



KIHEI FACILITIES PROJECT

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INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the National Ocean Service (NOS), a line office within NOAA, propose to update its facilities for the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary (hereafter referred to as the Sanctuary). The Sanctuary has offices on Kaua‘i, O‘ahu, and Maui, however, this project is limited to the existing facility located in Kihei, Maui, Hawai‘i .

The purpose of the proposed Kihei Facility Project (KFP) is to enhance the ability of NOS to meet its increasing responsibilities in Hawai‘i. 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 predesign 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.

A Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) has been prepared and describes, analyses, and discloses the environmental impacts of Proposed and Alternative Actions for the proposed implementation of the Facility Master Plan Report (with revisions) at the Sanctuary in Kihei, Maui, Hawai‘i.

The EA was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et. seq.), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR, Parts 1500-1508), and NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 216-6.

THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

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.

For the purpose of the DEA, the Proposed Action is the implementation of the Facility Master Plan Report (with revisions), to enable the Sanctuary to meet its long-term needs. The Facility Master Plan Report outlined three phases of site development over a period of ten years. The most significant activity is the construction of a new on-site multi-purpose building in Phase I. Per guidance from NOAA the DEA did not analyze alternatives that involved different site plans or building designs.

PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action reflects the “Renovate Existing Site Scenario”. The action 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 NOS 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 lots and gathering areas; widening the existing driveway; and landscaping with native plants.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The No Action Alternative is the same as the “Do Nothing Scenario.” Under this Alternative, a new multi-purpose building would not be built and the Sanctuary would continue to operate and utilize existing structures on Sanctuary property. None of the facilities would be renovated, although routine maintenance would continue. Although NOAA has determined that this alternative does not meet long-range facility requirements, it must be considered as an Alternative under the NEPA process.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER ANALYSIS

Of the four project alternatives originally identified, two were considered but eliminated from further analysis since they could not meet the facility needs as determined by NOAA.

SPLIT SITES SCENARIO

During the earlier PHASE ONE – PLANNING, NOAA evaluated the feasibility of locating the additional Sanctuary requirements at a separate facility. This scenario would have required the Sanctuary staff to conduct program activities both on-site and at an off-site location. Although the off-site location could have been used to hold large-scale program activities (e.g., those needing a meeting space currently not available at the existing site) and would also have met their requirements for storage of materials, this scenario would have created additional burdens on the limited staff, resulting in decreased organizational efficiency and significantly increased operational costs. As a result, the “Split Sites Scenario” was eliminated from further consideration.

NEW SITE SCENARIO

NOAA considered the suitability and cost effectiveness of other sites that might be available for the Sanctuary to expand their facilities. Since moving the Sanctuary activities to an entirely new location would be extremely disruptive, both to the Maui facility and to the overall HIHWNMS program, the search area was limited to the island of Maui. However, the availability of a property to house a new facility is limited, and the cost of suitable real estate would have resulted in land acquisition costs being higher than the projected construction costs. Construction costs would be substantially higher under this alternative due to the lack of existing facilities at a new site and the need to construct an entirely new set of buildings to support the Sanctuary’s activities. Subsequent searches then focused on excess and under utilized federal property, but no viable alternative sites were found. NOAA also considered the option of leasing facilities off-site, but this was rejected due to budget limitations. Consequently, the “New Site Scenario” was eliminated from further consideration.

Proposed Multi-Purpose Building Information

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.

The proposed building will be constructed of wood and will be supported by approximately 46 0.4 m by 12.8 m [16.5 in by 42 ft] concrete pilings. The pilings will occupy a surface area of about 6.2 square meters [68 square feet] or 1.5

percent of the area under the building footprint. Geotechnical investigations recommended that driven piles be used to support the building due to the unconsolidated substrate and high water table below the site that could cause liquefaction following earthquakes. The base of these pilings will rest on top of basalt bedrock at an approximate depth of 12.8 m [42 ft] below the ground surface. The building will be elevated above the ground surface so that the floors are located above the base flood elevation of +3.05 m [+10 ft] msl.

A new parking area (Lot A) will be located in the northeast section of the parcel, and the existing parking area (Lot B) along the south property line will be extended to the east. The total number of parking stalls that will be located on-site will meet the zoning requirements set forth by the Maui County Planning Department (MCPD). The existing driveway into the Sanctuary will be widened to 6.7 m [22 ft] in order to bring the driveway into compliance with Uniform Fire Code Article 10 Section 10.207, and to allow for passage between large vehicles (e.g., school buses and other vehicles) entering and leaving the site. Landscaping with native plants will occur along the sides and front property setback strips, as well as in a few interior areas.

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 Proposed Action would not have any significant and adverse impacts on the environment, therefore an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for the project.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Based on the “Significant Criteria”, listed in Section 12 of Hawai‘i Administrative Rules Title 11, Chapter 200, an applicant or agency must determine whether an action may have a significant impact on the environment, including all phases of the project, its expected consequences both primary and secondary, its cumulative impact with other projects, and its short and long-term impacts. In making the determination, the “Significant Criteria” Rules established are employed as the basis for identifying whether the proposed project has significant environmental impacts.

Based on these rules the following conclusions are reached:

The proposed project would not result in irrevocable commitment to loss or destruction of any natural or cultural resources.

The proposed project will be implemented on the NOS Kihei Sanctuary headquarters property. No significant natural resources are present at the project site. No known cultural or historical resources would be impacted.

The proposed project would not curtail the range of beneficial uses of the environment.

The proposed project will not curtail beneficial uses of the site and the surrounding area. The uses that currently exist on the site will be benefited and enhanced by the Proposed Action.

The proposed action does not conflict with the State's long-term environmental policies or goals and guidelines and is commensurate with Federal NEPA requirements.

The State policies as set forth in Chapter 344; Hawai'i Revised Statutes espouse conservation of natural resources, and enhancement of the quality of life. The project is in line with these policies and enhances the goal of enhancing quality of life by providing educational opportunities for both State residents as well as tourist visitors. The Council on Environmental Quality envisioned that the NEPA process would aid in project planning and identify any potential significant impacts derived from a project. The proposed action was assessed by this EA in the early planning stages of the project, which aided in reducing potential for significant impacts.

The economic or social welfare of the community and/or State will be positively impacted.

The Proposed Action will result in short-term employment opportunities during the construction phase of the project as well as provide for continued employment opportunities for Sanctuary staff.

The direct and indirect economic inputs of the project will benefit both local and State wide businesses.

No substantial secondary impacts, such as population changes or affects on public facilities, are anticipated.

The project is not expected to increase the local population and will result in only minor increases to demands on public utilities.

No substantial degradation of environmental quality is anticipated.

The specific site location for the project has been moderately impacted from by past land disturbing activities. The Proposed Action will not adversely impact the overall environmental quality of the area.

The proposed action does not involve a commitment to larger actions, nor would cumulative impacts result in considerable effects on the environment.

Negative long-term cumulative effects of implementing the Proposed Action are expected to be minimal. Most areas along the Kihei coastline have been impacted by human development and the new building would be located within an already developed site. There are no foreseeable future actions associated with the Sanctuary's long-term plans that would conflict or increase the level of impacts from the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action would result in the positive long-term impact of providing a building that contains offices and workspace for Sanctuary operations as well as a meeting center for the community.

No rare, threatened or endangered species or their habitats would be

affected.

No known endangered, threatened or candidate flora or fauna species are present at the specific site where ground-disturbing activities will occur, or may be affected by the Proposed Action.

Air quality, water quality or ambient noise levels would not be detrimentally affected.

The proposed project will not adversely affect air or water quality. It also will not generate solid wastes or produce emissions that will have significant impacts on the public health or the environment. Short-term impacts from construction activity include increased noise levels, dust and exhaust from construction machinery, which will be mitigated by to the maximum extent possible by implementation of construction Best Management Practices set forth by the Maui County Planning Department.

The project does not substantially affect scenic vistas and view plains in the County or State plans and studies.

Construction equipment such as the pile-driving rig will only occupy the site during the pile installation phase of the project. The view of the equipment from off site will be obstructed somewhat by the vegetation that surrounds the site. After completion of the multi-purpose building and installation of landscaping features, it is anticipated that the scenic and aesthetical quality of the site will be enhanced.

**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_purpose.html.