

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Porthill Land Port of Entry Expansion and Modernization Project
Final Environmental Assessment
Porthill, Idaho
June 2024

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality's Implementing Regulations for NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations parts 1500-1508), and the U.S. General Services Administration's Public Buildings Service NEPA Desk Guide (GSA, 1999), I find that the Porthill Land Port of Entry Expansion and Modernization Project, as described in the Final Environmental Assessment (EA), is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. Mitigation measures will be implemented to ensure that the action avoids or minimizes potentially adverse environmental impacts.

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APPROVED: _____ DATE: 5/24/2024
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Lisa Pearson
Regional Commissioner
Northwest/Arctic Region (Region 10)
Public Buildings Service
U.S. General Services Administration

This Finding of No Significant Impact will become final 30 days after publication, provided that no information leading to a contrary finding is received or comes to light during the 30-day review period.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) Northwest/Arctic Region (Region 10) prepared a Final Environmental Assessment (EA) to assess and document potential impacts resulting from the Porthill Land Port of Entry (LPOE) Expansion and Modernization Project.

The Porthill LPOE is located on Idaho State Highway 1 (SH-1) in the town of Porthill, Idaho. The Final EA explains the need for the project, the alternatives that were considered to meet the need, the impacts that were identified, and how impacts will be avoided or minimized. The anticipated impacts, mitigation of impacts, and other information discussed below are from the published Final EA.

As part of a nationwide effort, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) conducted programmatic feasibility studies for LPOEs and their operational deficiencies based on the most recent LPOE Design Standard. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, allocated \$3.4 billion for GSA to undertake 26 construction and modernization projects at LPOEs along the southern and northern borders. Many of the country's LPOEs are outdated, long overdue for modernization, operate at full capacity, and have surpassed the needs for which they were originally designed, including Porthill.

2.0 PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

The purpose of the project is to modernize and expand the Porthill LPOE to improve the LPOE's functionality, capacity, and sustainability.

The project's need is twofold: (1) to increase the available area at the LPOE because the existing facilities are too small to accommodate the current staff, and (2) to increase the Porthill LPOE's capacity because current traffic flow through the LPOE is inefficient, which causes congestion and delays in processing times.

3.0 SELECTED ALTERNATIVE AND RATIONALE FOR DECISION

GSA selected Alternative 3, Option B: Two-Story, Small Port Prototype with Full Demolition as the alternative for implementation because it best meets the purpose of, and need for, the project without causing significant impacts on the resources analyzed in the Final EA.

The Selected Alternative will acquire up to 0.04 acres of land owned by Boundary County and either acquire or secure easements from the State of Idaho for approximately 1.2 additional acres located west of the existing port. The Final EA included the acquisition of 1.158 acres of private property; however, GSA has since re-evaluated the acreage required for the expanded and modernized LPOE and no longer intends to acquire the 1.158 acres of private property as part of the Selected Alternative. The Selected Alternative will also include the full demolition of the existing LPOE (including foundation and utilities) which will remain operational throughout construction. Alternative 3, Option B will have a smaller building footprint and thus require less grading and filling than the other action alternatives analyzed, and operational spaces will be split between the first and second stories. The 4-acre project area is defined as the Porthill LPOE property, an Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) proposed easement to the west of SH-1 currently used for snow storage; and a portion of the ITD property.

3.1 Land Acquisition

Under the Selected Alternative, up to 0.04 acres of land owned by Boundary County will be acquired, and GSA will either acquire or obtain easements from the State of Idaho for approximately 1.2 additional acres

west of the existing port. The Selected Alternative will not include the acquisition of privately-owned property described in the Final EA.

3.2 Site Preparation

Site preparation will include the following measures:

- **Demolition:** Full demolition of the existing structures, including the main LPOE building, temporary buildings, the primary inspection booth and canopy, the secondary inspection bay and canopy, the building foundations, and utility connections.
- **Disposal:** Disposal of all demolished structures. Dedicated disposal contractors would haul demolished materials offsite for disposal of standard materials. Because the main building was built in 1967 it may contain hazardous construction materials such as asbestos containing materials (ACM) and lead-based paint. Material testing to determine the presence of ACM and lead-based paint in areas affected by proposed renovations and/or demolition would be conducted. All ACM or lead-based paint would be properly disposed of in accordance with federal, state, and local regulatory requirements prior to LPOE building renovations and/or demolition (Parsons, 2019). Any hazardous materials would be transported and disposed of offsite by licensed disposal contractors.
- **Grading and Filling:** Grade and fill the gully due west of the existing LPOE to accommodate new construction.
- **Rock Excavation:** Excavate area adjacent to the outbound inspection lane to create an adequate passing lane.

3.3 Facility Construction

The Selected Alternative will include the construction of the following new facilities:

- **Main Building (9,404 Net Square Feet [NSF]):** Construct a new, two-story, main LPOE building that would include a public waiting area, two public restrooms, office/working spaces, enforcement areas, commercial inspection support spaces, staff support spaces, and building support spaces.
- **Canopy and Booth Spaces for Commercial and POV Inspections (520 NSF):** Construct one POV/commercial lane with a high/low booth connected to the interior of the main building, and three additional POV/commercial lanes each with a high/low booth.
- **Primary Inspection Canopy (1,000 NSF):** Construct a canopy above the primary inspection lanes.
- **Non-Commercial Inspection Facilities (1,113 NSF):** Construct a new enclosed POV secondary inspection facility with two inspection bays and a public waiting area.
- **Primary Outbound Inspection (130 NSF):** Construct one lane with a high-low booth connected to the interior of the main port building.
- **Exterior Parking (8,050 NSF):** Construct six visitor parking spaces (350 NSF per space), 16 employee parking spaces (350 NSF per space), and one exterior government operated vehicle (GOV) parking space (350 NSF per space).
- **Enclosed parking (450 NSF):** Add one enclosed GOV parking space.
- **Commercial Vehicle Staging (1,000 NSF):** Construct one staging space.

- Staging for construction and stockpile areas would be located within or immediately adjacent to the construction footprint.
- The capacity for the water and septic systems would be increased; no increase in capacity will be needed for the electrical system.

The design phase would determine the construction phasing plan so that the LPOE would continue to be operational until the newly constructed LPOE is complete. To maintain port operations until the small port prototype is completed, either temporary facilities will be installed on land west of the existing facility; or the port will remain open until the final phase of construction when operations are switched over from the existing main building to the newly constructed main building.

All new facilities will be constructed to attain GSA's climate-resilient and energy-efficient goals.

3.4 Increased Building Capacity and Improved Traffic Flow

The Selected Alternative will expand the facility to a capacity that will allow the port to meet its current operational needs. Inspection lanes and facilities will be expanded and upgraded to handle traffic flows. High-low inspection booths will eliminate the need for dedicated commercial inspection areas and will improve operational efficiency. The revised lane formation will provide a more direct approach to the primary inspection booths compared to the current lane configuration, and the LPOE will have an established clear line of sight. There will also be more interior building space for port employees, in addition to extended visitor, employee, and truck parking space.

3.5 Construction Duration

The design phase is anticipated to begin in February 2026. The construction phase is anticipated to last up to 2 years and begin in December 2026. The Selected Alternative will involve the full demolition of the existing facility, and the final construction phasing and duration will be determined during the design phase. Substantial completion of the project is anticipated for October 2028.

The Selected Alternative allows for optimal operational efficiency and security based on the updated site design, optimal sustainability, and climate resiliency.

4.0 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

GSA places a strong emphasis on avoiding and minimizing potentially adverse environmental impacts. **Table 1** summarizes the potential impacts and applicable mitigation measures that will be implemented to ensure the Selected Alternative will have no significant impact on the human environment.

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF IMPACTS FROM THE SELECTED ALTERNATIVE AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Resource Area	Impacts	Mitigation Measures and Best Management Practices (BMPs)
Cultural and Tribal Resources	<p>Indirect, adverse, minor, short-term, local impacts on the setting of the adjacent 1938 historic LPOE building due to noise and visual disturbance from construction activities.</p> <p>Indirect, adverse, minor, short-term, local impacts on subsistence activities or tribal resources could occur due to increased noise and air emissions during demolition and construction activities.</p> <p>No archaeological resources have been identified within the project area, but cultural resource investigations are ongoing. If during construction any archaeological resources were discovered, there would be potential adverse or beneficial impacts to cultural resources.</p> <p>Beneficial, major, long-term, site-specific effects if a discovered archaeological resource is not damaged by construction activities and leads to the identification of a culturally significant resource.</p> <p>Adverse, major, long-term, site-specific impacts if an archaeological resource was found but damaged or destroyed by construction.</p>	<p>Cultural resource investigations and consultation in accordance with Section 106 are ongoing and would continue beyond publication of the Final EA. GSA contractors would be provided with an Inadvertent Discovery Plan for cultural resources and human remains, which would be implemented if such materials are uncovered during construction. GSA would consult with Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Kootenai Tribe to resolve any potential adverse effects resulting from an inadvertent discovery.</p>
Geology, Topography, and Soils	<p>Adverse, minor, long-term, site-specific impacts to geologic features due to rock excavation for a deep foundation.</p> <p>Adverse, moderate, long-term, site-specific impacts to topography due to grading and filling activities.</p>	<p>BMPs to minimize erosion and sedimentation include installing silt fencing and sediment traps; placing gravel or rip-rap for heavy vehicle transit; and reestablishing vegetation.</p> <p>Stormwater BMPs for the area of analysis will include a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP).</p>

Resource Area	Impacts	Mitigation Measures and Best Management Practices (BMPs)
	<p>Adverse, minor, short- and long-term, site-specific impacts to soils due to construction activities. These would result in soil erosion, soil compaction, and the covering of soils with buildings, roads, or other impermeable surfaces. Full demolition of the existing foundations would destroy existing soil horizons, and the structure and function of soils.</p> <p>Adverse, minor, short- and long-term, site-specific impacts to soil resources from sedimentation and soil erosion.</p> <p>Adverse, minor, long-term, site-specific impacts from the loss of soil structure, function, and drainage due to compaction and covering of soils with concrete, asphalt, and other impermeable surfaces and from use of heavy equipment and vehicle and foot traffic.</p>	
Biological Resources	<p>Direct, adverse, and beneficial, minor, short- to long-term, local impacts on vegetation due to the destruction and removal of any native or invasive plant species occurring in the area of analysis during construction of the new LPOE.</p> <p>Direct, adverse, minor, short- and long-term, local impacts on wildlife due to the removal of minimal available habitat and from disturbance due to noise and activity during construction and operation of the expanded Porthill LPOE.</p> <p>No impacts on terrestrial or aquatic threatened and endangered (T&E) species or their critical habitat because no listed species are expected to occur in the area of analysis.</p>	<p>An NPDES permit will be needed for the site and the standard BMP recommendations as prescribed by that permit will be followed. Construction vehicles will observe maximum speed limits to minimize the possibility for any wildlife-vehicle collisions; staging and stockpile areas will be located within or immediately adjacent to the construction footprint to reduce the area of habitat disturbance; and implementation of an SWPPP will minimize erosion.</p> <p>If any terrestrial federal- or state-listed species are detected during construction, work will stop, and consultation will be initiated with the relevant federal and state agencies. GSA will adhere to all applicable federal laws regulating the protection of special status species.</p>

Resource Area	Impacts	Mitigation Measures and Best Management Practices (BMPs)
	<p>Adverse, minor, short- and long-term, local impacts to biological resources due to construction activities.</p>	
Utilities	<p>No short- or long-term impacts on public electrical service.</p> <p>Potential short- and long-term impacts on the local community well and water supply from the construction and operation of the LPOE are unknown at this time. GSA would evaluate whether increased demand would impact the community well capacity during the design phase.</p>	None.
Noise	<p>Adverse, minor, short-term, local impacts due to noise generated from demolition and construction activities.</p> <p>Adverse, negligible, long-term, local impacts from noise during operations of the new LPOE.</p>	None.
Water Resources	<p>Adverse, minor, short-term, local impacts to stormwater during construction-related activities and adverse, negligible, long-term, local impacts to stormwater during LPOE operations.</p> <p>Adverse, minor, short-term, local impacts to surface waters during construction-related activities and adverse, negligible, long-term, local impacts to surface waters during LPOE operations.</p> <p>Adverse, negligible, short-term, local impacts to groundwater during construction-related activities and adverse, negligible, long-term, local impacts to groundwater during LPOE operations.</p>	<p>An NPDES permit will be needed for the site and the standard BMP recommendations as prescribed by that permit will be followed.</p> <p>Development of a SWPPP during the detailed design phase will involve the installation of properly sized culverts, curbs and gutters, as applicable, to allow for adequate collection and discharge of runoff. Permanent stormwater BMPs will be installed in compliance with local, state, and federal law, e.g., stormwater detention or retention ponds with outlet control structures, underground stormwater systems, infiltration trenches, porous pavements, or swales.</p>

Resource Area	Impacts	Mitigation Measures and Best Management Practices (BMPs)
Air Quality	<p>Adverse, negligible, short-term, local impacts to air quality during construction-related activities.</p> <p>Adverse, negligible, long-term, local impacts to air quality due to emissions from vehicles passing through the new LPOE.</p> <p>Beneficial, negligible, long-term, local impacts to air quality due to reduced vehicle idling with improved vehicle processing time.</p> <p>Beneficial, minor, long-term, local impacts to air quality due to energy and environmental improvements that would earn Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) certification for the expanded port.</p>	None.
Climate Change	<p>Adverse, negligible, short-term, regional impacts on climate change due to GHG emissions from the operation of construction equipment.</p> <p>Adverse, negligible, long-term, regional impacts on climate change due to GHG emissions from vehicles passing through the expanded LPOE.</p> <p>Beneficial, minor, long-term, regional impacts to climate change due to energy and environmental improvements that would earn LEED® certification for the expanded LPOE.</p> <p>Climate change would likely have adverse, moderate, long-term, regional impacts on the LPOE due to a higher risk of wildfires, flooding, and more extreme weather events.</p>	None.

Resource Area	Impacts	Mitigation Measures and Best Management Practices (BMPs)
Environmental Justice	<p>Adverse, minor, short-term, local impacts to nearby resident communities with environmental justice (EJ) concerns due to construction-related noise.</p> <p>Adverse, minor, short-term, local impacts to environmental justice during construction-related activities due to potential impacts to tribal cultural and recreational activities along the Kootenai River from construction noise and emissions.</p>	None.

5.0 OTHER ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED IN THE FINAL EA

The following alternatives were considered in the Final EA but were not chosen as the Selected Alternative.

5.1 Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative assumed that no demolition of existing facilities, construction of newer and larger facilities, or expansion of LPOE operations would occur at the Porthill LPOE. This alternative did not meet the purpose and need of the project because the existing facility does not have the space or functionality to meet the current operational demands. The Porthill LPOE would continue to operate with limited inspection areas, inefficient vehicle processing infrastructure, and with undersized and outdated workspace for staff and other personnel. Minor repairs would occur as needed; however, this alternative would not enable the facility to meet its current operational needs, which require upgraded and expanded inspection areas and port infrastructure, revised lane formation for more efficient traffic flow, and increased and modernized building space for port staff and other personnel.

5.2 Alternative 2 – Small Port Prototype with Partial Demolition

Alternative 2 considered a small port prototype design, similar to the Selected Alternative, but would have had one story, including a basement (for mechanical systems; Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning [HVAC]; and storage) and would include only partial demolition of the existing LPOE facilities. Facility expansion and modernization would have included site preparation (demolition, grading and filling, rock excavation) and construction. Site preparation and construction would have been phased so that the LPOE would have continued to be operational. All aboveground structures, including the main LPOE building, temporary buildings, the primary inspection booth and canopy, and the secondary inspection bay and canopy would have been demolished. The existing basement foundations and utilities would have been retained and re-used to the extent possible for the new facility.

5.3 Alternative 3, Option A – One Story, Small Port Prototype with Full Demolition

Alternative 3, Option A would have been similar to the Selected Alternative but with a one-story main LPOE building and a larger building footprint. The main floor would have contained a public waiting area, enforcement areas, commercial inspection support spaces, offices, break room, fitness room, mechanical space, LAN room, and two restrooms.

6.0 REFERENCES

(CBP, 2023). U.S. Customs and Border Protection. 2023. Land Port of Entry Design Standard.

(DHS, 2014). U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General. 2014. Use of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds by U.S. Customs and Border Protection for Construction of Land Ports of Entry. Available online at:
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