

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
United States Diplomacy Center at the Harry S Truman Building  
Washington, DC

**FINDING**

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508), I find that the proposed construction of the United States Diplomacy Center (USDC) at the U.S. Department of State (DoS) Harry S Truman Building, as described in the attached 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 for the construction and operation of the USDC. The USDC is considered an independent utility from the proposed Harry S Truman Building Perimeter Security Improvements Project, and can be implemented regardless of the perimeter security elements that are being studied by the separate Harry S Truman Building Perimeter Security Improvements Project EA.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_



DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

08/29/2011

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*This FONSI will become final 30 days after publication of its Notice of Availability in the Washington Post, provided that no information leading to a contrary finding is received or comes to light during the 30-day review period.*

## **I. BASIS FOR FINDING**

DoS prepared an EA analyzing the environmental impacts that could result from construction of the USDC. The EA was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508). The EA documents the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts for the Action and No Action Alternatives. The environmental issues addressed in the EA were identified during the scoping process, which included consultations with Federal and local agencies and other stakeholders. The Final EA is incorporated by reference in this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The FONSI will be made available for public review for a period of 30 days.

## **II. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION**

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide a place of learning and inspiration where the public can gain knowledge of the history, practice and challenges of American diplomacy. The USDC is needed to more clearly communicate the work of DoS to the American people, and to provide a permanent security screening facility for visitors to the George C. Marshall Wing (Marshall Wing) of the DoS Harry S Truman Building.

## **III. DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES**

The alternatives considered in detail in this EA include the Action and No Action Alternatives, which are summarized below. More complete descriptions of the alternatives are included in Section 2 of the Final EA.

### ***NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE***

Under the No Action Alternative, construction, interior programming and associated exterior building modifications for the USDC would not be implemented; site conditions would remain as they are at present. Under this alternative, the Harry S Truman Building 21<sup>st</sup> Street NW pavilion would retain its current function of security screening.

### ***ACTION ALTERNATIVE***

Under the Action Alternative, the 41,361 SF USDC would be accommodated within the northern section of the first floor of the existing Marshall Wing and a new Entry Pavilion, which would be an addition to the 21<sup>st</sup> Street NW entrance to the Marshall Wing of the Harry S Truman Building. The proposed interior functions of the USDC would require demolition of existing interior partitions and systems for conversion of approximately 19,773 SF of the interior first floor of the northern wing of the Marshall Wing, from employee offices to Exhibit Halls II and III. Security screening equipment would be located to the north and south of the entrance to the Entry Pavilion. Staff and Marshall Conference Center visitors would use the north screening station. All other visitors would enter through the screening station on the south. Ramps along the north and south walls of the Entry Pavilion would lead up from the security stations to the exhibit area, at the center, and to the Marshall Wing entrance.

## **IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

The EA analyzed the impacts of each of the alternatives on the natural and man-made environments. This section summarizes the impacts associated with implementing the new Entry Pavilion and internal building modifications for the USDC. A full description of impacts can be found in the Final EA. In addition to the resource issues summarized below, a number of issues were considered for evaluation at the outset of the process, but were eliminated from detailed study within the EA because there would be no impacts. Resource issues dismissed from detailed study include: Floodplains and Wetlands, Threatened and Endangered Species, Wildlife, Community Facilities, Solid and Hazardous Waste and Archaeological Resources.

### ***Geology***

Implementation of the Action Alternative would result in long-term, minor impacts to the site's geology, due to the construction of the Entry Pavilion's lower level and an increase in structural load that would require increased stabilization. No mitigation required.

### ***Topography***

Implementation of the Action Alternative would result in long-term, minor impacts on the site's topography due to filling and grading activities for the lower floor slab areas, and as backfill against walls below grade.

Mitigation: During construction, best management practices (BMPs) could include sediment barriers, storm drain inlet protection and dust control measures.

### ***Soils***

Implementation of the Action Alternative would result in long-term, minor impacts on the site's soil, due to grading of the land for construction, and resurfacing portions of the site.

Mitigation: A Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control plan for construction activities at the project site would be developed, which would incorporate BMPs, such as silt fences, to prevent the loss of soils. Additionally, grading and excavation of soils at the project site would be minimized to the greatest extent possible.

### ***Stormwater/Groundwater***

Implementation of the Action Alternative would result in minor, short-term impacts to groundwater. Since groundwater would likely be encountered during construction of the Entry Pavilion, at or above the proposed basement level elevations, temporary construction dewatering and permanent subdrainage may be necessary if groundwater is present during mass excavations or excavations for foundations. Minor, long-term impacts to stormwater would result from the provision of a new connection to the storm drain system for the Entry Pavilion, which would utilize one of the existing storm drain lines that outfalls onto 21<sup>st</sup> Street NW.

Mitigation: Minor, short-term impacts would be mitigated by employing sediment control measures according to a Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control plan, pursuant to the District of Columbia's building permit requirements for construction activities. This plan would incorporate BMPs to minimize the impacts on stormwater caused by construction, which would include sediment barriers, storm drain inlet protection and dust control measures

### ***Air Quality***

Implementation of the Action Alternative could result in short-term, minor impacts to air quality, due to proposed construction activities, and long-term, minor impacts associated with facility operations. Impacts on local and regional air quality associated with construction activities would not likely occur past the construction phase; therefore, ambient air quality modeling has not been performed.

Mitigation: During construction, fugitive dust emissions would be minimized by:

- Applying water, soil stabilizers or vegetation to exposed soil and demolition debris to control dust; using enclosures, covers, silt fences or wheel washers and suspension of earth-movement activities during high wind conditions.
- Maintaining a speed of less than 15 mph for construction equipment on unpaved surfaces, as well as utilizing fuel with low sulfur content.
- Employing a construction management plan to minimize interference with regular motor vehicle traffic.
- Using electricity from power poles instead of generators whenever possible; repairing and servicing construction equipment according to the regular maintenance schedule recommended for equipment.
- Incorporating energy-efficient supplies, whenever feasible.

### ***Vegetation***

Under the Action Alternative, impacts to vegetation would be minor, in the long-term, due to the removal of the granite planters around the temporary screening facility, and along the east-facing wall of the entrance to the Marshall Wing. These planters would be removed for construction of the Entry Pavilion, within the 21<sup>st</sup> Street NW forecourt, and would not be replaced. The landscaping on the south-facing wall of the north wing of the Marshall Wing would remain undisturbed, as would the existing street trees planted along the west sidewalk on 21<sup>st</sup> Street NW. No mitigation required.

### ***Energy and Sustainability***

Under the Action Alternative, long-term impacts to energy and sustainability would be beneficial, as the project is being built to LEED Silver standards. No mitigation required.

### ***Land Use***

Under the Action Alternative, impacts to land use would be minor in the long term, due to the conversion of internal building uses from offices to museum exhibition space. The conversion of internal building uses and the addition of the Entry Pavilion would not require a change in zoning, nor would it negatively affect the District of Columbia's land use and/or zoning guidelines and requirements for the site. No mitigation required.

### ***Economy, Employment and Population***

Implementation of the Action Alternative would result in short-term, beneficial impacts to DC's economy and employment, as the number of workers would increase for the duration of project construction. Additional beneficial impacts to the local economy would be anticipated, due to the likelihood of visitors to support local retail in the vicinity of the project area. No mitigation required.

### ***Visual Resources***

Under the Action Alternative, long-term, moderate impacts would result from construction of the Entry Pavilion. The USDC Entry Pavilion would be visible from most vantage points along the east side of the Harry S Truman Building and along 21<sup>st</sup> Street NW.

Mitigation: Due to the proposed transparent glass ceiling design, visitors and employees within the Entry Pavilion would have full views of the face of the Marshall Wing of the Harry S Truman Building. These views would be enhanced in the evenings, after the sun sets, due to the illumination of the face of the Harry S Truman Building by the glow of the opaque and semi-transparent glass structure. The position of the pavilion, adjacent to the public space, would further frame the 21<sup>st</sup> Street NW streetscape. The pedestrian experience along 21<sup>st</sup> Street NW would be enhanced by views of the soft opacity of the modern, glass Entry Pavilion, which would juxtapose the hard surface of the adjacent Harry S Truman Building. The partially transparent entrance of the Entry Pavilion would allow pedestrians to see into the structure, which, in combination with the structure's low setting and presence of the existing, remaining street trees, would create an inviting and publicly-accessible addition to the 21<sup>st</sup> Street NW streetscape and Harry S Truman Building landscape.

### ***Noise***

Under the Action Alternative, short-term, minor impacts would result from construction activities; however, these construction activities would be required to comply with local noise ordinances. During construction, all applicable noise regulations would be adhered to, and measures to ensure that all construction equipment is maintained regularly and fitted with mufflers, would be employed. No mitigation required.

### ***Cultural Resources***

Under the Action Alternative, impacts to cultural resources would be moderate in the long-term, due to the impacts associated with the proposed Entry Pavilion on the originally open forecourt of the Marshall Wing and on views of the east façade, as well as interior building modifications. Additional information regarding cultural resources, the Section 106 process and the MOA can be found in Section V of the FONSI.

#### **Mitigation:**

- The historic lobby of the Marshall Wing, now closed to the general public, would become accessible to visitors.
- Models of the buildings that have housed the Department of State would be reencased and displayed in the historic lobby of the Marshall Wing.
- Content on the USDC website, including text, photographs, and drawings, would document and interpret the Harry S Truman Building and other buildings that have housed DoS.
- An interactive station would be installed in the lobby to interpret Kindred McLeary's 1942 mural, "The Defense of Human Freedom."
- The status and location of the bas relief that was once installed over the entrance doors to the Marshall Wing would be investigated with the intention of graphic reproduction and display (with interpretive information) within the USDC.

### ***Utilities***

Under the Action Alternative, long-term, minor impacts would result from the provision of a new connection to the storm drain system, proposed modification of the existing electric service and modification of two existing manhole structures. No mitigation required.

### ***Circulation and Parking***

Under the Action Alternative, short-term, minor impacts would result from construction-related activities associated with the reconfiguration of interior space and construction of the new Entry Pavilion. The reconfiguration of interior space would displace some existing office space and employees, which may result in a short-term reduction of personal vehicle trips to the Harry S Truman Building. In the long-term, peak period conditions would remain consistent, due to the predominantly off-peak operations for the USDC, and the retention of existing parking facilities.

**Mitigation:** The following potential recommendations were developed to enhance mobility to/from the proposed USDC:

- Provide a Facility Transportation Coordinator to assist USDC visitors, schedule and direct groups visiting by charter/school bus to use designated bus standing areas, and periodically review transportation operations to determine if any adjustments or enhancements are warranted.
- Include on the USDC website information that encourages visitors/groups to visit the site as a pedestrian, with a bicycle, by public transportation, or charter/school/tour bus.
- Provide adequate bicycle facilities for visitors choosing to arrive by bicycle.
- Coordinate with Capital Bikeshare to potentially expand its existing nearby facility based on a periodic review of its demand.
- Coordinate events with the USIP and potentially share its lay-by lane on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street NW.
- Encourage specific arrival/departure routes for charter/school bus groups.
- Restrict arrival/departure of charter/school bus groups to occur during non-commuting peaks as to not conflict with existing bus operations.

***Public Safety***

Implementation of the Action Alternative would result in long-term beneficial impacts to public safety, due to the construction of a permanent, modern security screening facility (Entry Pavilion). No mitigation required.

***Environmental Justice***

Under the Action Alternative, impacts to low-income or minority populations would be negligible. No mitigation required.

**V. SECTION 106 of the NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT**

Through the coordinated NEPA and Section 106 processes, DoS has determined that the proposed USDC construction would have an adverse effect on the historic resources within the Area of Potential Effect. DoS has consulted with the SHPO and the ACHP pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800, regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. Section 470(f)) regarding the effects of the Undertaking on the USDC and the L'Enfant Streets to develop a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to document the agreed upon design program and mitigation measures. The MOA will be executed and signed by DoS, GSA, NCPC and the consulting parties. DoS shall ensure that the measures outlined in the MOA are carried out to minimize, mitigate and avoid adverse effects.