



Grand Portage Land Port of Entry Modernization and Expansion Project Environmental Impact Statement

Meeting Handout

November 19, 2024, 5-7 p.m. CDT



Introduction

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement and is undergoing consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act for the Grand Portage Land Port of Entry (LPOE) Modernization and Expansion Project. The Draft EIS analyzes the potential impacts resulting from the modernization and expansion of the Grand Portage LPOE and installation of a three-phase power line, which are both located within the Grand Portage Reservation of the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. The LPOE facility is located between the far northeast corner of the state and the Canadian Province of Ontario where the Pigeon River meets Lake Superior. The LPOE is owned and managed by GSA and operated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection (CBP). The 7.3 mile three-phase power line would be located within an existing utility right-of-way that parallels Highway 61.

Project Background

The Grand Portage LPOE is a port of entry for vehicles and pedestrians crossing the U.S.-Canada border between the Grand Portage Reservation in the U.S. and Neebing, Ontario in Canada. The port is a full-service, multi-modal facility where CBP officers inspect commercially owned vehicles (COVs), privately owned vehicles (POVs), and pedestrians. The existing facilities were constructed in 1965 and are served by an inefficient road design. A GSA Feasibility Study (2019) for the facility determined that the existing structures do not meet square footage needs specified by CBP's space and facility requirements (also referred to as the Program of Requirements). In addition, the facility does not allow for expeditious and safe inspection of the traveling public since there are no outbound inspection capabilities. The Feasibility Study identified three alternatives for expanding and modernizing the port.

Following preparation of the Feasibility Study, a Program Development Study (PDS) was initiated as the next step in the design process to further refine potential alternatives under consideration. The PDS process is an iterative process that builds on prior phases, and documents are issued based on a percent completion of project design; the 100 percent PDS was issued in December 2023. In collaboration with the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, who is serving as a Cooperating Agency for the EIS, the PDS process identified a single alternative to carry forward for further evaluation. A small, temporary incursion outside of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) easement would be required on the north end of the project footprint for construction, but the operational footprint would be entirely within the MnDOT Highway 61 easement.

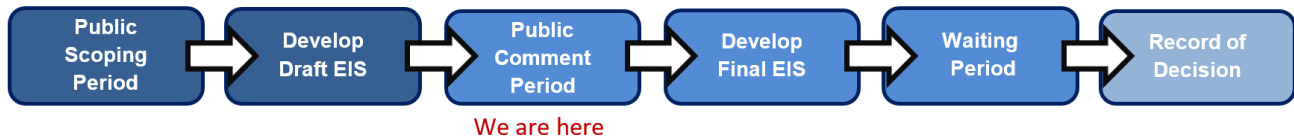
Proposed Alternatives

GSA proposes to modernize and expand the Grand Portage LPOE within an existing MnDOT easement on the Grand Portage Reservation. This project is needed to address various space and operational issues associated with the existing LPOE. The EIS considers one “**action**” **alternative** and one “**no action**” **alternative**. The two alternatives are described as follows:

- **Alternative 1** – Construct the facilities as described in the 100 percent PDS (see Figure 1). GSA would remove all existing LPOE buildings and replace them with new facilities in a new site configuration. All construction activities would take place within the proposed limits of construction, which encompass approximately 10.4 acres. GSA would replace the Grand Portage LPOE with a modernized facility on an expanded footprint, increasing the existing 5.7-acre operational area to a total operational footprint of approximately 10.4 acres. GSA would upgrade the electrical distribution system leading to the LPOE by installing a 7.3 mile three-phase power line (see Figure 2). GSA would consider incorporation of renewable energy technologies (e.g., solar or geothermal) into the project.
- **No Action Alternative** – Under the “no action” alternative, there would be no construction activities at the Grand Portage LPOE and operations at the LPOE would continue under current conditions.

National Environmental Policy Act Process

GSA has prepared a Draft EIS and is asking for public comments regarding the document’s findings. NEPA directs federal agencies to conduct environmental reviews to consider the potential impacts on the environment by their proposed actions and requires that agencies take into account public concerns in reaching a decision that is in the best overall public interest. The public comment period provides an opportunity for citizens to review the Draft EIS and provide comments on the environmental analysis. Upon closing of the public comment period, GSA will consider all comments and, if necessary, conduct further analysis. The Final EIS will provide responses to substantive comments. The NEPA process and consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act is running concurrently.



For project updates, visit:

<https://www.gsa.gov/about-us/gsa-regions/region-5-great-lakes/buildings-and-facilities/minnesota/grand-portage-land-port-of-entry>

Public Comments

Public comments must be received or postmarked by December 16, 2024, in order to be considered during development of the Final EIS. All substantive comments will be considered equally and will be part of the public record. Comments may be submitted by one of the following methods:

- Verbally – Submit verbal comments at the virtual or in-person portion of the public hearing.
- On comment form – Submit written comments on forms provided at the in-person portion of the public hearing.
- By email – Send to michael.gonczar@gsa.gov. Please reference “Grand Portage LPOE EIS” in the subject line.
- By U.S. mail to:

ATTN: Michael Gonczar, Grand Portage LPOE EIS
U.S. General Services Administration, Region 5
230 S. Dearborn Street, Suite 3600
Chicago, IL 60604

For further information, contact Michael Gonczar, NEPA Program Manager, GSA Region 5, at 312-810-2326 or michael.gonczar@gsa.gov.

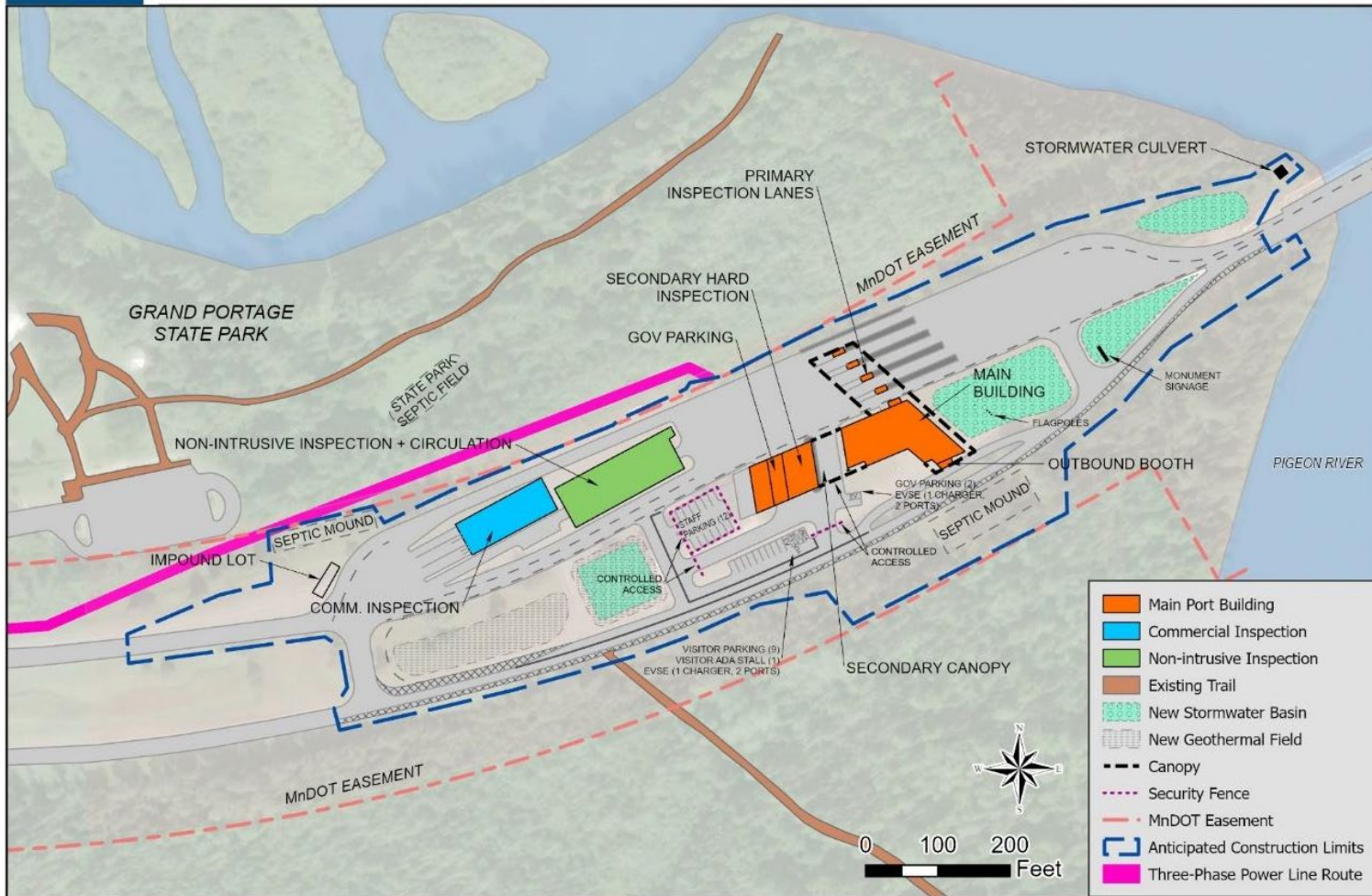


Figure 1. Proposed Layout of the Modernized and Expanded Grand Portage LPOE

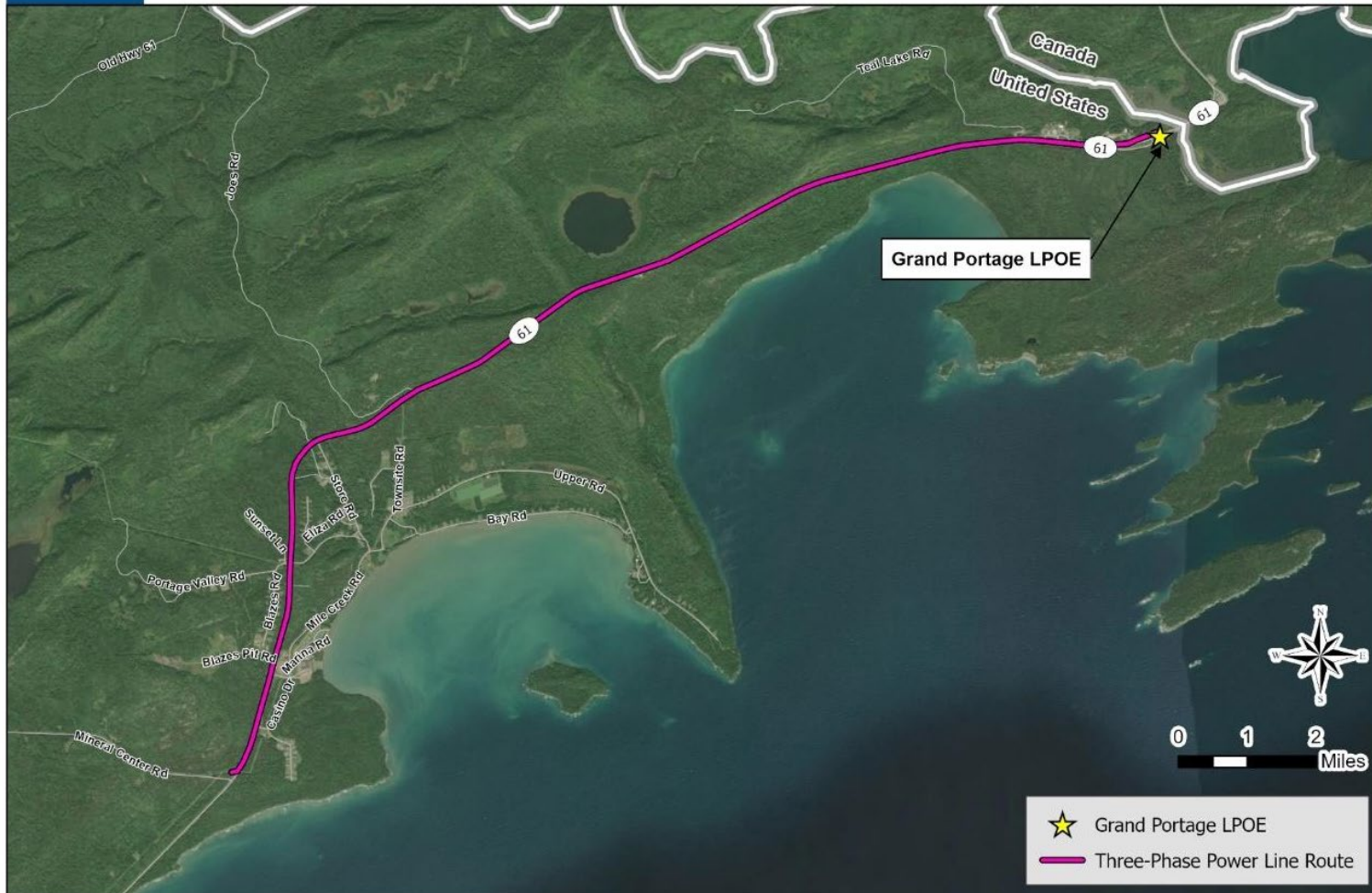


Figure 2. Proposed Three-Phase Power Line Route