
**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VA CONNECTICUT HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
WEST HAVEN CAMPUS
PROPOSED PARKING GARAGE
950 CAMPBELL AVENUE
WEST HAVEN, NEW HAVEN COUNTY, CONNECTICUT**

Introduction

A Final Environmental Assessment (EA), included herein by reference, was prepared to identify, analyze, and document the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts associated with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) Proposed Action to construct and operate a new four and one-half story parking garage in the western portion of the VA Connecticut Healthcare System, West Haven Campus (West Haven VA Medical Center (VAMC)) located at 950 Campbell Avenue in West Haven, New Haven County, Connecticut. The EA was prepared as required in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 ([NEPA]; 42 United States Code [USC] 4321 *et seq.*), the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508), and *Environmental Effects of the Department of Veterans Affairs Actions* (38 CFR Part 26).

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide increased on-site parking capacity to support the current and growing needs of the West Haven VAMC. The proposed parking garage would provide approximately 282 additional parking spaces at the West Haven VAMC campus.

The Proposed Action is needed to address the parking deficiency at the West Haven VAMC. Current parking at the campus is inadequate to meet the current and projected future needs of Veteran patients, VA employees, and visitors to the facility. The campus currently includes approximately 1,500 on-site parking spaces provided by surface parking lots. VA estimates that more than 400 additional parking spaces are needed to meet the current demand for on-campus parking. The overflow of patients and VAMC staff has resulted in the need for two off-site parking leases. Approximately 200 leased parking spaces are located at 318 Washington Avenue (approximately 1.4 miles from the West Haven VAMC campus). The second off-site leased lot is approximately 0.5-mile away and allows for approximately 75 parking spaces. Patients and VAMC staff routinely wait for extended periods of time to find a parking space or use a VA shuttle from the off-site leased parking lots, causing delays in getting to the VAMC on time and missed appointments. The parking shortage has impacted patient satisfaction and VAMC staff morale. VA plans to build new medical facilities at the West Haven VAMC campus in the next ten years, which will increase the demand for on-campus parking and exacerbate the current parking shortage.

The Proposed Action would create approximately 282 additional on-campus parking spaces to reduce the need for off-site parking by patients and staff at the facility. The additional parking would reduce missed appointments, increase patient satisfaction, and improve VAMC staff commute times and morale.

1. Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives

Proposed Action

VA's Proposed Action is to construct and operate a new four and one-half story parking garage in the western portion of the West Haven VAMC campus. The parking garage would be constructed in an existing campus parking lot (Lot P4), which is located near the main patient entrance of the hospital. The two-bay parking garage is designed to accommodate the potential future horizontal expansion of one additional bay to provide additional patient parking. The proposed 403 parking space garage would provide a net gain of approximately 282 parking spaces for the campus.

Alternatives Considered

After identifying the deficiency of on-campus parking spaces to accommodate the needs of West Haven VAMC employees and patients, VA examined various options to reduce the parking demand and/or increase the parking capacity of the campus. VA currently supports various programs for West Haven VAMC staff, such as the use of public transportation and van pooling, which reduce parking demands at the campus. VA is actively working to expand the use of these programs; however, the expansion of these programs alone is inadequate to address the parking shortage at the campus. VA also examined the West Haven VAMC campus for the creation of additional on-site surface parking; however, the West Haven VAMC campus is fully developed with no available land to establish additional surface-level parking lots. Through this analysis, VA determined that the construction of a new parking structure in an existing surface parking lot of the West Haven campus best met its need for additional on-campus parking.

VA identified four potential locations on the campus for the proposed parking garage. VA evaluated each of these locations based on the following project goals/considerations: maximizing parking, safety and security, vehicle and pedestrian traffic flow, potential future campus expansion, minimizing campus disruption during construction, potential for expansion, and proximity to the main outpatient building (Building 2). Through this evaluation, VA determined that existing Parking Lot P4, located northwest of the main patient entrance of Building 2, best met the project goals and objectives and would provide the most additional parking capacity for the West Haven VAMC.

The EA examined in depth two alternatives, the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative, defined as follows:

Proposed Action

VA proposes to construct and operate a new four and one-half story parking garage in the western portion of the West Haven VAMC campus, near the main patient entrance to the hospital. This area is currently an asphalt-paved campus parking lot (Lot P4). The proposed garage would be a two-bay, approximately 124 feet by 272 feet elevated parking structure that includes a total of approximately 403 parking spaces. One level would be at grade, the other three and a half levels would be elevated. The proposed parking garage is designed to accommodate the potential future horizontal expansion of one additional bay to provide additional patient parking near the main hospital entrance. The main hospital entrance drive, located adjacent to the proposed parking garage, would be turned into a one-way drive with dedicated delivery and shuttle parking to increase traffic flow in the drop off zone. Approximately 121 parking spaces would be removed as a result of the proposed parking garage and entrance reconfiguration, resulting in a net gain of approximately 282 parking spaces for the campus. Entry to the proposed parking garage would

be via the main entrance drive to the hospital from Ring Road (accessed from West Spring Street) with one main entrance on the south side and one secondary entrance on the east side of the garage, to allow entrance after a patient is dropped off at the hospital.

The parking garage would be built to VA's specifications by a VA-selected contractor. The parking garage would be owned, operated and maintained by VA. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2022 and be completed in 2023. Once operational, the parking garage would provide additional on-campus parking for West Haven VAMC patients and visitors, and would reduce the need for off-site parking.

VA currently has off-site parking leases to off-set the shortage of on-campus parking. These off-site leased parking areas would be used to address the temporary reduction in on-campus parking during the construction of the parking garage. Following the completion of the parking garage, the number of spaces required at the off-site leased parking areas would be reduced.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action would not be implemented and operations at the West Haven VAMC would continue as currently conducted. On-site parking at the campus would continue to be deficient. This deficiency in on-site parking is projected to grow, as Veteran demand for health care services increases and new medical facilities are constructed at the campus. VA would continue to rely on off-site, leased parking lots due to insufficient on-campus parking.

The No Action Alternative would not reduce the parking deficiency at the West Haven VAMC campus and would not meet the purpose of or need for the Proposed Action; however, the No Action Alternative was evaluated in the EA as required under the CEQ regulations and provides a comparative benchmark analysis against which to analyze the effects of the Proposed Action.

2. Environmental Analysis

Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action

The Final EA concluded that the Proposed Action would result in potential short-term and/or long-term adverse impacts to aesthetics, air quality, soils, hydrology and water quality, noise, solid waste and hazardous materials, parking (short-term), and transportation. All of these impacts are less-than-significant and would be further reduced through careful coordination and implementation of the general best management practices (BMPs), management and minimization measures, and compliance with regulatory requirements, as identified in the Final EA.

The Proposed Action would result in beneficial short-term impacts to the local socioeconomic environment in the form of temporary employment during the parking garage construction. Beneficial long-term socioeconomic impacts (reduced patient stress and missed appointments, increased patient and staff satisfaction) and beneficial long-term parking impacts would result from the Proposed Action.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action would not be implemented and no improvements to the current parking conditions at the West Haven VAMC campus would occur. No beneficial impacts attributable to the Proposed Action would occur and VA's ability to provide sufficient, on-campus parking for patients and staff at the West Haven VAMC campus would remain compromised.

Cumulative Impacts

The EA also examined the potential cumulative effects of implementing each of the considered alternatives. This analysis found that the Proposed Action, with the implementation of the general BMPs, management measures, and regulatory compliance measures specified in the EA, would not result in significant adverse cumulative impacts to onsite or regional natural or cultural resources.

Management and Mitigation Measures

No project-specific mitigation measures are proposed or required for the Proposed Action.

The routine BMPs and management measures summarized in Table 5 of the Final EA (attached herein as Appendix A) will be included by VA in the Proposed Action to minimize and maintain adverse effects at less-than-significant levels.

3. Regulations

Implementing the Proposed Action will be consistent with applicable Federal, State, and local environmental regulations, including those listed in Section 6 of the Final EA.

4. Commitment to Implementation

VA affirms its commitment to implement the BMPs, management measures, and regulatory compliance measures identified in the Final EA and this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Implementation is dependent on funding. VA will ensure that adequate funds are requested in future years' budget(s) to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in the Final EA and this FONSI, and to fund the commitments described above.

5. Agency and Public Involvement

VA has consulted with appropriate Federal, State, and local regulatory agencies, and federally recognized Native American Tribes identified as having possible ancestral ties to the West Haven area. This consultation is documented in the Final EA. Concerns expressed by pertinent regulatory agencies and Tribes have been addressed in the Final EA.

VA published and distributed the Draft EA for a 30-day public comment period, as announced by a Notice of Availability published in a local newspaper of general circulation (New Haven Register) from January 15 through 17, 2022. The Draft EA was made available for public review and comments at the West Haven Public Library and on the West Haven VAMC website from January 15, 2022 to February 14, 2022. USEPA reviewed the Draft EA, thanked VA for addressing their scoping comments, and indicated that they had no comments on the Draft EA. VA received no other public comments regarding the Draft EA.

6. Finding of No Significant Impact

After careful review of the Final EA, VA has concluded that implementation of the Proposed Action would not generate significant controversy or have a significant impact on the quality of the human or natural environment, provided VA implements the BMPs, management measures, and regulatory compliance measures identified in the Final EA. VA will implement these measures.

Therefore, per the NEPA, the CEQ Regulations, and VA's NEPA regulations, I am signing this FONSI. This analysis fulfills the requirements of the NEPA and the CEQ Regulations. An Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

Date

Alfred A. Montoya Jr., MHA, FACHE
Medical Center Director
VA Connecticut Healthcare System

**Best Management Practices and Minimization Measures
 Incorporated into the Proposed Action**

Technical Resource Area	Best Management Practice/Management Measure
Aesthetics	Comply with the development standards of the Code and Charter of the City of West Haven to the extent practicable.
	Use shielded, downward-facing outdoor lighting.
Air Quality	Use appropriate dust suppression methods (such as the use of water, dust, palliative, covers, suspension of earth moving in high wind conditions) during onsite construction activities.
	Stabilize disturbed areas through re-vegetation or mulching if the areas would be inactive for several weeks or longer.
	Implement measures to reduce diesel particulate matter emissions from construction equipment, such as reducing idling time (limited to 3 minutes per CT regulations) and using newer equipment with emissions controls.
	Comply with the applicable CT DEEP Bureau of Air Management air quality regulations. Secure any required minor air emissions permits from CT DEEP prior to construction.
	Include electrical vehicle charging stations in the site design, to the extent practicable.
Cultural Resources	Should potentially historic or culturally significant items be discovered during project construction, the construction contractor would immediately cease work in the area until VA, a qualified archaeologist, CT SHPO, and other consulting parties are contacted to properly identify and appropriately treat discovered items in accordance with applicable state and federal law(s).
Geology and Soils	Control soil erosion and sedimentation impacts during construction by implementing erosion prevention measures and complying with the CT DEEP NPDES permitting process. The General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater and Dewatering Wastewaters from Construction Activities (Construction General Permit) would require stormwater runoff and erosion management using BMPs, such as earth berms, vegetative buffers and filter strips, and spill prevention and management techniques. The construction contractor would implement the sedimentation and erosion control measures specified in the Construction General Permit to protect surface water quality.

Technical Resource Area	Best Management Practice/Management Measure
Hydrology and Water Quality	Control soil erosion and sedimentation impacts during construction by complying with the CT DEEP Construction General Permit.
	Incorporate low-impact development into the site design, to the extent practicable.
	Design improvements in accordance with the requirements of Energy Independence Security Act Section 438 with respect to stormwater runoff quantity and characteristics.
	Ensure the design of the parking garage includes sufficient stormwater management so as not to adversely affect the water quantity/quality in receiving waters and/or offsite areas.
Wildlife and Habitat	Native species should be used to the extent practicable when re-vegetating land disturbed by construction to avoid the potential introduction of non-native or invasive species.
Noise	Limit, to the extent possible, construction and associated heavy truck traffic to occur between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday, or during normal, weekday, work hours.
	Locate stationary operating equipment as far away from sensitive receptors as possible.
	Comply with the noise control provisions of the Code and Charter of the City of West Haven.
	Shut down noise-generating heavy equipment when it is not needed.
	Maintain equipment per manufacturer's recommendations to minimize noise generation.
	Encourage construction personnel to operate equipment in the quietest manner practicable (such as speed restrictions, retarder brake restrictions, engine speed restrictions).
Land Use	Comply with the City of West Haven zoning regulations and development standards, to the extent practicable.
Wetlands, Floodplains, and Coastal Zone Management	None required.
Socioeconomics	Secure construction areas to prevent unauthorized access by children from the nearby residential areas.

Technical Resource Area	Best Management Practice/Management Measure
Community Services	None required.
Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials	Comply with applicable federal and state laws governing the use, generation, storage, transportation, and disposal of solid and hazardous materials during construction.
Transportation and Parking	Plan, manage, and schedule construction activities to minimize the number of and duration that current parking spaces are temporarily eliminated.
Utilities	Submit detailed design plans to each utility provider to determine the specific connection/extension requirements and implement the necessary requirements.
Environmental Justice	None required.