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KIHEI FACILITIES PROJECT

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1. Who is the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary?

The sanctuary is a federally designated area managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the State of Hawaii that covers an area of about 1,400 square miles in the waters of the Main Hawaiian Islands. The mission of the sanctuary program is to protect the humpback whale and its habitat, through education, research, and interpretive enforcement. In practice, mission-related activities are carried out by Sanctuary staff in offices on Maui (the headquarters), O‘ahu, and Kaua‘i. In addition, the State of Hawai‘i, which co-manages the sanctuary, works out of an office on O‘ahu.

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2. What is the Kihei Facility Project?

The Kihei Facility Project involves the renovation of existing facilities and the construction of a new multi-purpose building on the existing property to aid in meeting long-term facility needs of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary headquarters in Kihei, Maui, Hawai‘i. Connected actions that will also be carried out include site clearing and excavation; installation of water, sewage and electric lines; paving for new parking lot and gathering areas; widening the existing driveway; and landscaping with native plants.

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3. Why is the project needed?

- Relieve current overcrowding
- Provide space for additional staff
- Modern facility for conducting seminars, education programs for students and community outreach

The Sanctuary maintains a headquarters on NOAA property in Kihei, Maui, Hawai‘i. In addition, the Sanctuary has site offices on the islands of O‘ahu and Kaua‘i. The presence of resident Sanctuary staff on these islands has nurtured strong community-based networks of volunteers, partnerships, and support for the protection of Hawaii's humpback whales. The sanctuary's presence on the Big Island of Hawai‘i has been maintained by staff from other islands, Big Island-based Sanctuary Advisory Council members, and volunteers (NMSP 2002).

The Facility Master Plan Report for the Sanctuary headquarters was completed in October 2000, and updated in September 2001 and May 2002 (API 2000, API 2001, API 2002). The Master Plan documented the current and projected facility needs for the Maui Sanctuary offices—in terms of personnel, programs and activities, buildings, site conditions, and government regulations. The planning process resulted in a spatial program for a new multi-purpose building along with a phasing plan to implement other improvements (expansion and renovation) to the existing facilities. The Facility Master Plan Report includes three phases over a period of ten years. By stretching the development over this time period, the Sanctuary will be able to meet and sustain the goals and objectives of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary, including facility improvements.

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4. What are the steps in the planning process?

The project is being developed as a pilot project through the following five-phase Project Development, Approval, and Management (PDAM) process:

1. *PHASE ONE – PLANNING*. Phase One is already completed. It consisted of defining the agency's mission and identifying the functions needed to achieve that mission; developing a facility master plan to accommodate the needed functions; identifying alternatives; and preparing initial cost estimates.
2. *PHASE TWO – SCOPING*. This phase is currently underway. It consists of conducting four interrelated and interdependent analyses—technical, economic, environmental, and programmatic—on all reasonable alternatives, in order to determine the best course of action. The technical analysis consists of several pre-design activities such as a conducting a geotechnical investigation, developing conceptual designs, and updating cost estimates. The environmental analysis consists of preparing an environmental assessment (EA) and/or an environmental impact statement (EIS), as required by NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 216-6, Environmental Procedures for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The economic analysis consists of a computer-based evaluation of costs and benefits of each alternative. And finally, the programmatic analysis is an overall evaluation of the alternatives to determine the relative effectiveness of each in accomplishing the agency's mission.
3. *PHASE THREE – DESIGN*. Phase Three includes schematic design and design development, as well as preparation of construction documents. More detailed cost estimates will be developed during this phase, in preparation for soliciting bids for construction.
4. *PHASE FOUR – CONSTRUCTION*. Phase Four consists of procuring a construction contractor, and constructing, inspecting, and accepting the

facility.

5. *PHASE FIVE – OCCUPANCY*. During Phase Five, the new facility will be occupied, a post-occupancy evaluation will occur, and normal day-to-day operations and management activities will begin.

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5. What is the schedule for completing the project?

The project is currently in Phase 2, the Scoping part of the planning process (see question 4 above). Once the final Environmental Assessment is done the project will move into the next stages, Design, followed by Construction, with eventual occupancy of the new multi-purpose building in 2005 or 2006.

6. What are the alternatives being considered for the project?

In accordance with the Project Development, Approval and Management process, a project team identified the following four potential scenarios to satisfy the facility requirements for the project:

1. Split Sites Scenario – renovate the existing facilities and acquire additional facilities off-site;
2. New Site Scenario – lease or acquire new property and construct new facilities;
3. Renovate Existing Site Scenario – renovate and construct new facilities on the existing site; and
4. Do Nothing Scenario – no alterations or modifications to the existing facilities.

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7. Which alternative is NOAA going to pursue?

Renovate Existing Site Scenario – renovate and construct new facilities on the existing site. The following is an overview of the logistical and construction activities that will likely occur with implementation of the Proposed Action. The proposed building will cover a surface area of approximately 38.1 m by 11.3 m [125 ft by 37 ft] (430 m² [4625 square feet]) and will be located along the north property line. The building will be aligned east to west along its longest axis, with the front of the building facing south. The back wall of the building will be aligned approximately 3 m [10 ft] in and run parallel to the north property line. The center of the building is located on approximately the halfway point of the east to west property distance or roughly 56.4 m [185 ft] from the east property line. The building

will be 9.4 m [31 ft] at its highest point. The two existing storage buildings will be demolished and removed.

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8. Are the funds available to complete this project?

NOAA is in the process of securing construction funds for the project.

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9. How will this affect parking and traffic in the area.

South Kihei Road does not have a turning lane or a traffic control device leading into the Sanctuary property, and thus, the level of services (LOS) may be impaired for vehicle operators as their vehicles enter and depart the property. The LOS along South Kihei Road, as defined by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), is reasonably free flowing with speeds and travel times restricted by vehicle levels.

During the primary whale-watching season of December through March, the majority of visitors arrive and depart the sanctuary within the peak hours of 9:00am-4:30pm, and thus, do not significantly impact traffic counts (Cappelle, pers. comm. 2003). Special events and public meetings held at the Sanctuary lead to minor slowing of traffic on South Kihei Road due to vehicles arriving and departing during a short period. School children attending the Sanctuary's educational outreach programs arrive in groups twice a month on school buses. Often during departure, the school buses back out onto South Kihei Road, requiring staff to temporarily control traffic to allow the bus to safely negotiate an exit. This stopping of traffic is generally done during non-peak hours and has been noted by staff as not causing problems with motorists (Cappelle, pers. comm. 2003).

The Sanctuary presently has 22 parking stalls that accommodate visitors and staff parking needs under normal visitation. People attending special events and meetings at the Sanctuary may park in the Kalepolepo Park lot. To date there has been an informal agreement between the Maui County Department of Parks and Recreation and the Sanctuary to allow for the use of the neighboring Kalepolepo Park during heavy visitor use. The Sanctuary generally requires overflow parking during the evening hours when Kalepolepo Park is not busy. In exchange, the Sanctuary provides additional parking for beachgoers on weekends when the Sanctuary is closed.

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10. What are the major environmental impacts (if any)?

The Proposed Action is the renovation of existing facilities and the construction of a new on-site multi-purpose building for the Sanctuary to help meet the long-term needs identified in the Facility Master Plan Report (API 2000), the Main Building Alternatives Study (API 2001), and the Facilities Requirements Update Report (API 2002).

The Proposed Action involves site grading, demolition and removal of two existing storage building and the construction of a new multi-purpose building along with connected actions. The sanctuary does not anticipate that the Proposed Action will have any significant and adverse impacts on the environment, therefore an Environmental Assessment has been prepared for the project.

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11. What studies have been completed to date?

To date no studies per se have conducted at the NOS Kihei Sanctuary headquarters property site in support of the proposed action. A geotechnical study was done to look at the substrate below the propose multi-purpose building. The purpose of this investigation by Pacific Geotechnical Engineers was to determine the type of footing and structures needed to support the multi-purpose building

The environmental consultant has reviewed reports, documents and other materials relevant to the site and surrounding area in order to assess the affects both positive and negative that the proposed action will have on the environment. The project is currently in what is defined as Phase Two-Scoping portion of the overall project schedule. It consists of conducting four interrelated and interdependent analyses—technical, economic, environmental, and programmatic—on all reasonable alternatives, in order to determine the best course of action. The technical analysis consists of several pre design activities such as a conducting a geotechnical investigation, developing conceptual designs, and updating cost estimates. The environmental analysis consists of preparing an environmental assessment (EA) and/or an environmental impact statement (EIS), as required by NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 216-6, Environmental Procedures for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The economic analysis consists of a computer-based evaluation of costs and benefits of each alternative. And finally, the programmatic analysis is an overall evaluation of the alternatives to determine the relative effectiveness of each in accomplishing the agency's mission.

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12. What is the NEPA process?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was established by the U.S. Congress as a way to protect the quality of the human environment for future generations. NEPA establishes a national environment policy and sets forth procedural requirements that must be followed in reaching a decision for a federal action.

There are three Levels of NEPA Compliance:

- Categorical Exclusion (CATX): excludes government from further NEPA review.
- Environmental Assessment (EA): If not a CATX, then an EA is used to determine if a federal action qualifies for a Finding Of No • Significant Impact (FONSI), thus exempting the agency from the requirement to prepare an EIS.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS): In general, an EIS is prepared if neither a CATX nor a FONSI via an EA is made. An EA is a concise public document for which a federal agency that serves to:

Briefly provide sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement or a Finding Of No Significant Impact.

Aid in the agency's compliance with NEPA.

Facilitate preparation of a statement when one is needed.

Where are we at in the process? The proposed action has been identified and a Preliminary Draft Environmental Assessment (PDEA) has been completed. The first report was reviewed by NOAA personnel, and comments and suggestions were addressed for next version of the report. The Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) has been distributed to various Federal, State, and local government agencies and made available to the public to review and make comments on. This process has ended and written comments were received until April 7, 2003. The comments have been addressed, and the Final Environmental Assessment (FEA) will be prepared. It is anticipated that a FONSI will be made.

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13. Is NOAA planning on conducting any more studies?

There are no more studies planned for this project.

14. Definitions and Acronyms

API - Architects of the Pacific, Inc.

DEA - Draft Environmental Assessment

EA - Environmental Assessment

EIS - Environmental Impact Statement

HIHWNMS - Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

KFP - Kihei Facilities Project (multi-purpose building, new building)

NEPA - National Environmental Policy Act

NMSP - National Marine Sanctuary Program

NAO - NOAA Administrative Order

NOAA - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency within the Department of Commerce

NOS - National Ocean Service, an office of NOAA

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION EMAIL THE KIHEI FACILITIES
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Revised by the [HIHWNMS web team](#) on March 19, 2004.

URL:

http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov/special_offerings/sp_off/kfp/KFP_faq.html.