



U.S. General Services Administration

Hartford Federal Courthouse Project

Draft Environmental Impact Statement Public Hearing





Meeting Agenda

- Welcome and Housekeeping
- Introductions
- Purpose of the Meeting
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Process
- Project Overview and Alternatives
- Resources Evaluated in the Draft EIS and Summary of Potential Impacts
- How to Submit Comments



Welcome and Housekeeping

Meeting Recording and Accessibility

- Audio of this presentation is being recorded with closed captioning
- The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is available here: www.gsa.gov/HartfordCourthouse

Comment Submission

- Instructions on how to submit comments will be provided before the commenting session



Introductions

- ❑ **U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)**
 - Bob Herman, Project Manager
 - Sara Massarello, Site Program Manager
 - Jane Urban, Environmental Protection Specialist

- ❑ **U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut**
 - Honorable Michael P. Shea, Chief Judge

- ❑ **Solv LLC (GSA's NEPA Contractor)**
 - Kevin Ebert
 - Leon Kolankiewicz

Meeting Purpose

- Describe the NEPA Process
- Provide an overview of GSA's proposed project
- Review findings of the Draft EIS
- Provide an opportunity for comments on the Draft EIS





NEPA Process

☐ NEPA requires federal agencies to:

- Consider and document the effects of their proposed projects on the natural and human environment
- Involve the public in the decision-making process

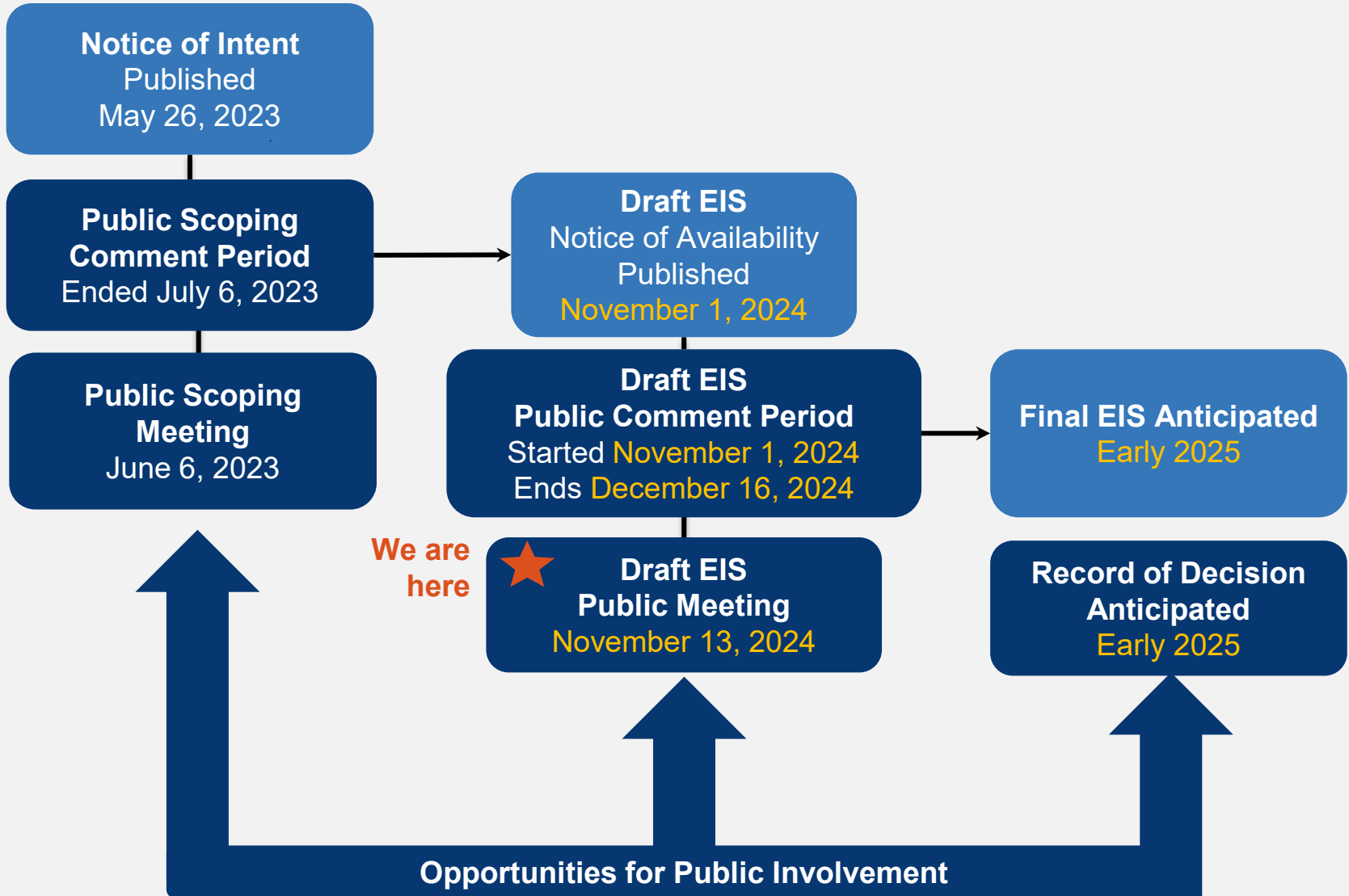
GSA has prepared a Draft EIS per NEPA requirements to assess potential effects from the proposed construction and operation of a new federal courthouse in Hartford

☐ Public Input:

- The public review period is an opportunity for you to provide input on the Draft EIS
- GSA will consider all comments during the decision-making process and development of the Final EIS



EIS Timeline





Project Background

- ❑ The U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut (the Court) currently operates across three facilities in New Haven (its headquarters location), Bridgeport, and Hartford
- ❑ Studies have concluded that relocating the Court's headquarters to Hartford would provide efficiencies in judicial operations across the state
- ❑ The Ribicoff Federal Building and Courthouse, located in Hartford and built in 1963, does not have the capacity to accommodate the Court's functions and operations



*U.S. District Courthouses in Connecticut (top to bottom):
Bridgeport, New Haven, Hartford*

Project Purpose and Need

Purpose

To meet the current and long-term space needs of the Court and related agencies by providing an adequate number of courtrooms, judges chambers, and other office space in Hartford, and to ensure efficient judicial operations across the State of Connecticut

Need

The Project is needed because the Ribicoff Federal Building and Courthouse is inadequate in size and configuration for the Court's operations including deficiencies in judicial, detainee, and juror circulation and overall facility security



Description of Proposed Action

Proposed Action: Acquire a site in Hartford, CT and design, construct, and operate a new courthouse on the site.

Key Features of the new Courthouse:

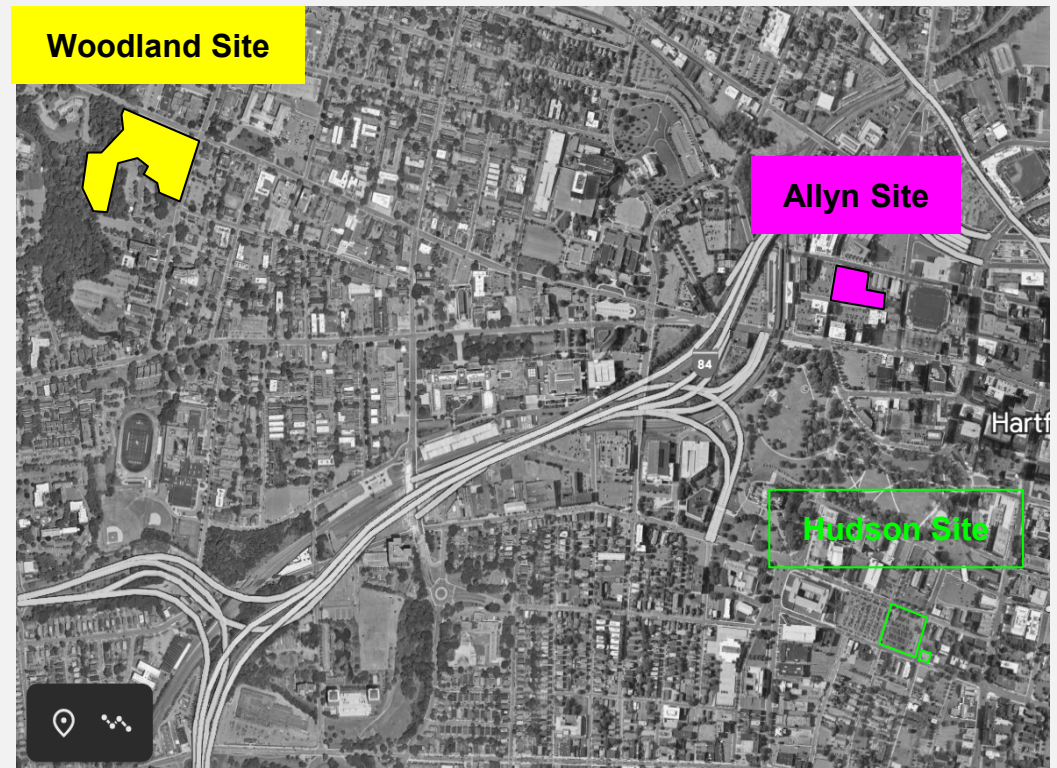
- Up to 281,000 gross square feet
- 11 courtrooms and 18 Judges chambers
- Offices for the Court and related agencies
- 66 secure parking spaces
- US Green Building Council - LEED Gold, SITES Silver
- GSA Sustainability Program

Photos of recently
built U.S.
Courthouses
(left - right):
San Antonio, TX
Nashville, TN
Springfield, MA



Project Site Selection

- ❑ The site selection team consists of GSA and Court representatives along with advisors in real estate, design & construction, historic preservation, and urban planning
- ❑ Sites needed to be able to accommodate a new courthouse up to 281,000 gross square feet and be within the Hartford City limits



- ❑ Three viable sites were initially identified: **Woodland, Allyn, and Hudson**
- ❑ The Hudson site was later removed from consideration

Proposed Project Alternatives

The Draft EIS evaluates three alternatives. Each “action” alternative corresponds to one potential project site.

Action Alternative 1: Woodland Site

- A state office building on 10.19 acres in the Hartford Asylum Hill neighborhood
- South of Saint Francis Hospital
- Bordered by Asylum Ave, Woodland St., and the North Branch Park River

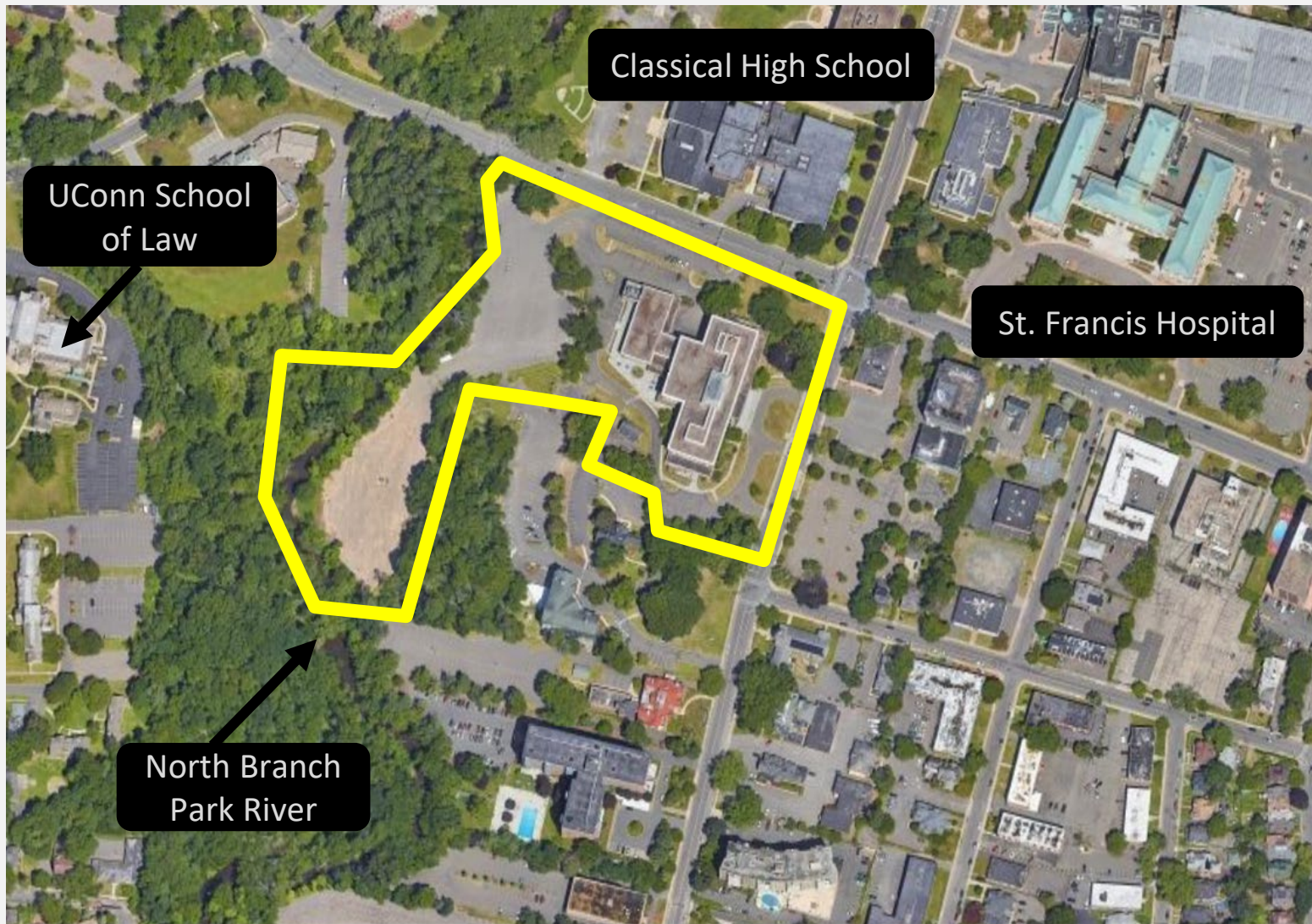
Action Alternative 2: Allyn Site

- A surface parking lot on 2.19 acres in downtown Hartford
- West of the XL Center and east of Union Station
- Bordered by Allyn St., Church St., and High St.

No Action Alternative

- Site acquisition and the subsequent design, construction, and operation of a new courthouse would not occur (status quo)
- Minor repairs, routine maintenance, and operations of existing Court facilities would continue
- The purpose and need of the proposed project would not be met

Alternative 1: Woodland Site



Alternative 2: Allyn Site





Potential Effects to Resource Areas

Resource Area	Woodland Site		Allyn Site		No Action Alternative
Land Use					
Utilities					
Traffic & Transportation					
Air Quality					
Climate Change					
Solid and Hazardous Waste & Materials					
Socioeconomics					
Environmental Justice					
Cultural Resources					
Geology, Topography, & Soils					
Water Resources					
Visual Resources & Aesthetics					



No Effects



Beneficial Effect



Negligible to Minor Adverse Effect



Moderate Adverse Effect



Major Adverse Effect

Potential Effects to Land Use

Alternative 1: Woodland Site

- Minor beneficial effects from compliance with Hartford's zoning designation and future land use goals, and partial compliance with the neighborhood strategic plan
- Negligible adverse effects from the removal of the site from Connecticut's 'Payment In Lieu of Taxes' (PILOT) grant program, and minor adverse effects from partial non-compliance with the neighborhood strategic plan

Alternative 2: Allyn Site

- Minor beneficial effects from compliance with Hartford's zoning designation and future land use goals
- Negligible adverse effects from removal of the site from Hartford's tax base

No Action Alternative

- No effects to land use



Potential Effects to Traffic & Transportation

Alternative 1: Woodland site

- Moderate adverse effects during construction from lane restrictions, closures, etc.
- Minor adverse effects from increase in traffic during operation of new courthouse: +321 net average daily trips; +6 net AM peak hour trips; and +7 net PM peak hour trips
- Minor adverse effects from lack of sufficient parking

Alternative 2: Allyn Site

- Minor adverse effects during construction from lane restrictions, closures, etc.
- Moderate adverse effects from increase in traffic during operation of new courthouse: +2,851 average daily trips; +162 AM peak hour trips; and +145 PM peak hour trips
- Negligible adverse effects from lack of sufficient parking

No Action Alternative

- No effects to traffic and transportation



Potential Effects to Solid & Hazardous Waste & Materials

Alternative 1: Woodland site

- Negligible adverse effects from accidental spills of fuel and chemicals during construction
- Moderate adverse effects from generation and disposal of hazardous building materials and potential contaminant runoff from standing waste

Alternative 2: Allyn Site

- Negligible adverse effects from accidental spills of fuel and chemicals during construction
- Moderate adverse effects from generation of contaminated excavation waste and potential runoff from standing waste
- Minor adverse effects from the increased generation and management of waste

No Action Alternative

- Minor adverse effects from the continued use of hazardous materials and the generation of solid and hazardous waste during building operations



Potential Effects to Socioeconomics

Alternative 1: Woodland site

- Negligible to minor beneficial effects to labor and income from increased employment; opportunities for community engagement; and overall increased economic activity in the neighborhood
- Negligible adverse effects from the removal of the site from Connecticut's PILOT grant program

Alternative 2: Allyn Site

- Negligible to minor beneficial effects to labor and income from increased employment and overall increased economic activity in the neighborhood
- Negligible adverse effects from the removal of the site from Hartford's tax base

No Action Alternative

No effects to socioeconomics



Potential Effects to Cultural Resources

Alternative 1: Woodland Site

Archaeological resources: No effects

Architectural Resources:

- Woodland Site structures have not been evaluated for historic significance; moderate to major effects may occur if they are determined to be historic
- Negligible beneficial or adverse effects to the viewshed of historic resources near the site

Alternative 2: Allyn Site

Archaeological resources: Negligible to moderate beneficial or adverse effects may occur if the project led to the discovery of historically or culturally important resources

Architectural Resources: Negligible beneficial or adverse effects to the viewshed of historic resources near the site

No Action Alternative

No effects to cultural resources



Potential Effects to Water Resources

Alternative 1: Woodland site

Surface Water and Stormwater: Minor effects during construction-related activities from potential sediment or contaminant runoff and accidental spills. Negligible effects from O&M and benefits from development of riparian cover and green infrastructure

Wetlands: Benefits from potential reestablishment of wetland vegetation

Floodplain: Benefits from potential removal of impervious surfaces from the floodplain

Alternative 2: Allyn Site

Surface Water and Stormwater: Minor effects during construction-related activities from potential sediment or contaminant runoff and accidental spills. Negligible effects from O&M

Wetlands: No effects

Floodplain: No effects

No Action Alternative

No effects to water resources.

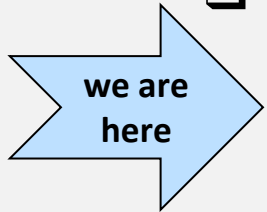


Best Management Practices (BMPs)/Mitigation Measures

Resource Area	BMP / Mitigation Measure
Solid and Hazardous Waste and Materials	Additional surveys and subsurface investigations to verify presence of underground tanks and contamination; soils remediation; removal and disposal of hazardous materials by licensed contractors; regular vehicle maintenance; proper storage of hazardous chemicals; frequent removal of waste from construction site
Cultural Resources	If the existing structures on the Woodland Site are determined to be historic, GSA would develop and implement mitigation measures under the Section 106 process in consultation with the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office; implementation of an Inadvertent Discovery Plan
Water Resources	Implementation of stormwater pollution prevention plan; erosion control strategies like temporary seeding and silt fencing; stormwater BMPs like detention ponds, vegetated swales; adherence to permit requirements



Next Steps & Anticipated Timeline



Project Planning & Development, including NEPA

- Public Review of the Draft EIS (**November 1, 2024 – December 16, 2024**)
- Publish Final EIS (**Anticipated Early 2025**)
- Identify the Preferred Alternative and issue the Record of Decision documenting the decision (**Anticipated Early 2025**)

Design anticipated to begin in **2025**

Construction anticipated to begin in **2027**

Occupancy anticipated in **2030**



Tell us what you think!

GSA welcomes public input and will accept comments on the Draft EIS until **December 16, 2024. There are multiple ways to submit comments:**

- In Person:** Fill out a comment form and leave it here with us tonight. You can also provide verbal comments after this presentation.
- Email** comments to HartfordCourthouse@gsa.gov with subject line **“Hartford Courthouse EIS”**
- Mail** comments to:
 - Attention: Robert Herman, Project Manager
 - Abraham A. Ribicoff Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse
 - 450 Main St., Suite 435
 - Hartford, CT 06103
- Dropbox:** Place comments in the dropbox at the main entrance of the Ribicoff Courthouse at 450 Main Street.



Commenting Etiquette

- Once called, please step up to the microphone.
- State and spell your first and last name at the start of your comment.
- Be respectful of participants and presenters.
- Remain quiet while others are speaking.
- Verbal comments will be held to a two-minute time limit.
- If time allows, participants may be permitted to speak again after all commenters have had the opportunity to speak. Additional comments can also be submitted in writing.
- A recording of the meeting will be made available online at www.gsa.gov/HartfordCourthouse, and your comments will be included in the administrative record.

THANK YOU!