childhood Center

3.3.1.2 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The ROI for GHGs differs from other resource areas considered in this EIS since the concerns about GHG emissions are primarily related to climate change, which is global and cumulative in nature. Therefore, the affected environment is discussed broadly using a global, national and regional framework to provide context for the analysis of potential GHG impacts from the proposed project.

Recent scientific evidence indicates a correlation between increasing global temperatures over the past century and the worldwide increase in anthropogenic (human) GHG emissions (IPCC 2018). Climate change associated with global warming is predicted to produce negative environmental, economic, and social consequences across the globe in the coming years.

GHG Emissions and Effects

GHGs are gases that trap heat in the atmosphere by absorbing outgoing infrared radiation. GHG emissions occur from both natural processes as well as human activities. Water vapor is the most important and abundant GHG in the atmosphere; however, human activities produce only a small amount of the total atmospheric water vapor. The most common GHGs emitted from natural processes and human activities include CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O. The main source of GHGs from human activities is the combustion of fossil fuels such as oil, coal, and natural gas. Other examples of GHGs created and emitted primarily through human activities include fluorinated gases (e.g., perfluorocarbons) and sulfur hexafluoride. The main sources of these man-made GHGs are refrigerants and electrical transformers.

Numerous studies document the recent trend of rising atmospheric concentrations of CO₂. The longest continuous record of carbon dioxide monitoring extends back to 1958 (Keeling 1960; Scripps 2020). These data show that atmospheric CO₂ levels have risen an average of 1.5 parts per million (ppm) per year over the last 60 years, with the growth rate accelerating from around 1 ppm per year in the 1960s to 2 ppm per year in the 2000s (NOAA 2020). The global atmospheric CO₂ concentration has now passed 400 ppm, a level that last occurred about 3 million years ago when both global average temperature and sea level were significantly higher than today (USGCRP 2017). Rising atmospheric concentrations of CO₂ and other GHGs have been identified as the primary driver behind significant changes to global climate patterns. Observed changes to global climate include rising average temperatures, shrinking glaciers and sea ice, rising sea levels, increased drought and wildfires, increased flooding and other severe weather events, thawing permafrost, a lengthened growing season, and shifts in plant and animal ranges. International and national organizations independently confirm these findings and predict that these trends are likely to continue into the foreseeable future unless action is taken to reduce global GHG emissions (IPCC 2018; USGCRP 2017).

1 Each GHG has been assigned a global warming potential (GWP) by the USEPA (USEPA 2020e). The
2 GWP is the ability of a gas or aerosol to trap heat in the atmosphere. The GWP rating system is
3 standardized to CO₂, which is given a value of one. For example, CH₄ has a GWP of 25, which means
4 that it has a global warming effect 25 times greater than CO₂ on an equal-mass basis. To simplify GHG
5 analyses, total GHG emissions from a source are often expressed as a CO₂ equivalent, which is calculated
6 by multiplying the emissions of each GHG by its GWP and adding the results together to produce a
7 single, combined emission rate representing all GHGs. While CH₄ and N₂O have much higher GWPs than
8 CO₂, CO₂ is emitted in such large quantities that it is the predominant contributor to global CO₂
9 equivalent emissions from both natural processes and human activities.

10 **3.3.2 Environmental Consequences**

11 To evaluate air quality impacts and GHG emissions, alternatives were reviewed for their potential to
12 cause the following:

- 13 • Result in emissions of criteria pollutants or HAPs that would exceed relevant air quality or health
14 standards including the NAAQS or CAAQS;
- 15 • Violate any federal or state permits; or
- 16 • Conflict with local or regional air quality management plans to attain or maintain compliance
17 with the federal and state air quality regulations.

18 A significant adverse impact from GHG emissions would occur if that action would result in:

- 19 • Increase in direct or indirect emissions from fixed and mobile sources such as stationary fuel
20 combustion, construction equipment, and employee vehicles; or
- 21 • Increase in indirect offsite GHG emissions associated with electricity generation.

22 When assessing significance, GSA also considered the potential for best management practices to reduce
23 the severity or extent of these impacts. Applicable best management practices are described below, and in
24 Section 3.3.2.4.

25 **3.3.2.1 No Action Alternative**

26 Under the No Action Alternative, GSA would not construct a new USCIS building or relocate tenants to
27 new offsite locations. Ongoing operations and maintenance at the CHFB would continue to occur,
28 including periodic emergency generator maintenance as well as vehicle traffic created from trucks and
29 personal vehicles. These sources would generate minor amounts of criteria air pollutants and GHG
30 emissions. No additional impacts related to air quality or GHGs would occur.

31 **3.3.2.2 Alternative 1**

32 **Construction**

33 **Air Quality**

34 Alternative 1 would have minor and temporary direct impacts on air quality during construction of the
35 new USCIS building.

36 As explained in Section 3.3.1.1, the USEPA's General Conformity Rule under the CAA ensures that the
37 actions taken by federal agencies do not interfere with a state's plans to attain and maintain the NAAQS
38 (40 CFR 93.153(b)). Because Orange County is currently designated a nonattainment area for O₃ and
39 PM_{2.5} and a maintenance area for CO, NO₂, and PM₁₀, the General Conformity Rule requirements apply.
40 Therefore, Alternative 1 is subject to review under the General Conformity Rule and a general conformity
41 analysis is required (see Appendix B). For completeness, direct and indirect emissions of all applicable
42 criteria pollutants (i.e., CO, VOCs [as a precursor for O₃], NO₂, SO₂, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5}) were estimated for

1 the construction phase of the proposed project. These estimated values were then compared to the General
2 Conformity Rule’s *de minimis* emissions thresholds to determine whether implementation of
3 Alternative 1 would impact air quality in the region.

4 Construction emissions were estimated for on-road vehicles and nonroad construction equipment. Since a
5 detailed construction plan has not yet been developed for the site, the number and types of construction
6 equipment needed were estimated based on available data for other, similar projects, and in coordination
7 with appropriate GSA staff. Emissions rates from on-road vehicles such as privately-owned vehicles were
8 estimated using industry standard emission rates (Argonne National Laboratory 2013). Emission rates for
9 nonroad vehicles such as excavators, cranes, graders, backhoes, and bulldozers were estimated using the
10 USEPA MOVES model. For purposes of analysis and to provide a conservative estimate of potential air
11 emissions, the following assumptions were made:

- 12 • During construction, all nonroad equipment would be operated eight hours per day. This leads to
13 a conservatively high estimate, since in practice equipment would not be operated for eight hours
14 each day.
- 15 • On-road vehicles would travel various distances. Worker vehicles were assumed to travel
16 20 miles per day, while vendor and waste trucks were assumed to travel 50 miles per day.

17 The results of the conformity analysis are presented in Table 3.3-3. Full documentation of the
18 methodology used to estimate the air emissions is presented in Appendix B.

19 **Table 3.3-3. Estimated Construction-Related Air Emissions Under Alternative 1**

Source	Criteria Pollutant Emissions (tons)					
	CO	NO ₂	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}	SO ₂	VOCs
Construction Equipment	0.81	1.48	0.11	0.11	0.00	0.15
Worker Vehicles	11.83	0.65	0.13	0.08	0.02	0.68
Delivery and Waste Trucks	2.31	2.27	0.24	0.12	0.02	0.18
Fugitive Dust			29.80	4.71		-
Total	14.95	4.40	30.29	5.01	0.04	1.01
<i>De minimis Threshold</i>	100	100	100	70	100	10

20 Source: USEPA 2020f.

21 Note: Individual numbers may not sum to totals due to rounding.

22 CO = carbon monoxide; NO₂ = nitrogen dioxide; PM_{2.5} = particulate matter of diameter 2.5 microns or less; PM₁₀ = particulate matter of
23 diameter 10 microns or less; SO₂ = sulfur dioxide; VOC = volatile organic compounds.

24 As shown in Table 3.3-3, the total annual direct and indirect emissions associated with the construction of
25 Alternative 1 would not exceed the *de minimis* threshold rate for any of the criteria pollutants analyzed
26 per the thresholds identified in Section 3.3.1. Therefore, further analysis under the General Conformity
27 Rule is not required. Overall, the construction/demolition activities would cause short-term, minor
28 adverse impacts to air quality and could affect individuals living or working in close proximity to the
29 CHFB site. These impacts would occur during the estimated 30 months of construction and would end
30 once construction is completed.

31 Alternative 1 would comply with all applicable federal, state and local regulations relating to air quality,
32 including any permitting and registration requirements. Table 3.3-4 provides an overview of the
33 applicability of the federal CAA air regulations for Alternative 1.

1

Table 3.3-4. CAA Regulatory Review for Alternative 1

CAA Regulation	Description of the Regulation	Applicability to Alternative 1
New Source Review	New Source Review permitting protects air quality when air emissions sources are built or modified.	If new emergency generators are installed under Alternative 1, they would need to undergo the New Source Review permitting process.
PSD	PSD applies to new major sources or modifications at existing sources of air pollutants where the area the source is located is in <i>attainment</i> or unclassifiable.	PSD review would be required if new emergency generators are installed under Alternative 1.
Title V permitting requirements	A Title V Permit requires sources of air pollutants to obtain and operate in compliance with an operating permit. A Permit is required if a source has actual or potential emissions greater than or equal to 100 tons per year.	A Title V Permit would likely not be required because any new emergency generators installed under Alternative 1 would be below the 100 tons per year threshold.
NESHAP	NESHAP are stationary source standards for HAPs. HAPs are those pollutants that are known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health effects.	The use of Maximum Available Control Technology would not be required because the potential HAP emissions would likely not exceed NESHAP thresholds under any of the alternatives.
NSPS	NSPS are technology-based emission standards which apply to new, modified, and reconstructed facilities in specific source categories such as manufacturers of glass, cement, rubber tires, and wool fiberglass.	The project would be exempt from NSPS permitting requirements because none of the alternatives would involve construction or operation of any of these types of facilities.

Source: USEPA 2020g.

CAA = Clean Air Act; HAP = Hazardous Air Pollutants; NESHAP = National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants; NSPS = New Source Performance Standards; PSD = Prevention of Significant Deterioration

2 There would be no direct impacts to air quality from disposal of the remaining 64.85 acres of the CHFB
3 site.

4 **Greenhouse Gases**

5 Alternative 1 would generate GHG emissions during construction activities, and in the short term would
6 represent a negligible, incremental contribution to global GHG emissions and climate change. Short-term
7 GHG emissions associated with Alternative 1 would primarily result from the use of fuel in construction
8 equipment, worker vehicles, and delivery and refuse trucks. GHG emissions were estimated using
9 USEPA emission factors (USEPA 2018) and are presented in Table 3.3-5.

10 **Table 3.3-5. Estimated Construction-Related Greenhouse Gas Emissions Under Alternative 1**

Source	Greenhouse Gas Emissions (metric tons)			
	CO ₂	CH ₄	N ₂ O	CO ₂ -eq
Construction Equipment	729.01	0.04	0.02	735.56
Worker Vehicles	1,175.47	0.05	0.01	1,180.71
Delivery and Waste Trucks	2,763.40	0.07	0.03	2,773.07
Total	4,667.88	0.15	0.06	4,689.34

11 CH₄ = methane, CO₂ = carbon dioxide; CO₂-eq = carbon dioxide equivalent; N₂O = nitrous oxide

1 As shown in Table 3.3-5, construction-related GHG emissions under Alternative 1 would represent less
2 than 0.001 percent of California’s annual GHG emissions in 2017 (424 million metric tons of CO₂
3 equivalent) (CARB 2019).

4 There would be no direct impacts to GHGs from disposal of the remaining 64.85 acres of the CHF� site.

5 **Operations**

6 **Air Quality**

7 Under Alternative 1, operations of a new USCIS building would have a long-term, negligible to minor
8 impact on air quality. Onsite sources of air emissions would likely include fuel combustion for building
9 heating. The new building would consist of approximately 380,000 square feet of floor space, which is
10 substantially smaller than the existing CHF� (i.e., approximately 1 million square feet of floor space).
11 Therefore, the new building would require considerably less energy to operate. In addition, as described
12 in Section 2.1.1, all GSA buildings are required to attain at a minimum LEED® Gold certification.
13 However, GSA intends to construct the new building to meet LEED® Platinum requirements, which is
14 the highest level attainable under the LEED® certification system. As a result, the new building would
15 likely be substantially more energy efficient than the existing CHF�. Less fuel would be needed to heat
16 the building as well, resulting in lower air emissions relative to that of the existing CHF�. The LEED®
17 rating system allows for flexibility in how project teams choose to meet the number of points required to
18 obtain a given certification level. Therefore, the actual energy performance of the new building, at either
19 the LEED® Gold or Platinum level, would likely not be known until building design is substantially
20 completed.

21 Other onsite sources of air emissions include emergency generators. The CHF� is currently equipped
22 with a single, 350 kW standby diesel generator that provides backup power to elevators, stair lights, and
23 the fire suppression system, as well as a smaller generator that provides power to Immigrations and
24 Customs Enforcement (ICE), a tenant within the building. Emergency generators are required to undergo
25 periodic testing to verify their fitness for operations in the event of an actual emergency, which results in
26 small amounts of air emissions. Since the new building would have a considerably smaller footprint and
27 would be more energy efficient, it would likely require a smaller emergency generating capacity as
28 compared to the existing CHF�. [GSA to confirm whether the generator belonging to ICE would be
29 installed at newly leased locations]

30 Operations of the new building would also require grid-supplied electricity, which is generated offsite,
31 and, depending on the energy source, may result in air pollutant emissions. Since the new building would
32 be smaller and likely more energy efficient, offsite air pollutant emissions are likely to be reduced
33 compared to current conditions.

34 The parcel to be developed currently consists of several gravel lots that have deteriorated over time.
35 Improving this site with a new USCIS building and new pavement would likely provide a minor
36 beneficial impact by reducing fugitive dust.

37 Under Alternative 1, up to 1,000 individuals currently working at the CHF� would be relocated to other
38 leased office space throughout the region. It is assumed that these individuals would be relocated to
39 Class A office space. Federal agencies are required to preferentially lease space in buildings that meet
40 energy-efficiency and other sustainability requirements, except under exceptional circumstances
41 (GSA 2020a). Therefore, it is likely that any leased locations selected for agencies relocating from the
42 CHF� would be more energy efficient than the CHF�, and would likely lead to a negligible change
43 overall in energy-related air pollutant emissions as compared to current conditions.

44 [Flagged to include air quality analysis related to changes in traffic, pending transportation analysis]

1 **Greenhouse Gases**

2 Under Alternative 1, operations of a new USCIS building would have long-term, minor beneficial direct
3 impacts on GHG emissions. Similar to air emissions, onsite sources of GHGs include fuel use for
4 building operations and emergency generators. Compared to the CHFB, the new building would likely
5 result in reduced fossil fuel-related GHG emissions due to its smaller footprint and greater energy
6 efficiency. Additional sources of GHGs include fugitive leaks of refrigerants from cooling and
7 refrigeration equipment. Because of its smaller size, the new building would likely require a smaller-sized
8 cooling system; therefore, fugitive emissions would also be lower.

9 Operations of the new building would also require less purchased electricity, since it would be smaller
10 and likely more energy efficient. Therefore, offsite GHG emissions are likely to be considerably reduced
11 compared to current conditions. Similar to air quality, leasing of office space would likely lead to a
12 negligible change in GHG emissions when compared to current conditions.

13 **Future Redevelopment**

14 Under a renovation scenario, adverse indirect impacts could occur from renovation of the existing CHFB
15 on the remaining 64.85-acre parcel to be disposed. There could be minor impacts to air quality and GHGs
16 during construction. These impacts would likely occur as a result of fuel use in construction equipment,
17 worker vehicles, and trucks. Details on renovation are unknown at this time and are not part of GSA's
18 action; however, it is assumed that the extent of air quality and GHG impacts under a renovation scenario
19 would be much less than the impacts associated with construction of a new building, as discussed above.
20 Renovation may require some ground disturbance and interior building work to bring the building up to
21 current California Building Code, which could result in some emissions of criteria air pollutants from
22 equipment and vehicles, as well as fugitive dust. Best management practices would be utilized to
23 minimize fugitive dust.

24 Operations of the CHFB under a renovation scenario could result in similar amounts of air pollutants and
25 GHG emissions as under current conditions, from sources such as emergency generators and vehicle
26 traffic; however, there would likely not be a significant change compared to current conditions.
27 Improvements to building energy efficiency as a result of renovations could potentially lead to a slight
28 decrease in energy-related air pollutant and GHG emissions. Assuming that the number of workers at the
29 renovated building would stay consistent with current levels (approximately 3,000), there would be an
30 overall increase in the number of individuals commuting to the site. However, it is expected that most of
31 these individuals would be relocating from other office locations in the region and therefore would not
32 represent an overall increase in traffic in the region. To the extent that individuals commute longer
33 distances as a result of the change in their work location, there could be a negligible to minor increase in
34 regional air pollutant and GHG emissions. [Conclusions to be modified pending the traffic analysis]

35 Under a demolition/new construction scenario, indirect impacts could occur from demolition of the
36 existing CHFB and new construction on the remaining 64.85-acre parcel to be disposed. There would be
37 minor to moderate impacts to air quality and GHGs during construction. These impacts would occur as a
38 result of fuel use in construction equipment, worker vehicles, and trucks, and due to fugitive dust
39 emissions, similar to the construction impacts discussed above for the USCIS building. However, the
40 magnitude of impacts may be greater given the larger area being disturbed, the additional steps involved
41 in demolition of the existing CHFB, and the size and scale of development to be constructed. Demolition
42 of the existing CHFB could require up to 44,000 haul trips over an approximate 36-month period, or
43 approximately 60 haul trips per day, with up to 300 workers on site during demolition.

44 Operations of new development could result in air pollutant and GHG emissions; the amount of emissions
45 could vary greatly depending on building energy efficiency, size, and use; as well as onsite renewable
46 energy used, or the purchase of renewable energy generated offsite. Any increases, however, would likely
47 be less than significant as new construction would likely be energy efficient compared to the existing

1 CHFB. The number of workers and visitors commuting to the site and the distance traveled would also
2 affect both air pollutant and GHG emissions. [Conclusions to be modified pending the traffic analysis].

3 Follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses would be required (depending on who acquires the site) for any
4 proposed redevelopment plans presented by a future developer and would further address air quality and
5 GHG emissions once final development plans are completed.

6 **3.3.2.3 Alternative 2**

7 Under Alternative 2, there would be negligible direct impacts to air quality or GHG emissions during
8 construction or operations. All tenants would be removed from the CHFB and no construction would
9 occur at the site. Off-site leasing of new office space may require office build-outs, which could entail
10 negligible, temporary increases in air pollutant and GHG emissions. These activities would be required to
11 comply with all applicable federal, state and local regulations. Similar to Alternative 1, leasing of office
12 space would likely lead to a negligible change in air pollutant and GHG emissions compared to current
13 conditions.

14 [Flagged to include air quality analysis related to changes in traffic, pending transportation analysis]

15 **Future Redevelopment**

16 Under a renovation/new construction scenario, indirect impacts could occur from renovation of the
17 existing CHFB, and new construction on the south or west end of the 92-acre site to be disposed. Under
18 this scenario for Alternative 2, there could be minor indirect impacts to air quality and GHGs during
19 renovation activities, similar to as described under Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment (renovation
20 scenario). In addition, it is assumed there would be some new construction on the south or west end of the
21 site, resulting in similar, minor impacts as described for construction of the new USCIS building under
22 Alternative 1.

23 Under a demolition/new construction scenario, indirect impacts would occur from demolition of the
24 existing CHFB and new construction on the 92-acre site to be disposed. Under this scenario for
25 Alternative 2, there could be moderate indirect impacts to air quality and GHGs during construction.
26 Impacts would be similar to the impacts described under Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment
27 (demolition/new construction scenario) but would likely be of greater intensity, as up to 92 acres of the
28 site would potentially be impacted.

29 Operations of buildings under a renovation/new construction or a demolition/new construction scenario
30 would be similar to the types of impacts described under Alternative 1. There would be impacts to air
31 quality and GHGs; the severity of these impacts could vary greatly depending on building size, use,
32 energy efficiency, and the use of renewable energy.

33 Similar to Alternative 1, Follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses would further address air quality and GHG
34 emissions once final development plans are completed.

35 **3.3.2.4 Impact Reduction Measures**

36 Construction activities at the CHFB would generate fugitive dust and other emissions. Emissions from
37 open areas (e.g., a construction site) require reasonable precautions to prevent PM from becoming
38 airborne. The following best management practices (BMPs) would minimize particulate and other air
39 pollutant emissions during construction:

- 40 • Adopting the best management practices detailed in the South Coast Air Quality Management
41 District's Rule 403 for fugitive dust.
- 42 • Stabilizing open storage piles and disturbed areas by covering and/or applying water or
43 chemical/organic dust palliative where appropriate, including both inactive and active sites,
44 during workdays, weekends, holidays, and windy conditions;

- 1 • Installing wind fencing and phasing grading operations where appropriate, and using water trucks
2 for stabilization of surfaces under windy conditions;
- 3 • When hauling material and operating non-earthmoving equipment, preventing spillage and
4 limiting speeds to 15 miles per hour. Earth-moving equipment would be limited to 10 miles per
5 hour;
- 6 • Paving roadways where necessary, and maintaining them in a clean condition by promptly
7 removing spilled or tracked dirt or other materials;
- 8 • Covering open equipment when conveying or transporting material likely to prevent material
9 from becoming airborne;
- 10 • Minimizing the use and number of trips of heavy equipment;
- 11 • Maintaining and tuning all engines per manufacturer specifications to perform at USEPA
12 certification levels, where applicable, and to perform at verified standards applicable to retrofit
13 technologies.
- 14 • Conducting periodic, unscheduled inspections to limit unnecessary idling and to ensure that
15 construction equipment is properly maintained, tuned, and modified consistent with established
16 specifications;
- 17 • Prohibiting construction vehicles both on- and off-site from excess idling, consistent with current
18 CARB Regulations;
- 19 • Prohibiting tampering with engines and requiring continuing adherence to manufacturer's
20 recommendations;
- 21 • Encouraging bids that include use of energy and fuel-efficient fleets and Best Available Control
22 Technology, particularly those seeking to deploy zero-emission technologies;
- 23 • Using alternative fueled vehicles and construction equipment where feasible;
- 24 • Using energy efficient lighting systems, such as LED technology, where feasible;
- 25 • Using lighter-colored pavement where feasible;
- 26 • Recycling construction debris to the maximum extent feasible;
- 27 • Planting shade trees in or near construction projects where feasible; and
- 28 • Developing a construction traffic and parking management plan to minimize traffic interference
29 and maintains traffic flow.
30

3.4 SOCIOECONOMICS

The analysis of socioeconomic resources identifies those aspects of the social and economic environment that are sensitive to changes and that may be affected by actions associated with tenant relocation and disposal activities at the CHFEB. While social impacts are discussed in this section, a discussion of those impacts that could disproportionately affect minority and low income and youth populations are discussed in Section 3.13 (Environmental Justice and Protection of Children’s Health and Safety). A detailed discussion of traffic and roads is included in Section 3.10 (Transportation and Traffic).

The data supporting this analysis were collected from standard sources, including federal agencies such as the U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Bureau of Economic Analysis; state agencies such as the California Department of Finance; and local agencies such as Orange County and the City of Laguna Niguel’s and Aliso Viejo’s Planning Division and Office of Economic Development. Data are presented for Orange County and compared to the state of California overall, and described for Laguna Niguel as appropriate. The most recent and best available data are presented throughout the section.

3.4.1 Affected Environment

Socioeconomic impacts would be felt predominantly by individuals, residents, and workers in Orange County, particularly residents in areas closest to the CHFEB. Nearly all tenant relocation would occur within Orange County. The anticipated maximum number of tenants that would relocate to Los Angeles County (i.e., Long Beach) is 20 (see Chapter 2), representing less than one percent of the total number of tenants. Because tenant relocation would occur primarily within the County, minimal to no tenants are anticipated to relocate their residence to adjacent counties (i.e., Los Angeles, San Diego, or Riverside counties). In addition, any construction workforce is anticipated to come from Orange County. Therefore, the ROI for socioeconomics is defined as Orange County, and this analysis focuses primarily on the County and potentially affected communities.

3.4.1.1 Population and Housing

Population

Table 3.4-1 shows past and current population data and future population estimates for Orange County and California. The populations of Orange County and California both increased from 2000 to 2017, but the rate of increase was slightly higher in California. Population growth is expected to continue between 2020 and 2040 at a comparable rate.

Table 3.4-1. Population Growth

Location	Historic and Current Population Growth				Projected Population			
	2000	2010	2017	Change (%) (2000-2017)	2020	2030	2040	Change (%) (2020-2040)
Orange County	2,846,289	3,010,232	3,155,816	10.9	3,257,087	3,431,096	3,555,527	9.2
California	33,871,648	37,253,956	38,982,847	15.1	40,467,295	43,631,295	46,484,933	14.9

Source: USCB 2017a, 2010a, 2000; California Department of Finance 2019

Housing

A housing unit refers to a house; an apartment; a mobile home or trailer; a group of rooms; or a single room occupied as separate living quarters, or if vacant, intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. Both occupied and vacant housing units are included in the total housing unit inventory. A housing unit is classified as occupied if it is the usual place of residence of a person or group of people; a housing unit is classified as vacant if it is not the usual place of residence of a person or group of people. The rental vacancy rate is the proportion of the rental inventory which is vacant and available for rent

1 (USCB 2017f). Table 3.4-2 shows the total housing units, occupied housing units, and rental vacancy
2 rates in Orange County and California. Homeowner vacancy rates are substantially lower, at 0.8 and 1.7
3 percent for Orange County and California, respectively.

4 **Table 3.4-2. Housing Characteristics (2017)**

Location	Total Housing Units	Occupied Housing Units	Rental Vacancy Rate (%)
Orange County	1,081,701	1,024,976	3.2
California	13,996,299	12,888,128	3.6

5 Source: USCB 2017f

6 **3.4.1.2 Labor**

7 Labor force and employment statistics are presented for Orange County, as that is where the majority of
8 the construction and operation labor force related to activities at the existing CHFB site would be
9 expected to occur, as well as where relocation of the existing CHFB tenants would be expected to occur.

10 **Labor Force**

11 The size of a county’s civilian labor force is measured as the sum of those currently employed as well as
12 unemployed. People are classified as unemployed if they do not have a job, have actively looked for work
13 in the prior four weeks, and are currently available for work (BLS 2015). Table 3.4-3 provides a
14 breakdown of the civilian labor force in Orange County and California. Between 2000 and 2018, Orange
15 County’s labor force grew at a slightly lower rate than the State overall. Orange County added
16 approximately 143,000 people to its labor force during this period, and California added more than
17 2.5 million to its labor force (BLS 2018, 2010, 2005, 2000).

18 **Table 3.4-3. Civilian Labor Force, 2000-2018**

Location	2000	2005	2010	2018	Increase (%) (2000-2018)
Orange County	1,482,303	1,585,916	1,537,187	1,625,426	9.7
California	16,867,808	17,530,064	18,336,271	19,398,212	15

19 Source: BLS 2018, 2010, 2005, 2000

20 **Unemployment**

21 The unemployment rate is calculated based on the number of unemployed persons divided by the labor
22 force, where the labor force is the number of unemployed persons plus the number of employed persons.
23 Table 3.4-4 provides unemployment data for Orange County and California. Unemployment rates in
24 Orange County were consistently lower than in the state of California in 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2018.
25 From 2005 to 2010, unemployment in Orange County and California increased substantially, which can
26 be attributed to the 2008 economic downturn. Unemployment rates have decreased since 2010, and 2018
27 unemployment rates were the lowest levels in the last 18 years (BLS 2018, 2010, 2005, 2000).

28

Table 3.4-4. Unemployment Data for Orange County and California

Year	Orange County	California
2000	3.5	4.9
2005	3.7	5.4
2010	9.7	12.2
2018	2.9	4.2

Source: BLS 2018, 2010, 2005, 2000

Employment by Industry

Table 3.4-5 shows employment by industry in Orange County. In 2018, the two leading industries in the County were professional and business services; and trade, transportation and utilities. These two industries account for nearly half of total employment in Orange County (CAEDD 2018).

Table 3.4-5. Employment by Industry in Orange County, 2018

Industry	Employment
Professional and Business Services	315,400
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	262,000
Educational and Health Services	225,000
Leisure and Hospitality	222,600
Government	160,800
Manufacturing	159,800
Financial Activities	119,100
Mining, Logging and Construction	106,600 ^a
Other Services	51,100
Information	26,700
Farming	2,000
Total	1,651,100

Source: CAEDD 2018

^a 106,100 is for construction

Table 3.4-6 shows the top five employers in Orange County, all who employ 5,000 persons or more. The top two employers are the University of California Irvine and Walt Disney Parks and Resorts, both of which employ more than 10,000 persons. Another 20 companies in the County each employ between 1,000 and 4,999 employees. Twelve of these are associated with the health and medical professions; California State University Fullerton is also included. Of these 20 companies, the employer closest to the project area is the Laguna Woods Village Community Center (senior citizens center) in Laguna Woods, about 4 miles north of Laguna Niguel and the CHFb (CAEDD 2019).

1 **Table 3.4-6. Major Employers in Orange County (2018)**

Employer Name	Location	Description/Industry	Employer Size Class
University of California Irvine	Irvine	Schools, universities and colleges / academic	10,000+
Walt Disney parks & resorts	Anaheim	Amusement and Theme Parks	10,000+
Boeing Co Huntington	Huntington Beach	Aircraft Manufacturers / manufacturing	5,000-9,999+
Broadcom Corp	Irvine	Semiconductors and related devices / manufacturing	5,000-9,999
Mflex	Irvine	Electronic equipment and supplies / manufacturing	5,000-9,999

2 Source: CAEDD 2019

3 **3.4.1.3 Earnings**

4 Earnings are discussed in this section using per capita personal income (PCPI) and compensation by
5 industry.

6 **Per Capita Personal Income**

7 Personal income data are measured and reported for a worker’s county of residence. PCPI is the personal
8 income for county residents divided by the County’s total population. Table 3.4-7 contains 2000, 2005,
9 2010, and 2018 annual PCPI data for both Orange County and California. All dollar estimates are in
10 current dollars (not adjusted for inflation). In general, the PCPI was slightly higher in Orange County
11 during the entire period, however, California’s PCPI grew faster than Orange County’s from 2000 to
12 2018.

13 **Table 3.4-7. Annual Per Capita Personal Income in Orange County and California (in dollars)**

Location	Per Capita Personal Income				Percent Change (2000-2018)
	2000	2005	2010	2018	
Orange County	\$38,144	\$47,377	\$49,740	\$69,268	81.6
California	\$33,403	\$39,326	\$43,609	\$63,557	90.3

14 Source: BEA 2018, 2010, 2005, 2000

15 **Industry Compensation**

16 Compensation data are measured and reported for the county of work location and are typically reported
17 on a per job basis. Compensation data indicate the wages and salaries for work done in a particular place
18 (e.g., a county), but if the worker does not live in the county where the work occurred (e.g., a person from
19 a neighboring county crosses county lines to go to work) then a sizeable portion of the wages/salaries
20 would be spent elsewhere. These expenditures would not remain in or flow back into that county’s
21 economy. Total compensation includes wages and salaries as well as employer contribution for employee
22 retirement funds, social security, health insurance, and life insurance. The term “Total Industry
23 Compensation” is often used in economic data to describe this data, and is presented to characterize the
24 scale of business activity performed in Orange County.

1 Total industry compensation in Orange County for 2018 was approximately \$137 billion, making it the
2 third largest county in California. Total compensation in the State in 2018 was over \$1.5 trillion. The
3 government (federal, state and local) and manufacturing are the two largest employers in Orange County,
4 accounting for approximately 12 (\$16.5 billion) and 12.4 percent (\$17 billion), respectively, of total
5 employee compensation. Of the government employees, nearly 72 percent are found in local government.
6 Federal workers received compensation of just over \$1.3 billion, or one percent of total employee
7 compensation in Orange County. Other large sectors include health care and social assistance, finance and
8 insurance, construction, wholesale and retail trade. These sectors along with the government and
9 manufacturing sectors account for nearly 62 percent of the total compensation to employees in Orange
10 County in 2018 (BEA 2018).

11 **3.4.1.4 Local Economy of Laguna Niguel and Surrounding Communities**

12 The local economy of Laguna Niguel employs approximately 33,700 people, compared to 28,346 and
13 16,879 employees employed in Aliso Viejo and Laguna Hills, respectively. Households in Laguna Niguel
14 and Laguna Hills had similar median annual incomes of \$99,206 and \$99,797, respectively, in 2017,
15 while the median household income in Aliso Viejo was slightly higher at \$106,353. These are all higher
16 than the household median income in Orange County (\$81,851), California (\$67,169), and across the
17 entire United States (\$61,937) (USCB 2017g). The largest industries and highest paying industries
18 overlap in all three communities, although in slightly different order, as follows (Datausa 2020):

19 **Top industries:**

- 20 • **Laguna Niguel:** Health Care and Social Assistance (4,562), Professional, Scientific, & Technical
21 Services (4,110), and Retail Trade (3,447)
- 22 • **Aliso Viejo:** Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (4,098), Health Care and Social
23 Assistance (3,103), and Retail Trade (3,077)
- 24 • **Laguna Hills:** Health Care and Social Assistance (2,348), Retail Trade (2,348) and Professional,
25 Scientific and Technical Services (1,994)

26 **Highest paying industries:**

- 27 • **Laguna Niguel:** Management of Companies and Enterprises (\$103,846), Manufacturing
28 (\$100,045), and Finance & Insurance (\$96,351)
- 29 • **Aliso Viejo:** Utilities (\$119,185), Manufacturing (\$90,882), and Information (\$87,697)
- 30 • **Laguna Hills:** Finance and Insurance (\$91,991), Real Estate, Rental & Leasing (\$90,846) and
31 Utilities (\$87,292)

32 The top employers in Laguna Niguel are the U.S. Government (approximately 6.3 percent of total City
33 employment), Costco (approximately 1.8 percent) and Capistrano United School District (approximately
34 1.1 percent) (City of Laguna Niguel 2017).

35 **3.4.1.5 Community Services**

36 **Recreational Facilities**

37 Orange County includes several recreational opportunities, including more than 15 regional parks,
38 wilderness parks, a nature preserve, regional trails, golf courses, and beaches (OC Parks 2020a).
39 Recreational areas closest to Laguna Niguel include Laguna Niguel Regional Park, located immediately
40 south of the CHFEB across Aliso Creek Road (approximately 1,000 feet from the site). This park consists
41 of 227 acres and a 44-acre lake, and provides a wide variety of recreational uses, including lake fishing,
42 volleyball and tennis courts, jogging and bicycle trails, barbeque/fire rings, picnic shelters, an
43 amphitheater and a scenic overlook (OC Parks 2020b). Over one-third of the total land area within the
44 City is devoted to open space. A combination of regional parks, community parks, neighborhood parks,

1 private recreation facilities, open space corridors, greenbelts and landscaped slope banks are scattered
2 throughout the City and help establish its open space character. The City has access to over 5,000 acres of
3 open space, extending beyond the City limits to include Aliso and Wood Canyons Regional Park and the
4 Salt Creek Regional Park (within 2 miles to the west of the CHFb, in Aliso Viejo). Aliso Viejo
5 Community Park and the Aliso Creek hiking and biking trails are located immediately west of the CHFb,
6 just on the other side of the Alicia Parkway. Other nearby recreational areas between 5 and 10 miles from
7 the CHFb include Laguna Beach, Laguna Coast Wilderness Park and Crystal Cove State Park.

8 Proximity to nature can influence where people choose to live and how much people are willing to pay for
9 housing (i.e., property values). Research indicates that people make regional housing and labor market
10 decisions based in part on the availability of and proximity to public lands, such as state parks, national
11 forests, and recreational lakes and rivers. Living near public lands provides amenities such as convenient
12 access to recreation and wildlife viewing. Population movement and migration into environmentally
13 desirable areas can also be explained by the presence and density of natural landscapes (e.g., rivers and
14 mountains) and the associated environmental amenities such as clean air (Garber-Yonts 2004; Hand et
15 al. 2008).

16 **Police, Fire, and Healthcare Services**

17 The Southwest Operations Division of the Orange County Sheriff's Department provides law
18 enforcement services to approximately 305,000 residents within Aliso Viejo, Dana Point, Laguna Hills,
19 Laguna Niguel, Laguna Woods, San Clemente, and San Juan Capistrano. The division employs
20 approximately 256 staff, of which 219 are Deputy Sheriffs, and deploys approximately 125 patrol cars
21 each 24-hour period (Orange County Sheriff's Department 2020).

22 The Cities of Laguna Niguel and Aliso Viejo partner with the Orange County Fire Authority for fire and
23 emergency medical services. The Orange County Fire Authority provides comprehensive emergency
24 services to residents near the project area through a regional approach. The Operations Department is
25 comprised of 7 divisions and eleven battalions that include 79 fire stations (5 to 10 stations per battalion)
26 that provide regional emergency response to all fires, medical aids, rescues, hazardous material incidents,
27 wildland fire, aircraft fire and rescue services to John Wayne Airport, and other miscellaneous
28 emergencies. Division 5 serves the project area, including the cities of Aliso Viejo, Laguna Hills, Laguna
29 Niguel, Laguna Woods, and Lake Forest. Fire Stations 4, 39 and 49 serve the Laguna Niguel area;
30 station 57 covers adjacent Aliso Viejo (Orange County Fire Authority 2020).

31 The closest hospitals to the project area include Mission Hospital, Saddleback Memorial Hospital, and
32 South Coast Medical Center, all within 5 miles of the CHFb. Mission Hospital is a state-of-the art, 523-
33 bed acute care hospital in Mission Viejo, California (Providence 2020).

34 **Schools**

35 The project area is located within the Capistrano Unified School District, which encompasses 200 square
36 miles and includes 63 campuses and over 47,000 students. The District includes all or parts of the
37 following cities and a portion of the unincorporated area of Orange County: San Clemente, Dana Point,
38 San Juan Capistrano, Laguna Niguel, Aliso Viejo, Mission Viejo, and Rancho Santa Margarita; and the
39 communities of Las Flores, Coto de Caza, Dove Canyon, Ladera Ranch, Sendero/Rancho Mission Viejo
40 and Wagon Wheel (Capistrano Unified School District 2020).

41 Eleven elementary schools, three middle schools and two high schools serve the Laguna Niguel and Aliso
42 Viejo area. Saddleback College is a community college located a few miles from the CHFb in Mission
43 Viejo (Laguna Niguel Schools 2020). Four schools are located within 0.5 mile of the CHFb, including
44 Laguna Niguel Elementary School to the east, Wood Canyon Elementary School and Aliso Niguel High
45 School immediately to the west in Aliso Viejo, and St. Mary's School located to the southwest.

3.4.2 Environmental Consequences

To evaluate the impacts on socioeconomic resources, the alternatives were reviewed for their potential to cause the following:

- Alters local economies;
- Changes housing characteristics (types of units, occupancy, housing values, etc.) or residential development patterns;
- Alters population growth or demographic patterns
- Displaces populations, residents, or businesses to accommodate construction;
- Requires an amount of public or private resources (time and/or money) that interferes with the performance of other local government functions or the viability of proposed projects; or
- Induces growth without adequate supporting community services (e.g., education, public health and safety)

A significant adverse impact to socioeconomics would occur if the action would result in:

- Alters local economies on a substantial basis without the capacity to absorb a decrease or increase;
- Changes housing characteristics or residential development patterns in a substantial way;
- Places a demand on suitable housing that exceeds availability;
- Alters population growth or demographic patterns in ways that change the overall character of communities;
- Requires an amount of public or private resources (time and/or money) that substantially interferes with the performance of other local government functions or the viability of proposed projects; and
- Induces growth that exceeds the capacity of supporting community services, including:
 - Change in the number of users of community services that exceed existing capacity;
 - Change in the demand for emergency and public protection services that would increase response times based on existing personnel resources and equipment; and
 - Change in the funding needed to sustain services or to increase access to services.

3.4.2.1 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, GSA would not construct a new USCIS building or relocate tenants to new offsite locations. Ongoing maintenance to the CHFB would occur, but there would be no adverse impacts on socioeconomic resources. Socioeconomic benefits of approximately 3,000 government jobs remaining within the Laguna Niguel community and the associated income, spending, and tax revenue would continue.

3.4.2.2 Alternative 1

Construction

There would be short-term, minor, beneficial direct impacts during construction under Alternative 1. Construction of the new USCIS building would create between 15 and 35 jobs during an estimated 30-month construction period, and up to 300 jobs during a peak construction period of 15 months. It is anticipated that the majority of construction workers for the new building would be local and commute

1 daily to the project site from their current residences within Orange County and surrounding counties. As
2 such, no direct impacts on population, housing, community services, or recreational facilities are
3 anticipated. Construction would have a short-term, negligible, and beneficial impact on unemployment
4 and income in Laguna Niguel and communities associated with tenant relocation sites throughout Orange
5 County. [GSA to confirm if the El Lazo Basketball Courts would close during construction]

6 Short-term, negligible to minor, beneficial indirect economic effects are anticipated from an increase in
7 wages and local spending by construction workers in Laguna Niguel and communities associated with
8 tenant relocation sites throughout Orange County. Construction of a new USCIS building and leasing of
9 space for approximately 1,000 tenants elsewhere in Orange County would cost approximately \$403
10 million, which includes labor, material, overhead, profit, and design fees. For other similar projects, labor
11 costs are generally two thirds the sum of labor and materials, excluding overhead and profit (GSA 2018a).
12 For purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that at least a portion of materials and equipment would be
13 purchased from local vendors, which would have beneficial impacts on local businesses in the short term.
14 In addition, an increase in economic activity could occur from local spending in the community by the
15 construction workforce (e.g., retail, food service, entertainment, etc.). Associated spending would result in
16 increased tax revenue for the local, state, and federal government, resulting in minor beneficial impacts.

17 [GSA to confirm statement: “For other similar projects, labor costs are generally two thirds the sum of
18 labor and materials, excluding overhead and profit”. Is so, please provide email communication
19 confirming this statement for purposes of the Admin Record file.]

20 **Operation**

21 There would be long-term, adverse and beneficial direct impacts during operations. Following
22 construction, approximately 2,000 USCIS staff currently located at the CHFB would move into the new
23 onsite facility while the remaining approximately 1,000 tenants would relocate to existing offsite lease
24 space within Orange County as discussed in Chapter 2. Specific office locations of the relocated tenants
25 have not been identified, but it is assumed at least 55 percent of the remaining tenants would relocate in
26 south or central Orange County no farther north than Irvine, with as many as 45 percent of the remaining
27 tenants relocating to areas north of Irvine such as Santa Ana, Anaheim, or Long Beach. It is also assumed
28 that the large majority of the relocated tenants would retain their current residence and instead change
29 their daily commute time (either lengthening or shortening the commute depending on the new office
30 location). Therefore, negligible impacts on population, housing, community services, and recreational
31 facilities are anticipated. New office space for relocated tenants would likely be located across multiple
32 locations throughout the County, and potential impacts on socioeconomic resources in a given community
33 from a small influx of relocated workers would be minor and beneficial due to increased spending and
34 income in that community.

35 The shift of approximately 1,000 jobs out of the project area would have a moderate adverse impact on
36 the local Laguna Niguel economy. This represents an approximate 3 percent reduction in jobs in the City,
37 and would represent an approximate 2.1 percent decrease in local per capita income in the City
38 (\$69,268,000 out of \$3.3 billion in personal income for the City in 2017), based on 2018 per capita
39 income data for the County¹. This could adversely impact local businesses and vendors due to decreased
40 spending, which could result in a decrease in jobs at area businesses due to lower economic activity in
41 surrounding communities. However, as previously indicated, workers are not expected to change their
42 current residence, so decreases in spending would be associated with spending during normal business
43 hours. Regardless, Alternative 1 would likely result in a noticeable change to the local economy in

¹ Per capita income for the County is utilized for income reduction calculations as workers at the CHFB are assumed to live throughout Orange County, and some outside of the County.

1 Laguna Niguel. Potential future use of the remaining land to be transferred out of federal ownership and
2 potential associated socioeconomic impacts are considered in the Future Redevelopment section.

3 Following disposal of the remaining 64.85-acre parcel, long-term, minor and beneficial impacts could
4 occur from an increase in tax revenue if the land is transferred out of federal ownership, as the remaining
5 parcel would become taxable land. This would result in a slight increase in tax coffers collected by local,
6 state, and federal governments.

7 **Future Redevelopment**

8 Under a renovation scenario, short term, minor indirect impacts may occur during the construction period.
9 A small and local construction workforce would likely be required for renovations and there would be no
10 temporary increases in population as workers would be expected to commute from within the region. As a
11 result, there would likely be no impacts on housing, community services, or recreational facilities in
12 Laguna Niguel or the surrounding region. There could be short-term, minor, beneficial impacts during
13 construction due the temporary increase in jobs and associated spending in the local economy, similar to
14 as described for construction of the USCIS building under Alternative 1.

15 During operations of a renovation scenario, it is assumed a similar number of employees would occupy
16 the renovated structure as compared to current occupancy levels of the CHFB (i.e., up to 3,000 workers).
17 When considered with the 2,000 USCIS employees to remain on site, this would represent a net increase
18 of up to 2,000 additional employees on site. It is unknown to what extent future tenants would relocate to
19 areas near Laguna Niguel, and such relocation would ultimately depend on future use of the new
20 development. Considering the average family size of 3.47 and that up to 708,491 households (71.4
21 percent) have children in Orange County (based on 2010 Census Bureau data), an increase in 3,000
22 workers could result in an increase in population of up to 7,433 individuals, which would represent a 0.2
23 percent increase population in Orange County (based on 2017 population data). This represents and
24 upper bound estimate, as the majority of new workers are anticipated be located within the local
25 community.

26 Under a worst-case scenario where all workers and their families relocate to communities within Laguna
27 Niguel and adjacent to the project site (i.e., Aliso Viejo, and Laguna Hills), moderate to significant
28 adverse socioeconomic impacts could occur due to increased demands on housing, community services,
29 and recreational facilities. Vacancy rates are low within the community, and an increase in new workers
30 and families could result in an increased demand on housing stock; placing a demand on suitable housing
31 that exceeds availability. Vacant units (rental and for sale) in the communities of Laguna Niguel, Aliso
32 Viejo and Laguna Hills totaled 3,322 units in 2017. The impact on these local communities would be
33 potentially significant if most or all the workers chose to live in these three communities, although if any
34 new development included residential housing, that would help increase the local housing supply and
35 offset some adverse impacts. If workers relocate further from these communities within Orange County,
36 the impacts would be much smaller, but could still be minor to moderate, depending on relocation
37 decisions. Orange County had 56,272 vacant units in 2017; residences for 3,000 new workers and their
38 families would represent approximately 5.3 percent of the vacant housing units in the County and result in
39 a minor to moderate impact on the housing supply. Increased demands could also be placed on fire and
40 police response times, and student-to-teacher ratios in schools may increase. In addition, moderate
41 beneficial socioeconomic impacts could occur due to the increase in income and spending in the local
42 community and associated tax revenue. Increased tax revenues could be utilized to offset increased strains
43 on community services and recreational facilities by funding enhancements to appropriate services and
44 facilities.

45 Under a demolition/new construction scenario, minor temporary indirect impacts may occur from
46 demolition of the existing CHFB and new construction on the remaining 64.85-acre parcel to be disposed.
47 Under this scenario, impacts would be similar to those described for construction of the new USCIS
48 building, but would be to a greater intensity as development would be on a larger scale and likely extend

1 for a longer period of time. A larger construction workforce may be required for the redevelopment
2 compared to the workforce needed for construction of the USCIS building, and there is potential that a
3 small number could relocate nearby, with families. This could result in short-term, minor adverse impacts
4 on the local housing supply, community services, and recreational facilities. New construction would also
5 generate short-term, minor beneficial impacts to the local economy, similar to those described for the new
6 USCIS building construction.

7 Impacts during operations of a demolition/new construction scenario would likely be similar to as
8 described for operations of the renovation scenario, but to a larger extent and intensity. Future
9 development of the site is currently unknown and would be dictated by the future owner of the site. As a
10 result, the number of new workers that would be based at the site is unknown, as is the extent to which
11 commercial or residential uses would occupy the site. Development of a mixed-use space with
12 commercial and residential uses could have minor to significant socioeconomic impacts, depending on the
13 size and scope of development. Adverse impacts would be due to increase strains on housing stock,
14 community services, and recreational facilities, similar to as described for the renovation scenario and
15 depending on the extent to which workers relocate. Beneficial impacts would be due to increased jobs, tax
16 revenue, income, and potentially the housing stock, depending on the number of housing units
17 incorporated into the development. Increased tax revenues could be utilized to offset increased strains on
18 community services and recreational facilities by funding enhancements to appropriate services and
19 facilities. In the longer term, any future redevelopment would be expected to create new jobs and attract
20 new workers that could help offset, to some extent, the adverse economic effects associated with
21 relocation of the existing CHFB workforce.

22 Follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses would be required (depending on who acquires the site) for any
23 proposed redevelopment plans presented by a future developer and would further address socioeconomic
24 impacts.

25 **3.4.2.3 Alternative 2**

26 Under Alternative 2, there would be short-term, negligible to minor beneficial socioeconomic impacts
27 during construction while existing lease spaces are built-out to accommodate approximately
28 3,000 tenants. Beneficial impacts would occur from temporary increases in income and spending by
29 construction workers in the local communities near where build-outs would occur, as well as from the
30 increase purchasing of materials in the region. Impacts would be distributed across communities
31 dependent upon the final relocation spot for tenants. Beneficial impacts would be greatest near the
32 selected location for USCIS, which is likely to occur in the northern part of Orange County (e.g., Irvine,
33 Santa Ana or Anaheim). No impacts on housing stock, recreational facilities, or community services are
34 anticipated.

35 During operations of Alternative 2, there could be moderate to significant impacts to the local economy of
36 Laguna Niguel due to the relocation of 3,000 employees to other communities within the County. It is
37 assumed that because office relocation would occur within the County, the large majority of the relocated
38 tenants would change their daily commute in order to retain their current residence. Therefore, there
39 would be no impacts to housing or population, minimal impacts on recreational facilities, and the
40 economic benefits related to tenant's place of residence would remain unchanged. Socioeconomic
41 benefits of an increased workforce would shift to other communities within Orange County where
42 relocation would occur, resulting in beneficial direct and indirect impacts to those communities through
43 increased spending. The CHFB is the largest employer in Laguna Niguel, and relocation of tenants would
44 represent an approximately 9 percent decrease in total workforce in the City, and a 3.8 percent decrease in
45 the total workforce within the three-community area (i.e., 78,925 employees in Laguna Niguel, Aliso
46 Viejo and Laguna Hills combined). This could have a substantial and potentially significant impact on the
47 City of Laguna Niguel and its ability to absorb the 9 percent workforce loss, and a moderate adverse
48 impact on local businesses and vendors in the three-city community due to long term decreases in

1 spending. The decrease in spending could result in a decrease in jobs at local businesses, reductions in
2 local sales tax revenue (which generated 25.9 percent of revenue for the City of Laguna Niguel in 2017),
3 and overall reduction in local economic activity. The loss of 3,000 jobs would also represent an
4 approximate 6.3 percent decrease in local per capita income for Laguna Niguel (2017 dollars), similar to
5 the analysis for Alternative 1; however, decreases in spending would also be associated with spending
6 during normal business hours. In addition, assuming that relocated workers would maintain their current
7 residence, property tax revenue generated by workers residing in the local communities would not
8 change; property taxes generate the largest revenue for all three cities. Regardless, Alternative 2 would
9 likely result in a substantial change to the local economy of Laguna Niguel and the surrounding
10 communities. Potential future use of the remaining land to be transferred out of federal ownership and
11 potential associated socioeconomic impacts are considered in the Future Redevelopment section.

12 Following disposal of the 92-acre site, long-term minor beneficial impacts could occur from an increase
13 in tax revenue if the land is transferred out of federal ownership, as the remaining parcel would become
14 taxable land. This would result in a slight increase in tax coffers collected by local, state, and federal
15 governments.

16 **Future Redevelopment**

17 Under both a renovation/new construction and demolition/new construction scenario, minor to significant
18 indirect impacts could occur from increased demands on housing, community services, and recreational
19 facilities from a potential population influx of new workers and their families, as well as beneficial
20 impacts due to increased jobs, income, and tax revenue. Impacts during construction and operation would
21 be similar to as described under Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment (demolition/new construction
22 scenario), and would be dependent upon the size and scope of new development to occur on the parcel.
23 Impacts could be to a greater extent and intensity under a demolition/new construction scenario,
24 depending on the scale of new development. In the longer term, any future redevelopment would be
25 expected to create new jobs and attract new workers that could help offset, to some extent, the adverse
26 economic effects associated with relocation of the existing CHFB workforce.

27 Similar to Alternative 1, follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses would be required (depending on who
28 acquires the site) for any proposed redevelopment plans presented by a future developer and would
29 further address socioeconomic impacts.

30 **3.4.2.4 Impact Reduction Measures**

31 No impact reduction measures would apply for Socioeconomics under the Proposed Action.

32

3.5 GEOLOGY, SEISMICITY, AND SOILS

Geological resources consist of the Earth's surface and subsurface materials. These resources are typically described in terms of geology, topography, soils and geologic hazards. Geology is the study of the Earth's physical structure and composition, as well as the configuration of the surface and subsurface features. Topography describes the general shape and arrangement of the natural and artificial physical features of a land surface. Soils are the unconsolidated material overlying bedrock, and are typically described in terms of type, slope, and physical characteristics (e.g., structure, permeability, strength and erosion potential). Geologic hazards are natural geologic events that can endanger human lives and threaten property. Examples of geologic hazards include earthquakes and landslides.

3.5.1 Affected Environment

The ROI for geological resources focuses on the 92-acre CHFB site. The CHFB site has been previously disturbed and developed and contains mostly paved surfaces and landscaped areas. Undeveloped lots comprised primarily of gravel are located on the southern end of the site and maintained landscaped areas comprised of native and non-native vegetation surround the building.

The ROI for geology, seismicity, topography, and soils does not include regional conditions outside of the 92-acre CHFB site as it is assumed off-site leased office space would be located in previously developed areas, and any necessary build out would not require new ground disturbance. As a result, no impacts to geology, seismicity, topography, or soils would occur from this action outside of the 92-acre CHFB site. Off-site leasing of new office space would be conducted at locations that meet current and applicable California Building Code and ASCE standards related to geologic hazards.

3.5.1.1 Geology

The geology of the region consists of rugged mountains, with the CHFB site residing within the Peninsular Ranges Geomorphic Province, which is characterized by a series of mountain ranges separated by long valleys trending northwest. The underlying layers are granite rocks intruding older metamorphic rocks. The Province extends approximately 920 miles from the Los Angeles Basin to the southern tip of Baja California and varies in width from approximately 30 to 100 miles (CGS 2015).

3.5.1.2 Seismicity

Southern California is a seismically active area with many active faults. An active fault is one that has ruptured in the last 11,000 years (CGS 2019). There are no known active faults within or adjacent to the CHFB site. The closest active faults are a segment of the Newport-Inglewood-Rose Canyon fault zone, located off the Pacific Coast approximately four miles southwest of the CHFB, and a segment of the Pelican Hill fault, located approximately 4 miles west of the CHFB. A pre-Quaternary fault lies underneath the project area. A pre-Quaternary fault is a fault older than 1.6 million years or a fault without recognized Quaternary displacement (CGS 2010).

The United States Geological Survey produces seismic hazard maps based on the rate at which earthquakes occur in a given area and the distance shaking extends from the source. A hazard map shows the level of horizontal shaking that has a two percent chance of being exceeded in a 50-year period. Shaking is expressed as a percentage of the force of gravity (percent g). A rating of 10 to 20 percent g is considered to cause moderate damage, and major damage could occur at values greater than 20 percent g. The 2014 Seismic Hazards Map shows that the ROI has a seismic hazard rating of 50 percent g, which could be subject to major damage (USGS 2015a).

The California Department of Conservation created the California Earthquake Hazards Zone Application to determine where earthquake hazard zones are located. Earthquake hazard zones define areas subject to three distinct types of geologic ground failures: fault rupture (where the surface of the earth breaks along a fault); liquefaction (when the soil temporarily turns to quicksand and cannot support structures) and

1 earthquake-induced landslides. According to the California Earthquake Hazards Zone Application, the
2 CHFB site is not within a fault zone, but does have the potential to experience strong ground shaking
3 from the occurrence of earthquakes centered on nearby faults and more distant regional faults. The CHFB
4 site is within the San Juan Capistrano liquefaction zone (CGS 2019). Liquefaction is mostly confined to
5 the alluvial sediments situated within the floodplain of Aliso Creek.

6 **3.5.1.3 Topography**

7 The CHFB site ranges in elevation from approximately 160 to 240 above mean sea level (USGS 2015b).
8 Topography generally slopes downward from north to south. The central and southern portion of the site
9 has been graded and is on relatively flat terrain, although the CHFB is built into a hillside and some steep
10 slopes are present on the north end of the site.

11 **3.5.1.4 Soils**

12 Soil is a collective term for the inorganic and organic substrate covering bedrock in which vegetation
13 grows and a multitude of organisms reside. Soils are surveyed nationwide by county. Soil resources
14 provide a foundation for both plant and animal communities by establishing a substrate for plant growth
15 and vegetative cover for animal habitat and feeding.

16 Soil associations at any given site are determined by five factors: 1) physical and mineralogical
17 composition of the parent material; 2) climate under which the soil material accumulated and has existed
18 since accumulation; 3) plant and animal life atop and within the soil; 4) topography, or the “lay of the
19 land”; and 5) length of time that these forces of soil formation have acted on the parent material
20 (NRCS 2019a).

21 Based on Natural Resource Conservation Service soil survey data, there are eight soil associations
22 historically associated with the CHFB site (NRCS 2019b). The majority of the site is mapped as Bosanko
23 clay, 15 to 30 percent slopes² (54 percent) or Sorrento loam, 2 to 9 percent (22 percent). The soils mapped
24 within the project area are described below and shown in Figure 3.5-1:

- 25 • **Bosanko clay, 15 to 30 percent slopes:** Well-drained soils with very slow infiltration rates. The
26 parent material of Bosanko clay is acid residuum weathered from igneous rock. These soils are
27 typically found on hill slopes.
- 28 • **Calleguas clay loam, 50 to 75 percent slopes, eroded.** Well-drained soils with very slow
29 infiltration rates. The parent material of Calleguas clay loam is residuum weathered from
30 calcareous shale. These soils are typically found on hill slopes.
- 31 • **Capistrano sandy loam, 2 to 9 percent slopes.** Well-drained soils with moderate infiltration
32 rates. The parent material of Capistrano sandy loam is alluvium derived from granite. The soils
33 are typically found in alluvial fans and are classified as prime farmland if irrigated.
- 34 • **Myford sandy loam, 9 to 30 percent slopes, eroded.** Moderately well-drained soils with very
35 slow infiltration rates. The parent material of Myford sandy loam is alluvium derived from
36 sandstone. These soils are typically found on terraces.

² The slope range for each soil type is expressed as a percentage of the distance between two points. A higher slope range can increase erosion potential in a particular area. A 0 to 2 percent slope gradient is considered nearly level, a 2 to 9 percent is considered nearly level to moderately sloping, and a 50 to 75 percent slope gradient is considered a very steep slope.

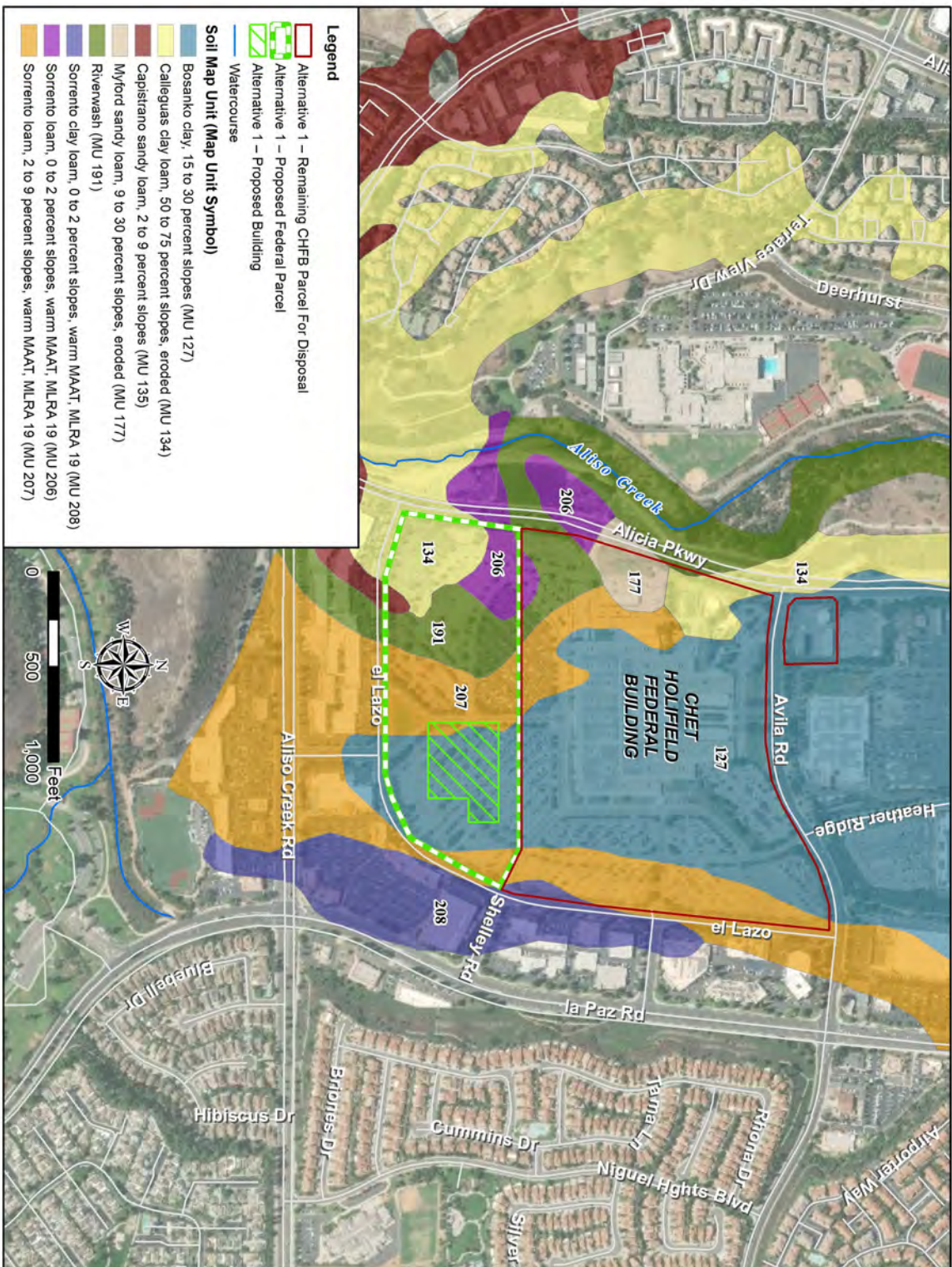


Figure 3.5-1. Soils at Project Site

- 1 • **Riverwash.** Well-drained soils with very slow infiltration rates. The parent material of Riverwash
2 is sandy and gravely alluvium. These soils are typically found in alluvial fans.
- 3 • **Sorrento clay loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes.** Well-drained soils with moderate infiltration rates.
4 The parent material of Sorrento clay loam is alluvium derived from sedimentary rock. These soils
5 are typically found in alluvial fans and are classified as prime farmland if irrigated.
- 6 • **Sorrento loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes.** Well-drained soils with moderate infiltration rates. The
7 parent material of Sorrento loam is alluvium derived from sedimentary rock. These soils are
8 typically found in alluvial fans and are classified as prime farmland if irrigated.

9 **Sorrento loam, 2 to 9 percent slopes.** Well-drained soils with moderate infiltration rates. The parent
10 material of Sorrento loam is alluvium derived from sedimentary rock. These soils are typically found in
11 alluvial fans and are classified as prime farmland if irrigated.

12 However, as shown in Figure 3.5-1, the majority of the site consists of developed areas and has been
13 previously disturbed from past development. Of the 92-acre site, approximately 59 acres are developed or
14 paved (i.e., buildings, roads, or parking areas) and approximately 18 acres are landscaped. Approximately
15 15 acres on the outermost southern and western portions of the site consists of undeveloped gravel lots.
16 As discussed in Section 3.5.1.3, the central and southern portion of the site (approximately 63.5 acres) has
17 been graded and is on relatively flat terrain. Some steep slopes exist on the north end of the site near
18 Avila Road.

19 **3.5.2 Environmental Consequences**

20 Impacts on geological resources would be considered significant under the following conditions:

- 21 • geological structures that control groundwater quality are altered;
- 22 • people or structures are exposed to potential substantial adverse effects from a geologic hazard
23 (i.e., on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse);
- 24 • if soil erosion produces substantial gulying, extensive damage to vegetation, or a sustained
25 increase in sedimentation in streams;
- 26 • if there is a substantial loss of soil, and/or a substantial decrease in soil stability and permeability;
27 or
- 28 • if soils are substantially disrupted, displaced, compacted or covered over.

29 Except when installing impermeable surfaces, generally adverse impacts on geological resources can be
30 avoided or minimized if proper construction techniques and erosion-control measures are incorporated
31 into project development.

32 **3.5.2.1 No Action Alternative**

33 Under the No Action Alternative, GSA would not construct a new USCIS building or relocate tenants to
34 new offsite locations. Ongoing maintenance to the CHFB would occur, which could generate negligible
35 amounts of land disturbance and soil erosion. No impacts to geology or topography would occur. The
36 CHFB would continue to be at risk for seismic disturbance as it is not currently constructed to California
37 Building Code for seismic safety.

1 **3.5.2.2 Alternative 1**

2 **Construction**

3 **Geology**

4 Alternative 1 would have minor direct impacts on geology during construction within the 27.15-acre
5 parcel to be retained. Construction of a new USCIS building would require excavation; however, the
6 depth of excavation is currently unknown and would depend on the results of the geotechnical
7 investigation and engineering report to be prepared for the development in accordance with GSA
8 Facilities Standards for the Public Buildings Service (P-100) and current California Building Code. This
9 could involve some disturbance or modification of the surficial geology, but impacts are anticipated to be
10 within a depth comparable to the past construction of the existing CHFB and commercial development
11 adjacent to the site. See Section 3.8 for a discussion on groundwater quality.

12 There would be no impacts to geology from disposal of the remaining 64.85 acres of the CHFB site.

13 **Seismicity**

14 Construction of a new USCIS building would result in beneficial impacts related to seismic hazards. New
15 construction would reduce the potential for adverse effects, including the overall threat of loss of life and
16 property, to federal tenants from seismic hazards. The CHFB was constructed in 1971 and was designed
17 to less stringent standards than are currently required, as documented in seismic evaluations prepared for
18 the site (Degenkolb Structural Engineers 2006, 2017). As described under Geology, a geotechnical
19 investigation and engineering report would be prepared for the development that would further
20 characterize geologic hazards and specify site-specific construction requirements related to seismicity.
21 Prior to initiating construction, a grading permit would be obtained from the City of Laguna Niguel for
22 building pad certification.

23 There would be no change to existing seismic hazards following disposal of the remaining 64.85 acres of
24 the CHFB site.

25 **Topography**

26 Alternative 1 would have negligible direct impacts on topography. Within the 27.15-acre parcel to be
27 retained, existing pavement and parking infrastructure would be removed and the site would be graded as
28 necessary. As this portion of the site is relatively flat, the grading of soils would be minimal, and
29 topography would not change substantially from current conditions.

30 There would be no impacts to topography from disposal of the remaining 64.85 acres of the CHFB site.

31 **Soils**

32 Alternative 1 would have minor direct impacts on soils. A total 27.15 acres of previously disturbed soils
33 would be impacted during construction of the new USCIS building. Of the 27.15 acres, 13.4 acres are
34 existing gravel lots, 10.5 acres are existing paved areas (i.e., roadways), and 3.25 acres are existing
35 landscaped areas. The use of heavy equipment for site preparation for construction of buildings,
36 roads/walkways, parking areas and other infrastructure under Alternative 1 would require grading,
37 excavation, and filling; however, these actions would occur in areas where soils have been previously
38 disturbed. If any natural soil horizons exist, they would likely be lost during construction. Heavy
39 equipment may compact or loosen and destroy the structure and function of organic and mineral soils
40 over the long term, reducing soil moisture and most likely resulting in increased runoff and erosion. Soil
41 erosion from use of heavy equipment could also occur as a result of ground disturbance, leading to
42 detachment of soils and transport of freshly disturbed surfaces in wind and stormwater runoff. Soil
43 productivity (i.e., the capacity of the soil to produce vegetative biomass), would remain largely
44 unchanged, considering the parcel has been previously disturbed.

1 The project would be subject to the California Stormwater Construction General Permit, which specifies
2 measures for stabilizing soils in the project area and minimizing soil loss during construction (see Section
3 3.8, Water Resources). Compliance with the terms of this permit would limit impacts from soil erosion
4 during construction.

5 There would be no impacts to soils from disposal of the remaining 64.85 acres of the CHFB site.

6 **Operations**

7 No impacts to geology or topography are anticipated during operations of Alternative 1, either from
8 operations of the new USCIS building or from off-site leasing of new office space in locations throughout
9 the region.

10 Long-term negligible direct impacts would be associated with loss of soil structure and function as a
11 result of covering soils with concrete, asphalt, and other impermeable surfaces. Soils at the site have been
12 previously disturbed from historical site use. Additionally, the majority of the site is already either
13 impervious or semi-impervious gravel lots, and new construction would represent a marginal increase in
14 impervious surfaces that could contribute to increased potential for water runoff and soil erosion. New
15 development would be required to comply with the terms of the City of Laguna Niguel new development
16 stormwater requirements, which specifies design requirements that would limit runoff from the site
17 (see Section 3.8, Water Resources). Compliance with these development standards would limit impacts
18 from soil erosion over the long term.

19 **Future Redevelopment**

20 Under a renovation scenario, adverse indirect impacts could occur from renovation of the existing CHFB
21 on the remaining 64.85-acre parcel to be disposed. No indirect impacts to geology or topography are
22 expected under construction or operations, but there could be minor indirect impacts to soils during
23 construction. Under this scenario for Alternative 1, no new structures are anticipated, but there could be
24 minor temporary impacts to soils near the CHFB while improvements are made to the structure,
25 particularly those to bring the building up to current California Building Code seismic standards
26 (Degenkolb Structural Engineers 2006, 2017). Some earth work could be required to fortify the building
27 foundation, resulting in potential for soil disturbance, compaction, and erosion. However, best
28 management practices could be utilized to stabilize soils to prevent erosion and runoff. Renovations
29 would result in beneficial impacts to seismic hazards as the threat of loss of life and property to tenants
30 from seismic hazards is reduced.

31 No indirect impacts to geology, topography, or soils are anticipated during operations of a renovation
32 scenario. New development would be required to comply with the terms of the City of Laguna Niguel
33 new development stormwater requirements, which would limit impacts from soil erosion over the long
34 term (see Section 3.8, Water Resources).

35 Under a demolition/new construction scenario, indirect impacts could occur from demolition of the
36 existing CHFB and new construction on the remaining 64.85-acre parcel to be disposed. Under this
37 scenario, there could be moderate indirect impacts to geology, topography, and soils during construction.
38 Impacts would be similar to as described for construction of the new USCIS building but would be to a
39 greater intensity as development would occur over a larger area and to a greater extent. Excavation would
40 be required, which could affect geological horizons depending on overall excavation depth. Some steep
41 slopes are present throughout the northern portion of the site, and depending on future development plans,
42 additional grading may be required that could change the topography of the site. Most of the site consists
43 of existing impervious surfaces or previously disturbed areas, although up to 64.85 acres could be
44 impacted during construction. Impacts would also include additional ground disturbance, grading, and
45 earth work from demolition activities of the existing CHFB. The potential for wind and water erosion and
46 soil loss during construction could be greater, considering the presence of steep slopes. New construction
47 would be subject to the terms of the California Stormwater Construction General Permit, similar to as

1 construction for the new USCIS building, which would limit impacts from soil erosion during
2 construction (see Section 3.8, Water Resources). New construction would be built to current California
3 Building Code, which would decrease overall seismic risk and result in beneficial indirect impacts.

4 No indirect impacts to geology or topography are anticipated during operations of a demolition/new
5 construction scenario. Long-term, minor, and adverse indirect impacts could be associated with new
6 development and an increase in impervious surfaces, similar to as described for operations of the new
7 USCIS building, but to a larger extent depending on the size of development. New development would
8 also be required to comply with the terms of the City of Laguna Niguel new development stormwater
9 requirements, which would limit impacts from soil erosion over the long term (see Section 3.8, Water
10 Resources).

11 Follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses would be required (depending on who acquires the site) for any
12 proposed redevelopment plans presented by a future developer and would further address excavation, as
13 well as soil erosion prevention and stormwater management once final development plans are completed.

14 **3.5.2.3 Alternative 2**

15 Under Alternative 2, there would be no impacts to geology, topography, or soils during construction or
16 operations. All tenants would be removed from the CHFEB and no construction would occur at the site.
17 Off-site leasing of new office space may require office build-outs; however, these build-outs would not
18 require ground disturbance, and no impacts to geologic resources would occur. Off-site leasing of new
19 office space would be conducted at locations that meet California Building Code and ASCE standards
20 related to geologic hazards, which would minimize the threat of loss of life and property to federal tenants
21 from seismic hazards. Therefore, there would be long-term beneficial direct impacts to seismic hazards.
22 There would be no change to existing geologic resources following disposal of the 92-acre site.

23 **Future Redevelopment**

24 Under a renovation/new construction scenario, indirect impacts could occur from renovation of the
25 existing CHFEB, and from new construction on the south or west end of the 92-acre site to be disposed.
26 Under this scenario for Alternative 2, there could be minor indirect impacts to geology, topography and
27 soils during construction. Minor impacts from land disturbance and earth work in the area around the
28 CHFEB could occur as the building is renovated, similar to as described for Alternative 1 Future
29 Redevelopment (renovation scenario). In addition, it is assumed there would be new construction on the
30 south or west end of the site, resulting in similar, minor impacts as described for construction of the new
31 USCIS building under Alternative 1. Renovation and new construction would be done in accordance with
32 current California Building Code and would minimize the threat of loss of life and property to tenants
33 from seismic hazards, resulting in beneficial impacts.

34 Under a demolition/new construction scenario, indirect impacts could occur from demolition of the
35 existing CHFEB and new construction on the 92-acre site to be disposed. Under this scenario for
36 Alternative 2, there could be moderate indirect impacts to geology, topography, and soils during
37 construction. Impacts would be similar to as described for Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment
38 (demolition/new construction scenario) but would be to a greater intensity as up to 92 acres of the site
39 would be impacted. New construction would be conducted in accordance with current California Building
40 Code and would minimize the threat of loss of life and property to tenants from seismic hazards, resulting
41 in beneficial impacts.

42 Operations of a renovation/new construction scenario and a demolition/new construction would be similar
43 to as described under Alternative 1 for the new USCIS building. There would be no direct impacts to
44 geology or topography, but there could be long-term minor indirect impacts from the loss of soil structure
45 from the increase in impervious surfaces at the site. New development would be required to comply with
46 the terms of the City of Laguna Niguel new development stormwater requirements, similar to as described

1 under Alternative 1, which would limit impacts from soil erosion over the long term (see Section 3.8,
2 Water Resources).

3 Similar to Alternative 1, follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses would further address excavation, soil
4 erosion prevention, and stormwater management once development plans are finalized.

5 **3.5.2.4 Impact Reduction Measures**

6 Refer to Section 3.8.2.4 for a discussion of measures that would limit impacts from soil loss as a result of
7 erosion during construction and operations.

8 Prior to issuance of a grading permit for any pavement in excess of 3,000 square feet, the future developer
9 is required to submit a site-specific geotechnical study to the City of Laguna Niguel for approval (City of
10 Laguna Niguel 2015). All design, grading and construction is to be performed in accordance with
11 requirements of the City of Laguna Niguel ordinances and the most recent California Building Code
12 applicable at time of grading. Following approval, the future developer would be required to apply for a
13 grading permit with the City of Laguna Niguel.

14

3.6 LAND USE

This section assesses the potential for existing land use patterns and development trends within the project area to affect, or be affected by, implementation of the project. Land use is described by land activities, ownership, and the governing entities' management plans. Local zoning defines land use types and regulates development patterns.

3.6.1 Affected Environment

The ROI for land use focuses on the 92-acre CHFB site and adjacent properties. The CHFB is located on a 92-acre site in Laguna Niguel, Orange County, California. The site is primarily used for federal office space and is located between Alicia Parkway and El Lazo at the Avila Road cross street. The project site consists of the two parcels as shown on Figure 1-2. The main parcel is located at 24000 Avila Road, Laguna Niguel, California, and is bounded by Avila Road to the north, Alicia Parkway to the west, and El Lazo to the south and east. This parcel is 86.5 acres and includes the CHFB and surrounding parking lots, basketball courts, roads and driveways, landscaped areas, as well as other supporting facilities such as guard stations, a reservoir for fire suppression, a 500,000-gallon water tank that services the fire protection system, and a maintenance warehouse. The CHFB site also includes a large 3,840-cell photovoltaic system on the roof of the building that produces 914 kilowatts of electricity annually to support building operations (GSA 2019a). The second parcel includes the Central Utility Plant (CUP), which is located directly across the street on the north side of Avila Road at 23731 Avila Road, on the corner of Alicia Parkway and Avila Road. The CUP property is 5.5 acres and includes chillers, boilers, cooling tower, and other utility infrastructure (i.e., Southern California Edison's Niguel substation) (GSA 2017a).

The property is located in the northwestern corner of the City of Laguna Niguel, which is a high-value real estate suburban area comprised of retail and residential zones. The City of Laguna Niguel consists of 9,421 acres (14.72 square miles) and is located in the southwestern portion of Orange County. Laguna Niguel is predominantly a "bedroom" community to the job centers of central and northern Orange County (e.g., Irvine, Newport Beach), with most of the residential uses concentrated in well-defined areas linked together by parks, greenbelts, and curvilinear landscaped streets. The majority of residences are single-family units. One third of the City is devoted to open space, and a combination of regional parks, community parks, neighborhood parks, private recreation facilities, open space corridors, greenbelts, and landscaped slope banks are scattered throughout the City, which help establish its open space character (Laguna Niguel City Council 2011). There are several commercial areas located throughout the City, but there is not a primary downtown area. Regional shopping centers are located in nearby Laguna Hills and Aliso Viejo. Regional access is mainly provided by Interstate 5.

3.6.1.1 Land Use Planning and Zoning Municipal Zoning Designations

California law requires each city and county to adopt a comprehensive long-term general plan for its physical development. The City of Laguna Niguel's General Plan functions as a blueprint for the future through appropriate growth, policies, and programs, and it also serves as a decision-making tool to guide future growth and development. The Zoning Plan implements the City's General Plan. It classifies different land uses and regulates such uses in order to serve the greater needs of community.

Land use designations identified in the General Plan provide for a range of land uses. The designations are intended to be broadly defined to provide for future flexibility and options in site-specific land use planning. These designations are classified under general categories of residential, commercial, industrial, open space, and community facilities. Commercial centers are larger planned shopping complexes which provide for a range of goods and services and serve a larger area than neighborhood centers. Definitions applicable to the CHFB site, potential future use, and adjacent land uses include:

- 1 • Community Commercial: typical uses include retail businesses, restaurants, personnel services,
2 home improvement, auto repair, major department stores, gas stations, appliance stores, food
3 markets, auto repair.
- 4 • Business/Industrial Park: provides for a variety of compatible light manufacturing, wholesaling
5 and office uses supportive of a variety of contemporary business center environments.
- 6 • Public/institutional: variety of government and social services to the community.

7 **3.6.1.2 City and Community Plans**

8 Laguna Niguel is comprised largely of several master planned communities and specific plan areas that
9 were approved by Orange County over the last 20 years. Each of these planned communities prescribes
10 specific land uses, site development standards, and plans for circulation and infrastructure systems. For
11 comprehensive planning purposes, the City of Laguna Niguel has been separated into 14 Community
12 Profile Areas that demonstrate common orientation or similar characteristics. These are all described in
13 the City of Laguna Niguel's General Plan (Laguna Niguel City Council 2011). The Community Profile
14 Area analysis provides the framework for the formulation of City goals, policies and implementation
15 actions at a profile area level. The ROI for land use targets the existing GSA-owned, 92-acre CHFB site.
16 The CHFB site is identified as being in Community Profile Area 1 in the General Plan.

17 Community Profile Area 1 includes a total of 320 acres and is bounded by Pacific Park Drive to the north,
18 Laguna Niguel Regional Park to the south, Alicia Parkway to the west, and La Paz Road to the east.
19 Community Profile Area 1 is one of the largest business districts in the City with respect to area
20 (commercial square footage) and employment, and includes the CHFB.

21 The CHFB site is zoned as public/institutional and professional office. Zoning/land uses for areas
22 immediately surrounding the site, as described in the General Plan, Chapter 2 (Laguna Niguel City
23 Council 2011) include:

- 24 • Areas directly to the north of Avila Road (up to Pacific Park Drive) are zoned community
25 commercial and professional office space (note the project site lies close to the northern boundary
26 of the City of Laguna Niguel and US 73).
- 27 • Areas directly to the east of El Lazo (to La Paz Road) are zoned community commercial,
28 professional office and business/industrial park space. Across La Paz Road areas are zoned
29 neighborhood commercial, open space (steep hill), residential (detached), and institutional
30 (Laguna Niguel Elementary School, located approximately 0.25 mile to the southeast). An area
31 zoned residential (attached) lies immediately to the northeast of the site.
- 32 • Areas directly to the south of El Lazo are zoned community commercial and open space (Laguna
33 Niguel Regional Park, located across Aliso Creek Road, approximately 0.25 mile south), and
34 additional residential (attached) further to the south.
- 35 • Areas to the west (directly across Alicia Parkway) are zoned parks and recreation and include the
36 Aliso Creek/greenbelt (including a hiking and bike trail). The CHFB site is located next to City's
37 western boundary with Aliso Viejo. Aliso Niguel High School lies immediately to the west of the
38 CHFB in Aliso Viejo (less than 1,000 feet).

39 Figure 3.6-1 shows the general land uses of the areas immediately surrounding the site.

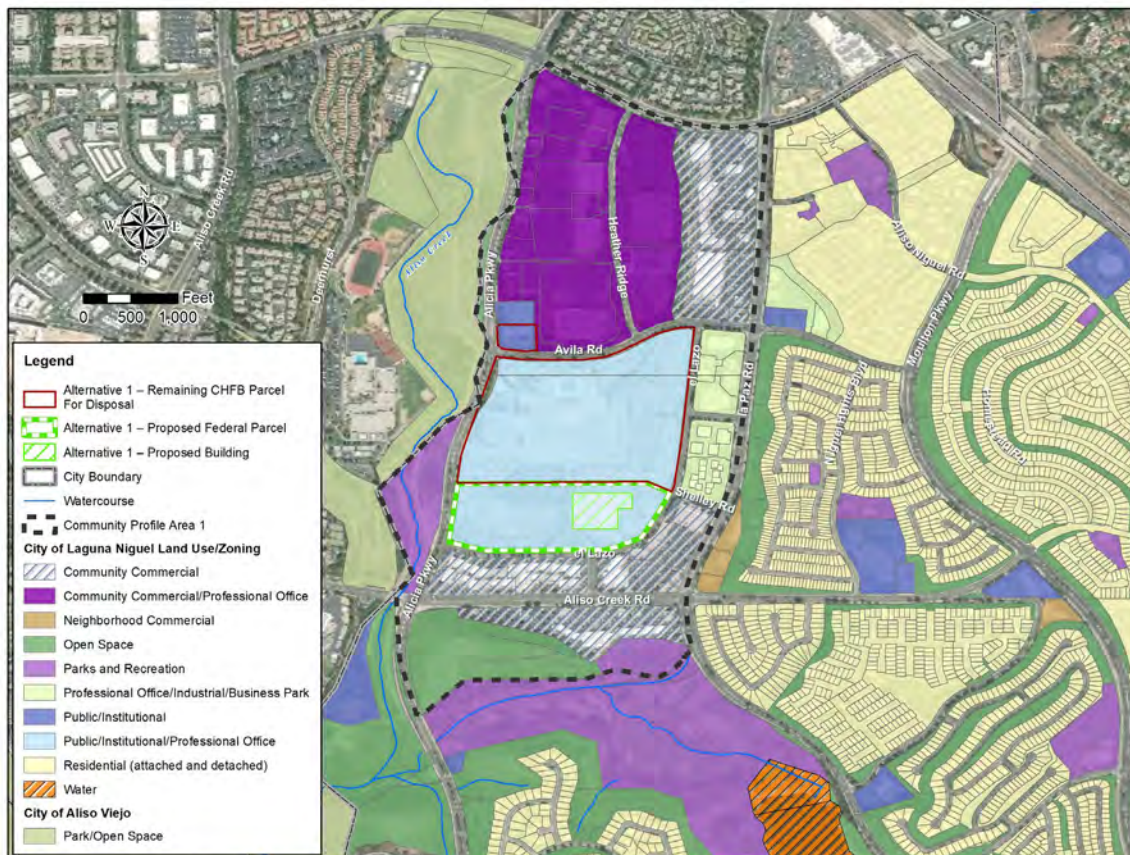


Figure 3.6-1. Land Uses in the Vicinity of the CHF B

Community Profile Area 1, also referred to as Country Village/Narland Business Center, was identified by the City (early in the General Plan’s development) as one of three opportunity areas offering special economic and community development opportunities. In selecting the preferred land use concept of each, the City analyzed market potentials for retail and service commercial; office; business park, industrial, and visitor serving uses in order to calibrate approximate acreage limits considered practicable in light of competing economic development in south Orange County. The original plan included goals that would allow for future expansion of Community Profile Area 1 within existing business centers, commercial and professional office space, and public/institutional uses (which includes the CHF B site). For example, the City’s 2011 General Plan projected an additional 300,000 square feet of professional office use on the CHF B site because it was underutilized (Laguna Niguel City Council 2011). An important land use objective in the City’s General Plan is the development of additional retail space on vacant commercial lands, and more efficient use of lands that have been developed. In particular, a high priority planning objective is to develop the remaining commercial areas with a mixed-use character having an emphasis on pedestrian circulation and amenities such as landscaped plazas and walkways (Laguna Niguel City Council 2011). This could be relevant to any future non-public use of the CHF B site. Any future development would also need to be consistent with the unique character of the community, which is shaped by three key land use elements: the land use patterns, the open space system (linked by walking/hiking and bicycle trails) and the circulation system (vehicular and non-vehicular modes).

3.6.2 Environmental Consequences

To evaluate the impacts to land use, alternatives were reviewed for their potential to cause the following:

- Changes in land use or zoning;

- 1 • Changes in land ownership; or
- 2 • Changes in or reduction of public use of recreational areas or special interest areas.

3 A significant adverse impact to land use would occur if is the action would result in:

- 4 • Inconsistent with current or planned future land uses and community plans or policies for land
- 5 use;
- 6 • A major alteration of the character and use of the land in relation to surrounding uses; or
- 7 • Conflicting with zoning designations or ordinances.

8 Although local governments cannot regulate or permit activities of the federal government on federally
9 owned land, federal agencies must consider local zoning laws for new building construction. The Public
10 Buildings Amendments of 1988 direct that each building constructed or altered by GSA shall be
11 constructed or altered only after consideration of all design requirements of State and local governments

12 **3.6.2.1 No Action Alternative**

13 Under the No Action Alternative, GSA would not construct a new USCIS building or relocate tenants to
14 new offsite locations. These impacts are not anticipated to result in adverse effects on existing land use
15 and zoning.

16 **3.6.2.2 Alternative 1**

17 **Construction**

18 Construction of the new USCIS building could cause temporary disturbances to adjacent land uses and
19 users, such as from increased fugitive dust, traffic, or noise from construction activities (see Sections 3.3,
20 Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases; 3.10, Transportation and Traffic, and 3.12, Noise). Construction for
21 entrance road access and installing or upgrading utilities in roadways leading to the site could temporarily
22 affect access to nearby retail and commercial businesses and residential areas. The intensity of any
23 adverse impact would depend on the extent and duration of the access limitation or extent of detour but
24 would be expected to be temporary and minor.

25 **Operation**

26 Under operations, the new USCIS building would operate as a federal facility, similar to the existing land
27 use of the CHFB. GSA would consider all requirements of zoning laws, design guidelines, and other
28 similar laws of the State and/or local government during the planning and development process
29 (e.g., facility concept, design, site layout) to minimize impacts to adjacent land uses. This includes, but is
30 not limited to, laws relating to landscaping, open space, building setbacks, maximum height of the
31 building, historic preservation, and aesthetic qualities of the building. Since the property is already zoned
32 public institutional, operation of the new facility would be consistent with existing land use and local
33 zoning laws, and there would be no long-term adverse impact on existing land use.

34 The remaining 64.85 acres of land would be disposed and potentially subject to the City of Laguna Niguel
35 rezoning process, depending on who acquires the site. If disposed out federal ownership, the site may
36 need to be rezoned from its current public/institutional use. Impacts are further discussed below under
37 Future Redevelopment.

38 **Future Redevelopment**

39 Under a renovation scenario, indirect impacts could occur from renovation of the existing CHFB on the
40 remaining 64.85-acre parcel to be disposed. There would be negligible adverse impacts to off-site land
41 use during construction activities, depending on the extent of exterior renovation activities, similar to as
42 described for construction of the USCIS building.

1 Under a demolition/new construction scenario, indirect impacts could occur from demolition of the
2 existing CHFB and new construction on the remaining 64.85-acre parcel to be disposed. Impacts from
3 demolition, waste removal, and construction of any future development would be similar to those
4 described for construction of the new USCIS building (increased fugitive dust, traffic, or noise from
5 construction activities) but would be to a greater intensity as development would occur over a larger area
6 and to a greater extent. Such construction activities would be expected to result in short-term minor to
7 moderate effects on surrounding land uses.

8 Future use of the portion of the site that is disposed (i.e., 64.85 acres) would be dictated by the new owner
9 and the City of Laguna Niguel re-zoning process. Because a developer is not known at this time, no
10 detailed plan exists for redevelopment of the property. This includes unknown density and composition of
11 future commercial, residential, or mixed-use development that could occur. This would represent a
12 change in existing land use of the property, which is currently zoned public/institutional, and would likely
13 require re-zoning (unless future use is for another public/institutional use). Therefore, potential adverse
14 indirect impact on land use could occur. However, the site is located in one of the City's business districts
15 and currently surrounded by a variety of commercial, business, and professional office space, and the
16 existing facility is already being used as professional office space. Therefore, any new zoning for a new
17 commercial development would be expected to be consistent with existing zoning in the area and
18 supported by the City of Laguna Niguel, and overall impacts on land use would likely be considered
19 minor.

20 If included in future development, inclusion of any residential use in a mixed-use development could
21 represent a greater change from existing land use. However, the CHFB site is currently in close
22 proximity to residential areas (e.g., approximately 0.2 mile to the east), and one of the City's goals in its
23 General Plan (2011) is to promote mixed uses in any undeveloped commercial areas within this part of
24 the City, as long as the future development is consistent with the unique character of the community
25 (e.g., incorporates pedestrian circulation and amenities such as landscaped plazas and walkways). Any
26 change in zoning to reflect future retail, office, or mixed use would presumably be consistent with the
27 City's existing land use plan for this particular business area (Community Profile Area 1), and if the new
28 development was in character with the surrounding community, the indirect impacts on land use would be
29 minor.

30 Follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses would be required (depending on who acquires the site) for any
31 proposed redevelopment plans presented by a future developer and would further address potential
32 impacts on land use.

33 **3.6.2.3 Alternative 2**

34 Under Alternative 2, there would be no direct impacts on land use during construction or operations. All
35 tenants would be removed from the CHFB and no construction would occur at the site. Off-site leasing of
36 new office space may require office build-outs; however, these build-outs would occur in existing
37 commercial space and not result in any changes to current land use. There would be no change in, or
38 adverse impact on, existing land use.

39 The 92-acre CHFB site would be disposed and potentially subject to the City of Laguna Niguel rezoning
40 process, depending on who acquires the site. If disposed out federal ownership, the site may need to be
41 rezoned from its current public/institutional use. Impacts are further discussed below under Future
42 Redevelopment.

43 **Future Redevelopment**

44 Under a renovation/new construction scenario, adverse indirect impacts could occur from renovation of
45 the existing CHFB, and from new construction on the south or west end of the 92-acre site to be disposed.
46 Under this scenario for Alternative 2, minor impacts to adjacent land uses from land disturbance (e.g.,
47 fugitive dust, noise, traffic) and site access could occur, similar to those described under Alternative 1

1 Future Redevelopment (renovation scenario) and construction of the new USCIS building. Under a
2 demolition/new construction scenario, indirect impacts could occur from demolition of the existing CHFB
3 and new construction on the 92-acre site to be disposed. Under this scenario for Alternative 2, there could
4 be short-term moderate indirect impacts to adjacent land uses during construction (increased fugitive dust,
5 traffic, or noise from construction activities). Impacts would be similar to those described under
6 Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment (demolition/new construction scenario) and construction of the new
7 USCIS building, but would be to a greater intensity as up to 92 acres of the site would be developed.

8 Future development and operation of the existing CHFB site under a renovation/new construction
9 scenario or a demolition/new construction scenario would be similar to that described under Alternative 1
10 Future Redevelopment in that both scenarios would represent a change in land use and require re-zoning;
11 however, Alternative 2 would require rezoning of the entire 92-acre site. Depending on the future use and
12 how much of a change in land use it would represent from the current zoning (e.g., continued use as office
13 space or mixed-use development), the potential impacts on land use could be slightly greater than under
14 Alternative 1 given the larger area affected, and could be minor to moderate. New development plans
15 would likely be consistent with the overall land use goals for this area and thus supported by the City of
16 Laguna Niguel, given the commercial nature of this part of the City and assuming the development
17 incorporates elements that reflect the unique character of the community.

18 **3.6.2.4 Impact Reduction Measures**

19 Measures to reduce construction impacts on land use-related concerns such as fugitive dust, traffic, or
20 noise from construction activities are discussed in Sections 3.3, Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases; 3.10,
21 Transportation and Traffic, and 3.12, Noise, respectively.

22 Although local governments cannot regulate or permit activities of the federal government on federally
23 owned land, GSA would consider local zoning laws for construction and operation of the new USCIS
24 building and all design requirements of state and local governments to the extent practicable (GSA
25 2018b). This would include both the incorporation of exterior design elements to reflect the unique
26 character of the area and the emphasis on pedestrian circulation and amenities such as landscaped plazas
27 and walkways, to the extent practicable and consistent with GSA design standards.

28

29

3.7 VISUAL RESOURCES AND AESTHETICS

Visual resources consist of the natural and man-made landscape features that give a particular environment its visual characteristics. The CHFB site is an existing developed property owned by GSA and surrounded by developed residential and commercial areas. GSA does not have specific visual quality objectives in its real estate program; however, federal agencies, including GSA, consider local requirements for aesthetic qualities of new building construction. The Public Buildings Amendments of 1988, 40 U.S.C. 3312, direct that each building constructed or altered by GSA shall be constructed or altered only after consideration of all design requirements (except procedural requirements) of state or local governments (GSA 2018b).

GSA has a series of policy guides that address a variety of planning issues for federal facilities, including site security, site selection, project planning, and Facility Design standards. This includes GSA's mandatory facilities standard, Public Building Service P100 Facility Standards (P100 Standards), which applies to the design and construction of new federal facilities (as well as major repairs and alterations of existing buildings) (GSA 2018b); and the Whole Building Design Guide (GSA 2020b). In addition, GSA has programs in place related to community planning to help create federal facilities that are consistent with good neighbor principles and that support positive community development and neighborhood urban design goals. Key principles of GSA's Urban Development/Good Neighbor Program (GSA 2019b) include:

- Locate new owned and leased federal facilities in places that support public plans;
- Design new facilities to create outstanding federal workplaces and support neighborhood urban design goals;
- Renovate existing federal properties to improve their public spaces, create positive first impressions, and encourage stakeholders to improve neighborhood conditions;
- Manage federal properties to encourage public use and openness; and
- Participate in neighborhood physical and management improvement efforts around federal properties.

3.7.1 Affected Environment

The ROI for visual resources and aesthetics focuses on the 92-acre CHFB site and adjacent properties. The existing 92-acre CHFB site sits in the northwestern corner of Laguna Niguel, California between Alicia Parkway and El Lazo at the Avila Road cross street. The CHFB was originally constructed (1968-1971) for North American Aviation/Rockwell International, a company whose work included the manufacturing arena for defense and space industries. The building had 6,200 parking spaces radiating diagonally along the building axes to support the thousands of workers originally expected to work at the facility. The company never occupied the building because its requirements changed, and they exchanged the building with GSA in 1974.

The CHFB has a unique stepped pyramidal form that has a similar appearance to ancient ziggurats (i.e., ancient Mesopotamian temples). It is one of Laguna Niguel's earliest visual landmarks and one of Orange County's largest and most easily recognizable buildings. The building was designed by modern master architect William L. Pereira and includes seven tiers, with a large portion of the more than one million square foot building below-grade. The building is constructed of angled, painted pre-cast concrete panels with a textured finish that displays curvilinear forms. The top tier of the building has a large flat roof with attached protruding vertical elements that provide additional structure to the building. The east entrance is trapezoidal in form, which references the overall shape of the building. The building is surrounded by a "moat" of smooth rocks on three sides which helps to create the appearance of a modern-day fortress (GSA 2017a). GSA is currently in the process of nominating the building to be listed in the National

1 Register of Historic Places, the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation
2 (see Section 3.2, Cultural Resources). Figure 3.7-1 helps illustrate the extent to which the CHFB is visible
3 within the surrounding communities and general area. [Photos to be added pending site visit for cultural
4 resources]

5 Other structures at the site include a maintenance warehouse; a 500,000-gallon water tank that services
6 the fire protection system; an energy plant; and security buildings. A heliport is located onsite and
7 additional landscaped areas are located throughout the site. The remaining southern portion of the
8 property includes large unused parking areas that have deteriorated due to age and wear and are in poor
9 condition (see Chapter 2, Figure 2-2).

10 The surrounding area includes commercial shopping, retail centers, and office space; and the City of
11 Aliso Viejo lies directly to the west. Figure 1-2 in Chapter 1 shows an aerial view of the CHFB site and
12 surrounding area. The closest residential areas extend up in the hills to the east and southeast of the site.
13 Open spaces and recreational parks are located to the west and south; however, no designated scenic view
14 corridors, vistas, viewing areas or other scenic resources have been identified within the vicinity of the
15 project area (see also related discussion in Section 3.6, Land Use).

16 **3.7.2 Environmental Consequences**

17 To evaluate the impacts on visual resources, alternatives were reviewed for their potential to cause a
18 change in the following:

- 19 • Existing scenic view;
- 20 • Existing character of the landscape;
- 21 • Amount of open space in an undeveloped area; or
- 22 • Visual and aesthetic experience and expectation of viewers in or near the project area.

23 A significant adverse impact to visual resources would occur if the action would result in:

- 24 • Alteration, obstruction or removal of what most observers would consider a scenic view;
- 25 • Detraction from a significant feature of the landscape;
- 26 • Elimination of a large area of undeveloped open space;
- 27 • Degradation of the visual appeal of an area; or
- 28 • Introduction of a visual element that is incompatible, out of scale or in great contrast with the
29 surrounding area.

30 It should also be noted that the subjective importance or intensity of a visual impact would depend on the
31 extent of obstruction and compatibility (or incompatibility) of introduced features and the attitudes,
32 expectations, and perspectives of individual observers affected.

33 **3.7.2.1 No Action Alternative**

34 Under the No Action Alternative, GSA would not construct a new USCIS building or relocate tenants to
35 new offsite locations. Therefore, no construction-related impacts to visual quality or the aesthetics of the
36 area would occur. Ongoing maintenance to the CHFB would occur, however, it would not affect any
37 visual resources or aesthetics of the area.

1 **3.7.2.2 Alternative 1**

2 **Construction**

3 Short-term, minor adverse impacts would occur during construction under Alternative 1. Impacts would
4 be localized and affect the project area and immediate surroundings as a result of the unappealing
5 aesthetic nature of construction activities. In the short term, the visual quality and character of the area
6 near the project site would be affected by the presence of construction materials, heavy equipment and
7 construction vehicles, and unfinished stages of site preparation and building construction. Outdoor
8 construction activities could extend to 8:00 p.m., consistent with the City of Laguna Niguel's Noise
9 Ordinance (see Section 3.12, Noise). If construction activities occur during nighttime hours, there could
10 be minor, short-term impacts from light pollution on neighboring properties. There are no residential
11 areas immediately adjacent to the property but the use of outdoor lighting during nighttime construction
12 activities could result in minor impacts to the closest residences within the viewshed of the parcel. The
13 closest residences are located approximately 1,056 feet away. Lighting would be utilized to the extent
14 practicable that would direct light downwards (e.g., down shielding) and minimize light pollution or
15 nighttime glare to nearby residences. Impacts would decrease to negligible as construction progresses to
16 later phases, particularly as landscaping is completed and work shifts to the interiors of completed
17 structures.

18 **Operations**

19 Long-term, minor to moderate impacts would occur during operations under Alternative 1. The
20 conversion of the 27.15-acre parcel to include a new four-story USCIS building would create a noticeable
21 contrast to the existing parking area found on the property and alter the visual experience of those
22 observing the site. However, the area to be disturbed is a previously developed site owned by GSA and
23 the immediate area is heavily developed. In addition, there are no designated scenic view corridors, vistas,
24 viewing areas or other scenic resources within the project vicinity. Within the existing parcel, an
25 underutilized and deteriorated parking area would be renovated to provide new parking for the facility
26 and would include professional landscaping to improve the parcel's overall appearance. The extent of the
27 impact would depend on the dominance and noticeability of the building in the landscape and the
28 observers' attitudes and perspectives regarding the presence and purpose of the new building. Visual
29 impacts from the proposed new facility are expected to be minor with respect to the overall visual
30 character, given the heavy development in the area and, in some cases, construction of the new facility
31 could create greater cohesion or unity in the already developed landscape. See Figure 2-1 in Chapter 2 for
32 a proposed rendering of the proposed new USCIS building.

33 The new USCIS building would be lower in height than the existing CHFB (i.e., four levels compared to
34 seven tiers) and would not be as visible for as a great a distance as the existing CHFB. However, the new
35 facility may obscure portions of the existing CHFB and affect its role in the overall landscape, which
36 some observers could perceive as an adverse effect if they preferred the open, unobstructed view of the
37 existing CHFB and its unique architecture (see also Section 3.2 for additional discussion on the CHFB
38 and its role in the surrounding landscape).

39 GSA would consider all requirements of zoning laws, design guidelines, and other similar laws of the
40 State and/or local government during the planning and development process for the new building. This
41 includes, but is not limited to: laws relating to landscaping, open space, building setbacks, maximum
42 height of the building, historic preservation, and aesthetic qualities of the building. In addition, the new
43 building would integrate GSA's programs of design/architecture and construction excellence in order to
44 optimize building performance and aesthetics. Specifically, construction would follow GSA's P100
45 Standard which establishes design criteria and standards for new government buildings. GSA would seek
46 LEED® Platinum certification, which has aesthetic components (specifically, "it must provide visual
47 testimony to the dignity, enterprise, vigor and stability of the American Government" [GSA 2019c]).

1 **Future Redevelopment**

2 Under a renovation scenario, no indirect impacts are likely to occur from renovation of the existing CHFB
3 on the remaining 64.85-acre parcel to be disposed. There would be no adverse visual effects associated
4 with construction activities since building renovation activities would include mostly interior work, and
5 any improvements made to the existing structure or existing landscaping would be considered a beneficial
6 impact to the existing visual quality and character of the site.

7 There would be no change from existing conditions under operations of a renovation scenario. Minor
8 improvements may be made to the building, but these would not likely affect any visual resources or
9 aesthetics of the area.

10 Under a demolition/new construction scenario, minor to moderate indirect impacts could occur from
11 demolition of the existing CHFB and new construction on the remaining 64.85-acre parcel to be disposed.
12 Demolition of the existing CHFB and associated waste removal would be a short-term adverse impact on
13 existing aesthetics in the immediate project area. In the longer term, demolition of the CHFB would
14 represent a major change and a permanent alteration of the existing landscape of the project area; the
15 change may be considered a potentially significant beneficial or adverse effect, depending on viewers'
16 perceptions of the existing CHFB. Some viewers may prefer the aesthetics, widespread visibility and
17 constant presence of the CHFB while others may prefer its demolition and replacement with the more
18 limited visibility of new mixed-use space.

19 Short-term and long-term minor adverse indirect impacts associated with construction and operation of
20 new development in a demolition/new construction scenario would be similar to as described for
21 construction and operation of the new USCIS building, but to a larger extent depending on the size of
22 development. In addition, federal building guidelines relating to design and construction would not
23 necessarily apply if the new development is privately owned. The construction period of any new mixed-
24 use space also may extend over a longer period of time and include some period of delay before
25 construction were to begin, in order to accommodate site acquisition and the permitting and design
26 process.

27 Follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses would be required (depending on who acquires the site) for any
28 proposed redevelopment plans presented by a future developer and would further address potential
29 impacts on aesthetics and visual resources.

30 **3.7.2.3 Alternative 2**

31 Under Alternative 2, no impacts to visual resources would occur during construction or operations. All
32 tenants would be removed from the CHFB and no construction would occur at the site. Off-site leasing of
33 may require office build-outs; however, it is assumed any build-outs would occur in the building interior
34 and would not result in any construction disturbances at the respective lease locations.

35 **Future Redevelopment**

36 Under a renovation/new construction scenario, minor to moderate indirect impacts could occur from
37 renovation of the existing CHFB, and from new construction on the south or west end of the 92-acre site
38 to be disposed. Under this scenario for Alternative 2, impacts from renovation may be minor and
39 potentially beneficial to some observers, as described under Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment
40 (renovation scenario). New construction could result in minor to moderate impacts during construction,
41 similar to as described for Alternative 1 for construction of the USCIS building.

42 Operations of a renovation/new construction scenario could be similar to as described for Alternative 1
43 (renovation scenario). Renovation would have long-term beneficial impacts as work would be done to
44 maintain and improve the existing structure. However, new construction could have minor to moderate
45 long-term adverse effects due to the introduction of a new feature into the surrounding viewshed, similar
46 to as described for construction of a new USCIS building.

1 Under a demolition/new construction scenario, minor to moderate indirect impacts could occur during the
2 construction phase from demolition of the existing CHFEB and new construction on the 92-acre site to be
3 disposed, similar as to described for the Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment (demolition/new
4 construction scenario). Impacts could be to a greater intensity as construction would occur on a larger
5 scale throughout the entire 92-acre site.

6 Operations of a demolition/new construction could be similar to as described for Alternative 1 Future
7 Redevelopment (demolition/new construction scenario), but to a greater intensity. There could be long-
8 term, significant beneficial or adverse impacts (subjective to the perspective of the observer) from
9 removal of the CHFEB, which would result in a permanent alteration of the existing landscape. In
10 addition, new structures would likely be built on the 92-acre site, which, depending on final design, could
11 result in minor to significant impacts on the long term viewshed, subjective to the perspective of the
12 observer.

13 Similar to Alternative 1, follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses would further address design considerations
14 for any future redevelopment and associated potential impacts on aesthetics and visual resources.

15 **3.7.2.4 Impact Reduction Measures**

16 GSA would implement the following measures to minimize impacts to visual resources:

- 17 • Consult with local officials, consider local requirements for new building construction, and
18 comply with state and local building codes to the maximum extent practicable.
- 19 • Integrate its programs of design/architecture and construction excellence into the new facility in
20 order to optimize building performance and aesthetics, including adherence to P100 Standard
21 which establishes design criteria and standards for new government buildings.
- 22 • Design exterior lighting to meet physical security requirements but controlled to minimize light
23 trespass (e.g., direct light downward and minimize glare). Fixtures for the security fence would be
24 a similar style. Exterior lighting would be consistent with the local ordinance code for outdoor
25 lighting (Supplemental nonresidential regulations 9-1-45-14).
- 26 • Incorporate landscaping and screening (trees and vegetation) into the exterior design to provide
27 aesthetic benefits to the surrounding community, consistent with GSA's Urban
28 Development/Good Neighbor Program.

29
30

3.8 WATER RESOURCES

Water resources may be grouped into five different areas in order to characterize the spectrum of potential impacts to the resource; these areas include water quality, groundwater, surface water, floodplains, and wetlands. In the following sections, the affected environment that is subject to potential impacts is described for these five different areas.

3.8.1 Affected Environment

3.8.1.1 Water Quality

The State Water Resources Control Board divides California into nine regions, each defining the jurisdiction for regional administration of the State's water quality control program. The project area is located within the San Juan Hydrologic Unit of the San Diego Region and drains south-southwest into the Pacific Ocean.

Water quality is regulated within the context of meeting standards established for compliance with the Clean Water Act (CWA). For instance, Sections 303(d) and 303(b) require states to identify water segments that fail to meet water quality standards. The Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and the State Water Quality Control Board update that list of waterways every 2 years. CWA Section 402 establishes the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System program. The California permit program, implemented by the State Water Resources Control Board, regulates discharges of pollutants into surface waters, including discharges during ground-disturbing activities that are transported by stormwater runoff. Under CWA Section 404, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulates and permits the discharge of fill material into Waters of the United States.

3.8.1.2 Groundwater

Several federal statutes have been enacted that are protective of groundwater quality, including:

- Safe Drinking Water Act
- Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act
- Toxic Substances Control Act
- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
- Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act "Superfund Act"

The state of California has identified groundwater basins in accordance with Bulletin 118, and regulates groundwater under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. No groundwater basins as identified by the State directly underlie the project area (DWR 2019). However, according a Groundwater Sampling Results and Closure Request (TTMS, Inc. 1994), groundwater was encountered on the south end of the building during UST removal activities at the CHFB site at depths ranging from approximately 11.9 to 16.1 feet below ground surface. No onsite information regarding groundwater flow direction was available for the subject property; however, according to a Report of Results for the Monitoring Well Installation, Sampling and Analysis (TPE Environmental 1990) at Laguna Niguel Regional Park Maintenance Yard (located directly south of the CHFB), groundwater in the vicinity of the site flows in a southwest direction.

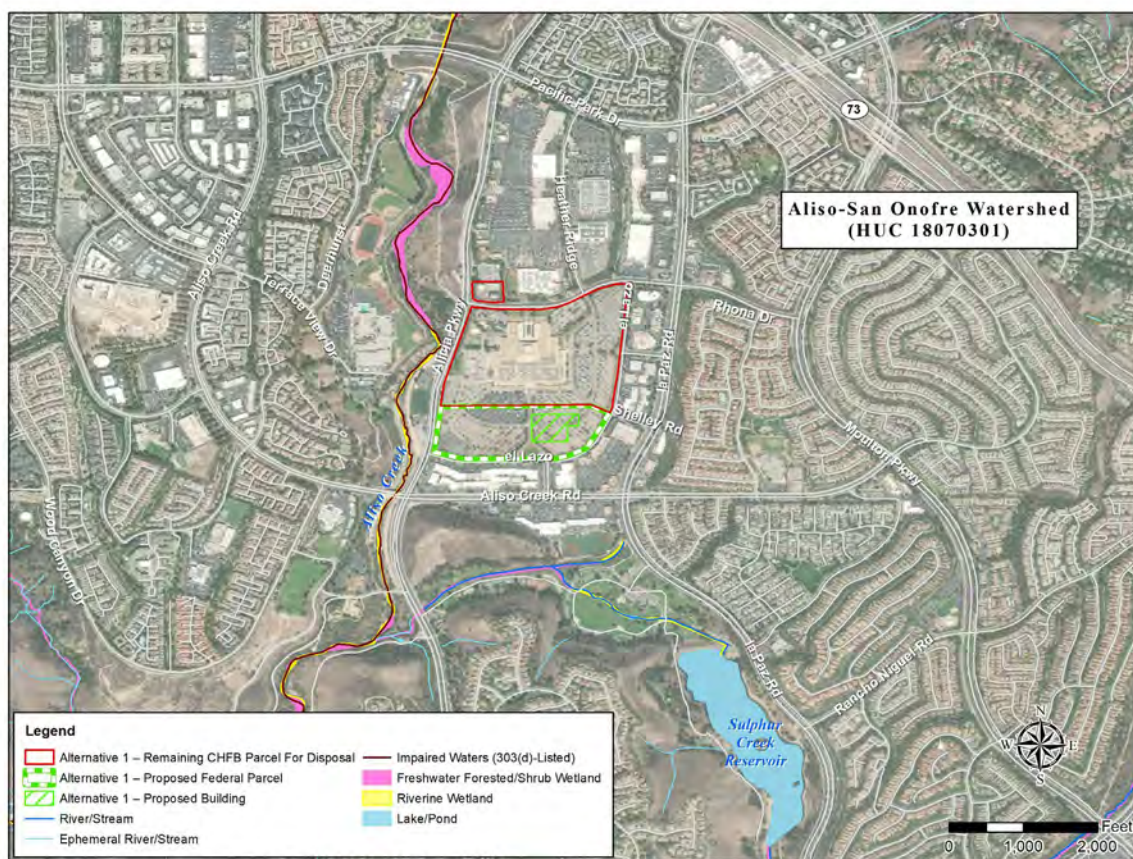
The December 2019 Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) for the project identified historical presence of leaking underground storage tanks (USTs) and potential unreported releases of perchloroethylene (PCE) from nearby dry-cleaning facilities as potential sources for groundwater contamination in the area (GSA 2019).

1 Drinking water for the project area is imported from the Colorado River by the Metropolitan Water
 2 District of Southern California. Following treatment, the water is then supplied to the Moulton Niguel
 3 Water District for distribution. The 2018 Consumer Confidence Report reports no violations; all drinking
 4 water provided by the Moulton Niguel Water District met or exceeded state and federal regulatory
 5 standards in 2018 (Moulton Niguel Water District 2019).

6 **3.8.1.3 Surface Water**

7 Neither natural nor artificial perennial surface water flow is present on the site. However, Aliso Creek, is
 8 located to the west of the CHFB site across Alicia Parkway as shown in Figure 3.8-1. Aliso Creek is a
 9 perennial waterway that receives substantial volumes of surface runoff, including from the CHFB site;
 10 approximately 75 percent of the watershed is urbanized. The route of this surface water was artificially
 11 realigned to accommodate construction of the CHFB in 1969 (USACE 2017).

12 Aliso Creek was listed as impaired, per section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, in the 2014-2016
 13 California Integrated Report. Pollutants identified in the integrated report for Aliso Creek include
 14 nutrients, metals, toxicity, pesticides, and miscellaneous (CRWQCB 2017).



15 **Figure 3.8-1. Water Resources in the Vicinity of the CHFB**

16 **3.8.1.4 Floodplains**

17 Federal activities within floodplains must comply with the Executive Order (EO) 11988 *Floodplain*
 18 *Management*. Per EO 11988, federal agencies are required to avoid adverse effects associated with the
 19 occupancy and modification of floodplains to the extent possible, thereby minimizing flood risk and risks
 20 to human safety. An eight-step decision-making process for floodplain management has been outlined by
 21 44 CFR 9.6 and is in GSA’s Floodplain Management Desk Guide.
 22

1 According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Maps depicting the
 2 project area, much of the southern and eastern portions of the site are located within the 500-year flood
 3 zone (Zone X [shaded]) (FEMA 2009). Figure 3.8-2 depicts the location of the 500-year flood zone in
 4 relation to the existing CHFB site. Zone X (shaded) is defined as areas of 0.2 percent annual chance flood
 5 hazard or areas of 1 percent annual chance flood with average depth less than one foot or with drainage
 6 areas of less than one square mile. As no portions of the site are located within designated 100-year
 7 floodplains, the requirements of EO 11988 do not apply.



8
9 **Figure 3.8-2. Floodplains in the Vicinity of the CHFB**

10 **3.8.1.5 Wetlands**

11 EO 11990 requires that federal agencies take measures to not only minimize the destruction, loss, or
 12 degradation of wetlands, but also to enhance wetland habitats. The project site is located on disturbed
 13 lands where no wetland areas are present onsite. However, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service
 14 (USFWS) Online Wetlands Mapper and National Wetlands Inventory identifies a riverine wetland and a
 15 palustrine freshwater forested/shrub wetland associated with Aliso Creek, located to the west of the
 16 project site across Alicia Parkway (USFWS 2020).

17 **3.8.2 Environmental Consequences**

18 For the purposes of this environmental consequences analysis, alternatives would result in adverse effects
 19 to water resources if activities were to cause any of the following:

- 20 • Alteration of stormwater discharges or infiltration rates, which could adversely affect drainage
- 21 patterns, flooding, erosion and sedimentation

- 1 • Alteration of groundwater recharge rates, which could adversely affect availability of
2 groundwater
- 3 • Violation of any federal, state or regional water quality standards or discharge limitations
- 4 • Modification of surface waters such that water quality no longer meets water quality criteria or
5 standards established in accordance with the Clean Water Act, state regulations or permits
6 (including downgrades of surface water use classification or listing on the Nationwide Rivers
7 Inventory)
- 8 • Changes to the availability of surface water or groundwater resources for current or future uses
- 9 • Change in stream channel morphology – slope and stability
- 10 • Loss of wetlands from the placement of dredge or fill material
- 11 • Alteration or conversion of wetland function caused by the removal of vegetation or
12 contamination from a spill
- 13 • Increased flooding (flooding risk to nearby properties) through altered land uses
14 (e.g., development in floodplain areas) that change current flooding levels or patterns

15 This section considers the potential effects listed above when assessing the impacts that could result from
16 implementation of any of the considered alternatives. Section 3.8.2.4 presents a list of measures that
17 would reduce or avoid such impacts.

18 **3.8.2.1 No Action Alternative**

19 Under the No Action Alternative, GSA would not construct a new USCIS building or relocate tenants to
20 new offsite locations. Ongoing maintenance to the CHFB would occur, which would generate negligible
21 amounts of land disturbance and associated sedimentation to adjacent surface waters. No impacts to
22 groundwater or floodplains would occur.

23 **3.8.2.2 Alternative 1**

24 **Construction**

25 During construction, there would be short-term impacts from increased potential for sedimentation and
26 contamination of local waterways or wetlands from runoff from the construction site, as well as increased
27 potential for spills of petroleum products or other hazardous materials stored onsite during construction.
28 Sediments potentially contaminated by such spills and pesticides remaining in the soil from the historic
29 use of the property for agriculture could travel offsite and adversely affect water quality in offsite surface
30 waters or wetlands. Because the project would disturb more than 1 acre of soil, selection of Alternative 1
31 would include adhering to the terms of California’s Stormwater Construction General Permit and would
32 consider measures contained within the Orange County Construction Runoff Guidance Manual (Orange
33 County 2012). Conditions of the permit require development of appropriate documentation (i.e., Notice of
34 Intent, Risk Assessment, site map, Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan [SWPPP], signed certification
35 statement, post-construction documentation, and payment of fees). The findings of the Risk Assessment
36 would determine the hazards associated with the site conditions and establish specific compliance
37 conditions of the permit. A SWPPP is required to be developed prior to construction to address control of
38 pollutant discharges using best management practices (BMPs) selected for the specific project and to
39 address stormwater monitoring. These BMPs include, but are not limited to, the measures summarized in
40 Section 3.8.2.4.

41 New development would also be required to comply with the terms of the City of Laguna Niguel new
42 development stormwater requirements which requires all development/redevelopment projects, where
43 applicable and feasible, to maximize infiltration, provide retention, slow runoff, and reduce pollutants at

1 the sources. The city requires all priority projects (new development that create 10,000 square feet or
2 more of impervious surface or redevelopment projects that add or replace at least 5,000 square feet or
3 more of impervious surface on an already developed site) develop a Water Quality Management Plan
4 (WQMP) and Hydromodification Management Plan (HMP). The project's WQMP is a plan for
5 minimizing the adverse effects of urbanization on site hydrology, runoff flow rates, and pollutant loads.
6 The HMP provides measures that address the changes in the magnitude and frequency of stream flows
7 and associated sediment load due to urbanization or other changes in the watershed land use and
8 hydrology. Both these plans serve to reduce the resulting impacts on receiving channels, such as erosion,
9 sedimentation and potential degradation of in-stream habitat (City of Laguna Niguel 2020a). General
10 requirements for water quality management for construction projects are summarized in Section 3.8.2.4.

11 Following construction, the site must meet the conditions for Notice of Termination by certifying the site
12 has been stabilized and there is no potential for construction-related stormwater discharges. Post-
13 construction BMPs and long-term maintenance plans must also be in place in order to apply for Notice of
14 Termination. With adherence to these conditions, overall impacts to surface waters and wetlands from
15 potential spills, erosion, and sedimentation during construction would remain minor.

16 Minor adverse impacts could also arise due to construction within a designated 500-year floodplain. The
17 short- and long-term additions of new structures or impervious surfaces in such areas could reduce the
18 floodplain's capacity to store water, thus increasing the spread or intensity of a flood event. Flooding
19 events, however, in the 500-year floodplain are low probability; 0.2 percent annual chance flood hazard or
20 areas of 1 percent annual chance flood with average depth less than one foot or with drainage areas of less
21 than one square mile.

22 Excavation and construction activities could result in minor adverse effects to groundwater. While no
23 known groundwater basins underlie the CHFB site, water has been found during previous excavation
24 activities, and future construction could affect groundwater flow or degrade existing groundwater quality.
25 GSA would implement appropriate measures to prevent any groundwater contamination, such as that
26 arising from hazardous materials used during construction or accidental releases of petroleum from
27 construction equipment (see Section 3.11, Hazardous Waste and Materials). Groundwater is not used as a
28 source of potable water in the region nor is it anticipated to support construction. Should dewatering be
29 required during construction, GSA would obtain appropriate permits as needed for groundwater
30 dewatering discharge (i.e., Order Number R9-2008-0002 / CAG919002).

31 **Operations**

32 Implementation of Alternative 1 would result in minor adverse impacts due to long-term increases in
33 stormwater runoff and long-term decreases in groundwater recharge. Under Alternative 1, there would be
34 an overall increase in impervious surfaces across the existing CHFB site, as gravel areas are paved to
35 accommodate new construction. This could increase the volume of stormwater runoff from the site
36 entering Aliso Creek. Stormwater management measures are subject to final design but may include use
37 of bioswales and permeable pavement to reduce stormwater runoff. Water capture technologies and green
38 roofs may also be considered. See Section 3.8.2.4 for a discussion of measures that could further reduce
39 or avoid potential impacts.

40 No direct impacts to floodplains would be anticipated during operations of Alternative 1, including both
41 operations of the new USCIS building as well as off-site leasing of new office space in locations
42 throughout the region.

43 **Future Redevelopment**

44 Under a renovation scenario, adverse indirect impacts could occur from renovation of the existing CHFB
45 on the remaining 64.85-acre parcel to be disposed. No indirect impacts to groundwater or floodplains are
46 expected under construction or operations, but there could be minor indirect impacts to offsite surface
47 waters and wetlands during construction. Under this scenario for Alternative 1, there could be minor

1 amounts of land disturbance near the CHFB while improvements are made to the structure. Such
2 improvements would require soil disturbance and erosion, leading to increased sedimentation and
3 associated minor adverse effects to offsite surface waters and wetlands. However, potential impacts
4 would be mitigated through adherence to the terms outlined in the Construction General Permit and
5 contained within the Orange County Construction Runoff Guidance Manual.

6 No indirect impacts to water resources would be expected during operations of a renovation scenario.
7 Stormwater discharge from the site could be comparable to existing conditions, and may be further
8 avoided through WQMP and HMP stormwater requirements by the City of Laguna Niguel if renovations
9 were to include 5,000 square feet or more of impervious surface; these plans would serve to reduce the
10 resulting impacts on receiving channels, such as erosion, sedimentation and potential degradation of in-
11 stream habitat during operations.

12 Under a demolition/new construction scenario, adverse indirect impacts could occur from demolition of
13 the existing CHFB and new construction on the remaining 64.85-acre parcel to be disposed. Under this
14 scenario, there could be minor indirect impacts to surface water, groundwater, floodplains, and wetlands.
15 Impacts would be similar to those described for construction of the new USCIS building, but would be a
16 greater intensity as development would occur over a larger area and to a greater extent. Excavation would
17 be required, which could affect groundwater quality and flow, depending on overall excavation depth.
18 Impacts would also include additional ground disturbance and an increase in impervious surface, leading
19 to increased sedimentation and stormwater runoff from the site. New construction would be subject to the
20 terms of the California Stormwater Construction General Permit and the City of Laguna Niguel
21 construction site stormwater requirements, which would limit impacts during construction. Depending on
22 placement of the building, there could be minor adverse impacts due to construction within a designated
23 500-year floodplain, similar to as described for the USCIS building.

24 Long-term, minor, adverse indirect impacts could be associated with new development, similar to those
25 described for operations of the new USCIS building, but to a larger extent depending on the size of
26 development. New development would also likely be required to comply with the terms of the WQMP
27 and HMP, which would limit impacts over the long term.

28 Follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses would be required (depending on who acquires the site) for any
29 proposed redevelopment plans presented by a future developer and would further address excavation, soil
30 erosion prevention, and stormwater management once final development plans are completed.

31 **3.8.2.3 Alternative 2**

32 Under Alternative 2, there would be no direct impacts to water resources during construction or
33 operations. All tenants would be removed from the CHFB, and no construction would occur at the site.
34 Off-site leasing of new office space may require office build-outs; however, these build-outs would not
35 require ground disturbance, and no impacts to water resources would occur.

36 **Future Redevelopment**

37 Under a renovation/new construction scenario, indirect impacts would occur from renovation of the
38 existing CHFB and new construction on the south or west end of the 92-acre site to be disposed. Under
39 this scenario for Alternative 2, there could be minor indirect impacts to surface water and wetlands during
40 construction. Minor impacts from land disturbance in the area around the CHFB could occur as the
41 building is renovated, similar to those described under Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment (renovation
42 scenario). In addition, it is assumed there would be some new construction on the south or west end of the
43 site, resulting in minor impacts, similar to those described for construction of the new USCIS building
44 under Alternative 1.

45 Under a demolition/new construction scenario, indirect impacts would occur from demolition of the
46 existing CHFB and new construction on the 92-acre site to be disposed. Under this scenario for

1 Alternative 2, there could be a minor indirect impact to floodplains and minor to moderate indirect
2 impacts to surface water and wetlands during construction. Impacts would be similar to those described
3 under Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment (demolition/new construction scenario) but would be to a
4 greater intensity as up to 92 acres of the site would be affected. Similar to other scenarios, new
5 construction would be subject to the terms of the California Stormwater Construction General Permit and
6 the City of Laguna Niguel construction site stormwater requirements, which would limit the extent of
7 indirect effects during construction.

8 Operations of a renovation/new construction scenario and a demolition/new construction scenario could
9 result in impacts similar to those described under Alternative 1 for construction of a USCIS building, but
10 to a greater intensity due to larger extent of development. There would be no direct impacts to
11 groundwater and floodplains, but there could be long-term, minor, indirect impacts on surface water and
12 wetlands from the increase in impervious surfaces onsite. New development would be required to comply
13 with WQMP and HMP stormwater requirements imposed by the City of Laguna Niguel which would
14 serve to reduce the resulting impacts on receiving channels, such as erosion, sedimentation and potential
15 degradation of in-stream habitat.

16 Similar to Alternative 1, follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses would further address soil erosion
17 prevention and stormwater management once final development plans are completed.

18 **3.8.2.4 Impact Reduction Measures**

19 Orange County requires construction to comply with two interrelated sets of municipal directives with
20 respect to water quality management: (1) compliance with applicable discharge prohibition requirements
21 set forth in the Water Quality Ordinance to prevent unauthorized non-stormwater discharges, and (2)
22 implementation of BMPs to the maximum extent practicable, in accordance with the County Drainage
23 Area Management Plan and local agency requirements, to reduce contaminants in stormwater discharges.
24 The county requires all construction projects regardless of size, at a minimum, to implement an effective
25 combination of erosion and sediment controls and waste and materials management BMPs. This would
26 apply to any ground-disturbing construction project at the site and includes (City of Laguna Niguel
27 2020b):

- 28 1) Sediments from areas disturbed by construction shall be retained on site using an effective
29 combination of erosion and sediment controls to the maximum extent practicable and stockpiles
30 of soil shall be properly contained to minimize sediment transport from the site to streets,
31 drainage facilities or adjacent properties via runoff, vehicle tracking, or wind.
- 32 2) Construction-related materials, wastes, spills or residues shall be retained on site to minimize
33 transport from the site to streets, drainage facilities, or adjoining property by wind or runoff.

34 Construction projects involving 1 acre or greater of soil disturbance must comply with the State's
35 Construction General Permit (City of Laguna Niguel 2020b). This includes:

- 36 1) Applying for and complying with a local grading or building permit and complying with local
37 ordinances
- 38 2) Submission of a Notice of Intent for Construction General Permit Coverage to the State Water
39 Resources Control Board
- 40 3) Preparation and implementation of a SWPPP
- 41 4) Implementation of BMPs as required by the City and the Construction General Permit and
42 preparation and submission of an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan for approval
- 43 5) Following construction completion, submit a Construction General Permit Notice of Termination

1 The City of Laguna Niguel also requires Erosion and Sediment Control Plans showing all BMPs for
2 construction, even when a project disturbs less than 1 acre of soil and is not covered by the Construction
3 General Permit (City of Laguna Niguel 2020b).

4 The Orange County Stormwater Program’s Construction Runoff Guidance Manual summarizes BMPs
5 pertaining to erosion control, sediment control, wind erosion control, tracking control, non-stormwater
6 management, waste management and materials pollution control, and inspection and maintenance.
7 Typical BMPs include:

- 8 1) Development and implementation of a site-specific run-off management plan.
- 9 2) Minimization of areas that are cleared and graded to only the portion of the site that is necessary
10 for construction.
- 11 3) Minimization of exposure time of disturbed soil areas.
- 12 4) Minimization of grading during the wet season and correlation of grading with seasonal dry
13 weather periods to the extent feasible.
- 14 5) Limitation of grading to a maximum disturbed area as determined by the County/City before
15 either temporary or permanent erosion controls are implemented to prevent stormwater pollution.
16 The county/city has the option of temporarily increasing the size of disturbed soil areas by a set
17 amount beyond the maximum, if the individual site is in compliance with applicable stormwater
18 regulations and the site has adequate control practices implemented to prevent stormwater
19 pollution.
- 20 6) Temporary stabilization and reseeded of disturbed soil areas as rapidly as feasible.
- 21 7) Non-stormwater management measures to prevent illicit discharges and control stormwater
22 pollution sources.
- 23 8) Erosion control BMPs such as physical/vegetative stabilization and concentrated flow erosion
24 control – reducing concentrated flow velocity or protecting concentrated flow paths to prevent
25 erosion.
- 26 9) Wind erosion control BMPs for dust control and prevention of erosion by wind.
- 27 10) Sediment control BMPs at all operational storm drain inlets, and at all non-active slopes.
- 28 11) Waste management and materials pollution control BMPs to prevent the contamination of
29 stormwater by construction wastes and materials.
- 30 12) Evaluation and maintenance of all BMPs, until removed.
- 31 13) Retention, reduction, and proper management of all stormwater pollution discharges on site to the
32 Maximum Extent Practicable standard.

33 Regarding an operational footprint increase in impervious surface, the City of Laguna Niguel requires
34 preparation of a WQMP and a HMP for “priority development projects”, defined as new development that
35 creates 10,000 square feet or more of impervious surface or redevelopment projects that add or replaces at
36 least 5,000 square feet or more of impervious surface on an already developed site. The WQMP is a site-
37 specific and project-specific plan the identifies measures to minimize the adverse effects of urbanization
38 on site hydrology, runoff flow rates and pollutant loads. The hydromodification management plan is also
39 a site-specific and project-specific plan which serves to reduce adverse changes to the magnitude and
40 frequency of stream flows and associated sediment load due to urbanization or other changes in the
41 watershed land use and hydrology (City of Laguna Niguel 2020a).

1 **3.9 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

2 The biological resources that have been identified for consideration in this EIS are vegetation, wildlife,
3 migratory birds, special status species (including federally listed endangered, threatened and candidate
4 species and State of California protected species) and designated or proposed critical habitat. This section
5 describes the biological resources occurring in the project area and the potential environmental effects of
6 the alternatives on these resources.

7 **3.9.1 Affected Environment**

8 The ROI for biological resources focuses on the 92-acre CHFB site and adjacent properties. The CHFB
9 site has been previously disturbed and developed and contains mostly paved surfaces and landscaped
10 areas. Undeveloped lots comprised primarily of gravel are located on the southern end of the site, and
11 maintained landscaped areas comprised of native and non-native vegetation surround the building. In
12 addition, indirect impacts could affect biological resources found within properties located adjacent to the
13 CHFB.

14 No direct impacts to biological resources would occur from this action outside of the 92-acre CHFB site. It
15 is assumed that off-site leased office space would be located in previously developed areas and any
16 necessary build-out would not require new ground disturbance.

17 **3.9.1.1 Vegetation**

18 The CHFB site is fully developed and located in a mixed-use landscape. Surrounding properties include a
19 mix of developed, undeveloped but disturbed, and landscaped lots. Little to no natural habitat remains
20 within adjacent parcels (City of Laguna Niguel 1992a). As shown in Figure 3.9-1, the only adjacent
21 vegetation communities are located to the west of the site and primarily consist of annual grasses and
22 forbs, riparian mixed shrub, and coast live oak woodlands.

23 As characterized by the CHFB site and surrounding landscape, natural habitat areas in Orange County are
24 highly fragmented by development. Aliso Creek, located directly west of Alicia Parkway which borders
25 the CHFB site, provides an important wildlife corridor containing a mix of riparian mixed scrub and
26 grassland (see Figure 3.9-1). The riparian corridor provided by Aliso Creek connects larger areas of
27 protected wildlife habitat in Orange County; between the Cleveland National Forest located to the north
28 and west of the CHFB site and the Aliso Woods Canyon Wilderness Park located to the south and east of
29 the CHFB site.



Figure 3.9-1. Vegetation Found in Vicinity of Project Area

3.9.1.2 Wildlife

Terrestrial wildlife includes native and non-native or naturalized terrestrial animals and the habitats in which they exist. Species addressed in this section include those not listed as threatened or endangered by the USFWS or protected by the state of California. The project site is completely developed or disturbed, and no natural faunal assemblages are present. Examples of urban wildlife typically found in Orange County, which may also inhabit the disturbed area around the CHFB site, includes bats, opossums, raccoons, skunks, snakes, and ducks (Orange County 2020).

3.9.1.3 Migratory Birds

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) makes it unlawful to pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, or sell birds (including any parts, dead or alive, feathers, eggs and nests) that are listed in the statute. Currently there are over 800 species on the list nationally. Several migratory bird species protected by the MBTA could occur within the project site at various times of the year; they are listed in Table 3.9-1 (USFWS 2019). The site is predominately urban/disturbed with some landscaping and trees throughout the site.

Table 3.9-1. Migratory Bird Species Potentially Occurring in the Project Area			
Species	Habitat	Probability of Presence	Breeding Season
Allen's Hummingbird (<i>Selasphorus sasin</i>)	Coastal forest, scrub, and chaparral habitats at elevations of up to 1,000 feet.	Year-round	February 1 – July 15
Bald Eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>)	Areas with tall trees or perches around open water.	September	January 1 – August 31
Black Skimmer (<i>Rynchops niger</i>)	Coastal areas around sandy beaches and islands or inland near very large lakes.	August	May 20 – September 15
Clark's Grebe (<i>Aechmophorus clarkia</i>)	Nesting areas include large lakes and marshes with emergent vegetation. When not nesting, may be found in saltwater or brackish habitats.	January, February, April, August, October-December	Year-round
Common Yellowthroat (<i>Geothlypis trichas sinuosa</i>)	May be found in a wide range of habitats with thick vegetation, but are most common in wet areas.	Year-round	May 20 – July 31
Costa's Hummingbird (<i>Calypte costae</i>)	Sage scrub and chaparral habitats.	January, March, April, August-October, December	January 15 – June 10
Golden Eagle (<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>)	Open and semi-open areas with native vegetation, primarily in areas of steep terrain at elevations of up to 12,000 feet.	June, September	January 1 – August 31
Lawrence's Goldfinch (<i>Carduelis lawrencei</i>)	Primary nesting areas include dry, open, oak woodlands with chaparral, weedy fields, and a source of freshwater.	January-March	March 20 – September 20
Long-billed Curlew (<i>Numenius americanus</i>)	Shortgrass prairies, alkali lakes, wet pastures, tidal mudflats, and agricultural fields are used during migrations along the coastline.	March	Breeds elsewhere
Marbled Godwit (<i>Limosa fedoa</i>)	Coastal mudflats, estuaries, and sandy beaches.	January, April	Breeds elsewhere
Nuttall's Woodpecker (<i>Picooides nuttallii</i>)	Oak woodlands at elevations between 900 and 5,500 feet above sea level.	Year-round	April 1 – July 20
Oak Titmouse (<i>Baeolophus inornatus</i>)	Primarily found in warm, open, dry oak or oak-pine woodlands or in scrub oaks or other brush with nearby woodlands.	January-April, July, October, November	March 15 – July 15
Rufous Hummingbird (<i>Selasphorus rufus</i>)	Winter in shrubby areas, thorn forests, and oak, pine, and juniper woodlands at elevations between 7,500 and 10,000 feet.	February-May, July-September	Breeds elsewhere
Song Sparrow (<i>Melospiza melodia</i>)	Inhabit a wide range of habitats, including tidal marshes, desert scrub, pinyon pine forests, deciduous forests, aspen parklands, prairie, Pacific rain forest, chaparral, agricultural lands, freshwater marsh, and suburbs.	Year-round	February 20 – September 5

Species	Habitat	Probability of Presence	Breeding Season
Spotted Towhee (<i>Pipilo maculatus clementae</i>)	Inhabit areas of dense shrub cover and plenty of leaf litter, including dry thickets, forest edges, old fields, chaparral, and canyon bottoms.	Year-round	April 15 – July 20
Tricolored Blackbird (<i>Agelaius tricolor</i>)	Historically found in wetlands, but now also utilize agricultural fields.	February, April, September	March 15 – August 10
Willet (<i>Tringa semipalmata</i>)	During the wintering period, found along open beaches, bay shorelines, marshes, mudflats, and rocky coasts.	November	Breeds elsewhere
Wrentit (<i>Chamaea fasciata</i>)	Coastal scrub and chaparral along the coast.	Year-round	March 15 – August 10

1 Source: NatureServe 2019; The Cornell Lab 2019; USFWS 2019

2 Based on a review of the habitat requirements of the special status species listed in Table 3.9-1, the
3 potential for these species to be present in the proposed project site are low given the existing
4 development and disturbed conditions at the site.

5 **3.9.1.4 Threatened and Endangered Species**

6 This section discusses federally-listed species and state of California special status species that have the
7 potential to occur within the ROI.

8 **Federally Listed Species**

9 Under the Endangered Species Act, an endangered species is defined as any species in danger of
10 extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. A threatened species is defined as any
11 species likely to become an endangered species in the foreseeable future. Species that are federally listed
12 as threatened or endangered and that have the potential to occur in the ROI are discussed in this section.

13 The *Information, Planning, and Consultation System (IPaC)*, maintained by the USFWS, was queried for
14 federally listed threatened and endangered species and designated critical habitats potentially occurring
15 within the project area. The species list generated by the database search includes a total of 12 federally
16 threatened or endangered species (as shown in Table 3.9-2): one mammal, four birds, one amphibian, one
17 fish, two crustaceans, and three plants (USFWS 2019). NatureServe elemental occurrence data were also
18 used to determine the presence of species within the ROI (NatureServe 2019). An elemental occurrence is
19 defined by NatureServe as an area of land or water where a species or natural community is or was
20 present and has conservation value. These occurrence data require that a species is in appropriate habitat,
21 at the appropriate time of the year, and is naturally occurring (NatureServe 2019). Table 3.9-2 also
22 includes a brief assessment of each species’ likelihood of occurrence in the project area based on the
23 species’ range/distribution and habitat requirements.

Table 3.9-2. Federally Threatened and Endangered Species Potentially Occurring in the Project Area

Species	Status	Habitat	Possibility of Occurrence in the Project Area
Pacific Pocket Mouse (<i>Perognathus longimembris pacificus</i>)	Endangered	Inhabit shrublands with sandy soil near the ocean, coastal dunes, river alluvium, and coastal sage scrub.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
California Least Tern (<i>Sterna antillarum browni</i>)	Endangered	Breeds on sandy or gravelly beaches and banks of rivers or lakes. Also found	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project

Table 3.9-2. Federally Threatened and Endangered Species Potentially Occurring in the Project Area

Species	Status	Habitat	Possibility of Occurrence in the Project Area
		along seacoasts, beaches, bays estuaries, lagoons, lakes, and rivers.	area.
Coastal California Gnatcatcher (<i>Poliophtila californica californica</i>)	Threatened	Coastal areas dominated by California sagebrush, usually at elevations of less than 1,600 feet. May forage in chaparral areas bordered by sage scrub.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Least Bell's Vireo (<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>)	Endangered	Inhabit areas of dense shrub or scrub. In arid regions, this species may be found along streams or in dry arroyos and gulches.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>)	Endangered	Areas with willows or other shrubs near standing or running water.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Arroyo Toad (<i>Anaxyrus californicus</i>)	Endangered	In California, found on sandy banks in riparian woodlands.	Potential for suitable habitat to be present; however, potential is low due to existing development and maintained landscaping in the project area. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Tidewater Goby (<i>Eucyclogobius newberryi</i>)	Endangered	Most abundant in the upper ends of lagoons created by small coastal streams. May also be found in brackish water of the lower sections of such streams, or in vegetated pools of slow moving streams.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Riverside Fairy Shrimp (<i>Streptocephalus wootoni</i>)	Endangered	Vernal pools that dry up and refill during the year.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
San Diego Fairy Shrimp (<i>Branchinecta sandiegonensis</i>)	Endangered	Vernal pools and ephemeral wetlands.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Big-leaved Crownbeard (<i>Verbesina dissita</i>)	Threatened	Rugged coastal hillsides and canyons in dense maritime chaparral communities. May also occur in coast sage scrub and mixed chaparral communities.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Laguna Beach Liveforever (<i>Dudleya stolonifera</i>)	Threatened	Weathered sandstone rock outcrops within coastal sage scrub or chaparral communities.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Thread-leaved Brodiaea (<i>Brodiaea filifolia</i>)	Threatened	Grasslands, typically in association with vernal pools and floodplains.	Potential for suitable habitat to be present; however, potential is low due to existing development and maintained landscaping in the project area. No Critical Habitat in the project area.

1 Source: NatureServe 2019; the Cornell Lab 2019; USFWS 2019

2 Based on a review of the habitat requirements of the special status plant and animal species listed in
3 Table 3.9-2, the potential for these plants or animals to be present in the proposed project site are low
4 given the existing development and disturbed conditions at the site.

1 Critical habitat, as defined and designated by the USFWS, is the habitat necessary to support the special
2 needs of federally threatened or endangered species. There are no critical habitat designations for
3 protected species in the proposed project site (USFWS 2019), thus critical habitat is not discussed in the
4 analysis of impacts.

5 **State of California Special Status Species**

6 Special status species are identified by state agencies to conserve rare species, avoid future federal
7 threatened or endangered status, and avoid impacts during construction activities. These species are not
8 listed as federally threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species. Special status species are
9 considered:

- 10 • Species protected by the MBTA (discussed above in Section 3.9.1.3 Migratory Birds);
- 11 • Rare, endangered, or threatened species designated by the State of California and/or listed in the
12 California Natural Diversity Database;
- 13 • Endangered or rare species designated under Section 15380(d) of CEQA guidelines;
- 14 • Species with a California Native Plant Society Rare Plant Ranking of 1 or 2 in the Inventory of
15 Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California; and
- 16 • Fully protected animals by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

17 The special status species listed in Table 3.9-3 were identified as potentially occurring in the vicinity of
18 the project area (California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2019).

Table 3.9-3. State of California Special Status Species Potentially Occurring in the Project Area

Species	Habitat	Possibility of Occurrence in Project Area
Western Spadefoot (<i>Spea hammondi</i>)	Found in a variety of habitats, but prefers shortgrass plains and sandy or gravelly soil. Breeding occurs in temporary rain pools and slow-moving streams.	Potential for suitable habitat to be present; however, potential is low due to existing development and maintained landscaping in the project area. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Northern Harrier (<i>Circus hudsonius</i>)	Most commonly found in large tracts of wetlands and grasslands with low, thick vegetation. Western populations breed in dry upland habitats, including meadows, fields, prairies, high-desert shrubsteppe.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
White-tailed Kite (<i>Elanus leucurus</i>)	Savannas, open woodlands, marshes, desert grasslands, partially cleared lands, and cultivated fields.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Black Swift (<i>Cypseloides niger</i>)	Nesting occurs in sea caves and on cliff ledges near waterfalls, and foraging habitat includes forests and open areas. In California, they are found at elevations between sea level and 7,500 feet.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Mountain Plover (<i>Charadrius montanus</i>)	Breeding occurs in open plains at moderate elevations. Wintering habitat includes short-grass plains, fields, and sandy deserts.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
American Peregrine Falcon (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>)	Breeding occurs in open landscapes with cliffs, and nests have been found at elevations of up to 12,000 feet. Nest sites may also be located along	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.

Table 3.9-3. State of California Special Status Species Potentially Occurring in the Project Area

Species	Habitat	Possibility of Occurrence in Project Area
<i>anatus</i>)	rivers and coastlines or in cities. During migrations and the wintering season, these birds may be found in almost any open habitat, but especially along barrier islands, mudflats, coastlines, lake edges, and mountain chains.	
Purple Martin (<i>Progne subis</i>)	In the western U.S., primarily utilize woodpecker holes in mountain forests or Pacific lowlands. Foraging occurs over towns, cities, parks, open fields, dunes, stream, wet meadows, and other open areas.	Potential for suitable habitat to be present; however, potential is low due to existing development and maintained landscaping in the project area. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Yellow-breasted Chat (<i>Icteria virens</i>)	Breeding occurs in areas of dense shrubbery, and habitat often includes blackberry. In arid regions of the western U.S., typically found along rivers.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Loggerhead Shrike (<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>)	Open country with short vegetation and shrubs and trees with spines or thorns. Frequently found in agricultural areas, riparian areas, desert scrublands, savannas, and prairies. Also often seen along mowed roadsides with fence lines and utility poles.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Yellow Warbler (<i>Setophaga petechia</i>)	Breed in thickets and disturbed or regrowing habitats along streams and wetlands. Often found among willows. In the western U.S., they may be found at elevations up to 9,000 feet.	Potential for suitable habitat to be present. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Grasshopper Sparrow (<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>)	Grasslands, prairies, fields, and pastures with little or no cover and some bare ground. In the western U.S., may be found in brushy habitat.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Coastal Cactus Wren (<i>Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus sandiegensis</i>)	Preferred coastal habitat includes patches of prickly-pear and cholla cacti mixed with short sagebrush and buckwheat.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Arroyo Chub (<i>Gila orcuttii</i>)	Inhabits headwaters, creeks, small to medium rivers. Prefers areas of slow-moving streams with sand or mud substrate.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Dulzura Pocket Mouse (<i>Chaetodipus californicus femoralis</i>)	Coastal scrub, chaparral, and grassland. Possibly extirpated from Orange County.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Western Mastiff Bat (<i>Eumops perotis californicus</i>)	Arid, semiarid, and rocky canyon habitats in the desert. May utilize crevices and shallow caves on the sides of cliffs and rock walls, often located high above the ground, for roosts.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Pocketed Free-tailed Bat (<i>Nyctinomops femorosaccus</i>)	Usually found in rugged canyons, high cliffs, and rock outcroppings in semiarid landscapes.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Pallid Bat (<i>Antrozous pallidus</i>)	Inhabits mountainous areas, intermontane basins, lowland desert scrub, deserts, and grasslands, often near rocky outcrops and water.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Southern California	Inhabits a range of habitats, including coastal sand	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical

Table 3.9-3. State of California Special Status Species Potentially Occurring in the Project Area

Species	Habitat	Possibility of Occurrence in Project Area
Legless Lizard (<i>Anniella stebbinsi</i>)	dunes, sandy washes, and alluvial fans.	Habitat in the project area.
California Glossy Snake (<i>Arizona elegans occidentalis</i>)	Prefers open areas with loose soil, but may be found in arid scrub, rocky washes, grasslands, and chaparral.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Western Pond Turtle (<i>Emys marmorata</i>)	Inhabits rivers, creeks, small lakes and ponds, marshes, canals, and reservoirs. This turtle may be found in brackish water.	Potential for suitable habitat to be present. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Two-striped Gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis hammondi</i>)	An aquatic snake, generally found in or near permanent fresh water. This often includes streams with rocky beds bordered by willows and other riparian vegetation.	Potential for suitable habitat to be present. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Coast Horned Lizard (<i>Phrynosoma blainvillii</i>)	Inhabit a variety of habitats, but often found in areas with sandy soil, scattered shrubs, and ant colonies. In California, it is most common in areas with native chaparral vegetation and porous soils.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Coastal Whiptail (<i>Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri</i>)	Inhabit a wide range of habitats, but primarily found in hot, dry, open areas with sparse foliage in chaparral, woodland, and riparian communities.	Potential for suitable habitat to be present. No Critical Habitat in the project area.
Red-diamond Rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus ruber</i>)	Utilize a wide range of habitats, but in southern California, is most commonly found in the western foothills of the Coast Ranges and in dry, rocky, inland valleys. Often inhabit granite outcroppings.	None. No suitable habitat. No Critical Habitat in the project area.

1 Source: California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2019; California Herps 2019a, 2019b; NatureServe 2019; The Cornell Lab 2019;
2 USFWS 2019

3 Based on a review of the habitat requirements of the special status plant and animal species listed in
4 Table 3.9-3, the potential for these plants or animals to be present in the proposed project site are low
5 given the existing development and disturbed conditions at the site.

6 **3.9.2 Environmental Consequences**

7 To evaluate the impacts on biological resources, alternatives were reviewed for their potential to cause the
8 following:

- 9 • Displacement of terrestrial or aquatic communities or loss of habitat
- 10 • Diminished value of habitat for wildlife, plants or aquatic species
- 11 • Interference with the movement of native resident or migratory wildlife species
- 12 • Conflicts with applicable management plans for terrestrial, avian and aquatic species and their
13 habitat
- 14 • Introduction of noxious or invasive plant species
- 15 • Decline in native fish populations
- 16 • Impacts on or displacement of endangered, threatened or other protected status species
- 17 • Encroachment or impacts on designated critical habitat for a federally listed species

18 A significant adverse impact to biological resources would occur if the action would result in:

- 1 • Long-term loss, degradation or loss of diversity within unique or high-quality (e.g., riparian) plant
- 2 communities
- 3 • Unpermitted “take” of federally listed species
- 4 • Local extirpation of rare or sensitive species not currently listed under the Endangered Species
- 5 Act
- 6 • Unacceptable loss of critical habitat, as determined by the USFWS
- 7 • Violation of the MBTA or Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

8 **3.9.2.1 No Action Alternative**

9 Under the No Action Alternative, GSA would not construct a new USCIS building or relocate tenants to
10 new offsite locations. Ongoing maintenance to the CHFB would occur, which could generate negligible
11 amounts of land disturbance and noise, and result in indirect negligible effects to biological resources.

12 **3.9.2.2 Alternative 1**

13 **Construction**

14 Alternative 1 would have negligible to minor direct impacts on biological resources within the
15 27.15-parcel to be retained. Construction of a new USCIS building would require ground disturbance and
16 potential grading and clearing activities. However, there is limited vegetation present on the site, and that
17 which is present is generally comprised of native and non-native and ornamental species used for
18 landscaping. The 27.15-acre parcel primarily encompasses gravel areas used as parking lots. As such,
19 very limited, low-quality habitat exists onsite, and direct impacts to vegetation or wildlife would be
20 minimal. No direct effects would occur to the Aliso Creek riparian corridor as it is located outside of the
21 CHFB site and is separated by Alicia Parkway.

22 Indirect effects to biological resources arising from construction of Alternative 1 would be minor. There
23 would be temporary increases in traffic, general human activity, and noise in the area, which would deter
24 wildlife that commonly utilize the area, thereby diminishing their use of the land in and around the project
25 area. As Alternative 1 includes construction in previously disturbed areas, impacts to species would be
26 less than significant, as most species that inhabit areas near the project site are tolerant of humans.
27 Approved species would be utilized for re-vegetation and landscaping, and appropriate steps would be
28 taken to avoid introduction of invasive species (see Section 3.9.2.4 for further details regarding these
29 measures). While noise could disturb the higher-quality habitat located to the west of the CHFB site, these
30 areas are separated by Alicia Parkway, an established roadway that would serve as a buffer to the
31 construction activity performed under Alternative 1. Potential indirect effects to Aliso Creek would be
32 minimized through use of required BMPs and permitting for protection of water quality and prevention of
33 stormwater runoff described in Section 3.8.2.4.

34 No special status species are known or expected to inhabit the CHFB site. Therefore, no impacts during
35 construction are anticipated. It is feasible that migratory bird species may pass through the area, but due
36 to the lack of suitable foraging or nesting habitat on the site, any potential measurable impacts would be
37 unlikely.

38 There would be no direct impacts to biological resources from disposal of the remaining 64.85 acres of
39 the CHFB site.

40 **Operations**

41 No direct impacts to biological resources are anticipated during operations of Alternative 1, including that
42 of operations of the new USCIS building or off-site leasing of new office space in locations throughout
43 the region.

1 **Future Redevelopment**

2 Under a renovation scenario, indirect impacts could occur from renovation of the existing CHFB on the
3 remaining 64.85-acre parcel to be disposed. Indirect impacts to vegetation could occur during
4 construction from the establishment of staging areas; impacts, however, would be negligible as the
5 existing vegetation is maintained landscaping and has little habitat value. Minor indirect impacts to
6 wildlife could occur due to noise generated during construction. Noise could deter wildlife from the site,
7 but due to the disturbed nature of the property, such impacts would likely be negligible.

8 Under a demolition/new construction scenario, indirect impacts could occur from demolition of the
9 existing CHFB and new construction on the remaining 64.85-acre parcel to be disposed. Under this
10 scenario, there could be minor impacts to vegetation and wildlife during construction. Impacts would be
11 similar to those described for construction of the new USCIS building but would be to a greater intensity
12 as development would occur over a larger area. Excavation would be required, which could affect any
13 existing onsite vegetation and indirectly affect wildlife due to noise and increased human activity at the
14 site. Construction activity could increase sedimentation and runoff into Aliso Creek; however, such
15 impacts would likely be negligible and avoided through adherence to applicable permit provisions and
16 standard BMPs (see Section 3.8.2.4 for a summary of impact reduction measures).

17 No impacts to biological resources are anticipated during operations of a renovation or demolition/new
18 construction scenario.

19 Follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses would be required (depending on who acquires the site) for any
20 proposed redevelopment plans presented by a future developer and would further address biological
21 resources once final development plans are completed.

22 **3.9.2.3 Alternative 2**

23 Under Alternative 2, there would be no direct impacts to biological resources during construction or
24 operations. All tenants would be removed from the CHFB, and no construction would occur at the site.
25 Off-site leasing of new office space may require office build-outs; however, these build-outs would not
26 require ground disturbance, and no impacts to biological resources would occur.

27 **Future Redevelopment**

28 Under a renovation/new construction scenario, adverse indirect impacts could occur from renovation of
29 the existing CHFB and new construction on the south or west end of the 92-acre site to be disposed.
30 Under this scenario for Alternative 2, there could be minor indirect impacts during construction, similar to
31 as described for construction of the new USCIS building, but to a greater intensity. Minor impacts to
32 existing, low-quality vegetation would occur during renovation, clearing, and grading activities, and
33 indirect noise impacts could deter wildlife from utilizing the site for shelter or foraging. Construction
34 activities could also increase sedimentation and runoff into Aliso Creek; however, impacts would be
35 negligible to minor due to the current low-quality habitat provided by the waterway and adherence to
36 applicable permit provisions and standard BMPs.

37 Under a demolition/new construction scenario, indirect impacts could occur from demolition of the
38 existing CHFB and new construction on the 92-acre site to be disposed. Under this scenario for
39 Alternative 2, there could be minor indirect impacts to biological resources during construction. Impacts
40 would be similar to those described under Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment (demolition/new
41 construction scenario) but would be to a greater intensity as up to 92 acres of the site would be affected.

42 Operations of a renovation/new construction scenario and a demolition/new construction scenario would
43 be similar to those described for construction of a new USCIS building under Alternative 1. No additional
44 impacts to biological resources would be expected during operations.

1 Similar to Alternative 1, follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses would further address biological resources
2 once final development plans are completed.

3 **3.9.2.4 Impact Reduction Measures**

4 In order to avoid or minimize impacts to vegetation, only approved species would be used for
5 revegetation. These plant species would not be invasive or noxious species, and all disturbed soils would
6 be revegetated following each phase of construction. If invasive species are disposed in an area proposed
7 for disturbance, they would be removed. To avoid introducing an invasive species, all equipment,
8 including clothes and shoes, would be assessed to guarantee they are free of seeds prior to entering the
9 work area.

10 Surveys for migratory birds would be conducted if ground disturbance is conducted within the nesting
11 seasons; however, as stated in Section 3.9.1.3, the potential for these species to be present in the proposed
12 project site are low given the existing development and disturbed conditions at the site. If necessary, such
13 surveys would be conducted no more than 10 days prior to vegetation removal for project activities that
14 occur within California bird breeding season, which extends from February 1 through August 31. Surveys
15 would be conducted at any buildings or structures proposed for construction or demolition and in any
16 natural areas directly affected by project activities. Surveys would include the disturbance area and a 500-
17 foot buffer around the disturbed area, as feasible. Any nests, with the exception of eagles' nests, identified
18 on the premises during the pre-breeding season surveys would be removed, as long as no eggs are present.
19 If a nest with eggs is found, activities in the disturbance area and buffer area would be halted until the
20 eggs hatched and the young fledged.

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3.10 TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

This section assesses the potential for existing transportation infrastructure within the project study area to be affected by the implementation of the project alternatives.

3.10.1 Regulatory Setting

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is a division of the United States Department of Transportation that specializes in highway transportation. The Federal Highway Administration supports State and local governments in the design, construction, and maintenance of the Nation's highway system (Federal Aid Highway Program) and various federally and tribal owned lands (Federal Lands Highway Program). Through financial and technical assistance to State and local governments, FHWA is responsible for ensuring that America's roads and highways continue to be among the safest and most technologically sound in the world.

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is the state agency responsible for highway, bridge, and rail transportation planning, construction, and maintenance. Caltrans manages more than 50,000 miles of California's highway and freeway lanes. Caltrans seeks to provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability.

The City of Laguna Niguel General Plan provides goals, policies, and implementation programs for motorized and non-motorized transportation to provide a safe, comprehensive, and integrated system of facilities for all users. The General Plan provides roadway classifications and capacities for the various arterials within the City.

3.10.2 Affected Environment

The study area for potential traffic impacts includes the local roadways within close proximity to the CHFB site, State Route 73 (SR-73) and Interstate 5 (I-5). SR-73 and I-5 serve as the primary highways in the region providing direct access to arterials that lead to the CHFB site. Existing local roadways located within the study area, primarily within the existing CHFB site and surrounding area are discussed below.

3.10.2.1 Existing Traffic Conditions

The CHFB site is generally bound by Avila Road to the north, Aliso Creek Road to the south, El Lazo to the east, and Alicia Parkway to the west (refer to Figure 2-2 in Chapter 2). El Lazo Road is a two-lane roadway that currently runs along the east and south side of the CHFB parking lot. Allegra Road, Shelley Road and Dorine Road provide direct access to the CHFB site from the surrounding arterials. Direct access to and from SR-73 is provided via La Paz Road. The most direct route to and from the I-5 would be traveling east on Avila Road or Aliso Creek Road, then south on Moulton Parkway, then east on Crown Valley Parkway leading to the I-5 northbound and southbound ramps.

There are currently seven vehicular access points leading to the surface parking lots surrounding the CHFB site. Two of the seven access points are signalized intersections while the remaining five are two-way stop-controlled intersections. The signalized intersection of Avila Road/Federal Building Parkway provides access to the parking lots in the northeast quadrant of the site. The second access that is signalized is Alicia Parkway/Fed Loading Dock. Entrance to the parking lots onsite are not restricted by guard stations or gates with the exception of two entrances. The loading docks near the signal at the Alicia Parkway entrance located on the west side of the CHFB is secured with an iron gate and guard station. Entrances to the smaller parking lots on the north side of the CHFB have unmanned control gates with key card access and tire shredders.

A brief description of the existing transportation network including the highways, arterials, and local roadways surrounding the CHFB site is provided below:

1 **I-5** is a major north-south route of the Interstate Highway System that runs through Orange County
2 connecting San Diego and Los Angeles. I-5 is located directly east of the CHFB site and provides
3 regional access to the site for federal employees. East of the site, I-5 consists of four travel lanes in each
4 direction with one high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane in each direction and one auxiliary lane in each
5 direction between the interchanges at Crown Valley Parkway and Avery Parkway. Both interchanges
6 serve as a major connection point to arterials that lead to the CHFB site.

7 **SR-73** is a north-south toll road connecting I-5 in San Juan Capistrano to Interstate 405 in Costa Mesa.
8 The entirety of the route is located within Orange County. SR-73 runs along the east and north side of the
9 CHFB site. East of the site, SR-73 between Moulton Parkway and Greenfield Drive is constructed as a
10 seven-lane highway with three lanes northbound and four lanes southbound. From SR-73, the Greenfield
11 Drive and La Paz Road interchanges would serve as the closest connections to arterials leading to the
12 CHFB site.

13 **Avila Road** is an east-west divided roadway with four travel lanes from Alicia Parkway to La Paz Road.
14 According to the City of Laguna Niguel's General Plan Circulation Element, La Paz Road is functionally
15 classified as a four-lane Primary Arterial with a capacity of 37,500 vehicles per day. A full access
16 driveway to the CHFB site and northern parking lots are provided via Avila Road. Dedicated bike lanes
17 (Class II) are provided on both sides of the roadway along the project frontage. Sidewalks are also
18 provided on both sides of the road. On-street parking is prohibited on both sides of Avila Road.

19 **Alicia Parkway** is a north-south divided roadway with six travel lanes along the project frontage from
20 Avila Road to Aliso Creek Road. According to the City of Laguna Niguel's General Plan Circulation
21 Element, Alicia Parkway is functionally classified as a six-lane Major Arterial with a capacity of 56,300
22 vehicles per day. A signal on Alicia Parkway provides vehicle and truck access to the CHFB site and
23 parking lots. Alicia Parkway connects with El Lazo which provides access to the parking lots on the
24 southern portion of the site. Class II bike lanes and sidewalks are provided on both sides of the road. On-
25 street parking is prohibited on both sides of Alicia Parkway.

26 **El Lazo** is a two-lane undivided roadway that runs along the eastern and southern border of the CHFB
27 site. This road is functionally classified as a Secondary Arterial with a capacity of 25,000 vehicles per day
28 according to the City of Laguna Niguel's General Plan Circulation Element. This roadway was built to
29 accommodate four travel lanes (two lanes in each direction) but is currently striped as one lane in each
30 direction. On-street parking is allowed on both sides of the road. Sidewalks are also provided on both
31 sides of the road. El Lazo provides direct access to the surface parking lots on the southern and eastern
32 portions of the site.

33 **La Paz Road** is a north-south divided roadway with six travel lanes from the SR-73 northbound on/off
34 ramps to Aliso Creek Road. According to the City of Laguna Niguel's General Plan Circulation Element,
35 La Paz Road is functionally classified as a six-lane Major Arterial with a capacity of 56,300 vehicles per
36 day. Class II bike lanes and sidewalks are provided on both sides of the road. On-street parking is
37 prohibited on both sides of the road. La Paz Road intersects with Allegra Road and Shelley Road that
38 provides direct access into the CHFB site and parking lots. North of the site, La Paz Road provides direct
39 access to SR-73. South of the site, La Paz Road connects with Crown Valley Parkway that leads directly
40 to I-5.

41 **Aliso Creek Road** is an east-west divided roadway with six travel lanes between Alicia Parkway to La
42 Paz Road and then transitions to a four-lane roadway from La Paz Road to Moulton Parkway. According
43 to the City of Laguna Niguel's General Plan Circulation Element, Aliso Creek Road is functionally
44 classified as a six-lane Major Arterial from Alicia Parkway to La Paz Road with a capacity of 56,300
45 vehicles per day. From La Paz Road to Moulton Parkway, La Paz Road is functionally classified as a
46 four-lane Primary Arterial with a capacity of 37,500 vehicles per day. Class II bike lanes and sidewalks
47 are provided on both sides of the road. Aliso Creek Road connects with Moulton Parkway to the east and

1 Moulton Parkway connects to Crown Valley Parkway and the I-5 freeway. On-street parking is prohibited
2 on both sides of the road.

3 **Moulton Parkway** is a north-south divided roadway with six travel lanes from Avila Road to Crown
4 Valley Parkway. According to the City of Laguna Niguel's General Plan Circulation Element, Moulton
5 Parkway is functionally classified as a six-lane Major Arterial with a capacity of 56,300 vehicles per day.
6 Class II bike lanes and sidewalks are provided on both sides of the road. From the project site, Moulton
7 Parkway leads to Oso Parkway which then connects to the I-5 but also leads to Crown Valley Parkway
8 south of the site.

9 **Crown Valley Parkway** and **Oso Parkway** are both east-west divided roadways with six travel lanes.
10 According to the City of Laguna Niguel's General Plan Circulation Element, Crown Valley Parkway and
11 Oso Parkway are functionally classified as six-lane Major Arterials with a capacity of 56,300 vehicles per
12 day. Class II bike lanes and sidewalks are provided on both sides of the two roadways. Crown Valley
13 Parkway and Oso Parkway provide direct access to and from the I-5 freeway.

14 **Dorine Road, Allegra Road, and Shelley Road** are two-lane undivided roadways that provide direct
15 access to the CHFB site. Allegra Road and Shelley Road connects La Paz Road to El Lazo Road. Dorine
16 Road connects Aliso Creek Road to Dorine Road. According to the City of Laguna Niguel's General Plan
17 Circulation Element, these three roadways are functionally classified as two-lane Secondary Arterials
18 with a capacity of 25,000 vehicles per day. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of these roadways and
19 on-street parking is permitted on both sides. Class II bike lanes are not provided on any of these
20 roadways. These roadways were built to accommodate four travel lanes but are only striped as one lane in
21 each direction.

22 **Level of Service**

23 Current roadway and intersection operations were reviewed at locations surrounding the CHFB site.
24 Based on recent traffic data and analysis conducted for the Laguna Niguel City Center Project, the Traffic
25 Impact Analysis (TIA) dated December 18, 2019 was used to assess current levels of service at
26 intersections surrounding the CHFB site. Level of service (LOS) is a term used to qualitatively describe
27 operating conditions of a roadway based on factors such as speed, travel time, maneuverability, delay and
28 safety. LOS ranges from LOS A (free-flow conditions) to LOS F (severely congested conditions). Traffic
29 impact analyses are typically focused on evaluating traffic operations during the morning and evening
30 commute peak hours (7:00 to 9:00 AM and 4:00 to 6:00 PM) on a typical weekday because these are
31 generally when the busiest traffic conditions occur. The City of Laguna Niguel considers LOS D or better
32 to be acceptable operating conditions and LOS E or F to be deficient operating conditions according to
33 the City's General Plan Circulation Element (City of Laguna Niguel, 1992). Daily traffic volumes on
34 major arterials throughout the City of Laguna Niguel were provided by City staff and utilized in the
35 review of existing capacity on roadways surrounding the CHFB site.

36 According to the intersection analysis conducted in the Laguna Niguel City Center Project TIA, Alicia
37 Parkway at Aliso Creek Road, La Paz Road at Aliso Creek Road, Moulton Parkway at Aliso Creek Road,
38 and La Paz Road at Pacific Park Drive are all intersections currently operating at acceptable levels of
39 service (LOS D or better). In addition, the analysis indicates the I-5 northbound and southbound ramp
40 intersections at Crown Valley Parkway are also currently operating at acceptable levels of service. The
41 LOS analysis shows there is available capacity at the study intersections mentioned above.

42 Daily traffic volumes collected in 2017 were reviewed from a capacity perspective along Alicia Parkway,
43 Aliso Creek Road, La Paz Road, Moulton Parkway and Crown Valley Parkway. These roadways either
44 surround the CHFB site and/or provide access to the I-5 and SR-73. All of the roadways mentioned are
45 currently built as six-lane facilities with a capacity of 56,300 vehicles per day. Daily traffic volumes
46 (2017) range from 9,900 to 46,200 vehicles per day on these specific roadways. The majority of the
47 roadways surrounding the CHFB site are currently operating under 50 percent capacity. Crown Valley

1 Parkway near the I-5 currently carries 46,200 vehicles per day with an 82 percent capacity (i.e., 46,200 /
2 56,300). This indicates there is available capacity on roadways surrounding the CHFB site, but potentially
3 limited capacity on Crown Valley Parkway near the I-5 interchange. However, performance and capacity
4 of a roadway segment is heavily influenced by the ability of intersections to accommodate peak hour
5 volumes; therefore, intersection operations are a better indication of capacity within a roadway network
6 and used in this analysis to evaluate future capacity and potential traffic impacts.

7 **3.10.2.2 Public Transit**

8 Orange County Transit Authority (OTCA) operates the local bus service in Laguna Niguel and several
9 neighboring cities throughout Orange County. Bus route 87 travels along Alicia Parkway from Rancho
10 Santa Margarita to Laguna Niguel. Route 87 currently provides bus stops located within a ¼ mile walking
11 distance from the CHFB site. Service is provided Monday through Friday with one-hour headways, no
12 weekend service is provided. Amenities at the bus stops are limited to only a sign with no benches or
13 shelters. The Laguna Niguel Metrolink Rail Station is located approximately 2-miles from the CHFB site.

14 **3.10.3 Environmental Consequences**

15 To evaluate the impacts on transportation facilities, alternatives were reviewed for their potential to cause
16 the following:

- 17 • Change in pedestrian and bicycle activity
- 18 • Change in vehicular trips generated by the site
- 19 • Increase traffic volumes on existing roadway segments and intersections within the project study
20 area
- 21 • Change in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per employee

22 A significant adverse impact to transportation facilities would occur if the action would result in:

- 23 • Increase in traffic volumes that would exceed the capacity of local roadways and intersections
24 within the study area
- 25 • Increase in traffic volumes result in deficient operations at study roadways and intersections
- 26 • Construction traffic creating a prolonged impact on travel conditions or facilities, including
27 inadequate emergency vehicle access, traffic hazards to pedestrians and bicyclists, or substantial
28 truck traffic on roadways not designated as truck routes
- 29 • Disruption or interference with existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities and creating
30 inconsistencies with adopted pedestrian or bicycle system plans, guidelines, policies, or standards
- 31 • Change (increase) in average VMT per employee

32 **3.10.3.1 No Action Alternative**

33 Under the No Action Alternative, GSA would not construct a new USCIS building or relocate tenants to
34 new offsite locations. Therefore, trip generation and distribution of traffic on the local and regional
35 roadways would be unchanged from existing conditions. In addition, there would be no construction
36 activity on site and as such there would be no construction-related impacts. Ongoing maintenance to the
37 CHFB would occur, which is consistent with existing operations and would not change existing traffic
38 volumes or operations on the transportation system.

39 As there would be no change to trip generation or distribution of trips on the roadway network, this
40 alternative would result in no direct or indirect impacts related to transportation facilities beyond those
41 occurring under existing conditions.

1 **3.10.3.2 Alternative 1**

2 **Construction**

3 Under Alternative 1, construction of the new 380,000 square foot USCIS building is scheduled to take
4 approximately 30 months to complete. Peak construction could last up to 15 months with a potential
5 maximum of 300 construction workers and 90 to 100 trucks per day for deliveries and waste removal.
6 Construction of the new USCIS building could cause minor temporary impacts to nearby roadways and
7 intersections, specifically along Alicia Parkway, Aliso Creek Road, La Paz Road and El Lazo. Haul
8 routes to/from the construction site to disposal sites have not yet been identified, however the temporary
9 impacts should be limited to the roadways and intersections utilized along these routes. Temporary
10 changes to onsite access due to construction may change travel patterns that could result in temporary
11 indirect impacts to nearby intersections.

12 Construction would involve temporary pedestrian sidewalk closures. Pedestrian sidewalks along the
13 perimeter of the project site would be closed during the construction period. As such, pedestrians would
14 be directed to utilize the sidewalks on the other side of the street. Thus, temporary indirect impacts would
15 occur on pedestrian facilities along the project frontage during construction.

16 **Operations**

17 Under Alternative 1, there would be no long-term, adverse direct impacts during operations compared to
18 existing conditions at the CHFB site. Specific office locations of the approximately 1,000 staff to be
19 relocated have not been identified. However, it is anticipated at least 55 percent of the remaining tenants
20 would relocate in south or central Orange County no farther north than Irvine, with as many as 45 percent
21 of the remaining tenants relocating to areas north of Irvine such as Santa Ana, Anaheim, or Long Beach.
22 Trips associated with the relocation of staff would most likely redistribute traffic throughout the County
23 and most likely result in a reduction of AM and PM peak hour traffic volumes and delay at intersections
24 surrounding the CHFB site. VMT per employee is based on the number of employees and the total trip
25 length for each employee. The VMT for the existing employees would remain unchanged for those
26 employees that will remain onsite.

27 From a trip generation perspective, the new USCIS building with approximately 2,000 employees would
28 generate less traffic than the existing CHFB building with approximately 3,000 employees. The reduction
29 in 1,000 employee trips would result in a beneficial impact. Project-related traffic volumes on study
30 roadway segments and intersections would be less than current traffic volumes. Therefore, no significant
31 long-term adverse impacts are expected to occur on roadway segments and intersections within the study
32 area based on the new USCIS building compared to the existing CHFB building. Relocation of 1,000
33 employees would likely provide a beneficial impact to the LOS at intersections surrounding the CHFB
34 site and intersections near the I-5 and SR-73.

35 During operations, there would be no direct long-term adverse impacts to the existing pedestrian and
36 bicycle facilities surrounding the new USCIS building. Following construction, pedestrian and bicycle
37 facilities adjacent to the new USCIS building would be similar to what exists today.

38 Employee VMT for those employees relocated may be impacted depending upon the location of their new
39 office space within the region. Therefore, there may be direct, adverse VMT impacts associated with the
40 relocation of employees to offsite locations. However, for purposes of this analysis, it is assumed traffic
41 impacts associated with the increased traffic to future offsite office locations has been considered in
42 previous CEQA analyses when the respective office buildings were originally reviewed and approved by
43 local City staff [**GSA to confirm appropriateness of assumption**].

44 **Future Redevelopment**

45 Under a renovation scenario, minor temporary impacts are likely to occur during the construction period.
46 There could be temporary increases in traffic due to construction vehicles as well as some potential road

1 closures; however, considering existing LOS of local intersections, impacts would be short term and
2 minor. Additionally, trip reductions associated with the relocation of 1,000 employees is likely to be
3 greater than the small and local construction trips required for renovation of the existing CHF�. Closure
4 of sidewalks and bike lanes are not anticipated and therefore, negligible and temporary impacts would
5 likely occur on nearby pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

6 During operations of a renovation scenario, it is assumed a similar number of employees would occupy
7 the renovated CHF� structure as compared to current occupancy levels of the CHF� (i.e. up to 3,000
8 workers). When considered with the 2,000 USCIS employees to remain on site, this would represent a net
9 increase of up to 2,000 additional employees on the 92-acre site. The net increase of 2,000 employees
10 traveling to the site would increase daily and peak hour traffic volumes at study intersections and roadway
11 segments which would likely worsen LOS at study locations surrounding the site. Therefore, there could
12 be minor to moderate long-term impacts at study intersections as a result of 2,000 additional employees
13 traveling to and from the site. Depending on the home-to-work trip length of the 2,000 new employees,
14 there may be significant long term VMT impacts.

15 Under a demolition/new construction scenario, minor, short-term impacts may occur from demolition of
16 the existing CHF� and new construction on the remaining 64.85-acre parcel to be disposed. Under this
17 scenario, impacts would be similar to as described for construction of a new USCIS building, but would
18 be to a greater intensity as development would be on a larger scale and likely extend for a longer period of
19 time. A greater amount of construction vehicles and worker trips would be required, resulting in short
20 term, minor impacts. Demolition of the existing CHF� and associated waste removal could result in
21 short-term minor impacts to local roadways and intersections based on the routing to disposal sites. In
22 addition, there could be short-term impacts to the immediate study roadways, intersections, pedestrian and
23 bicycle facilities during construction due to potential road and sidewalk closures.

24 Impacts during operations of a demolition/new construction scenario would likely be similar to as
25 described for operations of the renovation scenario, but to a larger extent and intensity. Future use of the
26 site that is disposed (64.85-acres) would be dictated by the new owner and the City of Laguna Niguel re-
27 zoning process. Because a developer is not known at this time, no detailed plan exists for redevelopment
28 of the property. This includes unknown density and composition of future commercial, residential, or
29 mixed-use development that could occur. This would represent a change in existing land use of the
30 property which could change travel patterns, traffic volumes within the study area, and VMT. Impacts to
31 study roadway segments, intersections and VMT may be moderate to significant, depending on the extent
32 of redevelopment and the number of net new trips generated by the site.

33 Follow-on NEPA or CEQA analysis would be required (depending on who acquires the site) for any
34 proposed redevelopment plans presented by a future developer and would further address potential traffic
35 impacts. As part of this documentation, trips generated by the new development would be considered and
36 compared to the existing CHF� to determine if there are net new trips or a reduction in trips. If there are
37 net new trips generated under this scenario, the roadway segments and intersections along with pedestrian
38 and bicycle facilities within the study area would be analyzed to determine if any significant impacts
39 occur.

40 **3.10.3.3 Alternative 2**

41 Under Alternative 2, there would be short-term minor beneficial impacts on transportation facilities. All
42 tenants would be removed from the CHF� similar to Alternative 1. Off-site leasing of new office space
43 may require office buildouts; however, these buildouts would not require ground disturbance, and no
44 impacts to transportation facilities would occur. Trips associated with the relocation of staff would most
45 likely redistribute traffic throughout the County and most likely result in a reduction of peak hour traffic
46 volumes and delay at intersections surrounding the CHF� site, similar to as described under Alternative
47 1, but to a greater extent as there would be a net reduction of approximately 3,000 trips per day to the site.
48 Employee VMT for those employees relocated may be impacted depending upon the location of their new

1 office space within the region. Therefore, there may be direct, adverse VMT impacts associated with the
2 relocation of employees to offsite locations. However, for purposes of this analysis, it is assumed traffic
3 impacts associated with the increased traffic to future offsite office locations has been considered in
4 previous CEQA analyses when the respective office buildings were originally reviewed and approved by
5 local City staff [**GSA to confirm appropriateness of assumption**].

6 **Future Redevelopment**

7 Under both a renovation/new construction and demolition/new construction scenario, minor to significant
8 indirect impacts could occur. Impacts during construction and operation would be similar to as described
9 under Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment (demolition/new construction scenario), and would be
10 dependent upon the size and scope of new development to occur on the parcel. Impacts could be to a
11 greater extent and intensity under a demolition/new construction scenario, depending on the scale of new
12 development and required construction trips. In the longer term, future use would be dictated by the new
13 owner and the City of Laguna Niguel re-zoning process. Because a developer is not known at this time,
14 no detailed plan exists for redevelopment of the property. This includes unknown density and
15 composition of future commercial, residential, or mixed-use development that could occur. This could
16 represent a change in existing land use of the property which could change travel patterns, traffic volumes
17 within the study area, and VMT. Impacts to study roadway segments, intersections and VMT may be
18 moderate to significant, depending on the extent of redevelopment and the number of net new trips
19 generated by the site.

20 Similar to Alternative 1, follow-on NEPA or CEQA analysis would be required (depending on who
21 acquires the site) for any proposed redevelopment plans presented by a future developer and would
22 further address potential traffic impacts. As part of this documentation, trips generated by the new
23 development would be considered and compared to the existing CHFB to determine if there are net new
24 trips or a reduction in trips. If there are net new trips generated under this scenario, the roadway segments
25 and intersections along with pedestrian and bicycle facilities within the study area would be analyzed to
26 determine if any significant impacts occur.

27 **3.10.3.4 Impact Reduction Measures**

28 Measure that would reduce impacts related to transportation during construction and operations are
29 discussed below.

- 30 • Minimize construction vehicle movement during peak traffic hours;
- 31 • Place construction staging areas where they would least interfere with local traffic and parking;
- 32 • Minimize detours and impacts to pedestrians and bicyclists;
- 33 • Prepare a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) to minimize traffic delays and maintain traffic safety
34 during construction;
- 35 • Develop and implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies to reduce single
36 occupancy vehicles and encourage walking, biking, using public transit, carpooling, flexible work
37 schedules and telecommuting;
- 38 • Implement traffic signal coordination on arterial streets were practical to maximize the efficiency
39 of the intersections and roadway network;
- 40 • Coordinate with local, state and Federal transportation authorities when planning access to the
41 CHFB site;
- 42 • Follow all local, state and Federal planning guidelines and regulations when maintaining or
43 upgrading roadway infrastructure.

3.11 HAZARDOUS WASTE AND MATERIALS

Specific environmental statutes and regulations govern hazardous material and hazardous waste management activities at federal operations and facilities. For this analysis, the terms hazardous waste, hazardous materials, and toxic substances include those substances defined as hazardous by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), and the Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures (SPCC) Rule. In general, they include substances that, because of their quantity, concentration, or physical, chemical or toxic characteristics, may present moderate danger to public health or welfare or the environment when released into the environment. The purpose of CERCLA, often referred to as Superfund, is to clean up contaminated sites so that public health and welfare are not compromised. RCRA provides for “cradle to grave” regulation of hazardous wastes. Other federal laws applicable to hazardous waste and materials include:

- Community Environmental Response Facilitation Act (CERFA) of 1992;
- Clean Water Act (CWA);
- Clean Air Act (CAA);
- Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA);
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA);
- Atomic Energy Act (AEA);
- Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA); and
- Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).

In addition to the acts and laws mentioned above, EO 12088, *Federal Compliance with Pollution Control*, mandates that necessary actions be taken to prevent and control environmental pollution when federal activities or federal facilities are involved. Hazardous waste in California is regulated primarily under the authority of the federal RCRA of 1976 and the California Health and Safety Code. Other California laws regarding hazardous waste are specific to handling, storage, transportation, disposal, treatment, reduction, cleanup and emergency planning. Worker health and safety and public safety are key issues when dealing with hazardous materials that may affect human health and the environment. Proper disposal of hazardous material disturbed during project construction is vital to ensure protection of human health and the environment

3.11.1 Affected Environment

The ROI for hazardous waste and materials is the 92-acre CHFB site, which consists of two parcels. The first parcel, located at 24000 Avila Road, Laguna Niguel, California, is 86.5 acres and includes the CHFB and surrounding parking lots, basketball courts, roads and driveways, landscaped areas, as well as other supporting facilities such as guard stations, a reservoir for fire suppression, a 500,000-gallon water tank that services the fire protection system, and a maintenance warehouse. The CHFB site also includes a large 3,840-cell photovoltaic system on the roof of the building that produces 914 kilowatts of electricity annual to support building operations (GSA 2019a). The second parcel houses the CUP and is located directly across the street on the north side of Avila Road at 23731 Avila Road, on the corner of Alicia Parkway and Avila Road. The CUP property is 5.5 acres and includes chillers, boilers, cooling tower, and other utility infrastructure (i.e., Southern California Edison’s Niguel substation) (GSA 2017a). The overall 92-acre site is located approximately 160 to 240 feet above mean sea level, with a generally flat topography sloping gently downward to the south.

1 Activities at the CHFB have been evaluated in two Phase I ESAs. The first ESA was performed in 2018
2 for the 27.15-acre parcel planned for construction of a new USCIS building under Alternative 1
3 (GSA 2018c), and a second ESA was performed for the entire 92-acre CHFB site in 2019 (GSA 2019d).
4 The Phase I ESAs were used to establish the existing conditions at the CHFB and to evaluate the
5 consequences of the Proposed Action Alternatives and the No Action Alternative with respect to
6 hazardous waste and materials. Information from a Lead-Based Paint Survey and Management Plan
7 (GSA 2005), and Asbestos Removal/Stabilization Project Study (GSA 2017b) was also used to document
8 existing conditions and environmental consequences from the alternatives considered.

9 Development at the CHFB site first occurred between 1967 and 1970 when the CHFB was constructed.
10 Prior to GSA's ownership of the property, the site was generally undeveloped or used for agriculture.
11 Therefore, residual contamination from historic use of pesticides and herbicides may be present in soils
12 underlying the site as identified in the most recent (2019) Phase I ESA. The Phase I ESAs did not identify
13 any visible signs of contamination including surface staining or stressed vegetation, or the presence
14 (either currently or historically) of facilities such as petroleum storage tanks or solid waste disposal areas
15 that would suggest the possibility of past contamination. The Phase I ESAs also did not uncover any
16 specific evidence to suggest that any past contamination or cleanup had occurred on site, and the location
17 is not listed in any databases of known contaminated sites.

18 Hazards and potential hazards associated with the CHFB are further discussed below.

19 **Asbestos-Containing Materials**

20 Due to the age of the CHFB, ACM are known or suspected to be present throughout the building.
21 Asbestos is commonly used in older buildings for insulation and fireproofing and can present various
22 health risks including respiratory illnesses, permanent lung damage, and cancer (ATSDR 2020). Asbestos
23 fibers can become airborne when ACM is damaged or disturbed and may be inhaled by building
24 occupants.

25 At the CHFB, asbestos-containing spray-on fire-resistive material (SFRM) was applied to the steel
26 framing for the first floor roof structure and poses the greatest asbestos-related hazard (GSA 2017). The
27 SFRM is friable, meaning that if it is damaged by physical contact, or shaken loose by building vibration
28 or movement (e.g., from a seismic event) it can be turned to dust and released into the air. Asbestos
29 containing dust has been found in numerous locations at the first floor ceiling space, including interstitial
30 areas under the second floor concrete slab, beyond the areas with structural steel overhead. It has also
31 been discovered above ceilings at first floor spaces where abatement has previously been performed.

32 Other ACM include gypsum drywall compound at joints, floor tile, roofing system mastic, piping
33 insulation, and fireproofing cores in common-area doors, all of which are not as friable and pose a lesser
34 health hazard. Some of the ACM at the CHFB has been abated (i.e., removed and cleaned up) under past
35 projects. These included work carried out in the 1980s to remove ACM-containing SFRM from floors 2
36 and 3 of the building.

37 **Lead-Based Paint**

38 Lead contaminated surfaces are known or suspected to be present at the CHFB site due to the age of the
39 building. Lead was commonly used as an additive to enhance the properties of structural paint until 1978,
40 when its use as a paint ingredient was banned. Older lead-based paint (LBP) that is deteriorating (i.e.,
41 chipping, peeling, or cracking) may eventually generate lead-containing dust that can be inhaled or
42 ingested. Young children and pregnant women are especially vulnerable to the health effects of lead,
43 which can damage developing brains nervous systems and lead to developmental issues (CDC 2020). In
44 adults, lead exposure can cause cardiovascular effects including high blood pressure, decreased kidney
45 function, and reproductive problems.

1 A 2006 survey of LBP conducted at the CHFB identified seven locations where lead was present in paint
2 at levels high enough (i.e., greater than 0.7 mg/cm²) to be considered LBP. These areas include walls,
3 stairs, and ceilings. In addition, several areas throughout the building contain lead paint that, while not
4 meeting the LBP threshold, are still covered under OSHA provisions for construction work. Furthermore,
5 it is likely that some of the paint used to mark the parking lots and roads, particularly the older
6 deteriorated lots on the southern end of the site, could contain lead.

7 California regulations (8 CCR 1532.1) define lead-related construction work as material that may result in
8 significant exposure of individuals to lead. Therefore, the state of California does not distinguish between
9 LBP and paint that contains lead at a lower concentration. Materials determined to contain greater than
10 5,000 ppm are considered LBP.

11 **Petroleum and Hazardous Materials Storage Tanks**

12 Six USTs were removed from the CHFB in 1993, including tanks used to store diesel, gasoline, used oil,
13 and sulfuric acid. Currently, the site has one 4,000-gallon UST that is used to store diesel for the
14 emergency generator and diesel fire pump. An additional diesel-fired emergency generator located
15 outside the southwest corner of the CHFB has a belly tank with an estimated capacity of 3,000 gallons
16 (GSA 2019d).

17 Soil contamination from leaking USTs was identified on-site at two storage tank areas in the western and
18 southern portions of the property. Soil in the western storage tank area was found to be impacted with
19 benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene (BTEX) up to 11, 48, 14, and 91 parts per billion (ppb),
20 respectively. Soil near USTs south of the building was found to be impacted with total petroleum
21 hydrocarbons as diesel (TPHd) up to 220 parts per million (ppm). A total of 1,800 cubic yards of
22 impacted soil was removed near USTs west of the building, and a total of 70 cubic yards of impacted soil
23 was removed south of the building. Impacted soil was transported to a local landfill for disposal.
24 Additional soil sampling was performed in these areas after excavation. No impacted soil was identified
25 on the west side of the building and approximately 5 to 10 cubic yards of impacted soil was estimated
26 to remain south of the building. Two groundwater monitoring wells were installed at the property, one at
27 each removal area, and sampled in July 1993 and June 1994. No detectable concentrations of TPHd, total
28 petroleum hydrocarbons as gasoline (TPHg), or BTEX were detected in the sampled groundwater during
29 the sampling events.

30 **Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)**

31 Neither of the Phase I ESAs identified any electrical transformers or other equipment that could
32 potentially contain PCBs on site. However, due to the age of the building, it is possible that some
33 transformers or electrical equipment may remain on site that could potentially contain PCBs.

34 **Nearby Facilities of Concern**

35 The Phase I ESAs identified several facilities in the surrounding area that have records in various
36 environmental compliance tracking databases, including industrial facilities and drycleaning
37 establishments. These facilities generated various types of hazardous waste and used oil. The majority of
38 these sites are not recorded as having had a release. However, one of the drycleaning facilities was cited
39 by regulators for improper storage of hazardous materials. Although there are no records of reported
40 releases at any of the drycleaning facilities, the Phase I ESAs identified the presence of these facilities
41 adjacent to the site to be a potential concern.

42 **3.11.2 Environmental Consequences**

43 To evaluate the impacts to hazardous materials and wastes, alternatives were reviewed for their potential
44 to cause the following:

- 45 • New sources of construction materials and operational supplies to be developed;

- 1 • Affect the capacity of existing material suppliers and industries in the region;
- 2 • Create the need for a hazardous waste treatment, storage, or disposal permit
- 3 for the project;
- 4 • Create reasonably foreseeable conditions that would increase the risk of a
- 5 hazardous materials or hazardous waste release; or
- 6 • Affect the capacity of waste collection services and treatment, storage, and disposal facilities.

7 A significant adverse impact to hazardous materials and wastes would occur if the action would result in:

- 8 • Violations of applicable federal, state, or local standards related to the management of hazardous
- 9 materials or wastes, or
- 10 • Increase in the use of hazardous materials or generation of hazardous wastes to such an extent
- 11 that would lead to an elevated risk of human health or environmental effects.

12 When assessing significance, GSA also took into account the potential for BMPs to reduce the severity or

13 extent of these impacts. Applicable BMPs are described in Section 3.11.2.4.

14 **3.11.2.1 No Action Alternative**

15 Under the No Action Alternative, GSA would not construct a new USCIS building or relocate tenants to

16 new offsite locations. Maintenance and repairs to the CHFEB would continue to occur as needed, which

17 could generate minor amounts of hazardous waste and other wastes such as asbestos-containing materials.

18 All wastes, including hazardous wastes and other wastes requiring special handling and disposal, would

19 be managed in accordance with all applicable federal and state regulations. No additional impacts related

20 to hazardous materials or wastes would occur, beyond those occurring under current conditions.

21 **3.11.2.2 Alternative 1**

22 **Construction**

23 Alternative 1 would have negligible to minor direct impacts on hazardous materials and wastes during

24 construction of a new USCIS building. Impacts would be short-term and adverse, and would end once

25 construction activities are completed.

26 To minimize potential exposure or safety concerns to workers, any existing municipal (household) trash,

27 construction debris, and other waste materials would be removed from all proposed development areas on

28 the 27.15-acre parcel and disposed of in accordance with applicable regulations. In addition, potentially

29 hazardous wastes generated during project-related construction activities would be disposed of or

30 recycled at appropriate facilities in accordance with associated regulatory requirements. There may be

31 areas within the 27.15-acre parcel to be retained with potential lead-containing surfaces that would need

32 to be managed appropriately (e.g., paint used to mark the parking lots and roads). These materials would

33 be sampled and if lead is found to be present, appropriate precautions would be taken during demolition

34 and waste removal to ensure worker protection and compliance with applicable regulations.

35 Hazardous materials associated with construction would be used in accordance with federal, state and

36 local regulations. The increased amounts of hazardous materials such as diesel fuel, gasoline, paint,

37 adhesives and solvents used onsite during construction could increase the potential for spills. Any spills

38 from construction activities would be immediately contained and disposed of properly. In addition, any

39 project-specific hazards affecting workers would be reduced based on strict adherence to OSHA standards

40 and other relevant safety laws, rules and regulations. Therefore, there would be a low likelihood of

41 hazardous material spills or associated human health impacts as a result of construction activities. See

42 Section 3.11.2.4 on steps that would be taken to minimize impacts related to hazardous materials and

43 wastes during construction activities.

1 Potentially contaminated soil (as a result of historical spills and releases or pesticide use) could be
2 encountered during excavation or demolition activities. Soil sampling would be conducted prior to soil
3 reuse or disposal to characterize the soil for the presence of hazardous materials (e.g., metals, petroleum
4 hydrocarbons, VOCs, pesticides, etc.). If contaminated soil is present, appropriate abatement,
5 management or disposal actions would be implemented in accordance with applicable regulatory
6 requirements to prevent, minimize, and control hazardous materials, if necessary, during construction.

7 **Operations**

8 There would be negligible impacts related to hazardous materials and wastes from operations of the new
9 USCIS building. The new facility would not include any ACMs or lead-based paint that could result in
10 occupant exposure, or any PCB-containing electrical equipment. There may be petroleum storage tanks
11 associated with the new facility; these would be installed and operated in accordance with all applicable
12 regulations and current industry standards including leak-detection systems and secondary containment.
13 Hazardous materials such as paints and cleaners would be used in facility maintenance activities, but
14 these would likely be in small amounts. Small amounts of hazardous waste may also be generated
15 periodically from facility maintenance activities and would be managed in accordance with applicable
16 regulations.

17 **Future Redevelopment**

18 Under a renovation scenario, minor indirect impacts could occur from renovation of the existing CHFB
19 on the remaining 64.85-acre parcel to be disposed of due to the use of hazardous materials and generation
20 of hazardous waste during construction. All locations potentially containing LBP would be evaluated
21 before starting construction activities to determine if any abatement measures would be required. For all
22 ACMs, a licensed abatement contractor would be retained to remove and properly dispose of ACMs prior
23 to commencing construction operations. Additionally, any transformers that need to be disturbed or
24 moved would be sampled for PCB content. If PCBs are present, appropriate abatement actions for their
25 disposal would be implemented in accordance with regulatory requirements, and soil beneath
26 transformers would be evaluated for evidence of releases. If any releases are detected in underlying soils,
27 appropriate abatement actions for removal and disposal would be implemented in accordance with
28 applicable regulatory requirements. The amount of waste generated, including waste ACM, lead-
29 contaminated debris, and PCB wastes, would vary depending on the extent of renovations being
30 undertaken. Other construction-related impacts would be similar to the direct impacts discussed for
31 construction of the new USCIS building, including the potential for encountering contaminated soil, the
32 use of hazardous materials and generation of wastes during construction, and the potential for hazardous
33 materials spills.

34 Under operations of a renovation scenario, similar amounts of hazardous material usage and waste
35 generation may occur as under existing conditions for the CHFB. To the extent that existing hazardous
36 materials such as ACM, LBP, and PCBs are removed during renovation activities, there would be a minor
37 but long-term beneficial impact from operations.

38 Under a demolition/new construction scenario, indirect impacts related to construction could be similar to
39 the renovation scenario but would likely be greater in magnitude because of demolition of the existing
40 CHFB. Additionally, there would be a potential for spills and other wastes to be generated during
41 construction activities. Demolition and construction debris would be managed in accordance with
42 applicable regulations and would be disposed of at appropriately licensed facilities. Impacts from
43 generation of wastes during demolition and construction activities would be minor, adverse and short-
44 term. There would be a long-term beneficial impact during operations, as a result of the removal of
45 existing hazardous materials from the site.

1 Follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses would be required (depending on who acquires the site) for any
2 proposed redevelopment plans presented by a future developer and would further address impacts related
3 to hazardous materials and waste once final development plans are completed.

4 **3.11.2.3 Alternative 2**

5 Under Alternative 2, there would be negligible to minor direct impacts to hazardous materials or wastes.
6 All tenants would be removed from the CHFB and no construction would occur at the site. Off-site
7 leasing of new office space may require office build-outs, which could result in negligible to minor,
8 temporary increases in waste generation. There may also be a temporary minor increase in waste
9 generation due to disposal of items while the CHFB is being vacated, including the potential for small
10 quantities of hazardous waste. These activities would be required to comply with all applicable federal,
11 state and local regulations.

12 **Future Redevelopment**

13 Under a renovation/new construction scenario, minor indirect impacts could occur from renovation of the
14 existing CHFB and new construction on the south or west end of the 92-acre site to be disposed. Under
15 this scenario for Alternative 2, there could be minor indirect impacts from use of hazardous materials and
16 generation of hazardous wastes during renovation activities, similar to as described for Alternative 1
17 Future Redevelopment (renovation scenario). In addition, it is assumed there would be some new
18 construction on the south or west end of the site, resulting in similar, minor impacts as described for
19 construction of the new USCIS building under Alternative 1.

20 Under a demolition/new construction scenario, indirect impacts could occur from demolition of the
21 existing CHFB and new construction on the 92-acre site to be disposed. Under this scenario for
22 Alternative 2, there could be moderate indirect impacts from use of hazardous materials and generation of
23 hazardous wastes during construction. Impacts would be similar to the impacts described under
24 Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment (demolition/new construction scenario) but would likely be of
25 greater intensity, as up to 92 acres of the site would potentially be impacted.

26 Operations under a renovation/new construction or a demolition/new construction could result in similar
27 impacts as described under operations for Alternative 1, Future Redevelopment. To the extent that
28 existing hazardous materials such as ACM, LBP, and PCBs are removed during renovation activities,
29 there would be a minor, long-term beneficial impact on occupant health. Any existing hazardous materials
30 in the CHFB would likely be completely removed under a demolition/new construction scenario. Usage
31 of hazardous material and generation of waste would continue occur as a result of building operations and
32 maintenance under both scenarios.

33 Similar to Alternative 1, Follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses would further address hazardous materials
34 and wastes once final development plans are completed.

35 **3.11.2.4 Impact Reduction Measures**

36 Measures that would limit impacts related to hazardous materials and wastes during building construction
37 and operations are discussed below.

- 38 • If PCB-containing materials are identified onsite, appropriate abatement actions for their disposal
39 would be implemented in accordance with regulatory requirements, and soil beneath transformers
40 would be evaluated for evidence of releases. If present in underlying soils, appropriate abatement
41 actions for removal and disposal would be implemented in accordance with applicable regulatory
42 requirements.
- 43 • All spills or releases of petroleum oil lubricating products, hazardous materials, pollutants or
44 contaminants would be handled in accordance with measures outlined in a Spill Prevention and
45 Response Plan prepared for the construction project.

- 1 • A Soil Management Plan would be prepared to address the potential for encountering areas of
2 potential environmental concern during associated grading, excavation or other subsurface
3 disturbance. The Soil Management Plan would identify specific measures to address hazardous
4 waste and materials cleanup efforts including monitoring, handling, stockpiling, characterization,
5 on-site reuse, export and disposal protocols for excavated soil.
- 6 • To prevent exposure to workers or the release of hazardous waste and materials to the
7 environment, field surveys, soil sampling or laboratory testing would be conducted in any
8 questionable areas prior to renovations, construction or demolition. These efforts would evaluate
9 the potential occurrence of contaminants where known spills or contamination have occurred,
10 followed by proper handling and disposal as necessary.

11

3.12 NOISE

This section presents an overview of noise, how noise is measured, and the existing acoustic environment that could be affected by the alternatives.

3.12.1 Affected Environment

The ROI for noise includes the CHFB site and areas within a half-mile radius. The ROI does not include regional conditions outside of the 92-acre CHFB site and corresponding half-mile radius; it is assumed off-site leased office space would be located in existing commercial areas or office parks, and noise levels experienced would be consistent with existing conditions at these locations. Construction build-outs at off-site leased office space would occur primarily indoors and would not require any ground disturbance or major earth work; therefore, negligible impacts would occur to the surrounding noise environment at those locations. Noise levels from these activities would be subject to applicable local noise ordinances and would occur during normal construction hours.

3.12.1.1 Noise Metrics and Regulations

Sound is a physical phenomenon consisting of vibrations that travel through a medium, such as air, and are sensed by the human ear. Noise is defined as any sound that is undesirable to the receptor because it interferes with communication, is intense enough to damage hearing, or is otherwise intrusive. While sound is defined as an auditory effect, noise is considered a disturbance. Human and wildlife responses to noise vary according to the type of sound, characteristics of the sound source, distance between the source and receptor, receptor sensitivity and time of day. Noise is often generated by activities essential to a community's economy and quality of life, such as construction and vehicular traffic. An organism's response to a sound source determines whether the sound is judged as pleasing or annoying. Noise can also be detrimental if it disturbs an organism's normal behavior (USEPA 1981).

Sound varies by both intensity and frequency. Sound pressure level, described in decibels (dB), is used to quantify sound intensity. The dB is a logarithmic unit that expresses the ratio of a sound pressure level to a standard reference level. Hertz (Hz) are used to quantify sound frequency. The A-weighted decibel (dBA) is used to characterize sound levels that can be sensed by the human ear. "A-weighted" denotes the adjustment of the frequency range to what the average human ear can sense when experiencing an audible event. The threshold of audibility is generally within the range of 10 to 25 dBA for normal hearing. The threshold of pain occurs at the upper boundary of audibility, which is normally in the region of 135 dBA (USEPA 1981). Table 3.12-1 presents sounds encountered in daily life, their dBA levels, and how they affect hearing. For example, a whisper is usually 30 dBA and is considered to be very quiet, an air conditioning unit 20 feet away is considered an intrusive noise at 60 dBA, and the sound of a refrigerator at 55 dBA is considered at the level of ambient sound levels. Noise levels can become annoying at 80 dBA and very annoying at 90 dBA. To the human ear, each 10 dBA increase seems twice as loud (USEPA 1981).

The dBA noise metric describes steady noise levels, although very few noises are in fact constant. Therefore, Day-night Sound Level (DNL) has been developed. DNL is defined as the average sound energy in a 24-hour period with a 10-dB penalty added to the nighttime levels (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.). It is a useful descriptor for noise because: 1) it averages ongoing yet intermittent noise; and 2) it measures total sound energy over a 24-hour period. In addition, Equivalent Sound Level (L_{eq}) is often used to describe the overall noise environment. L_{eq} is the average sound level in dB.

Ambient, or background, noise is a combination of various sources heard simultaneously. Calculating noise levels for combinations of sounds does not involve simple addition, but instead uses a logarithmic scale (HUD 1985). As a result, the addition of two noises, such as a garbage truck (100 dBA) and a lawn mower (95 dBA) would result in a cumulative sound level of 101.2 dBA, not 195 dBA.

1

Table 3.12-1. Sound Levels and Human Response

Sound Level (dBA)	Effect	Outdoor	Indoor
30	Very quiet	Rustling leaves	Soft whisper (15 feet)
40	Quiet	Quiet residential area	Library
55	Ambient	Rainfall or light auto traffic (100 feet)	Refrigerator
60	Intrusive	Normal Conversation	Air conditioning unit (20 feet)
70	Telephone use difficult	Freeway traffic	Noisy restaurant or TV audio
80	Annoying	Downtown (large city)	Alarm clock (2 feet) or ringing telephone
90	Very annoying; hearing damage (8 hours)	Tractor, bulldozer, excavator	Garbage disposal
100	Very annoying	Garbage truck, motorcycle	Subway train
110	Strained vocal effort	Pile drivers	Power saw at 3 feet
120	Maximum vocal effort	Jet takeoff (200 feet) or auto horn (3 feet)	Rock concert
140	Painfully loud	Carrier deck jet operation	--

2 Source: USEPA 1981
3 dba = A-weighted decibel

4 Noise levels decrease (attenuate) with distance from the source. The decrease in sound level from any
5 single noise source normally follows the “inverse square law.” That is, the sound level change is inversely
6 proportional to the square of the distance from the sound source. A generally accepted rule is that the
7 sound level from a stationary source would drop approximately 6 dB each time the distance from the
8 sound source is doubled. The sound level from a moving “line” source (e.g., a train or vehicle) would
9 drop 3 dB each time the distance from the source is doubled (USDOT 2018).

10 Barriers, both manmade (e.g., sound walls) and natural (e.g., forested areas, hills, etc.), as well as other
11 natural factors such as temperature and climate, may reduce noise levels. Standard buildings typically
12 provide approximately 15 dB of noise reduction between exterior and interior noise levels
13 (USEPA 1978). Noise generated by stationary and mobile sources has the potential to impact sensitive
14 noise receptors, such as residences, hospitals, and schools. Persistent and escalating sources of sound are
15 often considered annoyances and can interfere with normal activities, such as sleeping or conversation,
16 such that these sounds could disrupt or diminish quality of life.

17 The OSHA’s noise standard (29 CFR 1910.95) established workplace standards for noise. The minimum
18 requirement states that constant noise exposure must not exceed 90 dBA over an 8-hour period. The
19 highest allowable sound level to which workers can be constantly exposed is 115 dBA; exposure to this
20 level must not exceed 15 minutes within an 8-hour period. The standards limit instantaneous exposure,
21 such as impact noise, to 140 dBA. If noise levels exceed these standards, employers are required to
22 provide hearing protection equipment that reduces sound levels to acceptable limits (OSHA 2019).

23 The Noise Control Act of 1972 (PL 92-574) directs federal agencies to comply with applicable federal,
24 state, interstate, and local noise control regulations. In 1974, the USEPA provided information suggesting
25 that continuous and long-term noise levels in excess of DNL 65 dBA are normally unacceptable for noise-
26 sensitive land uses such as residences, schools, churches, and hospitals. However, in 1982, the USEPA
27 transferred the primary responsibility of regulating noise to state and local governments.

1 Division 6 of the City of Laguna Niguel’s Municipal Code, Noise Control, regulates the control of
2 unnecessary, excessive and annoying sounds emanating from the City. The Noise Element of the City of
3 Laguna Niguel General Plan provides the allowable noise levels by land use (City of Laguna
4 Niguel 1992b). Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) is the predominant noise rating scale used in
5 California for land use compatibility. The CNEL rating represents the average of equivalent noise levels
6 at a location for a 24-hour period, based on an A-weighted decibel with upward adjustments added to
7 account for increased noise sensitivity in the evening and night periods in order to account for the lower
8 tolerance of individuals to noise during those periods.

9 **3.12.1.2 Existing Noise**

10 The CHFB site is located within an existing commercial area in Laguna Niguel. Primary sources of noise
11 near the site include motor vehicle traffic from nearby roadways, commercial activity from nearby
12 shopping centers, and minor overhead aircraft noise.

13 Land use noise compatibility guidelines for office buildings areas are considered compatible from 50 to
14 68 CNEL, conditionally compatible from 68 to 77 CNEL and incompatible above 77 CNEL (City of
15 Laguna Niguel 1992b).

16 Table 3.12-2 lists the nearby sensitive receptors within 0.5 mile of the proposed construction site at the
17 CHFB. Sensitive receptors include residences, schools, daycares, libraries, parks, churches, and senior
18 living communities.

19 **Table 3.12-2. Nearby Sensitive Receptors**

Receptor Type	Receptor	Direction from CHFB	Distance (feet)
Park	El Lazo Basketball Courts	onsite at CHFB	0
Park	Laguna Niguel Skate and Soccer Park	Northwest	106
Daycare	Ziggurat Child Development Center	onsite at CHFB	264
Church	Faith Episcopal Church	East	317
Library	Music House Library	South	475
Park	Hillview Park	West	792
School	Aliso Niguel High School	West	792
Park	La Paz Sports Park	South	1,056
Residence	Residential Areas	East/West	1,056
Church	Vineyard Laguna Niguel (church)	Northeast	1,320
Park	Niguel Heights Park	East	1,320
Park	Laguna Niguel Regional Park	South	1,320
School	Laguna Niguel Elementary School	East	1,320
School	Wood Canyon Elementary School	Southwest	1,320
Church	The Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints	Southwest	1,901
Park	Aliso Canyon Community Park	Southwest	1,954
Residence	Residential Areas	South	2,059
Daycare	Tutor Time of Laguna	Northeast	2,218
Senior Center	OC Senior Care	East	2,270
School	St. Mary's School	Southwest	2,482
Park	Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park	Southwest	2,534

Source: City of Laguna Niguel 2019, 2011
CHFB = Chet Holifield Federal Building

3.12.2 Environmental Consequences

To evaluate the potential impacts from noise and vibration, alternatives were reviewed for their potential to cause the following:

- Addition of new mobile and stationary noise sources;
- Conflict with any federal, state or local noise ordinances;
- Long-term perceptible increase in ambient noise levels above regulatory thresholds at sensitive receptors during operations; or
- Excessive ground-borne vibration to persons or property.

A significant adverse impact from noise and vibration would occur if the action would result in:

- Harm or injure to adjacent communities or sensitive receptors (i.e., residences, schools, hospitals, etc.).
- Exceed applicable environmental noise limit guidelines.

3.12.2.1 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, GSA would not construct a new USCIS building or relocate tenants to new offsite locations. Ongoing maintenance to the CHFB would occur, which could generate minor, short-term amount of noise depending on the activity.

3.12.2.2 Alternative 1

Construction

Alternative 1 would result in moderate, short-term adverse noise impacts during construction. Construction of a new USCIS building would take approximately 30 months and involve site preparation, excavation for foundations and utility tie-ins, hauling of debris and materials, and building construction. The specific types of construction equipment and methods are not yet known, although are anticipated to be typical of standard building construction activities. Table 3.12-3 presents typical construction equipment (mobile and stationary) and the corresponding noise levels. Table 3.12-4 presents the typical noise levels during construction.

Equipment	Typical Noise Level at 50 feet (dBA)	Typical Noise Level at 500 feet (dBA)	Typical Noise Level at 1,000 feet (dBA)	Typical Noise Level at 1,500 feet (dBA)
Front Loader	80	60	54	50
Backhoe, excavator	80	60	54	50
Roller	85	65	59	55
Grader	85	65	59	55
Scraper	85	65	59	55
Truck	84	64	58	54
Front Loader	80	60	54	50

Source: Lamancusa 2009; USDOT 2018
dBA = A-weighted decibel

Construction Phase	dBA L_{eq} at 50 feet from Source
Ground Clearing	84
Excavation, Grading	89
Foundations	78
Structural	85
Finishing	89

Source: USEPA 1974; Bolt et al. 1971
dBA = A-weighted decibels; L_{eq} = Equivalent Sound Level

1 The maximum average noise levels generated during construction would typically range from 78 to
 2 89 dBA at a distance of 50 feet (see Table 3.12-4). Depending on the phase of construction, construction
 3 equipment could be operated concurrently. As a result, the analysis conservatively estimates noise levels
 4 at nearby receptors using the combined noise levels of several pieces of construction equipment (USDOT
 5 2012). The closest onsite sensitive receptors to the construction site would be the Ziggurat Child
 6 Development Center and El Lazo Basketball Courts. However, the Ziggurat Child Development Center is
 7 located 264 from the construction site, on the northwest corner of the CHFB; therefore, anticipated noise
 8 levels at this site during construction would be between 70 dBA to 83 dBA. Section 3.13, Environmental
 9 Justice and Protection of Children’s Health and Safety, provides additional discussion of potential noise
 10 impacts to the Child Development Center. [GSA to confirm if the El Lazo Basketball Courts would close
 11 during construction]. The closest offsite receptor is the Laguna Niguel Skate and Soccer Park, located
 12 approximately 100 feet to the northwest. Offsite receptors located between 100 feet to 500 feet could
 13 experience the combined noise levels of 70 dBA to 83 dBA. Aliso Niguel High School is located
 14 approximately 792 feet or 0.15 mile west of the CHFB. Noise levels at this receptor could experience
 15 combined construction noise levels of up to 66 dBA. Residences located approximately 1,056 feet or 0.2
 16 mile from the construction site could experience noise levels up to 63 dBA.

17 Standard buildings with windows and doors shut result in an approximately 15 dBA noise reduction
 18 (USEPA 1978). With windows and doors shut the interior noise levels at receptors from combined
 19 construction equipment within 50 feet would reduce to 75 dBA, and within 100 feet would reduce to
 20 approximately 69 dBA (USEPA 1978), as noise from a point source generally decreases 6 dBA per
 21 doubling of distance (Lamancusa 2009).

22 Although construction would be temporary, potential noise impacts would be minimized to the extent
 23 possible by standard noise control measures, such as project scheduling, noise barriers, and using noise
 24 controls on equipment (e.g., mufflers). Activities would be consistent with normal construction activities
 25 and would be conducted during normal business hours. If a variation from normal construction hours
 26 (i.e., between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday, excluding holidays) is required due to
 27 unforeseen circumstances (e.g., weather) or for specific tasks, a variance permit³ from the City of Laguna

³ Section 6-6-12 of the City of Laguna Niguel Municipal Code prescribes the process for obtaining a noise variance permit. Any owner or operator of a noise source who violates provisions of the noise code may apply for a variance with the Chief of Police. The application must include actions taken to comply with the provision, reasons why immediate compliance cannot be achieved, a proposed method of achieving compliance and a proposed time schedule for its accomplishment, and a fee. The application is then reviewed by the Noise Variance Board for approval or further action.

1 Niguel would be obtained. All construction activities would comply with the City of Laguna Niguel's
2 noise ordinance.

3 There would be no direct impacts to noise from disposal of the remaining 64.85 acres of the CHFB site.
4 The CHFB would be vacated and operations would cease at the site, resulting in a decrease in noise-
5 generating activities from the existing location.

6 **Operations**

7 Negligible, long-term direct noise impacts would be expected during operations of a new USCIS
8 building. Due to the nature of the activities associated with the USCIS building, no new stationary
9 sources of continuous noise are expected. The emergency generator would produce periodic noise during
10 maintenance or for emergency situations which is expected to be minimal. There would be a decrease in
11 vehicle traffic due to approximately 1,000 fewer employees traveling to the site from baseline conditions,
12 which would result in a decrease in noise from vehicle trips.

13 Long-term negligible noise impacts are anticipated from operations of new leased locations. Noise levels
14 at respective leased locations would be consistent with prescribed noise levels (i.e., 70 dBA) for existing
15 commercial or professional office land uses (City of Laguna Niguel 1992b). There could be a negligible
16 increase in noise from vehicular traffic in surrounding communities. Vehicle trips would be distributed
17 throughout Orange County and noise impacts would vary across communities depending on the final site
18 selection for each agency and commuting patterns for tenants. Traffic increases are not anticipated to
19 result in noticeable noise increases given the range of locations where each agency could relocate to as
20 well as the numerous traffic patterns that could be utilized. [Section to be updated pending completion of
21 traffic section.]

22 **Future Redevelopment**

23 Under a renovation scenario, adverse indirect impacts could occur from renovation of the existing CHFB
24 on the remaining 64.85-acre parcel to be disposed. Moderate, short-term indirect noise impacts would be
25 expected from construction activities. Under this scenario for Alternative 1, no new structures would be
26 constructed, but there could be construction activities on the interior and exterior of the CHFB while
27 improvements are made to bring the building up to current California Building Code. Moderate short-
28 term impacts could occur to sensitive receptors similar to as described for construction of the new USCIS
29 building, particularly the nearby sensitive receptors within 1,000 feet (refer to Table 3.12-2).

30 Moderate, long-term indirect noise impacts would be anticipated under operations of a renovation
31 scenario, depending on future occupancy numbers. Noise levels would be similar to existing conditions at
32 the CHFB and would be typical of commercial and office space. Assuming occupancy levels remain the
33 same as the existing CHFB, there could be an approximate net increase of up to 2,000 vehicular trips to
34 the site, which could result in moderate noise impacts to the surrounding community. [Section to be
35 updated pending completion of traffic section]

36 Under a demolition/new construction scenario, indirect impacts could occur from demolition of the
37 existing CHFB and new construction on the remaining 64.85-acre parcel to be disposed. Under this
38 scenario, there could be short-term moderate noise impacts during construction. Impacts would be similar
39 to as described for construction of the new USCIS building but would be to a greater intensity as
40 construction would occur across a larger area and potentially longer time frame, and would also include
41 demolition and additional site grading due to the presence of steep slopes. Table 3.12-4 presents typical
42 noise levels from construction. Future development plans are unknown but would likely be phased over a
43 number of years.

44 Minor to moderate, long-term indirect noise impacts would be anticipated under operations of a
45 demolition/new construction scenario. No new major stationary noise sources are anticipated under future
46 development scenario, and noise levels would likely be typical of prescribed noise levels (i.e., 70 dBA)

1 for existing commercial or professional office land uses (City of Laguna Niguel 1992b). However,
2 increased noise levels would be likely due to an increase in density of development and increased traffic
3 commuting to the site. [Section to be updated pending completion of traffic section]

4 Future traffic levels and associated noise impacts are currently unknown and would be considered in
5 follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses as described in Section 2.1.1.2. Similarly, these follow-on analyses
6 would further address noise impacts from construction and operation of future redevelopments of the site.

7 **3.12.2.3 Alternative 2**

8 Under Alternative 2, there would be negligible impacts to noise during construction. Construction build-
9 outs would occur primarily indoors and would not require any ground disturbance or major earth work.
10 Noise levels from these activities would be subject to applicable local noise ordinances and would occur
11 during normal construction hours.

12 Negligible to minor, long-term direct noise impacts are anticipated from operations of new leased
13 locations. Noise levels at respective leased locations would be consistent with prescribed noise levels
14 (i.e., 70 dBA) for existing commercial or professional office land uses (City of Laguna Niguel 1992b).
15 There could be a minor increase in noise from vehicular traffic in surrounding communities. Vehicle trips
16 would be distributed throughout Orange County and noise impacts would vary across communities
17 depending on the final site selection for each agency and commuting patterns for tenants. Traffic
18 increases are not anticipated to result in noticeable noise increases given the range of locations where
19 each agency could relocate to as well as the numerous traffic patterns that could be utilized. The CHF
20 would be vacated and operations would cease at the site, resulting in a long-term decrease in noise-
21 generating activities and associated traffic from the existing location. [Section to be updated pending
22 completion of traffic section]

23 **Future Redevelopment**

24 Under a renovation/new construction scenario, there could be short-term, moderate indirect noise impacts
25 during construction. Under this scenario for Alternative 2, there would be minor noise impacts from
26 renovation activities at CHF similar to as described under Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment
27 (renovation scenario). In addition, it is assumed there would be some new construction on the south or
28 west end of the site, resulting in similar, moderate noise impacts as described for construction of the new
29 USCIS building under Alternative 1. Moderate impacts could occur to sensitive receptors, particularly the
30 nearby sensitive receptors within 1,000 feet (refer to Table 3.12-2).

31 Under a demolition/new construction scenario, there could be moderate indirect noise impacts during
32 construction. Impacts would be similar to as described for the same scenario under Alternative 1 Future
33 Redevelopment (demolition/new construction scenario) but would be to a greater intensity and potentially
34 longer duration as up to 92 acres of the site would be impacted. Table 3.12-4 presents typical noise levels
35 from construction. Future development plans are unknown but would likely be phased over a number of
36 years.

37 Moderate, long-term indirect noise impacts would be anticipated under operations of both a renovation/
38 new construction and a demolition/new construction scenario. Increased noise levels would be likely due
39 to an increase in density of development and increased traffic commuting to the site. No new major
40 stationary noise sources are anticipated under future development scenario, and noise levels would be
41 typical of prescribed noise levels (i.e., 70 dBA) for existing commercial or professional office land uses
42 (City of Laguna Niguel 1992b). [Section to be updated pending completion of traffic section]

43 Future traffic levels and associated noise impacts are currently unknown and would be considered in
44 follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses as described in Section 2.1.2.2. Similar to Alternative 1, these
45 follow-on analyses would further address operational noise impacts from future redevelopments of the
46 site.

1 **3.12.2.4 Impact Reduction Measures**

2 Noise impacts would be minimized to the extent possible through various measures, including:

- 3 • Implementation of noise control measures, such as project scheduling, noise barriers, and using
4 noise controls on equipment (e.g., mufflers).
- 5 • Conducting construction activities during normal business hours (i.e., between 7:00 a.m. and
6 8:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday, excluding holidays). If a variation from normal construction
7 hours a variance permit from the City of Laguna Niguel would be obtained.
- 8 • All construction activities would comply with the City of Laguna Niguel's noise ordinance.

9

3.13 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

EO 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, requires that federal agencies consider as a part of their action any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects to minority and low-income populations. Agencies are required to ensure that these potential effects are identified and addressed. The USEPA defines environmental justice as “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.” The goal of “fair treatment” is not to shift risks among populations, but to identify potential disproportionately high adverse impacts on minority and low-income communities and identify alternatives to mitigate any adverse impacts.

EO 13045, *Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks*, places a high priority on the identification and assessment of environmental health and safety risks that may disproportionately affect children. The EO requires that each agency “shall ensure that its policies, programs, activities, and standards address disproportionate risks to children.” It considers that physiological and social development of children makes them more sensitive than adults to adverse health and safety risks, and recognizes that children in minority and low-income populations are more likely to be exposed to and have increased health and safety risks from environmental contamination than the general population.

3.13.1 Affected Environment

The ROI for environmental justice and children populations focuses on the CHFB site and immediate surrounding area. Potential impacts with the greatest intensity and longest duration (e.g., noise, air quality, transportation, changes in economic activity) would occur near the CHFB. Therefore, environmental justice and children protection considerations are analyzed within a 1-mile radius of the CHFB. There would also be impacts from the relocation of new tenants throughout the County; however, specific locations for current relocation are only known generally (see Chapter 2). In this scenario, environmental justice and children populations are considered at the county level and compared to the overall State of California.

3.13.1.1 Environmental Justice

The definitions of minority, low-income, and minority or low-income populations are presented below.

- **Minority** - Individual(s) who are members of the following population groups as designated in the U.S. Census: Black or African-American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, as well as Hispanic or Latino of any race.
- **Low-income** - The U.S. Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty (i.e., classified as ‘low-income’). If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty thresholds do not vary geographically but are updated for inflation using the Consumer Price Index. The official poverty definition uses money income before taxes and does not include capital gains or noncash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps) (USCB 2019).
- **Minority or low-income population** – Populations where either: (a) the total number of minority or low-income individuals of the affected area exceeds 50 percent of the overall population in the same area, or (b) the total number of minority or low-income individuals within the affected area is meaningfully greater (e.g., 120 percent greater) than the minority or low-income population percentage in an appropriate comparison unit of geographic analysis (CEQ 1997). 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.

In identifying minority or low-income populations, 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 Americans), 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 not to artificially dilute or inflate the affected minority population.

- Meaningfully Greater** - A meaningfully greater minority or low-income population within a geographic unit affected by a federal action is determined by comparing the minority or low-income composition of the geographic unit to the minority or low-income composition of the general population. Similar to selecting the appropriate unit of geographic analysis, a comparison population should be selected so as to not artificially dilute or inflate the affected minority populations. For this analysis, the comparison population is the total population of Orange County.

The analysis of minority and low-income populations focuses on U.S. Census Bureau data for geographic units (i.e., census tracts and block groups) that represent, as closely as possible, the potentially affected areas. A census tract is a geographic area for which the U.S. Census Bureau provides consistent sample data and is comprised of smaller census block groups. Census tracts generally contain a population between 1,200 and 8,000 people. A census block group is the smallest geographic area for which the U.S. Census Bureau provides consistent sample data, and generally contains a population between 600 and 3,000 individuals. Census data for minority populations are available at the block group level; however, data for incomes below the poverty level are currently available only for census tracts and larger areas. Table 3.13-1 summarizes the percentage of minority and low-income populations within 1 mile of the CHFB site, Orange County, and the State of California for comparison purposes.

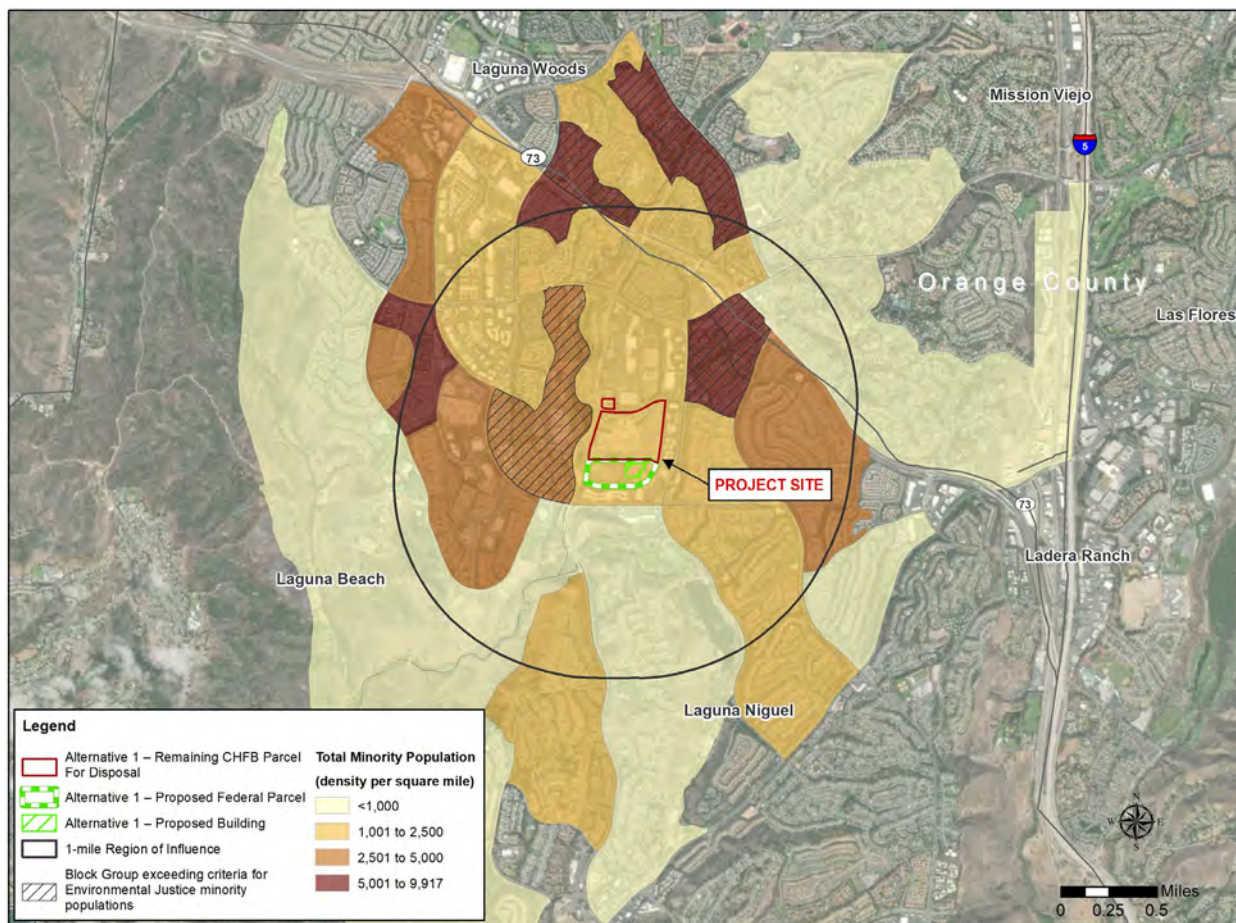
Table 3.13-1. Minority and Low-Income Population within the Region of Influence

Population Group	1 Mile ROI		Orange County		California	
	Population	Total (%)	Population	Total (%)	Population	Total (%)
Nonminority	37,074	64	1,306,398	41	14,777,594	38
Black or African American	1,186	2	49,560	2	2,161,459	6
Total Hispanic	8,782	15	1,079,172	34	15,105,860	39
American Indian or Alaska Native	306	1	6,584	0.2	137,813	0.35
Asian	7,031	12	615,659	20	5,427,928	14
Other Minority ¹	3,258	6	98,443	3	1,372,193	4
Total Minority	20,536	36	1,849,418	59	24,205,253	62
Total Population	57,637	100	3,155,816	100	38,982,847	100
Low Income	4,588	6	378459	12.1	5773408	15.1

USCB, 2017c

¹ Other Minority = Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; Some other race; or Two or more races.

1 The average minority population percentage of Orange County is approximately 59 percent, and a
 2 meaningfully greater minority population percentage relative to the general population of the county
 3 would exceed the 50 percent threshold defined by CEQ. Therefore, the lower threshold of 50 percent is
 4 used to identify areas with meaningfully greater minority populations within 1 mile of the CHF�. Of the
 5 30 block groups within the ROI, 5 block groups have individual racial group minority populations or
 6 aggregate minority populations that meet the environmental justice criteria. The total minority population
 7 residing within the 1-mile ROI is approximately 20,536, or 36 percent of the entire population. The
 8 overall composition of the ROI is predominantly nonminority. Minority populations in the ROI are
 9 predominantly Hispanic or Latino, followed by Asian. Figure 3.13-1 displays the block groups identified
 10 as meeting the criteria for environmental justice minority populations surrounding the CHF�, as well as
 11 the population density of minority populations within each block group.



12
13 **Figure 3.13-1. Minority Block Groups Near CHF�**

14 Low-income populations were evaluated using the absolute 50 percent and the relative 120 percent or
 15 greater criteria for potentially affected census tracts within the ROI. If a census tract's percentage of
 16 low-income individuals met the 50 percent criterion or was more than 120 percent of the total low-income
 17 population within Orange County (i.e., 14.5 percent), then the area was identified as having a low-income
 18 population. No census tracts within the 1-mile radius have a low-income population that exceeds the
 19 50 percent or meaningfully greater criteria.

20 **3.13.1.2 Protection of Children's Health and Safety**

21 The Memorandum Addressing Children's Health through Reviews Conducted Pursuant to the National
 22 Environmental Policy Act and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act recommends that an EIS "describe the

1 relevant demographics of affected neighborhoods, populations, and/or communities and focus exposure
2 assessments on children who are likely to be present at schools, recreation areas, childcare centers, parks,
3 and residential areas in close proximity to the proposed project area, and other areas of apparent frequent
4 and/or prolonged exposure” (USEPA 2012).

5 The analysis for EO 13045 requires the assessment of readily available demographic data and information
6 on local, regional, and national populations. The number and distribution of children less than 19 years
7 old in the ROI are evaluated to determine whether they would be exposed to environmental health and
8 safety risks from the Proposed Action and Alternatives.

9 Table 3.13-2 shows the population of children under age 5 and 5 to 19 within 1 mile of the CHF�,
10 Orange County, and California. Section 3.12.1.2 in Noise also shows locations of sensitive receptors, to
11 include locations children may be present within 0.5 mile of the CHF�.

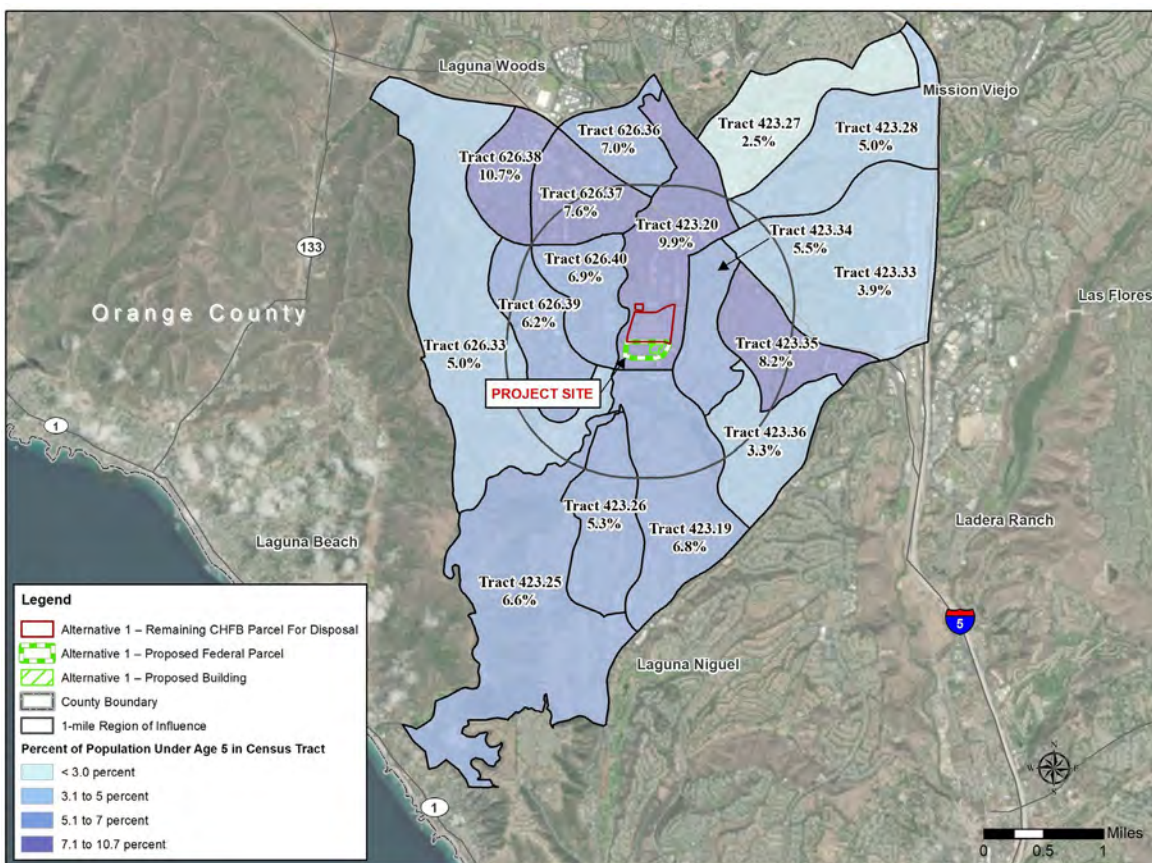
12 **Table 3.13-2. Youth Populations in the Region of Influence**

Location	Children Under 5 years (%)	Children 5 to 19 Years (%)
1 mile of CHF�	6.5	18.6
Orange County	6.0	19.4
California	6.4	19.7

13 Source: USCB 2017e

14 CHF� = Chet Holifield Federal Building

15 Figure 3.13-2 shows that the range of children populations under 5 years in census tracts within 1 mile of
16 the CHF� represent 2 to 10 percent of the total populations within each tract.



17 **Figure 3.13-2. Percent of Population Under 5 years in Census Tracts near CHF�**

1 Environmental Consequences

2 Consideration of the potential consequences for environmental justice requires three main components:

- 3 1) A demographic assessment of the affected community to identify the presence of minority or low-
4 income and youth populations that may be potentially affected.
- 5 2) An assessment of all potential impacts identified to determine if any result in significant adverse
6 impacts to the affected environment.
- 7 3) An integrated assessment to determine whether any disproportionately high and adverse impacts
8 exist for minority or low-income groups and youth populations present in or near the project area.

9 To evaluate the impacts on environmental justice resources, alternatives were reviewed for their potential
10 to cause the following:

- 11 • Cause a disproportionately high and adverse effect on a low-income or minority population; or
- 12 • Cause a disproportionately high and adverse environmental health and safety risks to children.

13 3.13.1.2 No Action Alternative

14 Under the No Action Alternative, GSA would not construct a new USCIS building or relocate tenants to
15 new offsite locations. No impacts on environmental justice populations or children are anticipated.

16 3.13.1.3 Alternative 1

17 Construction

18 Alternative 1 would result in short-term, minor impacts on environmental justice populations.
19 Environmental justice minority populations were identified as close as 293 feet to the west of the
20 proposed construction site of the new USCIS building, just across Alicia Parkway (see Figure 3-13-1).
21 The EIS identified the following impacts that could occur during construction and that may affect
22 populations surrounding the CHFB site, including environmental justice populations:

- 23 • Emissions, airborne dust, and soil surface disturbance from the use of on-road and nonroad
24 construction vehicles could result in short term and minor impacts to air quality in the immediate
25 vicinity of the project area (see Section 3.3, Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases). Fugitive dust
26 emissions would be managed through the use of BMPs, such as watering of soils during
27 excavation; offsite adverse effects to adjacent populations would be minimal with the use of
28 BMPs.
- 29 • [Minor], short-term traffic impacts could occur and cause delays near intersections closest to the
30 project area (see Section 3.10, Traffic and Transportation). [Pending completion of traffic
31 section]
- 32 • Receptors between 100 feet to 500 feet could experience temporary increases of combined noise
33 levels of 70 dBA to 83 dBA (see Section 3.12, Noise). Noise impacts would be minimized to the
34 extent possible by standard noise control measures, such as project scheduling, noise barriers, and
35 using noise controls on equipment (e.g., mufflers). Activities would be consistent with normal
36 construction activities and would be conducted during normal business hours.
- 37 • Minor visual impacts could occur during construction as a result of the unappealing aesthetic
38 nature of construction activities (see Section 3.7, Visual Resources and Aesthetics).
- 39 • Brief interruptions in utility service could occur where relocation or connections would be
40 required, although these would be temporary and coordinated with the local utility provider (see
41 Section 3.14, Utilities and Infrastructure).

- Beneficial impacts could result from increased spending and employment in the local community (see Section 3.4, Socioeconomics).

Impacts would be felt greatest directly adjacent to the construction site and would be noticeable within 1 mile. These impacts would adversely affect environmental justice minority populations within the vicinity of the CHFEB, but would not result in disproportionate or high adverse effects. Impacts would affect all populations within the vicinity of the construction site (where the total minority population is 36 percent), and impacts would not fall disproportionately on one or more populations. Impacts would be short-term for the duration of construction (i.e., up to 30 months), and would end following construction. There are no environmental justice low-income populations identified within 1 mile of the CHFEB and no impacts on environmental justice low-income populations are anticipated.

No impacts to environmental justice populations are anticipated from future build-outs of leased space, as construction activities are anticipated to take place indoors.

Protection of Children's Health and Safety

There could be minor to moderate adverse impacts to children populations during construction. Within 1,000 feet of the CHFEB, there are four sites identified that children may regularly attend (e.g., childcare centers or schools, community centers, or recreational facilities) and that could be adversely affected from construction. These include the Ziggurat Child Development Center [and El Lazo Basketball Courts - GSA to confirm if this site would close during construction] located onsite at CHFEB; Laguna Niguel Skate and Soccer Park (located 106 feet away); and Aliso Niguel High School and Hillview Park, both located 792 feet from the proposed construction site.

Increased level of noise created by construction equipment and vehicles could affect children's learning, especially near homes, schools, and recreational areas. At the Ziggurat Child Development Center, minor impacts are anticipated. Noise levels would be greatest when children are outdoors, which is for a short period of the day. Furthermore, the outdoor space for the daycare center is located on the other site of the CHFEB from the construction site (approximately 246 feet away), and it is anticipated existing structures would attenuate much of the construction noise emanating from site. Noise impacts could be greater at the Laguna Niguel Skate and Soccer Park, located 106 feet to the northwest. Offsite receptors located between 100 feet to 500 feet could experience the combined noise levels of 70 dBA to 83 dBA. Noise levels at Aliso Niguel High School and Hillview Park could experience combined construction noise levels of up to 66 dBA.

Minor air emissions impacts to children populations could occur during construction, particularly those closest to the construction site (i.e., at the Ziggurat Child Development Center and Laguna Niguel Skate and Soccer Park). Children are especially vulnerable due to higher relative doses of air pollution, smaller diameter airways, and more active time spent outdoors and closer to ground-level sources of vehicle exhaust. Similar to as described for environmental justice populations, emissions would be reduced through the use of BMPs such as watering of soils during excavation.

Construction areas would be fenced and under security due to the Homeland Security mission of Alternative 1, so that the likelihood of children entering the project site and encountering safety risks is low. [GSA to confirm accuracy of statement]

Operations

Minor to moderate impacts on environmental justice populations are anticipated during operations under Alternative 1. No or negligible adverse impacts from air, traffic, noise, or visual resources are anticipated during operations of the new USCIS building. There could be locally moderate to significant adverse socioeconomic impacts within Laguna Niguel from a decrease in employment by up to 3 percent due to tenant relocation to other areas within Orange County. This could adversely affect the local economy in Laguna Niguel, particularly lower wage employees working in service industry jobs. Although this could

1 adversely affect low-income individuals in the area, unemployment is generally low in Laguna Niguel
2 and Orange County, median incomes are much higher in the City and county compared to the State and
3 United States (see Section 3.4, Socioeconomics), and no low-income environmental justice populations
4 were identified within 1-mile of the CHFEB. Similarly, the socioeconomic benefits of increased
5 employment would shift to newly leased locations throughout the County, resulting in economic benefits
6 and indirect and induced job creation near those communities. Therefore, impacts would not be
7 disproportionately high or adverse to these communities, and impacts on environmental justice
8 populations would be less than significant. [Pending completion of traffic analysis]

9 **Protection of Children's Health and Safety**

10 No impacts to children populations are anticipated during operations of Alternative 1.

11 **Future Redevelopment**

12 Negligible to minor indirect impacts to environmental justice populations are anticipated during
13 construction under a renovation scenario for Alternative 1. Construction disturbances from air emissions,
14 visual resources impacts, traffic, and noise would be negligible to moderate as described in Sections 3.3,
15 Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases; Section 3.7, Visual Resources and Aesthetics; Section 3.10, Traffic
16 and Transportation; and Section 3.12, Noise, but are not anticipated to result in disproportionately high or
17 adverse impacts to environmental justice populations, for the same reasons as described for construction
18 of the USCIS building. Under future redevelopment for Alternative 1, it is anticipated the Ziggurat Child
19 Daycare facility would be relocated to the new USCIS building. Depending on renovation activities, child
20 populations could be adversely affected (as well as at the Laguna Niguel Skate and Soccer Park, Aliso
21 Niguel High School, and Hillview Park) similar to as described for construction of the new USCIS
22 building.

23 Moderate indirect impacts on environmental justice populations could occur during operations of a
24 renovation scenario. A net increase of up to 2,000 employees at the existing CHFEB site from new
25 development could adversely affect housing, community services, and recreational facilities in Laguna
26 Niguel, and could result in substantial increases in vehicle trips to the site [pending completion of traffic
27 analysis]. As shown in Figure 3.13-1, environmental justice populations are located directly west of the
28 CHFEB site and could experience long-term adverse socioeconomic, traffic, and associated air emissions
29 impacts. However, these impacts would not result in disproportionate or high adverse effects, as impacts
30 would be felt by all populations within the immediate vicinity of CHFEB (where the total minority
31 population is 36 percent of the population within 1 mile) and not fall disproportionately on one or more
32 populations. Similarly, increased development would have long-term beneficial economic impacts on the
33 Laguna Niguel community, which would also benefit environmental justice populations. There are no
34 environmental justice low-income populations identified within 1 mile of the existing CHFEB site and no
35 impacts on environmental justice low-income populations are anticipated. No impacts to children
36 populations are anticipated during operations of a renovation scenario.

37 Under a demolition/new construction scenario, minor to moderate indirect impacts to environmental
38 justice populations and children populations could occur during construction. Impacts would be similar to
39 as described for construction of the new USCIS building but could be to a greater intensity as
40 development would occur over a larger area and to a greater extent. The extent of noise, traffic, and air
41 emissions impacts may be greater due to the greater intensity and scale of development as well as the
42 timeline for construction; however, implementation of BMPs during construction activities would be
43 anticipated to keep potential adverse effects to less than significant.

44 Impacts during operations of a demolition/new construction scenario would be similar to as described for
45 operations of the renovation scenario, but to a larger extent and intensity. Future development of the site
46 is currently unknown and would be dictated by the future owner of the site. As a result, the extent of
47 socioeconomic and traffic impacts are unknown. Depending on the size and scale of development, these

1 impacts could be potentially significant, which could adversely affect minority populations. However,
2 similar for operation of the USCIS building, these impacts would be experienced by all populations
3 within the 1-mile radius, and would not be disproportionately high or adverse upon environmental justice
4 populations. Therefore, impacts to environmental justice populations are not anticipated to be significant.

5 Follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses would be required (depending on who acquires the site) for any
6 proposed redevelopment plans presented by a future developer and would further address impacts on
7 environmental justice populations once final development plans are completed.

8 **3.13.1.4 Alternative 2**

9 Under Alternative 2, there would be no adverse impacts to environmental justice or children populations
10 during construction as there would be no or negligible impacts to air emissions, visual resources, traffic,
11 and noise during construction; and there would be beneficial socioeconomic impacts as described in
12 Sections 3.3, Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases; Section 3.7, Visual Resources and Aesthetics; Section
13 3.10, Traffic and Transportation; Section 3.12, Noise and Section 3.4, Socioeconomics. Impacts would be
14 greatest near the final location of USCIS, which is likely to occur in the northern part of Orange County
15 (e.g., Irvine, Santa Ana or Anaheim). No impacts to children populations are anticipated during
16 construction or operations of Alternative 2. [Pending completion of traffic analysis]

17 **Future Redevelopment**

18 Under both a renovation/new construction and demolition/new construction scenario, minor to moderate
19 indirect impacts could occur to environmental justice populations, from air emissions, visual resources,
20 traffic, noise, and socioeconomic impacts. Impacts during construction and operation would be similar to
21 as described under Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment for the demolition/new construction scenario, and
22 would be dependent on the size and scope of new development to occur on the parcel. Impacts could be to
23 a greater extent and intensity under a demolition/new construction scenario, depending on the scale of
24 new development. Similar to as described under Alternative 1, these impacts are not anticipated to be
25 disproportionately high or adverse, given the composition of the ROI and nature of the impacts. Impacts
26 to children populations would be similar during construction and operations as described under
27 Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment.

28 Similar to Alternative 1, follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses would be required (depending on who
29 acquires the site) for any proposed redevelopment plans presented by a future developer and would
30 further address impacts on environmental justice populations.

31 **3.13.1.5 Impact Reduction Measures**

32 Impact reduction measures for resources specific to environmental justice are discussed in the respective
33 sections (i.e. Sections 3.3, Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases; Section 3.7, Visual Resources and
34 Aesthetics; Section 3.10, Traffic and Transportation; and Section 3.12, Noise).

35

3.14 UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

This section assesses the potential for existing utilities and support infrastructure within the project area to affect, or be affected by, implementation of the project.

3.14.1 Affected Environment

For purposes of this analysis, it was assumed that the ROI includes utilities utilized by the CHFB and any other utilities located on or adjacent to the 92-acre CHFB site. Existing utilities and support infrastructure located in the ROI, primarily within local roadways and the existing CHFB site, include water and sewer, natural gas, electricity, communications and stormwater, and are discussed below.

3.14.1.1 Water and Sewer

The Moulton Niguel Water District (MNWD) provides water and wastewater services to the CHFB and the greater Laguna Niguel area, serving over 170,000 customers (Municipal Water District of Orange County 2019). The MNWD service area is almost entirely developed and encompasses all or portions of the cities of Aliso Viejo, Laguna Niguel, Laguna Hills, Mission Viejo, Dana Point, and San Juan Capistrano. The primary wholesale water supplier to MNWD is the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, which provides approximately 75 percent of MNWD's total water supply. The remaining water supply is recycled water that serves landscape irrigation services.

South Orange County is highly dependent on imported water (Orange County Water District 2018). Orange County depends on imported water from northern California through the State Water Project and the Colorado River for approximately 37 percent of the County's total water supply. The balance comes from a large groundwater basin underlying the northern half of the County, recycled wastewater produced by local water agencies, and several smaller groundwater basins.

Wastewater generated at the project site is conveyed by a clay tile conveyance system to the MNWD sanitary sewer system at El Lazo Road and is treated at MNWD's 3A Wastewater Treatment Plant. The 3A Wastewater Treatment Plant is a conventional activated sludge treatment facility; the treatment process at the facility includes screening, grit removal, primary clarification, secondary treatment (activated sludge), secondary clarification, anaerobic digestion and solids dewatering. The design capacity of the 3A Treatment Plant is 6 million gallons per day. Approximately 2.4 million gallons of the plant's wastewater receives additional treatment each day for use as recycled water to irrigate local parks and greenbelts. Effluent that is not recycled is discharged to the Pacific Ocean through the San Juan Creek Ocean Outfall (Orange County Water District 2018).

Wastewater piping within the building consists of cast iron piping and is reported to be in good condition per recent assessments [GSA to provide personal communication in lieu of citing the Feasibility Study]. The use of clay tile piping for external wastewater transport has resulted in ongoing exterior maintenance issues, as this type of piping can be compromised with tree roots. Additionally, long runs from the building to the street sewer amplify this issue.

Current annual water consumption at the CHFB is estimated at 12.5 million gallons. Water is used at the CHFB in bathroom sinks, showers, toilets, and in kitchen sinks and dishwashers; all of these activities also generate wastewater. Current annual wastewater is estimated at 10.2 million gallons.

3.14.1.2 Natural Gas and Electrical

Natural gas is supplied to the CHFB site by Southern California Gas (SoCalGas), a regulated public utility that is owned by Sempra Energy. Natural gas is used at the CHFB for heating and hot water [GSA to confirm whether gas is supplied, and if so, to the CHFB or Central Utility Plant, or both]. The Southern California Edison Company supplies electricity to the main CHFB and the CUP. Electricity is used at the CHFB to power heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC), lighting, and office electronics

1 equipment. Current yearly natural gas consumption at the CHFB is estimated at 24.7 million cubic feet
2 (cf) and electricity consumption is 17.3 million kilowatt hours (kwh).

3 A 350 kW/438kVA Kohler standby diesel generator located on the CHFB basement level provides
4 backup power to elevators, stair pressurization fans, the fire alarm system, and the fire pump jockey
5 pump. A separate, newer generator provides emergency power exclusively to ICE, a tenant of the CHFB.
6 [GSA to confirm whether this generator would be installed at newly leased locations].

7 The CHFB also has a photovoltaic (PV) solar array with a total generating capacity of 914 kW. The array
8 consists of over 3,840 panels located in the roof areas. The PV inverters and associated equipment are
9 located in the building's basement. The Chet Holifield PV array is the second largest PV array in Orange
10 County.

11 **3.14.1.3 Communications**

12 Telephone and cable are provided by private utilities. Utilities in the surrounding area are located
13 [above/below] ground within easements. Telephone and cable lines are [buried/located] along [INSERT
14 Road]. [GSA to confirm provider, location of communication lines]

15 **3.14.1.4 Stormwater Infrastructure**

16 The project site is located within the Aliso Creek watershed. Aliso Creek is located adjacent to the site,
17 across Alicia Parkway, and drains into the Pacific Ocean. During a Phase I ESA performed for this
18 project, the site reconnaissance team observed storm drains located around the periphery of the site (GSA
19 2019d). Stormwater from the site is collected via a storm sewer than runs from east to west across the
20 southern portion of the site and drains into Aliso Creek after crossing under Alicia Parkway. Based on an
21 aerial review of the site, it is estimated that the 92-acre site consists of approximately 59 acres of
22 developed or paved areas, (i.e., buildings, roads, or parking areas), approximately 18 acres of landscaped
23 areas, and approximately 15 acres of undeveloped gravel lots on the outermost southern and western
24 portions of the site.

25 **3.14.2 Environmental Consequences**

26 The significance of potential impacts was assessed based on whether any of the alternatives would: To
27 evaluate the impacts on utilities and infrastructure, alternatives were reviewed for their potential to cause
28 the following:

- 29 • Disrupt utility operations during construction activities, or
- 30 • Lead to an increase in demand for utility services during construction or operations, such that the
31 utility's capacity to meet that demand would be exceeded or the level of service provided to other
32 customers would be negatively affected.

33 A significant adverse impact to utilities and infrastructure would occur if the action would result in:

- 34 • Long-term disruption of utility operations;
- 35 • Negatively affect local and regional utility supplier's ability to meet customer demands; or
- 36 • Require public utility system updates.

37 **3.14.2.1 No Action Alternative**

38 Under the No Action Alternative, GSA would not construct a new USCIS building or relocate tenants to
39 new offsite locations. Operations and maintenance of the CHFB would continue, and the resulting
40 demand for utility services would be similar to existing conditions. Utilities would require ongoing
41 maintenance as the systems increase in age. No additional impacts related to utilities or infrastructure
42 would occur, beyond those occurring under current conditions.

1 **3.14.2.2 Alternative 1**

2 **Construction**

3 Under Alternative 1, there may be a short-term increase in demand for water and wastewater because of
4 construction-related activities. Water would be required to control fugitive dust generation; and it is
5 assumed water would either be trucked in or supplied by onsite sources. Any increases in water usage
6 would be temporary and negligible and not impact the ability of utility providers to meet customer
7 demand. There would be a temporary and negligible increase in demand for wastewater services during
8 construction from hauling of portable toilets and other wastewater generated offsite. It is assumed any
9 electricity needs (e.g., for construction trailers) would be provided by onsite portable generators and
10 would not result in any increased demand on electrical providers. There would not be any increase in
11 demand for telecommunication services during construction. As discussed in Section 3.8.2.2, new
12 development would be required to comply with City of Laguna Nigel stormwater requirements, which
13 requires all development or redevelopment projects, where applicable and feasible, to maximize
14 infiltration, provide retention, slow runoff, and reduce pollutants at the source.

15 Construction during Alternative 1 (including activities such as excavation, drilling, and other above- and
16 below-ground work) would have the potential to cause temporary impacts to utility lines within the
17 project area. Existing utility maps would be reviewed and, where needed, utility companies would be
18 contacted to identify any locations where construction activities have the potential to affect utility lines.
19 Impacts would be avoided by coordinating with responsible utility providers in advance of such activities
20 and by either implementing measures to protect existing utility lines, or by arranging for their temporary
21 or permanent relocation.

22 New utility connections would likely be required to provide services to the new facility associated with
23 Alternative 1. Precise locations of proposed utilities for the new building are dependent on final design
24 and would be installed in coordination with each utility company to ensure appropriate design and
25 capacity for the utility connection to the proposed facilities. Any new utility connections would be
26 established only after securing the appropriate approvals from utility providers.

27 **Operations**

28 There would be long-term, negligible beneficial impacts to water and electricity utilities under operations
29 for Alternative 1. Since the new USCIS building under Alternative 1 would have a substantially smaller
30 footprint (380,00 square feet) compared to the existing CHFB (1 million square feet), and would house
31 1,000 fewer workers than the existing CHFB, a long-term decrease in demand for potable water, electric
32 services, and wastewater management would be expected in the vicinity of the CHFB. Additional
33 reductions in utility demand would occur as a result of improved building efficiency, as the new USCIS
34 would be designed to comply with current building codes as well as P100 Standards. Further reductions
35 may occur through energy and water efficiency measures implemented as a part of LEED® certification,
36 and potential future use of onsite renewable energy systems (see Section 3.14.2.4).

37 Tenants to be relocated would be placed in Class A office space in the surrounding area, primarily within
38 Orange County (with less than 1 percent of the workforce being relocated to Long Beach, in Los Angeles
39 County). This would represent localized increases in utility demand to providers at these locations;
40 however, relocation would occur at existing locations where it is assumed utility demand forecasting has
41 accounted for full building occupancy. Furthermore, leased spaces would be required to comply with all
42 current GSA policies on green leasing (GSA 2020a), which includes requirements for leased office space
43 to be energy and water efficient. Therefore, any leased space selected under Alternative 1 would likely be
44 more water- and energy-efficient than the existing CHFB. Overall impacts to water and electricity utility
45 providers on a regional scale from tenant relocation would be negligible and beneficial, as there would be
46 an aggregate decrease in utility consumption due to tenants being placed in newer work places with
47 greater utility efficiency.

1 Stormwater would managed on site per City and County stormwater management requirements (see
2 Section 3.8, Water Resources); additional stormwater management measures may be implemented to
3 achieve LEED® certification (GSA 2020c). As discussed in Section 3.8.2.2, there would be an increase
4 in the amount of impervious area under Alternative 1, due to the conversion of gravel areas to paved
5 surfaces. However, stormwater runoff would be minimized through the construction of measures such as
6 bioswales, permeable pavement, or other measures including green roofs and water capture technologies.
7 Overall, operation of the new USCIS building would likely result in long-term and minor beneficial
8 impacts to stormwater management within the project area as new development would improve
9 stormwater management systems. No long-term impacts to stormwater management are anticipated from
10 tenant relocation to offsite locations.

11 **Future Redevelopment**

12 Under a renovation scenario, adverse indirect impacts would occur during construction from the
13 renovation of the existing CHFB on the remaining 64.85-acre parcel. Impacts would be similar to as
14 described for construction of the new USCIS building and could include the potential for disruptions to
15 utility services. The potential for such impacts would depend on the extent of renovation activities, and
16 the degree to which these activities occur outside the existing CHFB footprint. Potential impacts to utility
17 lines would be avoided through coordination with utility companies and by taking steps to protect or
18 move utilities where needed.

19 Operations under a renovation scenario would likely result in a similar level of demand for utility services
20 as under current conditions. This would result in a net increase in demand on utility providers when
21 considered with operations of the USCIS building, as there could be a net increase of up to 2,000 workers
22 within the existing site. This could result in minor to moderate impacts on local utility providers;
23 however, any future use of the renovated CHFB would be coordinated with utility providers to ensure that
24 utility services can either accommodate future development or appropriate infrastructure can be installed
25 to handle increased demand. Additionally, the renovated building would be required to comply with
26 applicable updated building code requirements for water and energy efficiency, which would help
27 minimize demand for energy, water, and wastewater services. [GSA to confirm whether PHE should
28 reach out to local utility providers to confirm more specifics on utility infrastructure that could be
29 needed.]

30 Under a demolition/new construction scenario, indirect impacts related to construction may be similar to
31 the impacts described for construction of the USCIS building but could be greater or lesser in magnitude,
32 depending on the size and scale of construction. Operations of a new development would generate
33 demand for utility services, which could be greater or less than current conditions depending on future
34 facility design and use. It is likely that future use of the site would result in increased utility demands
35 within the existing CHFB site when considered with operation of the new USCIS building. New
36 development may increase impervious areas at the site, resulting in increased demands on stormwater
37 utilities; however, new development would be designed to current, more stringent stormwater standards
38 as discussed in Section 3.8, Water Resources, which would result in long-term beneficial impacts.

39 Follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses would be required (depending on who acquires the site) for any
40 proposed redevelopment plans presented by a future developer and would further address utility demands
41 and associated coordination with utility companies once final development plans are completed.

42 **3.14.2.3 Alternative 2**

43 Under Alternative 2, there would be negligible beneficial impacts to utilities and infrastructure on a
44 regional scale. All tenants would be removed from the CHFB and no construction would occur at the site.
45 There would be decreases in demands on utility providers at the existing CHFB site, and localized
46 increases to providers at future leased locations. Relocation would occur at existing locations where it is
47 assumed utility demand forecasting has accounted for full building occupancy, similar to as described for

1 Alternative 1. Therefore, overall impacts to water and electricity utility providers on a regional scale from
2 tenant relocation would be negligible, as there would be an aggregate decrease in utility consumption due
3 to tenants being placed in newer workplaces with greater utility efficiency. No impacts to stormwater
4 utilities would occur Alternative 2.

5 **Future Redevelopment**

6 Under a renovation/new construction scenario or a demolition/new construction scenario, short-term,
7 minor indirect impacts would occur, similar to as described for construction of the new USCIS building
8 under Alternative 1. There would be short-term increases in demand on water and wastewater utilities,
9 and impacts could be of a greater intensity depending on the size and scale of new construction.

10 Impacts from operations under a renovation/new construction or a demolition/new construction scenario
11 would be similar to the types of impacts described under Alternative 1 Future Redevelopment, but to a
12 greater intensity. Operations of a new development would likely generate long-term increased demands
13 for utility services, which could be greater or less than current conditions depending on the design and
14 scale of redevelopment. Under both scenarios, it is assumed there would be beneficial impacts on
15 stormwater utilities, as redevelopment would be designed to current, more stringent standards as
16 discussed in Section 3.8, Water Resources.

17 Similar to Alternative 1, follow-on NEPA or CEQA analyses would further address utilities and
18 infrastructure and associated coordination with utility companies once final development plans are
19 completed.

20 **3.14.2.4 Impact Reduction Measures**

21 Impacts on utilities would be reduced through the following:

- 22 • Adherence to GSA P100 Standards including:
 - 23 – Newly-constructed buildings must not exceed the energy intensity of 30,978 British Thermal
 - 24 Units (BTU) per square foot per year (btu/sf-yr).
 - 25 – Toilets must be dual-flush or low-flow (1.28 gallons per flush [gpf]), urinals must be High
 - 26 Efficiency Urinals (0.5 liters per flush [lpf]), and lavatory faucets must be metered-type with
 - 27 0.25 gallons per cycle.
- 28 • Using native or locally-adapted species, xeriscaping, and/or grey water reusage to reduce water
- 29 consumption. Any reuse of treated wastewater would comply with the water recycling criteria,
- 30 permitted uses, and other applicable requirements in Title 22 of the California Code of
- 31 Regulations.
- 32 • Reviewing existing utility maps and contacting utility companies ahead of time to identify any
- 33 locations where construction activities could potentially affect utility lines.
- 34 • Coordinating with utility providers in advance of such activities to determine the best course of
- 35 action to avoid or minimize impacts, either by implementing measures to protect utility lines or
- 36 by arranging for their temporary or permanent relocation.

37 Future development may incorporate onsite renewable energy generation and the use of energy- and
38 water-efficient technology; which would further reduce demands on utility providers. GSA would also
39 seek a minimum of a LEED® Gold certification for construction of a new facility onsite, and steps to
40 achieve this would likely include a reduction in the demand for energy and water.

41

42

3.15 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL SHORT-TERM USES OF MAN'S ENVIRONMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

Section 102(C)(iv) of NEPA [42 USC § 4332] and 40 CFR 1502.16 require an EIS to address “the relationship between local short-term uses of man’s environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity.” This involves the consideration of whether a Proposed Action is sacrificing a resource value that might benefit the environment in the long term, for some short-term value to the project proponent or the public.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to accommodate the long-term office space requirements for the current tenants located at the CHFB that would meet applicable building code, accessibility, and security standards. Furthermore, the purpose is to make such accommodations primarily within the Orange County, California market in a cost-effective manner that would not require substantial personnel relocations or majorly disrupt the federal tenants from achieving their agency mission.

As described in Chapter 3 of this EIS, the primary area affected is a 92-acre site which currently houses the CHFB. The entire site is previously disturbed and lacks surface water resources or viable wildlife habitat. The lot is bordered on all sides by roadways and existing (mostly commercial) development.

The existing CHFB site does not possess existing and enduring resource or environmental values whose long-term potential benefits would be sacrificed to provide for short-term value to the project proponent (GSA). The Proposed Action, if implemented, would last for many decades.

3.16 IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES THAT WOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

Section 102(C)(v) of NEPA [42 USC § 4332] requires EISs to address “any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources which would be involved in the proposed action should it be implemented.” Irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources mean losses to or impacts on natural resources that cannot be recovered or reversed.

More specifically, “irreversible” implies the loss of future options. Irreversible commitments of resources are those that cannot be regained, such as permanent conversion of wetlands and loss of cultural resources, soils, wildlife, agricultural and socioeconomic conditions. The losses are permanent and incapable of being reversed. “Irreversible” applies mainly to the effects from use or depletion of nonrenewable resources, such as fossil fuels or cultural resources, or to those factors, such as soil productivity, that are renewable only over long periods of time.

“Irretrievable” commitments are those that are lost for a period of time, such as the temporary loss of timber productivity in forested areas that are kept clear for use as a ROW, road, or winter sports site. The lost forest production is irretrievable, but the action is not irreversible. If the use changes back again, it is possible to resume timber production.

3.16.1 Irreversible Commitments of Resources

Under both the Hybrid Lease/Construction Alternative (Alternative 1) and the Lease Relocation Alternative (Alternative 2), the following irreversible commitments of resources would occur:

- Consumption of fossil fuels (primarily diesel) and lubricants by heavy construction equipment (e.g., bulldozers and Caterpillars, graders, scrapers, excavators, loaders, trucks) used to excavate and develop the 27.15-acre parcel for the new USCIS building (Alternative 1 only);
- Consumption of fossil fuels (primarily diesel) and lubricants by heavy construction equipment used to construct the new USCIS building (Alternative 1 only);

- 1 • Materials used to construct the new USCIS building, including cement/concrete, soil cement,
2 steel, iron and other metallic alloys, copper wiring, PVC pipe, plastic, etc. (Alternative 1 only);
3 and
4 • Energy, supplied by fossil fuels or some other source of electricity, used over the operational life
5 of the new USCIS building and used at new lease locations (Alternative 1 and 2).

6 **3.16.2 Irretrievable Commitments of Resources**

7 As noted above, “irretrievable” commitments of resources are those that are lost for a period of time, but
8 not permanently. Alternative 1 would entail the long-term loss of minimal amounts of vegetation within
9 the 27.15-acre parcel to be developed.

CHAPTER 4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

4.0 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts are defined by the CEQ regulations in 40 CFR 1508.7 as “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the [proposed] action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, actions taking place over a period of time.” Cumulative impacts include the direct and indirect impacts of a project together with the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions of other projects. According to CEQ’s cumulative impacts guidance, the cumulative impact analysis should be narrowed to focus on important issues at a national, regional, or local level.

The City of Laguna Niguel has experienced steady population and economic growth over the last few decades. Past and ongoing major actions in the area were and are primarily associated with residential and mixed-use development and development of supporting infrastructure such as roadways. Current and foreseeable future federal and local development projects within and in the vicinity of the project area are identified below.

4.1 FEDERAL PROJECTS

4.1.1 I-5 Widening Project from El Toro Road, South to SR-73

I-5 is a major interstate located approximately 4 miles east of Laguna Niguel that runs north to south and connects the local community near the CHFB to major cities such as Los Angeles and Anaheim. This project will add one general purpose lane in both the northbound and southbound directions from Avery Parkway to Alicia Parkway. The project will also extend the second carpool lane in each direction from Alicia Parkway to El Toro Road. New auxiliary lanes at 6 locations will be constructed and auxiliary lanes at 6 other locations will be reestablished. Construction is scheduled to begin in mid-2020 and be completed by 2023 (The Orange County Register 2018).

4.1.2 Aliso Creek Estuary Restoration

The Aliso Creek Estuary Restoration project includes the restoration of an approximately a five-mile stretch of the Aliso Creek near Laguna Niguel to create a fully functional estuary (USACE 2017). The conceptual plan for the project includes removal of the concrete channel and restoration of riparian habitat, as well as the demolition and relocation of a parking lot. The estuary restoration project also consists of widening the channel so that marshlands can more efficiently filter water and provide high value habitat for wildlife. The environmental impact analysis phase of this project is currently ongoing (Laguna Beach Independent 2020).

4.2 LOCAL PROJECTS

4.2.1 Crown Cove Condominiums

The Crown Cove Condominiums project includes the construction of a residential development consisting of 23 multi-family units at 30667 Crown Valley Parkway, Laguna Niguel. This project is located approximately 3 miles south of the CHFB and is currently awaiting approval to begin construction.

4.2.2 City Center Mixed Use Development

The City Center Mixed Used Development project includes the development of approximately 200,000 square feet of mixed-use commercial space and 275 residences with a series of public open spaces in Laguna Niguel. The project will occur on approximately 25 acres located approximately 3 miles south of the CHFB at the intersection of Crown Valley Parkway and Alicia Parkway, adjacent to City Hall. Commercial development will primarily include restaurants and other food service industries. Residences

1 will be designed as single-floor apartments and two-story townhomes. This project is currently awaiting
2 approval to begin construction. (City of Laguna Niguel 2020c).

3 **4.2.3 SunPointe Single-Family Dwelling Units**

4 The proposed SunPointe residential development, approved for construction, will provide 53 single-
5 family homes ranging from 2,600 square feet to 3,140 square feet, each with a two-car garage in Laguna
6 Niguel, approximately 3.5 miles southeast of the CHFEB. The proposed project would recontour a 19.5-
7 acre site through approximately 325,000 cubic yards of cut and fill and grading. Multiple retaining walls,
8 up to 18 feet tall, are proposed to create 53 lots with curvilinear slopes. Other development would include
9 infrastructure improvements, common open-space areas, perimeter fencing, slope landscaping, and
10 completion of an existing quarter mile segment of the Colinas Bluff Trail, which traverses through the
11 northern portion of the project site. (City of Laguna Niguel Planning Commission 2019a).

12 **4.2.4 Forbes Road Mixed-Use Development (2776 Forbes Road)**

13 The mixed-use development project, approved for construction, includes the development of 111 two-
14 and three-bedroom senior assisted living condominiums in Laguna Niguel, approximately 2 miles east of
15 the CHFEB. The proposed condominiums will be situated above 2,700 square feet of ground-floor retail to
16 include a pool, fitness center, private garden, bike shop, EV charging stations and a sky deck. This project
17 is located on Forbes Road, less than one mile north of the Laguna Niguel Metrolink station
18 (Bisnow 2018).

19 **4.2.5 Multi-Family Apartment Development at 27930 Cabot Road**

20 The apartment development project, under construction, includes development of a 425-unit multi-family
21 development on a 6.4-acre project site in Laguna Niguel, approximately 2 miles east of the CHFEB. This
22 development will consist of two separate apartment communities, including a 233-unit podium-style
23 building and a 192-unit wrapped building. The 233-unit building will consist of five stories above a three-
24 level parking garage. The 192-unit building will consist of four stories surrounding a five-level parking
25 structure (City of Laguna Niguel Planning Commission 2019b).

26 **4.2.6 Aliso Viejo Ranch**

27 The Aliso Viejo Ranch project is located at 100 Park Avenue, Aliso Viejo, CA, approximately 1.5 miles
28 north of the CHFEB. The project includes restoration of historically significant buildings, artifacts, and
29 farming equipment from the 1800s. Construction of this project is ongoing and the plans include the
30 rehabilitation and adaptive use of the existing barn and bunkhouse along with construction of a working
31 farm and several fishponds to be harvested biannually (City of Aliso Viejo 2020a).

32 **4.2.7 Aliso Viejo Town Center Revitalization**

33 The proposed Aliso Viejo Town Center Revitalization project includes the redevelopment of the former
34 Lowe's site in Aliso Viejo, California to support the vision of Aliso Viejo Town Center. The concept plan
35 released in 2015 includes new construction of commercial, residential, office, parking, and hotel
36 structures. The majority of the new construction is planned to be within the Gateway District in
37 Downtown Aliso Viejo, approximately 1 mile northeast of the CHFEB. In the Fall of 2019, the City began
38 to reach out to property owners within Town Center to discuss the findings of various analyses and began
39 to prepare the site for future development (City of Aliso Viejo 2020b).

40 **4.2.8 Dana Point Harbor Revitalization**

41 The Dana Point Harbor Revitalization project includes construction of two proposed hotels, a surf
42 museum, a separated entrance for boaters, a parking structure, and other retail stores (TheLog 2019). The
43 first phase of the project will include the construction of the three-level parking structure and commercial
44 space totaling 190,000 square feet along the waterfront, approximately 9 miles south of the CHFEB.

1 Construction for the first phase of this project is expected to begin in the Summer of 2020 (The Orange
2 County Register 2019).

3 **4.3 CULTURAL RESOURCES**

4 [Pending completion of Cultural Resources section]

5 **4.4 AIR QUALITY AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**

6 Under Alternatives 1 and 2, there would be emissions of criteria pollutants, GHGs, and fugitive dust
7 during the construction phase. Predicted annual construction emissions would be less than federal *de*
8 *minimis* thresholds for criteria pollutants and represent a negligible amount of California's annual GHG
9 emissions. As stated in Section 3.3.1.1, the region is in nonattainment area for O₃ and PM_{2.5} and is
10 currently designated as a maintenance area for CO, NO₂, and PM₁₀. Air emissions from existing and
11 future development projects within and in the vicinity of the CHFB are expected to minor and primarily
12 end following construction; this includes the future development/renovation and demolition scenarios
13 considered under Alternative 1 and Alternative 2. Similar to the impact reduction measures described in
14 Section 3.3, fugitive dust would be required to be controlled via state regulations. In addition,
15 construction activities at the CHFB site would be unlikely to occur at the same time as the other projects
16 described in Sections 4.1 and 4.2. Both the use of impact reduction measures and temporal separation
17 would reduce and minimize the potential for cumulative adverse impacts in conjunction with the
18 Proposed Action.

19 Projects described in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 involving the development of facilities along with future
20 development of the CHFB site considered in Alternatives 1 and 2 could generate operational emissions
21 which could cumulatively and adversely contribute emissions of pollutants regulated for nonattainment
22 status; these projects, however, would be subject to review and permitting approval by the CARB to
23 ensure projects are in compliance with air emission limitations. Therefore, cumulative impacts under
24 Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 in combination with other future development projects identified in
25 Sections 4.1 and 4.2 would be less than significant.

26 Under the No Action Alternative, there would be negligible emissions from ongoing maintenance,
27 generator usage, and vehicle trips. When considering past, present, or future projects, cumulative impacts
28 would be negligible.

29 **4.5 SOCIOECONOMICS**

30 Under Alternative 1 and 2, there would be short term beneficial impacts from increasing construction
31 jobs, local spending in the community, and associated tax revenue. All projects identified in Section 4.1
32 and 4.2 would create minor cumulative beneficial impacts, similar to as under the Proposed Action
33 Alternatives.

34 Under Alternative 1 and 2, there would be between 1,000 to 3,000 jobs relocated from the local Laguna
35 Niguel workforce and relocated to various locations around the County. This would result in localized
36 moderate adverse effects from job loss, decrease in spending near Laguna Niguel, and potential indirect
37 job loss; however, there would be overall negligible impacts in the County as socioeconomic benefits
38 would be redistributed. New development projects discussed in Sections 4.1 and 4.2, particularly those
39 associated with long term job creation such as the mixed use developments, Aliso Viejo Town Center
40 Revitalization, and Dana Point Harbor Revitalization, would offset some of the localized impacts
41 experienced in Laguna Niguel, and result in long term negligible beneficial cumulative impacts.

42 Under Alternative 1 and 2, some or all of the current CHFB site would be transferred out of federal
43 ownership, resulting in an increase in taxable land and tax revenue for local, state, and federal
44 governments. When combined with new development projects, this would result in a long term beneficial
45 cumulative impact.

1 Under the No Action Alternative, beneficial cumulative impacts would be expected when considering
2 new development projects.

3 **4.6 GEOLOGY, SEISMICITY, AND SOILS**

4 Under Alternatives 1 and 2, there would be short term minor impacts to soils from soil disturbance and
5 long-term negligible impacts to geology and soils as a large portion of the CHFB site has been previously
6 disturbed. All development projects identified in Section 4.1 and 4.2, along with the future development
7 scenarios considered in Alternatives 1 and 2 would result in some level of local soil disturbance or soil
8 loss from construction activities. As the Proposed Action would have negligible impacts to soils and
9 geology, GSA activities would not contribute to cumulative adverse impacts to these resources in
10 combination with future development projects. In addition, similar to the Proposed Action, any future
11 development would be subject to the same California stormwater permitting requirements as described for
12 Alternative 1, which would limit soil loss on site and reduce potential for cumulative adverse impacts
13 once construction is completed. No cumulative adverse impacts would be anticipated to seismicity; new
14 construction under the Proposed Action and for future development projects would be conducted in
15 accordance with current California Building Code and would minimize the threat of loss of life and
16 property to occupants from seismic hazards, resulting in beneficial impacts.

17 Under the No Action Alternative, minor amounts of maintenance could be required, which could result in
18 negligible amounts of land disturbance. This would result in negligible cumulative effects when
19 considered with other development projects in the area.

20 **4.7 LAND USE**

21 Under Alternatives 1 and 2, temporary and minor adverse impacts could affect surrounding businesses
22 and residential areas from fugitive dust, increased traffic volumes, or noise generated by construction
23 activities. As these impacts would be temporary and timing of construction would likely vary between
24 projects, it is unlikely that significant cumulative adverse impacts to land use would result from
25 construction of the Proposed Action in combination with the other projects identified in Sections 4.1 and
26 4.2 or future projects which could occur on the CHFB site.

27 The operation of the new USCIS building under Alternative 1 would be similar to the existing land use of
28 the adjacent CHFB; therefore, no impacts to land use would occur and there would be no adverse
29 cumulative effects. Any new zoning for new development whether at the CHFB site or for projects
30 described in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 would be expected to be consistent with existing zoning in the area,
31 further minimizing the potential of adverse effects from an individual project and on a cumulative basis.

32 No construction or future development would occur under the No Action Alternative. Therefore, no
33 cumulative impacts to land uses would occur.

34 **4.8 VISUAL RESOURCES AND AESTHETICS**

35 The immediate area near the CHFB is part of a developed residential and commercial landscape. Based
36 on the perspective of the viewer, construction of a new USCIS building under Alternative 1 could be seen
37 as having either an adverse or beneficial impact on visual resources in the project area. Facility
38 development and renovation under Alternatives 1 or 2 could be seen as beneficial since it is consistent
39 with the existing character of the landscape and would contribute to greater cohesion in views of the
40 landscape. It could be seen as adverse if the viewer values more open space or undeveloped land, even
41 within a developed landscape. This perspective could be applied to any of the facility development
42 projects that may occur in the area, including future development on the CHFB site or from projects
43 identified in Sections 4.1 and 4.2. Thus, from a visual standpoint, impacts resulting from development
44 that would occur from construction of a new USCIS building combined with any or all of the projects
45 discussed in Section 4.1 and 4.2 could be perceived as either cumulatively adverse or cumulatively
46 beneficial. Regardless of the perspective, cumulative impacts to visual resources are not likely to be

1 significant since the landscape is already heavily developed. In addition, it is unlikely that construction of
2 the projects would all occur at the same time, therefore, the potential for cumulative adverse visual effects
3 from multiple construction sites would be unlikely and would also be geographically separated in the
4 region.

5 No new construction or change in the visual landscape would occur under the No Action Alternative.
6 Therefore, no cumulative impacts to visual resources would occur.

7 **4.9 WATER RESOURCES**

8 Under Alternatives 1 and 2, there would be short term, minor impacts from the potential for sedimentation
9 and the potential for spills during construction to travel offsite into Aliso Creek, which is currently
10 impaired for nutrients, metals, toxicity, and pesticides. A majority of projects discussed in Sections 4.1
11 and 4.2, along with potential projects associated with future development of the CHFEB are also located in
12 the same watershed which could have the potential for indirect cumulative adverse effects to water quality
13 and hydrology of the stream from construction activities and increased stormwater runoff from additional
14 impervious surface in the watershed. The potential for significant cumulative adverse effects, however,
15 would be reduced similar to as for the Proposed Action, as all development projects would be subject to
16 the same California stormwater permitting requirements that would limit runoff. In addition, the Aliso
17 Creek Estuary Restoration project would result in beneficial impacts to water quality and potentially
18 stormwater flows as the concrete channel is removed from the creek, and natural habitat is restored.

19 No new construction would occur under the No Action Alternative. Therefore, no cumulative impacts to
20 water resources would occur.

21 **4.10 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

22 Under Alternatives 1 and 2, there would be minor impacts from vegetation loss and indirect impacts on
23 local habitat from increased noise levels and stormwater runoff during construction. No impacts to special
24 status species would occur as project area is highly developed and offers low quality habitat.

25 Development projects discussed in Section 4.1 and 4.2 along with future development projects at the
26 CHFEB site would all result in some level of similar impacts on vegetation and habitat. Some projects are
27 located on currently undeveloped land (i.e., Aliso Viejo Ranch, 27930 Cabot Road), which could result in
28 greater amounts of vegetation loss or habitat disturbance. However, all projects are located within or
29 adjacent to highly developed areas in within Laguna Niguel, Aliso Viejo, or Dana Point, and overall
30 cumulative impacts to habitat would be minor. These projects, including the CHFEB site, although within
31 the Aliso Creek watershed, would be located outside of the Aliso Creek riparian corridor and, therefore,
32 would have negligible direct effects on the corridor for wildlife connectivity between the Cleveland
33 National Forest and the Aliso Woods Canyon Wilderness Park.

34 Past and continued urbanization within the Aliso Creek watershed, however, has caused indirect effects to
35 the quality of habitat within Aliso Creek, including the degradation of riverine (aquatic and riparian)
36 habitat quality as a result of hydrologic alterations, floodplain function loss, channel modifications, loss in
37 contributing sediment sources, channel instability (streambed incision and streambank erosion), and
38 introduction and spreading of non-native plant species (USACE 2017). All projects, however, would be
39 subject to stormwater permitting design requirements that would limit the amount of stormwater runoff
40 offsite, reducing the potential for long term adverse cumulative effects to riverine habitat of Aliso Creek.
41 In addition, the Aliso Creek Estuary Restoration project would result in long term, beneficial impacts on
42 wildlife and habitat. When combined with the low potential for adverse impacts under Alternative 1, there
43 would be no more than minor cumulative impacts.

44 Under the No Action Alternative, no construction or associated impacts on biological resources would
45 occur; therefore, no cumulative impacts would occur.

4.11 TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

[Pending completion of Transportation and Traffic section]

4.12 HAZARDOUS WASTE AND MATERIALS

Under Alternatives 1 and 2, project-specific impacts from hazardous waste/materials would be reduced through conformance with applicable regulatory requirements and implementation of appropriate avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures as required by OSHA and RCRA. These requirements would also apply the construction and operation of other nearby projects and potential future development projects at the CHFB site. Therefore, the potential adverse cumulative impacts associated with hazardous waste and materials would not be significant when considered with other present and future projects within the vicinity of the CHFB.

Under the No Action Alternative, maintenance and repairs to the CHFB would continue to occur as needed but would likely only generate minor amounts of hazardous waste. Therefore, significant cumulative impacts would not be expected.

4.13 NOISE

Under Alternatives 1 and 2, minor to moderate adverse effects could occur from construction activities and operations [Pending completion of traffic analysis]. Cumulative effects to the ambient soundscape near the CHFB could occur from construction projects occurring within 1,000 feet of the CHFB (i.e., future development at the CHFB site and the Aliso Creek Estuary Restoration project), if these project occurred concurrently with construction of the USCIS (as noise impacts from construction are greatest within 1,000 feet). Project schedules are currently unknown, but if the projects did occur at the same time, no more than minor cumulative impacts are anticipated. Projects would be required to comply with the same noise reduction measures as described for Alternative 1.

With the exception of the Aliso Creek Estuary Restoration project, all projects identified for the cumulative effects analysis are greater than 1 mile from the CHFB. Therefore, the potential for noise from the project to cumulatively and adversely add to the noise environment from construction and operations of other projects identified in the region would not be anticipated. In the long term, Alternative 1 would result in a localized long-term decrease in ambient noise at the CHFB, as up to 1,000 fewer trips would be traveling to the site; however, these trips would be distributed to newly leased locations throughout the county. [Pending completion of traffic analysis].

Under Alternative 2, build-outs of office space would occur primarily indoors and would not require any ground disturbance. Noise impacts associated with these activities would be much smaller/negligible compared with the existing cumulative noise. There would be localized long term beneficial impacts from a decrease in 3,000 trips to the existing CHFB site; however, these trips would be distributed to newly leased locations throughout the county. [Pending completion of traffic analysis].

Under the No Action Alternative, no construction would occur and cumulative impacts would not be expected.

4.14 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

Under Alternative 1, construction activities associated with construction of a new USCIS building and other projects would create both adverse and beneficial, minor cumulative impacts to minority and youth populations near the project area. Cumulative, adverse impacts from increased air emissions and congestion could be synergistic if the construction of Alternative 1 and the other projects occur at the same time. Area residents may experience time delays over a longer period of time if the construction periods from these projects are considered sequentially. Health impacts and economic benefits would

1 occur in a similar manner. As discussed in Section 4.13, noise levels in or around Laguna Niguel, would
2 not likely cumulatively increase due to ongoing projects. When considered with construction of
3 Alternative 1, projects discussed in Section 4.1 and 4.2 are expected to create minor, adverse and
4 beneficial cumulative impacts once construction activities are completed. Besides potential separation in
5 time when a given project would be constructed, the potential for cumulative adverse impacts from the
6 project in combination with projects identified in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 would also be reduced by the
7 distribution these projects throughout the region as none are concentrate within a specific location.

8 In the long term, both Alternative 1 and 2 could have minor to moderate, localized impacts on
9 environmental justice populations due to a decrease in jobs in the Laguna Niguel community and
10 associated decreases in economic activity. As with socioeconomics, new development projects discussed in
11 Sections 4.1 and 4.2, particularly those associated with long term job creation such as the mixed use
12 developments, Aliso Viejo Town Center Revitalization, and Dana Point Harbor Revitalization, would
13 offset some of the localized impacts experienced in Laguna Niguel, and result in long term negligible
14 cumulative impacts. No impacts to children populations are anticipated for either Alternative 1 or 2;
15 therefore, no cumulative impacts would occur.

16 Under the No Action Alternative, no construction or relocation would occur, resulting in no cumulative
17 impacts to environmental justice or children populations.

18 **4.15 UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

19 Continued population growth in the Orange County and Laguna Niguel area has the potential to cause
20 strain to water, wastewater and electrical generation and transmission utilities. Southern California Edison
21 Company is responsible for providing electricity and Southern California Gas provides natural gas to
22 accommodate increases in demand due to population growth in the area. The MNWD is responsible for
23 providing water and wastewater services to the CHFB and the greater Laguna Niguel Area.

24 Under Alternative 1 and 2, there would be localized decreases in utility demands due. For Alternative 1,
25 there would be a reduction in 1,000 employees at the CHFB site, and the employees remaining on site
26 would be placed in a building that would have greater water and energy efficiency. For Alternative 2,
27 there would be a localized reduction of 3,000 employees at the site, but comparable increases at new lease
28 locations that could result in adverse effects to local utilities in those areas. Development projects in the
29 Laguna Niguel area would result in varying levels of increased demands on local utility companies and
30 utility infrastructure near Laguna Niguel. When considered with both Alternatives 1 and 2, there would be
31 overall negligible to minor cumulative impacts. Under both alternatives, future development scenarios
32 would likely result in similar negligible to minor cumulative impacts to utilities.

33 Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no changes to utility usage and no cumulative impacts
34 would occur.

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CHAPTER 6 PREPARERS

- 1
- 2 **General Services Administration, Pacific Rim Region**
- 3 Osmahn Kadri
- 4 NEPA Program Manager, Portfolio Management Division
- 5
- 6 **Potomac-Hudson Engineering, Inc. (PHE)**
- 7 Paul DiPaolo
- 8 B.S. Environmental Science and Policy, 2010
- 9 M.S. Environmental Planning and Management, 2017
- 10 Project Management
- 11 Robert Naumann
- 12 B.S. Resource Ecology & Management, 1998
- 13 M.S. Environmental Science, 2005
- 14 Melissa Secor
- 15 B.S. Business Management, 2004
- 16 B.S. Meteorology, 2007
- 17 Deborah Shinkle
- 18 B.A. Environmental Studies, 2002
- 19 Magdelyn Glaudemans
- 20 B.S. Environmental Science and Policy, 2015
- 21
- 22 Susan Smillie
- 23 B.S. Biology, 1978
- 24 M.En. Environmental Science, 1981

Appendix B: Cultural Resources Background Information

Archaeological Resources

Prehistoric and Historic Context

William J. Wallace (1955) developed a prehistoric chronology for the southern California coastal region that is still widely used today. Wallace's prehistoric sequence includes four periods: Horizon I - Early Man, Horizon II - Milling Stone, Horizon III - Intermediate, and Horizon IV - Late Prehistoric.

The Early Man period dates to ca. 10,000–6000 B.C. Evidence of Early Man period human occupation has been found along the southern California coast and Channel Islands. On San Miguel Island, Daisy Cave clearly establishes the presence of people in the region nearly 12,000 years ago. Present-day Orange and San Diego counties contain several sites dating to 9,000 to 10,000 years ago.

Recent data from Horizon I sites indicate that the economy was a diverse mixture of hunting and gathering, with a major emphasis on aquatic resources in many coastal areas and on Pleistocene lake shores in the Mojave Desert. Although few Clovis-like fluted points have been found in southern California, it is widely believed that the emphasis on hunting may have been greater during Horizon I than in later periods. The earliest well-defined culture in the region is called the San Dieguito tradition, which is marked by sites containing leaf-shaped bifacial projectile points and knives, stemmed or shouldered projectile points, scrapers, engraving tools, and crescents. Subsistence patterns shifted around 6000 B.C., coincident with the gradual desiccation associated with the onset of the Altithermal, a warm and dry period that lasted for about 3,000 years. After 6000 B.C., a greater emphasis was placed on plant foods and small animals.

The Milling Stone horizon (6000–3000 B.C.) is characterized by an ecological adaptation to collecting and the emergence of milling stones (metates, slabs) and hand stones (manos, mullers), which are typically intentionally shaped. Milling stones occur in large numbers for the first time and are even more numerous near the end of this period. As testified by their toolkits and shell middens in coastal sites, people during this period practiced a mixed food procurement strategy. Subsistence patterns varied somewhat as groups became better adapted to their regional or local environments.

Several key coastal sites in southern California characterize the Milling Stone horizon. One such archaeological site is the well-known Irvine site (CA-ORA-64), which has occupation levels dating between ca. 6000 and 4000 B.C. Many of these sites revealed an abundance of stone chopping, scraping, and cutting tools made from locally available raw material. Projectile points, rather large and usually leaf-shaped, and bone tools, including awls, are generally rare. The large points are associated with the spear and probably with the atlatl dart. Items made from shell, including beads, pendants, and abalone dishes, are generally rare. Evidence of weaving or basketry is present at a few sites. The mortar and pestle were also introduced during the Milling Stone horizon.

Characteristic mortuary practices of the Milling Stone horizon include extended and loosely flexed burials, some with red ochre, and few grave goods such as shell beads and milling stones interred beneath cobble or milling stone cairns. "Killed" milling stones, exhibiting holes, may occur in the cairns. Reburials are common in the Los Angeles County area, with north-oriented flexed burials common in Orange and San Diego counties.

Following the Milling Stone horizon, the Intermediate period dates from approximately 3000 B.C. to A.D. 500 and is characterized by a shift toward a hunting and maritime subsistence strategy, along with a wider use of plant foods.

During the Intermediate period, there was a pronounced trend toward greater adaptation to regional or local resources. For example, an increasing variety and abundance of fish, land mammal, and sea

1 mammal remains are found in sites along the California coast during this period. Related chipped stone
2 tools suitable for hunting are more abundant and diversified, and shell fishhooks become part of the tool
3 kit during this period. Larger knives, a variety of flake scrapers, and drill-like implements are common.
4 Projectile points include large side-notched, stemmed, and lanceolate or leaf-shaped forms. Koerper and
5 Drover (1983) consider Gypsum Cave and Elko series points, which have a wide distribution in the Great
6 Basin and Mojave Desert between ca. 2000 B.C. and A.D. 500, to be diagnostic of this period. Bone
7 tools, including awls, were more numerous than in the preceding period, and the use of asphaltum
8 adhesive was common.

9 Mortars and pestles became more common during this period, gradually replacing manos and metates as
10 the dominant milling equipment. Hopper mortars and stone bowls, including steatite vessels, appeared in
11 the tool kit at this time as well. This shift appears to correlate with the diversification in subsistence
12 resources. Many archaeologists believe this change in milling stones signals a shift away from the
13 processing and consuming of hard seed resources to the increasing importance of the acorn. It has been
14 argued that mortars and pestles may have been used initially to process roots (e.g., tubers, bulbs, and
15 corms associated with marshland plants), with acorn processing beginning at a later point in prehistory
16 and continuing to European contact.

17 Characteristic mortuary practices during the Intermediate horizon and Campbell tradition included fully
18 flexed burials, placed facedown or face up, and oriented toward the north or west. Red ochre was
19 common, and abalone shell dishes were infrequent. Interments sometimes occurred beneath cairns or
20 broken artifacts. Shell, bone, and stone ornaments, including charmstones, were more common than in the
21 preceding Encinitas tradition. Some later sites include Olivella shell and steatite beads, mortars with flat
22 bases and flaring sides, and a few small points. The broad distribution of steatite from the Channel Islands
23 and obsidian from distant inland regions, among other items, attest to the growth of trade, particularly
24 during the later part of this period. Howard and Raab (1993) have argued that the distribution of *Olivella*
25 grooved rectangle beads marks a unique trade relation between Horizon III inhabitants of the Mojave
26 Desert and those living in the southern Channel Islands.

27 In the Late Prehistoric period, which lasted from the end of the Intermediate (ca. A.D. 500) until
28 European contact, there was an increase in the use of plant food resources in addition to an increase in
29 land and sea mammal hunting. There was a concomitant increase in the diversity and complexity of
30 material culture during the Late Prehistoric, demonstrated by more classes of artifacts. The recovery of a
31 greater number of small, finely chipped projectile points, usually stemless with convex or concave bases,
32 suggests an increased use of the bow and arrow rather than the atlatl (spear thrower) and dart for hunting.
33 Other items include steatite cooking vessels and containers, the increased presence of smaller bone and
34 shell circular fishhooks, perforated stones, arrow shaft straighteners made of steatite, a variety of bone
35 tools, and personal ornaments made from shell, bone, and stone. There is also an increased use of asphalt
36 for waterproofing and as an adhesive.

37 By A.D. 1000, fired clay smoking pipes and ceramic vessels began to appear at some sites. The scarcity
38 of pottery in coastal and near-coastal sites implies ceramic technology was not well developed in that
39 area, or that ceramics were obtained by trade with neighboring groups to the south and east. The lack of
40 widespread pottery manufacture is usually attributed to the high quality of tightly woven and watertight
41 basketry that performed some of the same functions as ceramic vessels. Mortuary customs are elaborate
42 and include cremation and interment with abundant grave goods.

43 The seemingly abrupt changes in material culture, burial practices, and subsistence focus at the beginning
44 of the Late Prehistoric period are thought to be the result of a migration to the coast of peoples from
45 inland desert regions. In addition to the small triangular and side-notched points similar to those found in
46 the desert regions in the Great Basin and Colorado Desert, Colorado River pottery and the introduction of

1 cremation in the archaeological record are diagnostic of the Yuman tradition in the San Diego region.
2 This combination certainly suggests a strong influence from the Colorado Desert region.

3 In Los Angeles and Orange counties, similar changes (introduction of cremation, pottery, and small
4 triangular projectile points) are considered the result of a Takic migration to the coast from inland desert
5 regions. This Takic tradition was formerly referred to as the “Shoshonean wedge” or “Shoshonean
6 intrusion.” Modern Gabrielino/Tongva, Juaneño, and Luiseño in this region are considered the
7 descendants of the prehistoric Uto-Aztecan, Takic-speaking populations that settled along the California
8 coast during this period, or perhaps somewhat earlier.

9 *Juaneño*

10 The Project is located in an area historically occupied by the Juaneño, lying along the coast between the
11 Gabrielino to the north and the Luiseño to the south, with Juaneño territory running from Aliso Creek on
12 the north to a point between San Onofre and Las Pulgas on the coast. Rather than having a distinct
13 language, Juaneño speech was said to be a dialect of Luiseño (Kroeber 1925:636), though the dialectical
14 differences between the Juaneño and Luiseño “did not prevent mutual understanding . . .” White
15 (1963:104). White further posits that although local variations in culture between Juaneño and Luiseño
16 may have existed, it was at the village rather than the tribal level, suggesting only minor differences
17 between the two groups. In fact, Sparkman (1908) and White (1963) have argued that the Juaneño are
18 really a subgroup of the greater Luiseño tribe, with O’Neil (1988:107, 111) also making reference to the
19 Juaneño being a coastal branch of the Luiseño.

20 The term Juaneño describes those native people who were missionized into Mission San Juan Capistrano
21 and who inhabited the northernmost portion of Camp Pendleton, while Luiseño has been applied to those
22 living within the “ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Mission San Luis Rey . . . [who shared] an ancestral
23 relationship which is evident in their cosmogony, and oral tradition, common language, and reciprocal
24 relationship in ceremonies” (Oxendine 1983:8). Given the similarities between the groups, much of the
25 existing ethnohistoric information about the Juaneño is derived from accounts about the Luiseño (Kroeber
26 1925; White 1963).

27 The Gabrielino, Luiseño, and Juaneño shared similar lifeways as hunters-gatherers who used both inland
28 and coastal food resources while leading a semisedentary lifestyle, often living in permanent communities
29 along watercourses and near coastal estuaries. The presence of water, a stable food supply, and some
30 measure of protection from flooding were the most important factors relating to the location of habitation
31 sites. Commonly chosen habitation sites included the transition zone marking the interface between
32 prairies and foothills and sheltered coastal bays and estuaries, rivers, and streams, such as is found in the
33 general area of the Project (McCawley 1996).

34 *Spanish and Mexican Periods*

35 Spanish explorer Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo first encountered California in 1542, claiming it for the King of
36 Spain. More than two centuries later, in 1769, Spain sent Catholic missionaries and Spanish soldiers to
37 colonize California. Don Gaspar de Portolá led the first overland expedition through Orange County that
38 summer. In 1771, Father Junípero Serra founded Mission San Gabriel in what is now Los Angeles
39 County. Five years later, on November 1, 1776, Mission San Juan Capistrano was founded. The two
40 missions laid claim to much of what would become Orange County.

41 After Mexican independence from Spain in 1821, the process of dismantling of the mission system began
42 to unfold. The 1833 Secularization Act passed by the Mexican Congress ordered half of all mission lands
43 to be transferred to the Native Americans, with the other half to remain in trust and managed by an
44 appointed administrator. These orders were never implemented due to several factors that conspired to
45 prevent the Native Americans from regaining their patrimony. The missions, including the San Gabriel

1 Mission, were secularized by 1835. The Mexican War of the late 1840s ended with the Treaty of
2 Guadalupe Hidalgo, and in 1850, California became a state.

3 **Architectural History Resources**

4 *Historical Context⁴*

5 In 1959, the Laguna Niguel Corporation was established by Cabot, Cabot, and Forbes of Boston, who
6 made Laguna Niguel one of the first master planned communities in California. Victor Gruen and
7 Associates, an architecture firm known for large-scale shopping malls and planned communities,
8 developed a plan for 7,100 acres. By the mid-1960s, Laguna Niguel was primed as a potential site for
9 North American Aviation's growing Autonetics division. In 1971, Avco Community Developer acquired
10 the Laguna Niguel Plan and initiated development according to the original master plan. By 1989, Laguna
11 Niguel was incorporated as a city (Heritage Architecture 2016:2-2).

12 The CHFB was commissioned in reaction to growing government defense contracts fueled by the Cold
13 War, conflicts in Korea and Vietnam, and the aerospace industry. In 1947, the Berlin Airlift marked the
14 start of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Defense spending became an
15 important issue as the newly independent Air Force began to lobby for the return to an international
16 capacity for air power, including the design and manufacture of global strategic bombers capable of
17 delivering the atomic bomb anywhere on earth. This call for increased aviation and defense technology
18 spurred American firms to develop and incorporate into their designs the technological advances that
19 came out of World War II.

20 As World War II gave way to the Cold War, other technological developments grew from the aviation
21 industry; aviation led to missiles, and missiles eventually led to aerospace. Facilitating the creation of
22 these new technologies was the close relationship that developed between the aerospace and defense
23 manufacturers and the United States government, which had the resources and capacity to fund large
24 multi-year projects. The Department of Defense awarded one quarter of all of its contracts to California in
25 the 1950s. During this period, 15 of the 25 largest aerospace companies in the United States were based in
26 Southern California. Companies such as North American, Douglas, Lockheed, and Northrop developed
27 manufacturing campuses throughout Los Angeles and Orange County. These California companies
28 experienced a 140 percent increase in employment in the aircraft industry during the Korean War as the
29 88,400 jobs of 1950 grew to 213,000 by 1953.

30 In August 1957, the United States lost its sense of invulnerability to nuclear attack when the Soviet Union
31 successfully tested the world's first intercontinental ballistic missile. To counter, the United States
32 accelerated development of a protective fleet of land-based missiles. That same year, the Soviet Union
33 launched a man-made satellite, Sputnik. With this launching, the transition to the aerospace industry
34 began, accounting for more than 5.7 percent of all manufacturing jobs in the United States. By 1963,
35 70,000 defense research scientists and engineers resided in Southern California, mostly in suburban areas
36 and newly developed master planned communities, such as Irvine and Laguna Niguel in Orange County
37 (Heritage Architecture 2016:2-1).

38 *Chet Holifield Federal Building*

39 At the same time Laguna Niguel was being established as a master-planned community in 1959, Los
40 Angeles-based North American Aviation began moving its expanding Autonetics division to Anaheim.

⁴ The historical context included in this report is drawn and excerpted from Heritage Architecture (2016) and ARG (2019).

1 The company was in need of larger facilities to continue to meet the industry’s demanding need. As early
2 as 1966, the company chose the Laguna Niguel area because of its isolation and as a secured location for
3 its Data System Division. The following year, North American Aviation merged with Rockwell Standard
4 to become the North American Rockwell Corporation, which subsequently became known as Rockwell.

5 The newly formed Rockwell purchased 1,340 acres from the Laguna Niguel Corporation and the Moulton
6 Ranch and hired William Pereira & Associates Planning & Architecture to design the building. The
7 seven-story building was designed to resemble an ancient Babylonian temple tower called a Ziggurat. The
8 nearly one-million-square-foot building was to employ 7,500 workers and to be the world’s largest
9 electronics manufacturing plant of its time and the largest building in Orange County.

10 In 1968, an \$18.5 million contract was awarded to Huber, Hunt, and Nichols, Inc., general contractors,
11 and construction began on the facility. Rockwell planned to use the building’s lower floors for electronics
12 manufacturing and assembly, the middle floors for engineering, and the top floors for management
13 offices. The facility was to be part of the Laguna Niguel planned community that included residences and
14 other industrial buildings. However, when construction was completed in 1971, the aerospace industry hit
15 a downturn, with both the space program and the Vietnam War ramping down. Plans for the plant were
16 changed, and eventually Rockwell abandoned the use of the site. For several years the building remained
17 unoccupied.

18 Unable to sell the building, Rockwell contacted the GSA regional office in San Francisco in 1971 to offer
19 it in exchange for government-owned defense plants at El Segundo and Canoga Park, California. The
20 trade was made in March 1974. Since that time, GSA has occupied the building. In 1978, the building
21 was renamed in honor of former U.S. Congressman Chester (Chet) Earl Holifield. By 1986, the building
22 was 63 percent occupied. GSA submitted a prospectus to Congress on June 2, 1986, to complete
23 renovation of the building for continued long-term occupancy (Heritage Architecture 2016:2-2 to 2-3).

24 *Architectural History Resources in APE*

25 The CHFB is the only historic property in the APE. It has previously been determined individually for
26 listing in the NRHP at the local level of significance under Criterion C, as an excellent example of a
27 Modern/Brutalist ziggurat building designed by master architect William L. Pereira. The landscaping,
28 including wide expanses of parking, was designed in concert with the design of the building and
29 constructed as part of the same project.

30 **Architectural Description**

31 *Main Building*

32 *Exterior:* The main character-defining features of the building, including the massing, stepped ziggurat
33 shape, linear fenestration, and pebble-textured pre-cast concrete cladding, remain intact. The building is
34 painted a pale ochre color. Early photographs of the building indicate that it was originally gray, possibly
35 unfinished concrete.

36 The CHFB has a concrete structural system with cast-in-place concrete columns on a 30-foot structural
37 grid and a “spancrete” pre-cast concrete floor system at each level. The floor system below the fourth-
38 floor traffic deck on the north side of the building and at the upper roof is more substantial to
39 accommodate the additional structural loads associated with vehicular traffic and parking. The structural
40 deck in these areas consists of a concrete deck with 2-foot deep pan joists. The exposed concrete columns
41 of the building were originally labeled in accordance with the structural grid noted on the 1968
42 construction drawings. The notation is still visible on many of the existing columns. There is no evidence
43 of any significant changes to the original concrete structural systems.

44 The roofs of the building are generally flat and finished with composition roofing. The upper roof was
45 originally used as a helipad. Mechanical and communications equipment have been added to the upper

1 roof, and the helipad has been moved to an adjacent area on the site. Textured fiberglass fins have been
2 added to help screen some of the equipment. Solar panels have also been added on the lower roofs at the
3 south side of the building.

4 The exterior window system appears to be original, consisting of fixed-pane dark bronze aluminum
5 windows with a dark coating on the glass. Exterior doors generally consist of dark bronze-colored
6 aluminum framed doors with glass lights that match the dark coating of the windows.

7 *Interior:* The interior of the building is generally occupied by private office suites housing various federal
8 agencies. There are relatively few significant character-defining interior spaces. The original Main Lobby
9 located on the north end of the fourth floor is the most significant interior space in the building. The
10 fourth-floor lobby features a decorative wood ceiling treatment and wood wall paneling. Other important
11 interior spaces include the elevator lobbies and the main corridors.

12 According to the original drawings, the main office areas in the building were originally large open areas
13 without interior walls and partitions in most areas of the building. In many spaces, walls have been added
14 to subdivide the spaces into smaller office suites and private offices. The additional walls are evident
15 because the ceiling grid does not line up with the walls. The original interior finishes, such as flooring and
16 interior paint, have been replaced several times to facilitate continued use of the building for offices.
17 Original finishes have been largely replaced. There are two sets of escalators, which connect the main
18 north/south corridors from the underfloor to the third floor.

19 One of the few original decorative interior features in the building is the wood ceiling treatment located in
20 primary interior spaces such as the Main Lobby on the fourth floor, elevator lobbies on all levels, above
21 the escalators, and at the recessed entry on the south side of the underfloor. The decorative ceiling finish
22 includes suspended, evenly spaced, clear-finished wood boards.

23 The CHFB has previously experienced exterior and interior alterations to the building, as well as
24 alterations to the site. However, most of the alterations were limited to the interior, which was primarily
25 utilitarian and had a minimum number of character-defining features, as described below. Distinctive
26 finishes and character-defining features like wood slat ceilings were limited to public spaces like the main
27 lobby and elevator/escalator lobbies and remain largely intact. Thus, the original design intent is
28 uncompromised (ARG 2019:43).

29 *Site*

30 The site as a whole has experienced few changes since its construction; it was the first major development
31 in this area of Laguna Niguel and has seen commercial and residential areas expand around it over time.
32 Between 1981 and 1994, Alicia Parkway (at the west side of the property) was realigned, cutting off the
33 southwest portion of the parcel from the rest of the property. Sometime in the 2000s-2010s, the original
34 freestanding pole light fixtures in the parcel's inner parking lots were replaced (ARG 2019:44).

35 *Landscaping*

36 The existing landscape contributes to the overall significance of the site, although it is a secondary feature
37 that is largely overshadowed by the massive building. Most of the primary site features on the south, east,
38 and west sides of the building such as general topography, pedestrian paving, vehicular paving patterns,
39 landscape berms, curbs, planter locations, and mature trees around the entire perimeter appear to be
40 original.

41 The original 1968 drawings indicate a double row of multi-trunk European Olive trees planted in
42 pyramidal berms flanking the front entry drive. The drawings also show pre-cast concrete planters at the
43 perimeter of the parking deck. The planters have been removed, and the olive trees have been replaced
44 with shrubs. Additionally, shrubs and annual flowering plants have been added in the original lawn area
45 in the center. However, the general layout of the parking area remains unchanged, including the vehicle

1 access roads, sidewalks, curbs, and planting areas. The north entry and parking deck were the original
2 main entrance to the site. Although the main public entrance has been moved and the parking area is no
3 longer used, this area continues to contribute to the overall historical character of the building.

4 *Late Modern Architecture*

5 Late Modernism is an umbrella term for several architectural styles that emerged after World War II in
6 response to earlier modes of Modernism. Late Modern buildings generally favored sculptural forms over
7 the restrained aesthetic of its predecessors. Brutalism, as expressed in the CHFB, is a subset of Late
8 Modernism. Practitioners of Brutalist architecture used concrete both structurally and aesthetically to
9 create bold, monolithic forms that dominated their environments – the antithesis of other post-World War
10 II Modern styles that favored light, transparent qualities and buildings that blended seamlessly with their
11 surroundings. Brutalism proliferated in the 1960s and early 1970s and was particularly popular in public
12 architecture and educational institutions nationwide.

13 *Architect: William Pereira & Associates*

14 William L. Pereira was born in Chicago in 1909. At a young age, he honed his creative skills as a
15 draftsman, architect's assistant, painter, and illustrator. After graduating from the University of Illinois
16 School of Architecture in 1931, he worked for the firm of Holabird and Root and later designed movie
17 theaters for the chain of Balaban & Katz. This eventually led to a job designing a Hollywood studio for
18 Paramount Pictures, and for a time, a variety of non-architecture projects in the film industry. Pereira
19 shared an Oscar award for his work on special effects on Cecil B. DeMille's film, "Reap the Wild Wind."
20 After World War II, Pereira became a professor at the University of Southern California's School of
21 Architecture. In 1951, Pereira returned to architecture practice and formed a partnership with architect
22 Charles Luckman. The partnership proved extremely successful, and together the duo created some of Los
23 Angeles's most notable landmarks, including CBS Television City (1952), Los Angeles Center Studios
24 (1958), and the master plan for the Theme Building at LAX (1961).

25 When the partnership dissolved, and Pereira formed his own practice, William Pereira & Associates.
26 Often referred to as the architect of the "Los Angeles look," Pereira's major commissions include
27 Marineland of the Pacific (1954), the Metropolitan Water District campus (1963), the Los Angeles
28 County Museum of Art (1965), the Mutual Benefit Life Plaza (1969), and the Geisel Library at UC San
29 Diego (1970). Pereira also became a leading figure of master planning, as seen in his designs for the 1962
30 masterplan for the University of California Irvine campus, the 1970s design for the University of
31 Pepperdine, and the 1960 and 1966 campus plans (and numerous buildings) for the University of
32 Southern California. His success earned him the cover of Time magazine in 1963. Pereira died in 1985.

33 *Landscape Architect: Donald Brinkerhoff*

34 Donald Brinkerhoff graduated from Cal Poly Pomona with a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture in 1952.
35 In 1958, he founded the landscape architecture firm Lifescapes International with his wife, Barbara
36 Brinkerhoff, in Newport Beach, California. In 1973, the firm won awards from the American Society of
37 Landscape Architects, the American Association of Nurserymen, and the National Landscape
38 Association. The firm is perhaps best known for its work along the Las Vegas Strip between the late
39 1980s and 2000s, which included landscape designs for the Mirage, the Bellagio, the Venetian, the
40 Palazzo, and the Wynn. Over the course of his career, Brinkerhoff pioneered several advancements in the
41 field of landscape architecture, including cobblestone-patterned concrete paving. He is also credited with
42 originating the terms "softscape" and "hardscape" in distinguishing plant materials from architectural
43 landscape elements. In the early 1990s, Brinkerhoff received the American Society of Landscape
44 Architects' Fellows designation, the highest honor bestowed by the ASLA.