

Finding of No Significant Impact for Improvements at Administrative United States Penitentiary (AUSP) Thomson, Thomson, Illinois

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations (Title 40 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* [CFR] Parts 1500–1508) for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Title 42 of the United States Code [U.S.C.] 4321 *et seq.*) and 28 CFR Part 61, Appendix A, *Bureau of Prisons Procedures Relating to the Implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act*, the Federal Bureau of Prisons (Bureau) conducted an environmental assessment (EA) of the potential environmental and socioeconomic effects associated with constructing facility improvements at AUSP Thomson in Thomson, Illinois.

Proposed Action

The proposed action is to implement facility improvements at AUSP Thomson that the Bureau has deemed necessary for the federal mission at the penitentiary. Elements of the proposed action include construction of an armory, parking lot expansion and improvements, fire access road improvements, stormwater retention drainage improvements, a bus garage service building, an electrical equipment enclosure for the institution's switchgear and generator, a staff training course, construction of a staff training center, and construction of an outdoor firing range. All of the proposed facility improvements would be on AUSP Thomson property.

Purpose and Need

The Illinois Department of Corrections built the penitentiary in 2001, and the Bureau acquired it in October 2012. In 2010, the Bureau prepared the *Environmental Assessment for the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Acquisition and Activation of Thomson Correctional Center as Administrative United States Penitentiary Thomson*. The 2010 EA evaluated the potential environmental impacts of the Bureau's acquisition of the Thomson facility from the State of Illinois to address an acute shortage of male high-security, maximum-custody bed space for federal inmates. The Bureau site improvements described in the current EA were not part of the action evaluated in the 2010 EA; this current EA analyzes the proposed site improvements to comply with NEPA and with the CEQ's and the Bureau's NEPA implementing regulations.

Alternatives Considered

The Bureau considered alternatives for elements of the proposed action. For the armory and bus garage, the Bureau considered whether the armory and garage functions could be incorporated into the existing administration building and warehouse garage building via renovations, or accommodated with building additions. These alternatives were eliminated from further consideration because of findings of insufficient space within the existing structures, because building additions would result in costly site infrastructure modifications, and that additions would have a negative impact on operations and oversight. The Bureau considered whether the electrical equipment could be enclosed in a Central Utility Plant (CUP) type of building, but this alternative was eliminated because of findings that existing utility infrastructure distribution made the alternative not viable. The Bureau considered both indoor and outdoor options for the firing range. The indoor firing range was eliminated from consideration because the size of a typical Bureau firing range would be cost prohibitive as an indoor facility.

Under the no action alternative, the Bureau's proposed facility improvements at AUSP Thomson would not be implemented. Inclusion of the no action alternative in the EA is prescribed by CEQ regulations. The no action alternative serves as a benchmark against which the federal action can be evaluated. The no action alternative is evaluated in detail in the EA.

Factors Considered in Determining that No Environmental Impact Statement is Required

The EA, which is attached hereto and incorporated by reference into this finding of no significant impact, examines the potential effects of the proposed action and the no action alternative on the following resource areas and areas of environmental and socioeconomic concern: land use, air quality, noise, soils, water, biological resources, transportation, utilities, hazardous and toxic substances, aesthetics and visual resources, cultural resources, and socioeconomics.

Evaluation indicates that the proposed action would not result in significant adverse effects on the natural, visual, cultural, or socioeconomic environments. The proposed action would have the potential for appreciable long-term adverse effects from the proposed firing range; therefore, the Bureau would implement the following mitigation measures to ensure effects remain at less-than-significant levels.

- Perform a preconstruction detailed acoustical modeling effort and incorporate noise reduction measures (i.e., walls, barriers, berms, firing orientation), as necessary, into the design of the range. This effort should focus on the existing and future residential land use surrounding the facility.
- Restrict the firing range hours of operation to between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.
- Comply with all applicable federal, state, and local noise regulations.
- Construct the firing range in accordance with the Bureau's *Design Program Guidelines* so the range is large enough to accommodate the appropriate safety fan to contain all projectiles and ricochets.

Public Review

The Bureau made the EA available for 30 days for public comment, beginning on May 11, 2016, with publication of a Notice of Availability in *The Carroll County Review* newspaper, and ending on June 11, 2016. The EA was available on the Bureau's Web site at https://www.bop.gov/locations/regional_offices/ncro/, and copies of the EA were available for review at the following libraries: Chadwick Public Library District, Chadwick, IL; Lanark Public Library, Lanark, IL; Mount Carroll Township Public Library, Mount Carroll, IL; Savanna Public Library District, Savanna, IL; Milledgeville Public Library, Milledgeville, IL; and York Township Public Library, Thomson, IL. The Bureau received no comments on the EA during the 30-day comment period.

Conclusions

On the basis of the EA, it has been determined that implementation of the proposed action would have no significant adverse effects on the quality of human life or the natural environment; therefore, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required. The Bureau intends to proceed with the proposed action.


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Date