

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

NOTICE: National Environmental Policy Act; Proposed construction of New Office Building #20 at Johnson Space Center

AGENCY: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321, et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and the NASA policy and procedures (14 CFR part 1216 subpart 1216.3), NASA announces the availability of the Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) that address the environmental impacts expected to result from the construction of New Office Building #20 at the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center (JSC) in Houston, Texas. The facility would provide approximately 9,290 square meters (m²), consist of three stories and be constructed in the central portion of the JSC campus.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Written requests for copies of the EA or requests for information, should be directed to David Hickens, Chief, Environmental Office, NASA, Johnson Space Center, Mailcode JE, 2101 NASA Parkway, Houston, Texas 77058, FAX (281) 483-3048, or by calling (281) 483-3120.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: NASA has reviewed the EA prepared for the proposed construction of New Office Building #20 and has determined that it represents an accurate and adequate analysis of the scope and level of associated environmental impacts. The EA is hereby incorporated by reference in this FONSI.

Two alternatives have been considered: the proposed action and the no-action alternative. The no-action alternative would negatively affect available office space and the ability to refurbish existing office facilities. In addition, the no-action alternative would result in the continued use of temporary office facilities currently designated for demolition.

New Office Building #20 will provide approximately 9,290 m² of transitional office space for workers who will be located to the facility on a temporary basis to support the effort to refurbish existing office space at JSC. The refurbishment program is an estimated 20-year process. Additionally, the facility will provide for the permanent relocation of approximately 120 employees from Building T-585, which is slated for demolition. Once the refurbishment effort is complete, the building will house 520 permanent employees.

New Office Building #20 will be located at JSC across from Building 45 on 2nd street.

The potential physical, biological, socioeconomic, and cultural impacts of the construction and operation of New Office Building #20 have been assessed and evaluated. No substantial impacts, related to any of these issues, were identified.

Physical and biological resources considered include climate and earth movements, water, air and noise resources, hazardous materials, transportation, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife, and vegetation. New Office Building #20 would have no substantial impact on any of these resources. There are no unresolved conflicts in the use of resources.

Socioeconomic evaluation included effects on demographics and economic activity. New Office Building #20 would have no substantial impact on any of these resources.

Cultural resources considered archeological site records on file with the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory at the University of Texas at Austin. Based on a review of these records, no archeological sites have been recorded within the project limits. Therefore, New Office Building #20 is not anticipated to have any impacts on cultural resources. In the event that archeological resources are encountered during construction, operations shall cease in the vicinity until the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act are met.

Cumulative Impacts: The EA reviewed cumulative impacts that could result from the incremental impact of proposed activities when added to other past, present, and reasonable foreseeable future actions. No other actions have been identified within or adjacent to the proposed site for New Office Building #20 that would contribute to cumulative impacts.

Mitigation: Standard construction practices will be implemented to reduce erosion potential during ground disturbing activities.

On the basis of the EA, I have determined that the physical, biological, socioeconomic, and cultural impacts associated with the construction of New Office Building #20 will not individually or cumulatively have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. Therefore, NASA has determined that an Environmental Impact Statement need not be prepared. NASA may begin construction of New Office Building #20 at any time after publication of this FONSI.

Michael L. Coats
Director
Johnson Space Center