New Campus Loop Road and Utility Infrastructure Upgrades at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Manchester Medical Center

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Assessment

NEPA Public Meeting

Virtual

March 31, 2022

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Please Note: Today's session will be recorded.

Welcome

Today's Agenda

- The Proposed Action
  - Purpose & Need
  - Overview
- Our Team's Commitment to Environmental Protection
- The NEPA Process
- Draft Environmental Assessment (EA)
  - The 30-day review period is from March 27 through April 29.
- Comments and Questions
  - All comments and questions will be directly addressed in the Final EA

Technical Program Team		
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Andrew Glucksman	**Sam Grabelle**
Mabbett	Mabbett
Project Manager / Practice Lead of Natural Resources	NEPA Practitioner

The Manchester VA Medical Center

Is the only VA medical facility in the state.

Serves approximately 27,000 Veterans each year.

Employs 800 medical and support staff.

Offers primary care, mental health, medical and surgical outpatient services, and extended care.

Primary ambulatory services include oncology, neurology, infectious disease, pain management, traumatic brain injury, and physical therapy.

The 41-bed Community Living Center offers Home-Based Primary Care among other services.

Offers 27 programs and services to assist Veterans suffering from mental health illnesses and disorders.

Includes a Women Veterans Program and programs for homeless Veterans including vocational assistance.

Applies a Whole Health System of care to improve Veterans' quality of life.

Our Team's Commitment to the Environment

In carrying out its mission to provide high-quality, essential services to veterans, **the VA** is committed to ensuring that it does so without negatively impacting the environment.

Above Group, Inc. is a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) with diverse, and multifaceted team of engineers and scientists specializing in design, engineering, and consulting services.

WBRC, Inc. was founded in 1902 and employs licensed architects, engineers, interior designers, and landscape architects with expertise in healthcare, education, civic, and commercial projects.

Mabbett & Associates, Inc. is a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) with 40 years of environmental consulting experience.

The Purpose

One of the critical missions of the VA is to provide healthcare to the nation's millions of Veterans.

Construction projects are often required by the VA to meet the changing demand for services, improve aging infrastructure, and to keep pace with ever-changing technology and models of care.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to construct and operate a new loop road and implement parking and transportation improvements, safety enhancements, stormwater management improvements, and underground water utility infrastructure upgrades at the Manchester VA Medical Center.

The Need

The Manchester VAMC campus was constructed in the late 1940s.

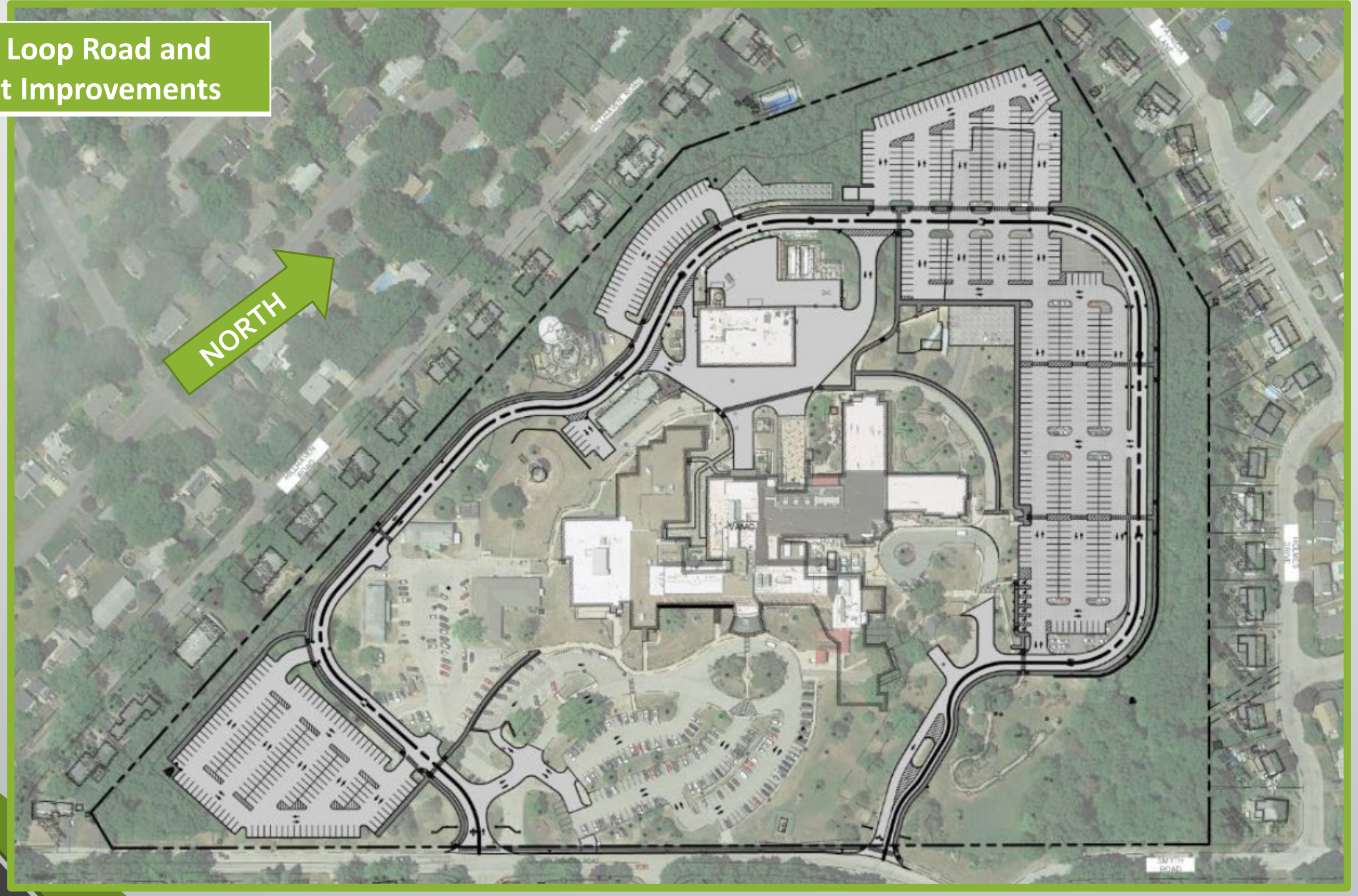
- The property has become increasingly developed, resulting in a severed traffic flow and safety issues at pedestrian crossings.
- As medical services have expanded, demand for parking has increased.
- The existing underground utility infrastructure for potable water is aging and has many inoperable valves.
- The stormwater management system needs improvements.

Overview of the Proposed Action

- Loop Road and Parking Lots
- Safety Improvements
- Western Entrance Realignment
- Utility Upgrades
- Aesthetic Improvements

This is a multi-phase project that is anticipated to begin in late 2022.

Proposed Loop Road and Parking Lot Improvements



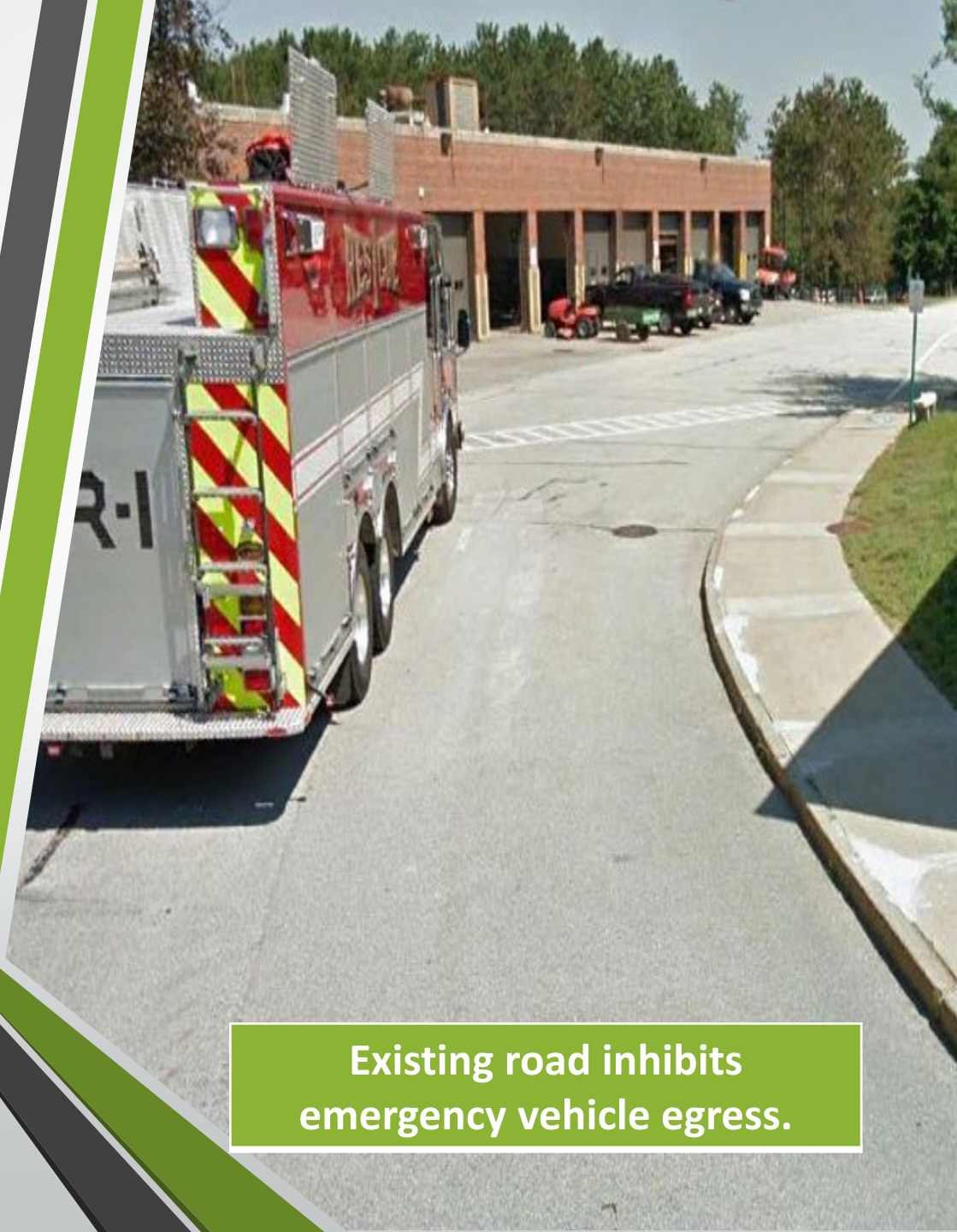
Loop Road and Parking Lots

The new 2-way loop road would:

- Connect the two entrances creating a single roadway to all facilities.

A minimum of 135 new parking spaces would be created by:

- Expanding and/or relocating existing lots.
- Adding new lots.



Existing road inhibits emergency vehicle egress.

Safety Improvements

Pedestrian Safety would be prioritized by:

- Installing curbing and sidewalks along most of the loop road.
- Better separating pedestrian and vehicle traffic.
- Installing new vehicle barriers where necessary.
- Creating pedestrian-only passage from the main parking lot to the main building.

Security would be improved by:

- Adding pole-mounted security cameras throughout the campus.
- Installing emergency call boxes with video surveillance near parking areas and along the loop road. Cameras would only be pointed inward toward the campus.

Currently, patients and visitors must cross the road from the main parking lot to get to the facilities.

Western Entrance Realignment

- Entrance would be shifted 50 feet to the west to align it with the Smyth Lane intersection.
- This would eliminate the need for unprotected left turns into and out of the campus.

Utility Upgrades

Potable Water and Stormwater systems would be upgraded, including:

- Significant improvements to the stormwater management systems to address inefficiencies and reduce off-site overland runoff.

- All inoperable and degrading cast iron potable water lines, service lines, and fittings.

Aesthetic Improvements

To address complaints from residents about night-time glare from lighting fixtures:

- Older outdoor lighting fixtures would be replaced with light-emitting diode (LED) lights.
- Lights would be shielded to prevent them from shining directly at the residences.
- Lights would automatically dim to 30% of their normal lumen output after midnight.

Aesthetic Improvements, continued

To shield western border views into the campus from the abutting residences on Hillhaven Road:

- A 6 to 8-foot-tall, 1300-foot-long opaque vinyl fence would be installed.
- Large existing trees along the western border would be preserved wherever possible.
- New shrubs and trees would be planted.

Landscape Palette – Western Property Line

Red Sunset Maple
(Deciduous Tree)

Silver Linden
(Deciduous Tree)

Hillspire Juniper
(Evergreen Tree)

White Spruce
(Evergreen Tree)

Serbian Spruce
(Evergreen Tree)

American Hornbeam
(Ornamental Tree)

Donald Wyman
Crabapple
(Ornamental Tree)

Greenwave Yew
(Shrub)

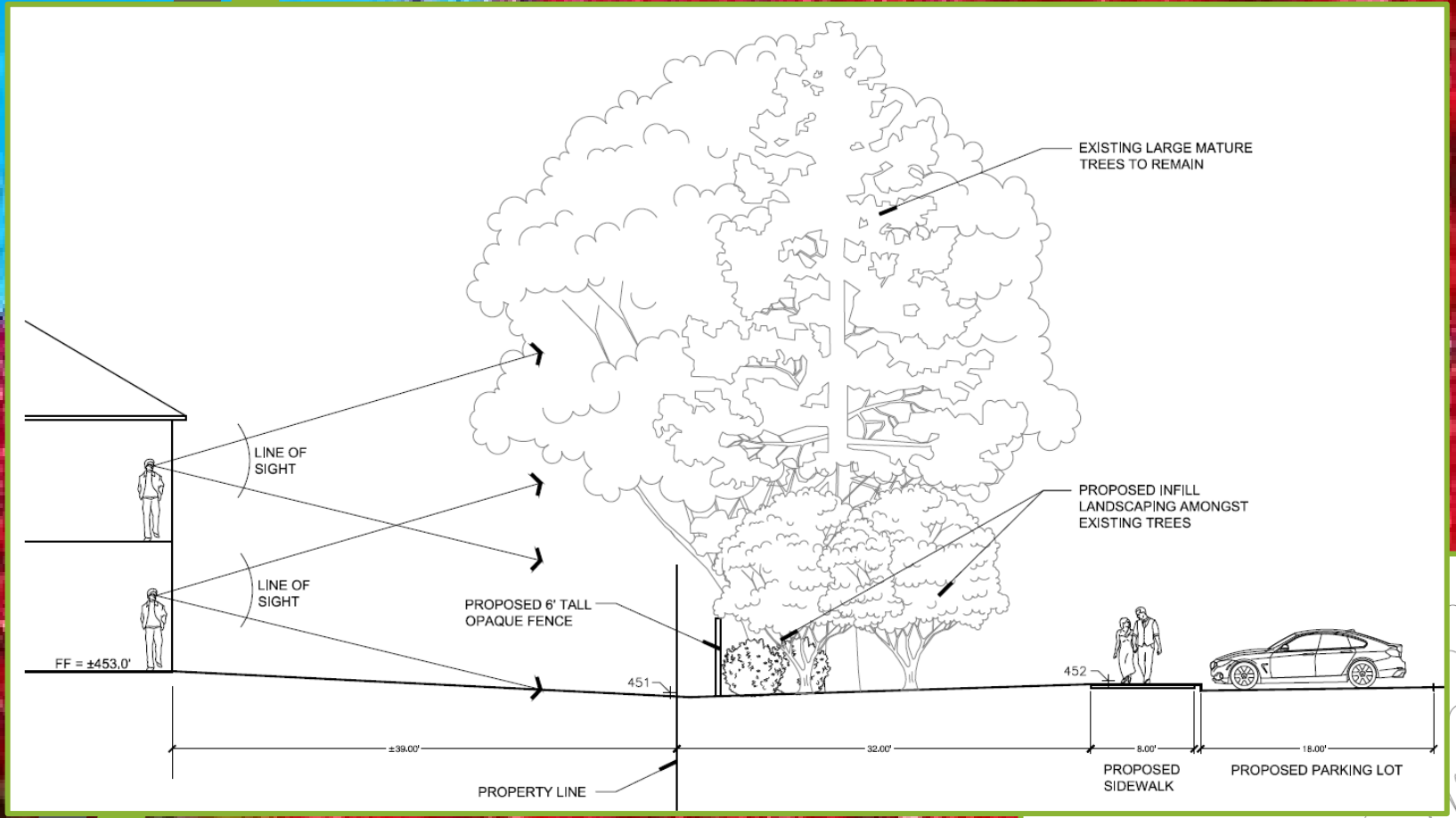
Arrowwood Vibunum
(Deciduous Shrub)

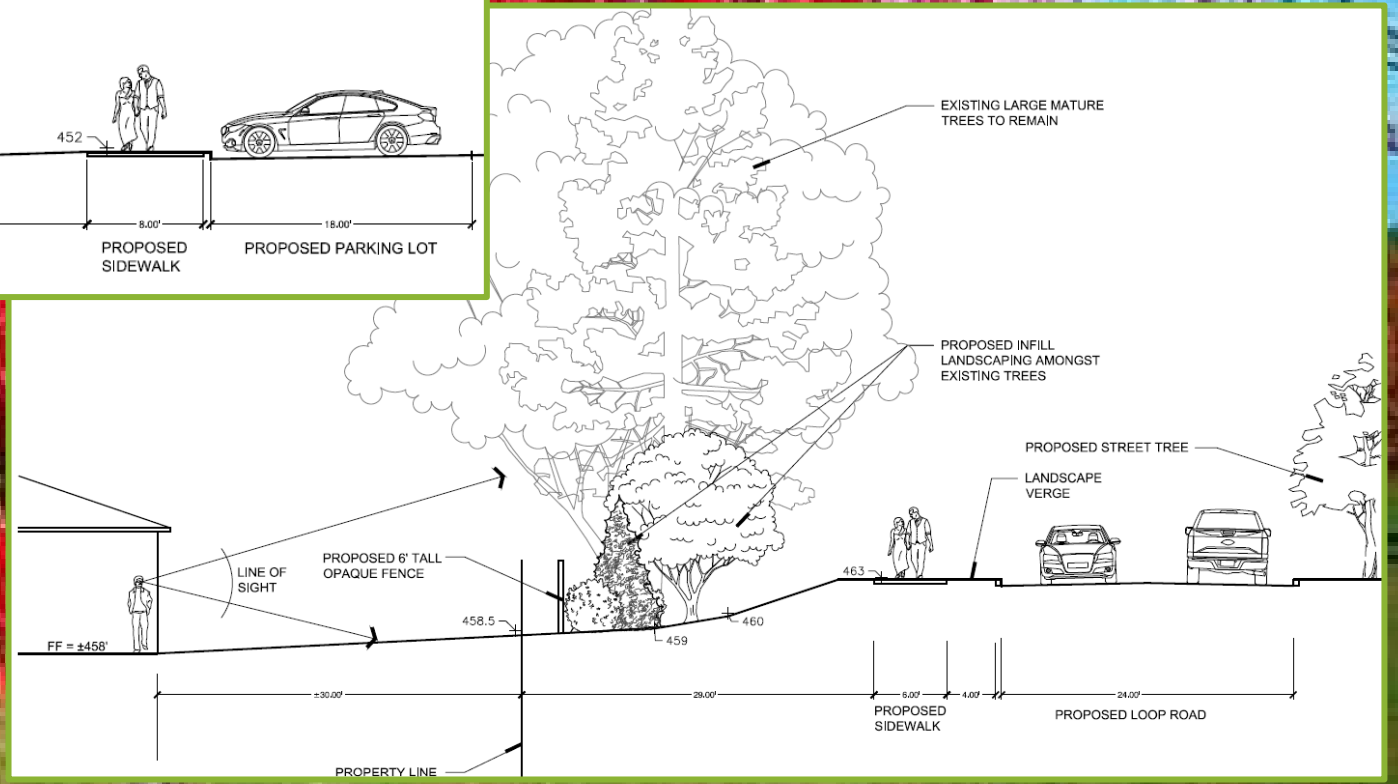
Sea Green Juniper
(Evergreen Shrub)

Hicks Yew
(Evergreen Shrub)

Cross Sections

Western Property Line



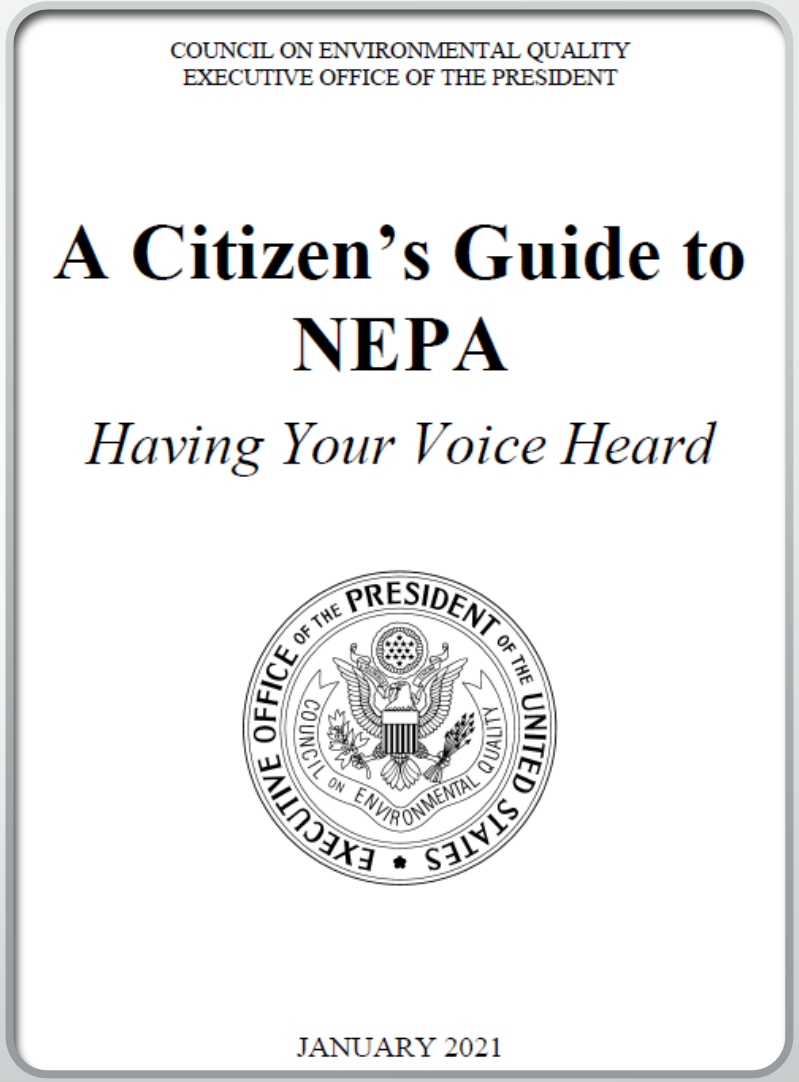


A Citizen's Guide

to the

National Environmental Policy Act

is a resource to help individuals
become familiar with NEPA.


COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

A Citizen's Guide to NEPA

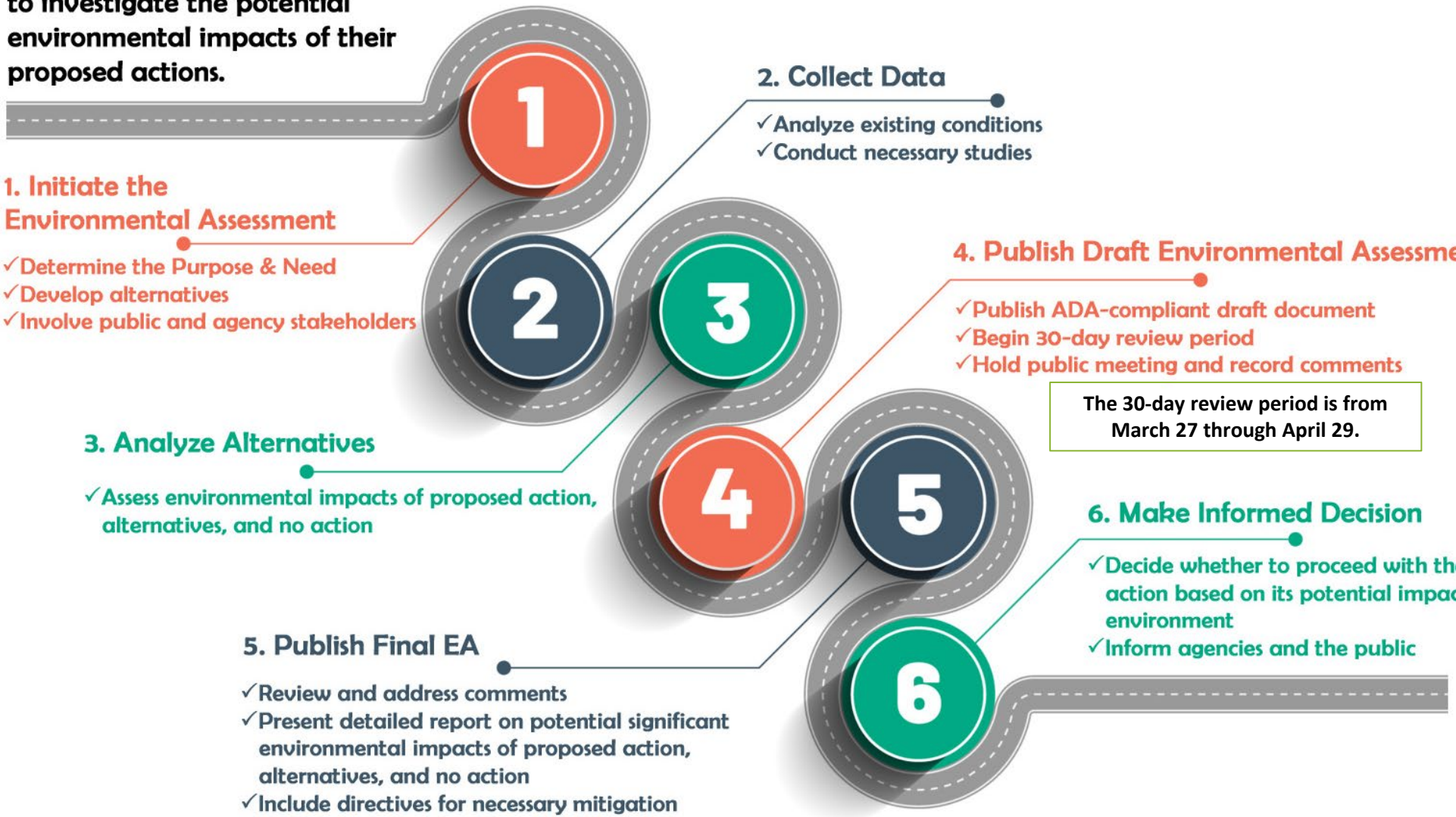
Having Your Voice Heard

JANUARY 2021

https://ceq.doe.gov/docs/get-involved/citizens-guide-to-nepa-2021.pdf

National Environmental Policy Act

The NEPA process leads to better decisions by requiring federal agencies to investigate the potential environmental impacts of their proposed actions.



1. Initiate the Environmental Assessment

- ✓Determine the Purpose & Need
- ✓Develop alternatives
- ✓Involve public and agency stakeholders

2. Collect Data

- ✓Analyze existing conditions
- ✓Conduct necessary studies

3. Analyze Alternatives

- ✓Assess environmental impacts of proposed action, alternatives, and no action

4. Publish Draft Environmental Assessment (EA)

- ✓Publish ADA-compliant draft document
- ✓Begin 30-day review period
- ✓Hold public meeting and record comments

The 30-day review period is from March 27 through April 29.

5. Publish Final EA

- ✓Review and address comments
- ✓Present detailed report on potential significant environmental impacts of proposed action, alternatives, and no action
- ✓Include directives for necessary mitigation and/or monitoring measures

6. Make Informed Decision

- ✓Decide whether to proceed with the proposed action based on its potential impacts to the environment
- ✓Inform agencies and the public

Graphic adapted from Charleston County Public Works

Draft Environmental Assessment

Complete document available:

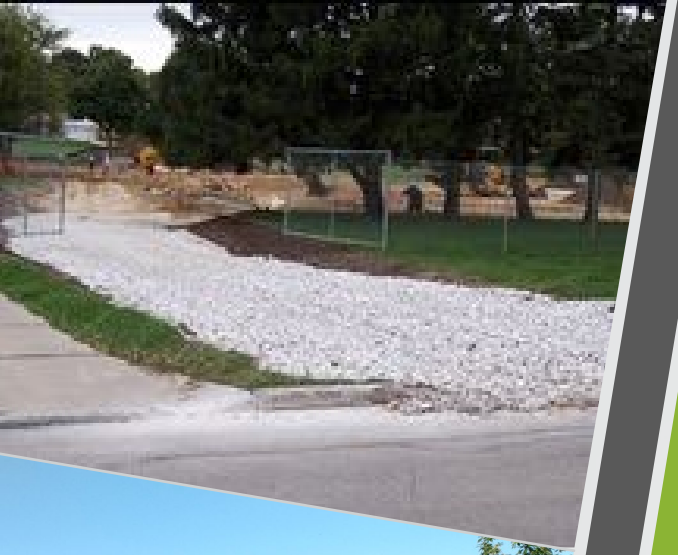
- on the VA Website - https://www.va.gov/manchester-health-care/news-releases/
- at the Manchester City Library - 405 Pine Street, Manchester, NH 03104

Environmental Resources

The Environmental Assessment identifies, analyzes and documents the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts associated with the construction and operation of the Proposed Action.

The environmental resources analyzed for this project were:

Aesthetics	Socioeconomics
Air Quality	Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials
Cultural Resources	Transportation and Parking
Environmental Justice	Utilities – Water and Stormwater
Geology, Topography, and Soils	Water Resources
Noise	Wildlife and Habitat



Aesthetics

During Construction – Short-term, less-than-significant adverse impacts mitigated by:

- Dust suppression
- Removal of loose soil from truck tires
- Temporary fencing around work areas

During Operation - Long-term moderate positive impact due to resolving abutting resident concerns about nuisance lighting and changes to the viewscape by:

- Replacing outdoor lighting fixtures
- Maintaining a vegetated buffer
- Erecting and maintaining an opaque fence

Aesthetics, continued

During Operation – Minor, long-term adverse impact due to the clearing of trees in the northern corner along Patricia Lane and Hillhaven Road, minimized by:

- Maintaining the existing buffer.
- Limiting tree clearing to the interior wooded area next to the existing parking lot.

Air Quality

During Construction – Short-term, negligible adverse impacts would be mitigated by:

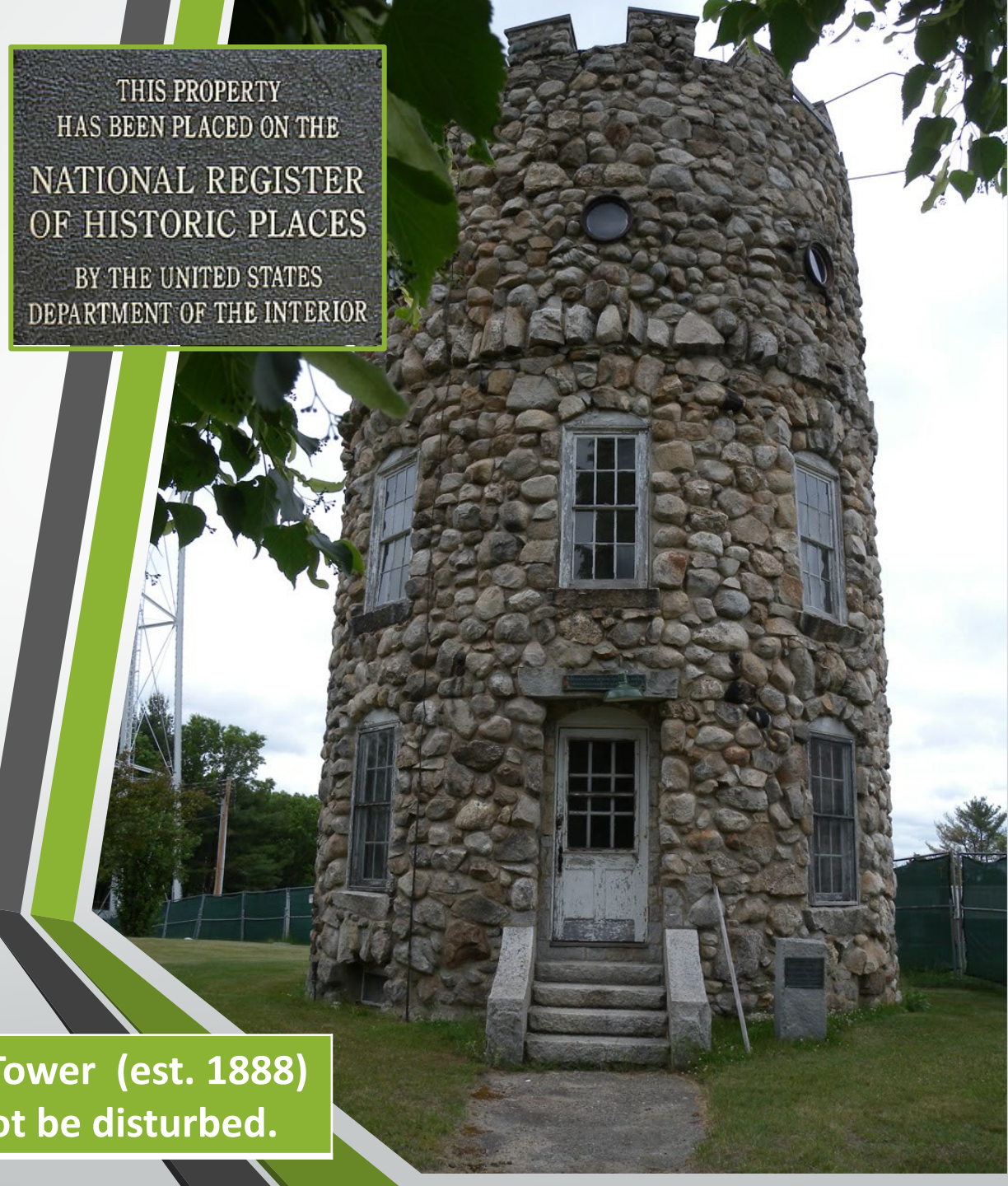
- Limiting the emissions of criteria pollutants from engines.
- Controlling airborne dust.
- Avoiding the release of dust that may contain previously undetected regulated building materials.

Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are defined as the physical remains of a people's way of life and include historical architecture and archaeology.

During Construction – No effects on cultural resources because:

- It is unlikely that any archeological remains pre-dating the initial (1940s) and subsequent (70s and 80s) construction.
- There are no federally recognized Native American tribes with ancestral ties to Hillsborough County.



Smyth Tower (est. 1888) will not be disturbed.

Cultural Resources, continued

To comply with the *National Historic Preservation Act of 1966*:

The VA has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources stipulating to:

- Production of an archival Historic American Buildings Survey document
- Creation of an interpretive panel pertaining to employees' residential life on campus.
- Creation of a public webpage and two public lectures devoted to the history and significance of the campus.
- Development of a Historic Properties Management Plan.

The VA will notify the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources if historic properties are discovered or unanticipated effects on historic properties occur.

Photo: Preservation Maryland

President Johnson signing the Act into law.

Environmental Justice

Federal agencies must identify and address the human health or environmental effects of their actions on minority and low-income populations.

During Construction - Minor short-term positive impact by:

- Potentially increasing job opportunities with local contractors.

During Operation – No disproportionate impact due to:

- The percentage of low-income and minority groups in the affected area is not meaningfully greater than in Hillsborough County or state-wide.

Geology, Topography, and Soils

During Construction:

- No adverse impact on geology.
  - Excavation would leave underlying bedrock intact and would not cause fracturing elsewhere.
- No landscape-level changes to topography.
- Short-term less-than-significant impact on soil.
  - Best Management Practices would minimize erosion and sedimentation impacts.

Noise

During Construction - Short-term, less-than-significant adverse impacts:

All noise levels would adhere to the *Manchester, NH Code of Ordinances §94.10 Noise Levels* standard by:

- Limiting construction activities during daylight hours and on weekdays, unless otherwise announced on the VA website.
- Minimizing movement of construction vehicles into and out of the campus with a central staging area.
- Using acoustic barriers, as needed.

Noise, continued

During Operation:

- Noise types would be limited to vehicles driving at posted speeds (15 mph) within the campus.
- New fencing and vegetation buffers would be maintained to further reduce vehicle noise outside the campus.

Socioeconomics

During Construction – short-term, less-than-significant beneficial impact due to:

- Potential increase in employment of local skilled laborers.
- Purchasing supplies, equipment, and materials from local and regional vendors.
- Workers' utilization of area lodging as well as food and other local services.

Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials

During Construction – Short-term, negligible adverse impacts, due to:

- Reuse, recycling of all debris off-site; landfilling only of materials not recycled or reused.
- Minor impact to overall volume of solid waste currently generated and disposed of in Hillsborough County.

Transportation and Parking

During Construction - Short-term, minor adverse impact due minimized by:

- Temporary parking for staff at Brady Sullivan building with shuttle service to and from the campus.
- Construction of new and enhanced parking lots scheduled before other activities.

During Operation - Long-term significant beneficial impact due to:

- Minimum of 135 new parking spaces.
- Safer roads with improved crosswalks and sidewalks and the new road looping behind the main parking lot.
- Continuous 2-way traffic flow and unobstructed access to all facilities and parking lots.

Utilities - Water

During Operation – Long-term significant beneficial impact due to:

- Improved efficiency and reliability.
- Minimal required maintenance resulting from the replacement of all inoperable and degrading equipment.

Utilities - Stormwater

During Operation - Long-term, significant beneficial impact due to:

- Installation of a new underground stormwater retention and infiltration system to regulate the volume and rate of runoff in accordance with state regulations.
- Addition of curbing and sidewalks to redirect stormwater to catch basins connected to the new system.

Photos: ACF Environmental

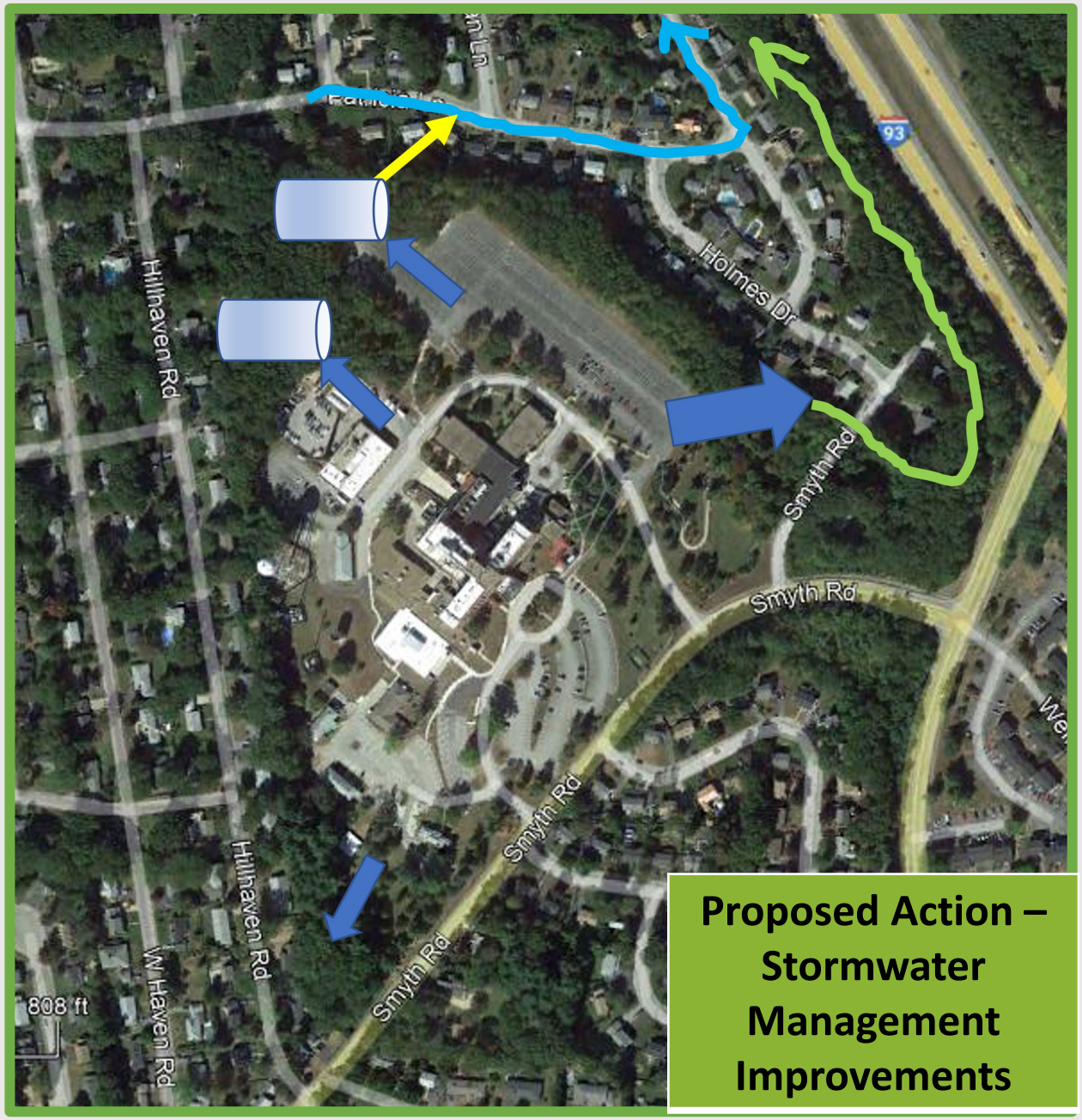
Stormwater, continued

Any excess runoff would be captured via:

- A new pipe connected to an existing portion of the City of Manchester stormwater pipe located between the northeastern portion of the campus and Patricia Lane.
- A detention basin equipped with a level spreader installed below the new parking lot to be built in the southwestern portion of the campus.

Photo: StormwaterPA

Current Stormwater Flow



Proposed Action – Stormwater Management Improvements

Water Resources

During Construction:

- No impact on surface water resources.
- If excavations for utility trenches and stormwater piping encounter shallow groundwater, they would be temporarily dewatered if necessary.

Wildlife and Habitat

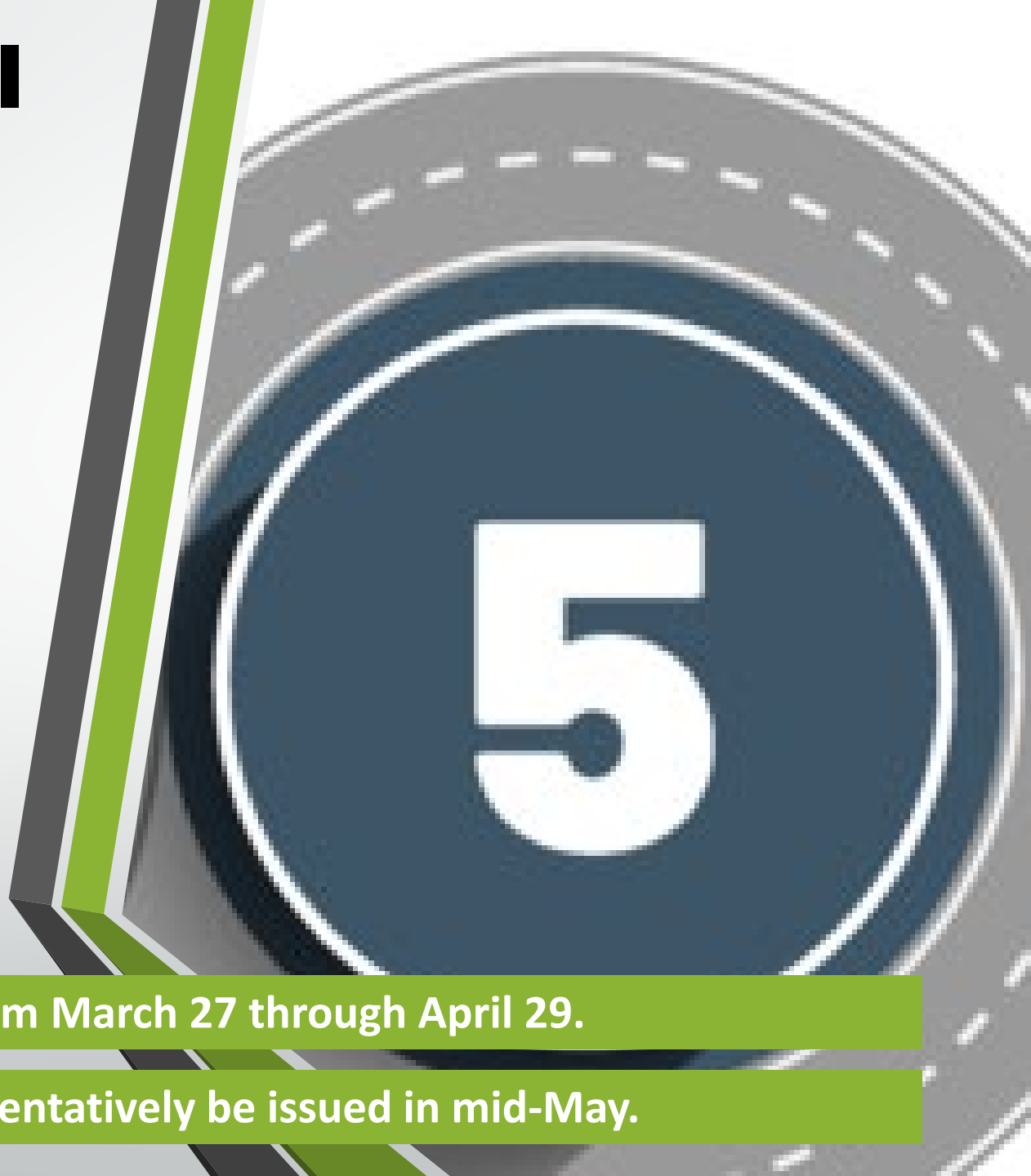
During Construction – no impact:

- Most of the campus wildlife are adapted to its environment.
- No protected species were identified during the field survey.
- Tree clearing will minimally reduce the northern wooded area.

Final Environmental Assessment

Next Steps:

- Review and address today's questions and comments as well as any submitted by email or mail.
- Determine necessary mitigation and/or monitoring measures.
- Publish both in the final detailed report on the potential significant environmental impacts of the proposed action.



The 30-day review period is from March 27 through April 29.

The FINAL EA and a decision will tentatively be issued in mid-May.

THANK YOU!

Comments? Questions?

Type your name into the Chat so we can call on you.

Please remember that this session is being recorded to preserve your comments and questions for review.

Additional comments or requests for more information should be sent to Keith Lacasse:

keith.lacasse@va.gov (603) 624-4366 x 1106
VA Manchester Health Care System
718 Smyth Road, Manchester, NH 03104

Reference “NEPA Loop Road" in all correspondence.