

*Draft*  
*Supplemental Environmental Assessment*  
*for the*

**Veterans Affairs Medical Facility**  
**Proposed Multi-Specialty Care Outpatient Clinic**  
**Walla Walla, Washington**

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May 2011

# FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

## Department of Veterans Affairs Modifications to Proposed VA Medical Center Walla Walla, Washington

In July 2011, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the *VA Medical Center Proposed Multi-Specialty Care Outpatient Clinic, Walla Walla County, Washington* (2011 EA). The purpose of the 2011 EA was to determine the potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts of constructing and operating a new VA Medical Center Outpatient Clinic (OPC) building in the City of Walla Walla, Washington. The 2011 EA concluded that no significant impacts to the human environment would result, and the VA issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Construction of the VA Medical Center is presently underway. Since completing the 2011 EA, the VA has proposed modifications to the original project scope that includes the construction of a new 23,000 square foot Residential Recovery Unit building adjacent to the OPC. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the VA prepared the attached Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) to examine the potential for environmental impacts from the proposed changes to the original project scope.

This FONSI is based on the attached SEA. The analysis performed in the SEA concludes that there would be no significant adverse impact, either individually or cumulatively, to the human environment, provided mitigation measures and commitments consisting of best management practices and regulatory compliance measures described in the 2011 EA are fully implemented. Therefore, this FONSI is appropriate and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

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Date

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Date

*This FONSI will become final 15 days after publication of its Notice of Availability provided that no information leading to a contrary finding is received or comes to light during the 15-day review period.*

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## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

In April 2011, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Proposed Multi-Specialty Care Outpatient Clinic (OPC) (Terracon 2011). The purpose of the 2011 EA was to determine the potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts of constructing and operating a new Outpatient Clinic in the City of Walla Walla, Washington. The 2011 EA concluded that no significant impacts to the human environment would result and the VA issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) accordingly. Construction of the Outpatient Clinic is presently underway. However, since completing the 2011 EA, the VA has proposed a modification to the project scope. That change includes the addition of a new 23,000 square foot Residential Recovery Unit (RRU) building (Figure 1). To comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the VA prepared this Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) to examine the potential for environmental impacts from the proposed change to the original project scope.

### **1.2 Purpose and Need for Proposed Action**

The purpose and need for the Proposed Action have not changed from the 2011 EA. On July 7, 2006, VA Secretary R. James Nicholson announced his Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) decision that VAMC Walla Walla will receive a new state-of-the-art outpatient facility to house primary, specialty, and mental health services. The purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill the need to implement Secretary Nicholson's CARES decision for a new state-of-the-art outpatient facility. The 2006 CARES report confirmed that clinical services are currently provided in multiple buildings (many are 75 years or older) containing numerous facility condition assessment deficiencies.

This project will provide access to a continuum of care for veterans with mental health, substance use disorders, homelessness, and vocational needs. The existing hospital building that currently house mental health rehabilitation services (Building 69) were built over 100 years ago. The historic building is outdated and not adequately designed to provide the services that are currently housed within it. Building 69 does not provide adequate privacy, proper accommodations for female veterans, or enough space for the intended programs. Safety concerns include dropped ceilings in Psychiatric areas, a high unsecured stairwell, and other areas of the building that have suicide risks. Building 69 has numerous energy deficiencies and is not seismically sound. All of the inadequacies listed above for Building 69 would be eliminated with construction of the proposed purpose-built RRU.

The purpose of the proposed RRU would be to provide a more homelike environment which would allow for implementation of recovery-oriented care for all rehabilitation programs. The proposed RRU would provide 24-hour nursing care including medication administration assistance with confusion and elopement potential redirection and frequent supportive interaction, and minor procedures (i.e. dressing changes). The new facility would also provide

peer-supported/house manager/peer counselor supervised residential beds. The proposed project would enhance the overall quality of mental health services and the campus as a whole.

### 1.3 Scope of Analysis

This SEA examines the potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts that would result from the proposed changes to the original project scope. This SEA considers the same No Action Alternative as the 2011 EA, the potential impacts that would occur if the proposed RRU building were not built and operated. Because the modifications to the Proposed Action would not change the analysis of the No Action Alternative, the No Action Alternative is not discussed further in this SEA. The reader is directed to the 2011 EA for a description of the No Action Alternative and discussion of its potential impacts.

### 1.4 Public Scoping and Agency Consultation

This SEA will be available for public review and comment for at least 15 days. VA will publish a Notice of Availability (NOA) in the local newspaper. VA will take into account any comments received from agencies and interested parties and modify this SEA, if warranted.

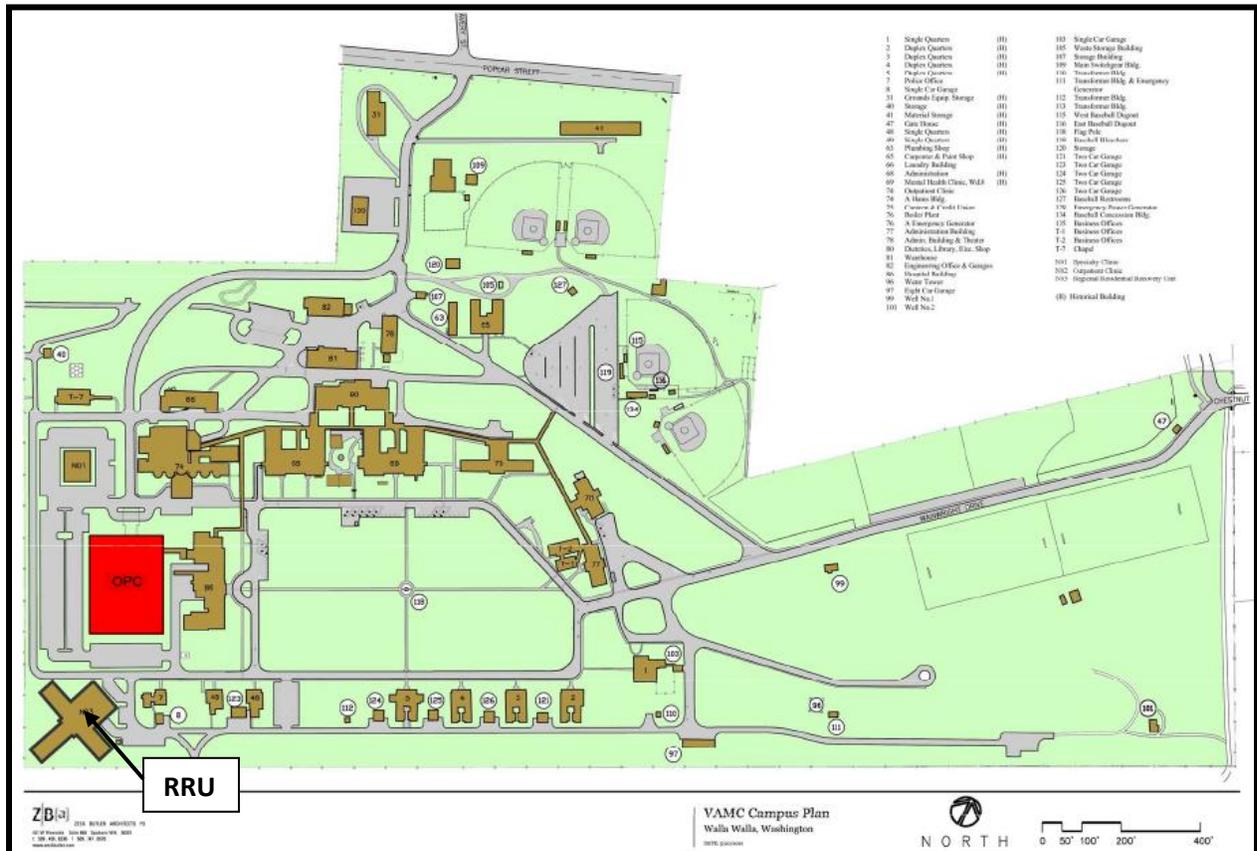


Figure 1. Map of VAMC Walla Walla campus showing location of OPC and RRU buildings.

## **2.0 Description of Proposed Changes to Original Project Scope**

The proposed change includes the construction of 23,000 square feet Residential Recovery Unit building located adjacent and south of the OPC Building. The proposed design is a one-and-a-half story, brick-clad building with a central entrance mass with three radiating wings (Figure 2). The proposed building will be situated in the southwestern corner of the campus and will blend with the overall setting of the Medical Center facility. An iterative design review process with Washington State Historic Preservation Office, Advisory Council for Historic Preservation, and other stakeholders has been completed. The functional use of the RRU building will largely replace the current use of historic Building 69.



**Figure 2. Rendering of proposed RRU building, view to southeast.**

## **3.0 Affected Environment**

There have been no known changes in the Affected Environment as described in the 2011 EA; the reader is directed to the 2011 EA for that information.

## **4.0 Environmental Consequences**

The following sections discuss changes to the potential impacts that may result from implementing the modifications to the original project scope. The basis for evaluating potential impacts will be the same criteria applied to the 2011 EA. Table 1 presents a summary of changes to potential impacts.

**Table 1. Summary of Changes to Potential Impacts**

<b>Environmental Resources</b>	<b>Add New 23,000 Square Feet RRU Building</b>
Aesthetics	No substantial change
Land Use	No substantial change
Air Quality	No substantial change
Cultural Resources	No substantial change
Geology and Soils	No substantial change
Hydrology and Water Quality	No substantial change
Wildlife and Habitat	No substantial change
Noise	No substantial change
Floodplains, Wetlands and Coastal Zone Management	No substantial change
Socioeconomics	No substantial change
Community Service	No substantial change
Solid and Hazardous Waste	No substantial change
Transportation and Parking	No substantial change
Utilities	No substantial change
Environmental Justice	No substantial change

Because construction methods and mitigation measures will be similar to construction of the OPC building and other parts of the Medical Center facility, construction activity would not cause a substantial change on impacts to aesthetics; land use; air quality; cultural resources; geology and soils; hydrology and water quality; wildlife and habitat, noise; floodplains, wetlands and coastal zone management; socioeconomics; community service; solid and hazardous materials; transportation and parking; utilities; and environmental justice. In general, construction activity would have the same impact to environmental resources as in the 2011 EA.

Upon completion and normal operations of the building, as part of the overall Medical Center facility, the building would not cause a substantial change on impacts to aesthetics; land use; air quality; cultural resources; geology and soils; hydrology and water quality; wildlife and habitat, noise; floodplains, wetlands and coastal zone management; socioeconomics; community service; solid and hazardous materials; transportation and parking; utilities; and environmental justice. Like the OPC, the RRU will replace existing functions currently housed in other buildings within the Medical Center facility. In general, normal operations of the building would have the same impact to environmental resources as in the 2011 EA.

The Medical Center facility is part of the Fort Walla Walla Historic District with 15 buildings currently registered on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). A Cultural Resource Survey Report (CRSR) (ICF 2010) identified 17 additional historic resources eligible for NRHP listing. In addition, the CRSR identified archaeological resources within proposed utility improvement areas associated with the OPC building construction. Previous cultural resource investigations have also identified cultural resources within the subject property. Archaeological resources are anticipated throughout the facility.

The VA entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Washington State Historic Preservation Office, Advisory Council for Historic Preservation, and the Confederated tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation dated December 16, 2010 as required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The MOA stipulates actions the VA will take to mitigate the impacts to a level of non-significance.

Therefore, based on the discussion above, there would be no change to the original finding of no significant impact due to the addition of the RRU building.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

The analysis performed in this SEA concludes that there would be no significant adverse impact, either individually or cumulatively, to the human environment, provided mitigation measures and commitments consisting of MOA stipulations, best management practices, and regulatory compliance measures described in the 2011 EA are fully implemented. Therefore, this SEA concludes that a Finding of No Significant Impact is appropriate, and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

## **6.0 References**

Terracon Consultants, Inc.

*2010 Environmental Assessment for the Veterans Affairs Medical Center Proposed Multi-Specialty Care Outpatient Clinic 77 Wainwright Drive Walla Walla, Walla Walla County, Washington 99362.* Prepared by Terracon Consultants Inc. Portland OR for Leo A. Daly Omaha, NE for submission to Veterans Affairs Office of Construction Management Vallejo, CA