



**VA**

**U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs**

**Virtual Public Meeting**

**Draft Environmental Assessment  
Proposed Upgrades and Improvements at  
Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Portland,  
Oregon**

**February 22, 2022**



# Introduction

## **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will:**

- Share information about the proposed action
- Provide instructions on submitting public comments
- Clarify project information in response to any questions



# Introduction

- **Glenn Elliott** – Director, VA Environmental Programs
- **Patrick Read** – Environmental Engineer, VA Office of Construction and Facilities Management
- **Héctor Abreu** – Federal Preservation Officer, VA
- **Jesse Byrd** – Project Manager, LRS Federal
- **Sara Schulkowski** – Environmental Engineer, LRS Federal
- **John Dodier** – Chief, Portland VAMC Facility Management Services
- **Brian McClure** – District Manager, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, VA Support Division



# Introduction

- Presentation on the Draft EA for the proposed upgrades and improvements at the Portland Veterans Affairs Medical Center
- After the presentation, VA will take questions from online public participants

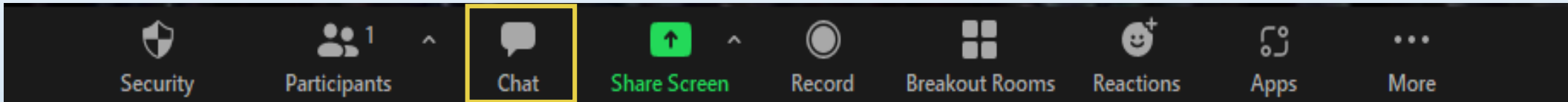


# Welcome to Public Meeting

- Participant audio is muted.
- Ask questions to be answered tonight using the Chat feature.
- Email comments on the Draft EA through **March 15<sup>th</sup>** to [VACOEnvironment@va.gov](mailto:VACOEnvironment@va.gov)
  - Please use the subject line “Portland VAMC Draft EA”.
- For meeting technical support, use the Chat feature or email [help@irsfederal.com](mailto:help@irsfederal.com)

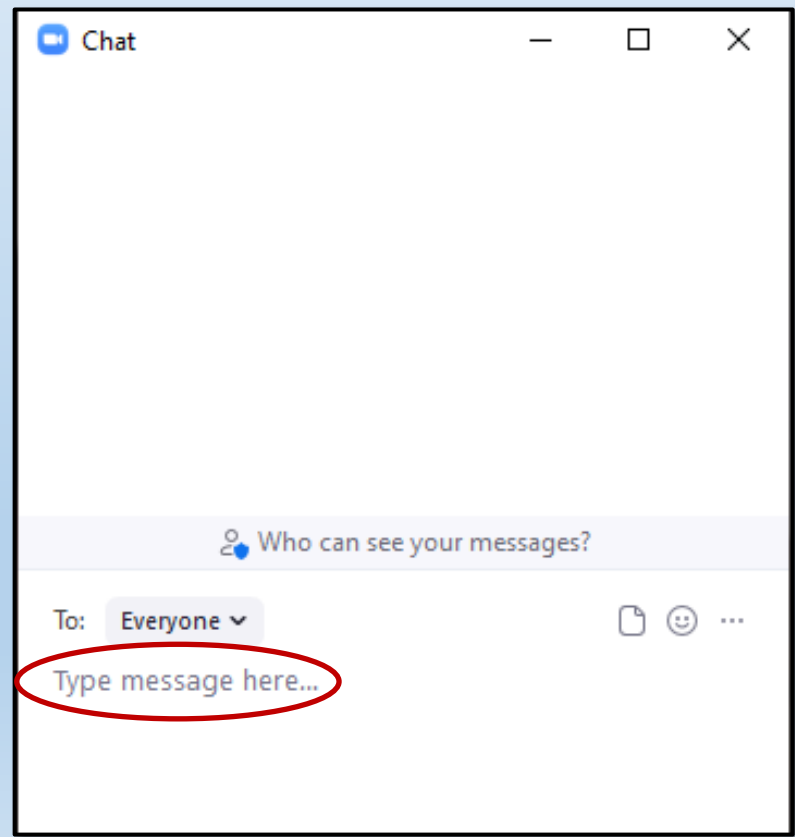


# Steps for Submitting Questions Using the Chat Feature



1. Click the Chat icon in the attendee controls at the bottom of your screen. You should see the Chat window open.
2. Type your question in the space provided at the bottom of the Chat window.
3. Press enter to submit. Questions are only visible to the meeting panel.

**Note:** Participants joining this public meeting by phone may submit questions via email to [VACOEnvironment@va.gov](mailto:VACOEnvironment@va.gov) and as per the Notice of Availability for the EA.



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# Purpose of the Meeting

- Describes the project and its review under the **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**.
- Summarizes Draft **Environmental Assessment (EA)** analysis and findings.
- Explains how to submit comments.
- Responds to questions about the project.

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# NEPA Overview

- NEPA requires Federal agencies to analyze and consider potential environmental impacts of their proposed actions. NEPA is used as a planning and decision-making tool for Federal agencies.
- **Levels of NEPA documentation:**
  - **Categorical Exclusion (CATEX):** A class of actions that a Federal agency has determined, after review by Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment.
  - **Environmental Assessment (EA):** Determines whether a federal action has the potential to cause significant environmental effects.
  - **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS):** Prepared if a proposed major federal action is determined to significantly affect the quality of the human environment.

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# NEPA Overview

- **Under NEPA:**
  - If the analysis under the **Environmental Assessment (EA)** finds that the proposed action would result in significant impacts, an **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)** would be required.
  - Federal agencies are not required to formally respond to scoping comments; however, VA has taken them into consideration during project planning and in the development of the Draft EA.
- The Final EA will address all public comments.

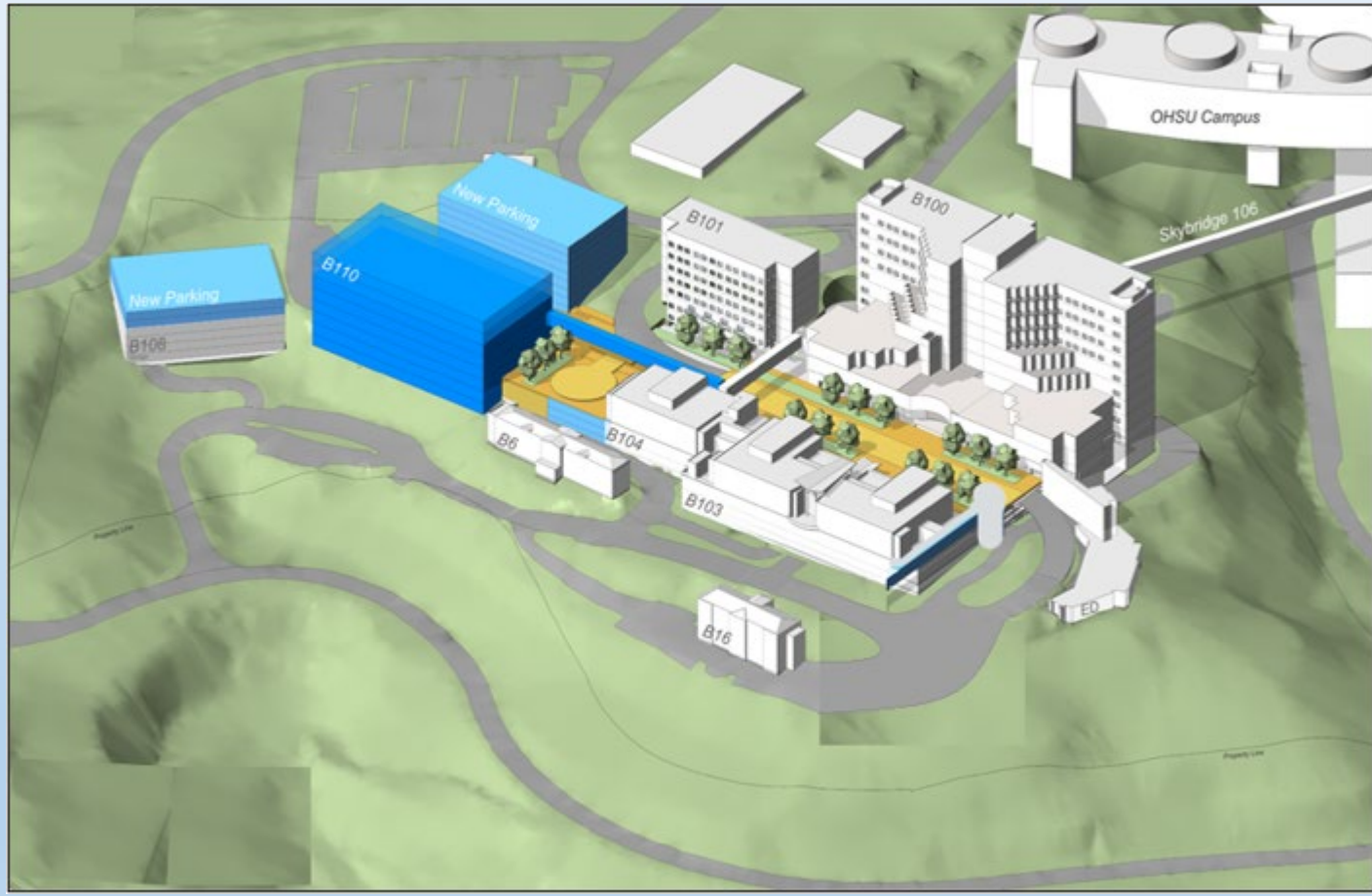
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# Portland VAMC Campus Project Overview

**Purpose:** Correct seismic deficiencies, address federal setback and physical security requirements, and provide sufficient patient and staff parking facilities at the Portland Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) to meet existing needs.

**Need:** The Portland VAMC facilities do not meet VA design criteria and seismic and physical security standards, and parking does not meet current staff and patient demand.



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# Alternatives Evaluated

## The alternatives considered in the EA:

- Alternative A
- Alternative B
- No Action Alternative (as required by NEPA regulations)

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# Alternative A

## Project components:

- Demolition of Building T-41, Building T-51, and Trailer 1.
- Design and construction of two additional parking levels at Building 108.
- Design and construction of Building 110.
- Design and construction of Building 111.
- Energy plant improvements and upgrades.

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# Alternative B

## Project components:

Alternative B comprises all project components described under Alternative A in addition to:

- Design and construction for a complete seismic upgrade to Building 100 and nearby Building 101 include a façade replacement and service elevator.
- Design and construction for required seismic upgrades and improvements to Building 102 including a new water tank and entrance ramps.
- Remaining structural and non-structural seismic upgrades and the full renovation and modernization of Buildings 100 and 101.

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# No Action Alternative

- VA would not implement the proposed action.
- Upgrades and new development at the campus would not occur.
- Does not meet purpose of and need for action.
- Services would continue to be provided from the campus without proposed action upgrades or new developments.
- Provides a benchmark for comparing impacts of the Action Alternatives.

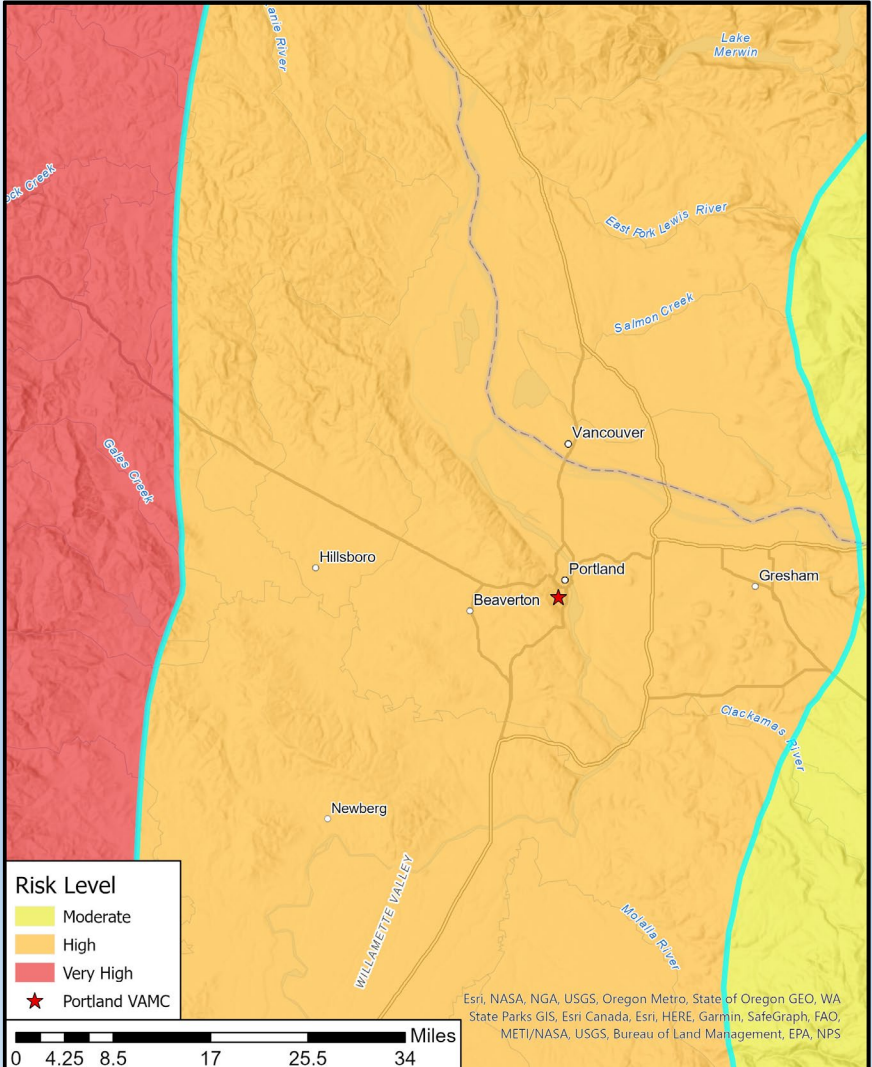
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# Location

- The Portland VAMC is located south of downtown Portland and within a mile of the Willamette River.
- There are several active faults in the region and Portland has a long history of earthquakes.
- The Portland VAMC is located within a high potential earthquake hazard zone with a very high risk for liquefaction of soils.

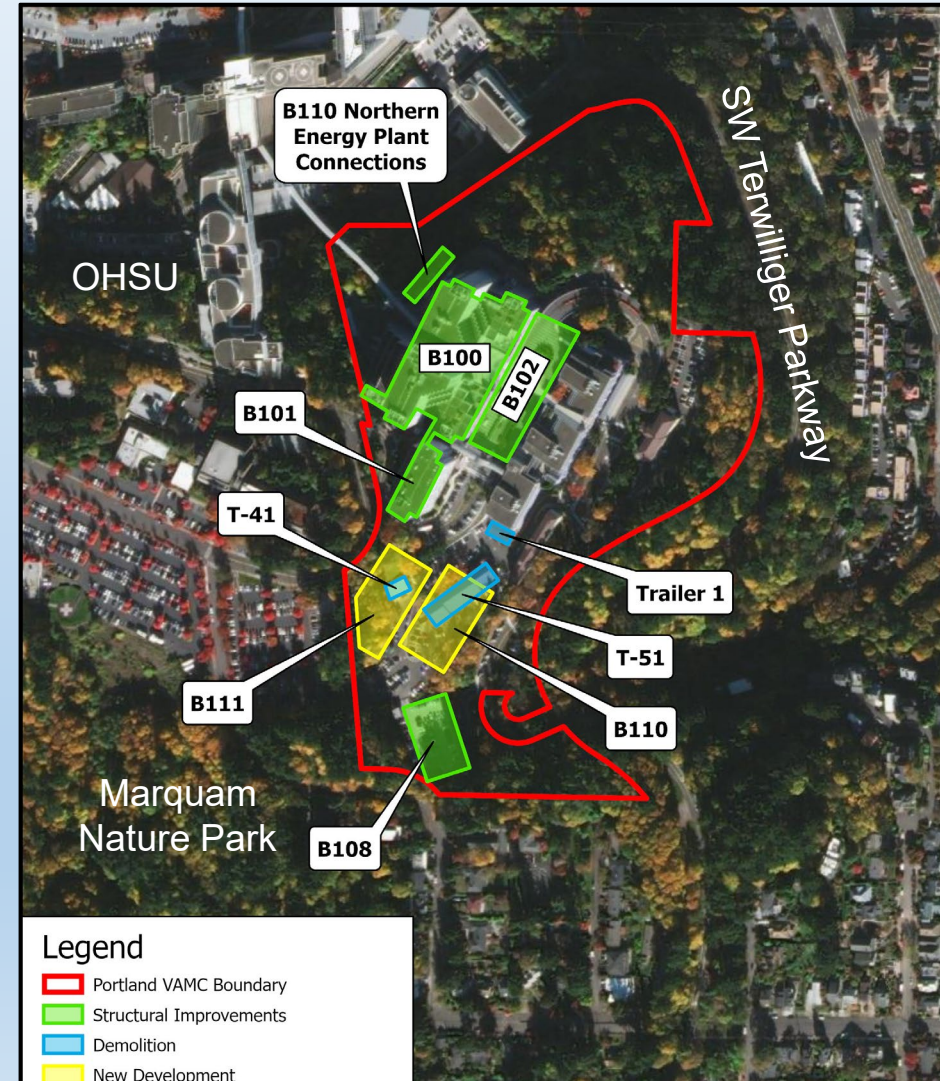
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# Site Description

- Site consists of an approximately 28.5-acre medical campus surrounded by wooded, steeply sloping terrain.
- **Existing development includes:**
  - Multiple medical buildings
  - Surface parking lots and parking structures
  - Central energy plant
- Surrounding land uses are a mix of institutional, recreational, commercial, and residential.
  - Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU)
  - Residential housing
  - SW Terwilliger Parkway
  - Marquam Nature Park



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# Draft Environmental Assessment

- Describes Affected Environment (baseline conditions) at the site.
- Analyzes potential impacts from construction and operation to environmental resources.
- **Resources analyzed in this Draft EA are:**
  - Aesthetics
  - Air quality
  - Cultural & historic resources
  - Geology & soils
  - Hydrology & water quality
  - Wildlife & habitat
  - Noise
  - Land use
  - Floodplains & wetlands
  - Socioeconomics
  - Solid waste & hazardous materials
  - Traffic, transportation, & parking
  - Utilities
  - Environmental justice

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# Cultural and Historic Resources

- There are no **National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)**-listed or eligible historic buildings identified on the VAMC campus where upgrades and improvements are proposed.
- On November 16, 2020, the **State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)** determined that the VA campus was not eligible for the NRHP, and therefore, the proposed upgrades and improvements will not adversely affect any historic resources.
- VA has requested subsequent concurrence from SHPO, which will be provided in the final EA.
- Future Section 106 consultation with SHPO or Native American Tribes and consulting parties would be required if ground disturbing activities (e.g., ground disturbance for ancillary locations, terrain reconfigurations, staging areas or excavations for utilities) are proposed in areas outside of the VAMC campus.

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# Cultural and Historic Resources

- The nearby roadway, SW Terwilliger Parkway, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Wooded areas surrounding the campus would remain intact, providing a buffer between campus construction and the historic SW Terwilliger Parkway.
- Proposed building heights would also not exceed existing, and construction activities would be almost entirely limited to previously developed areas.
- The Portland VAMC campus is a low risk for inadvertent discovery of pre-contact cultural resources and a low risk for uncovering historic-period cultural resources, and it is therefore unlikely that the proposed action under Alternatives A and B would impact archeological resources.
- A project-related inadvertent discovery plan will be created, outlining procedures on what to do and who to contact if there is an inadvertent discovery as a result of any project-related minor ground-disturbing activities in previously undisturbed locations within the area of potential effects during construction.
- Further consultation would be required if an inadvertent discovery occurs during construction.

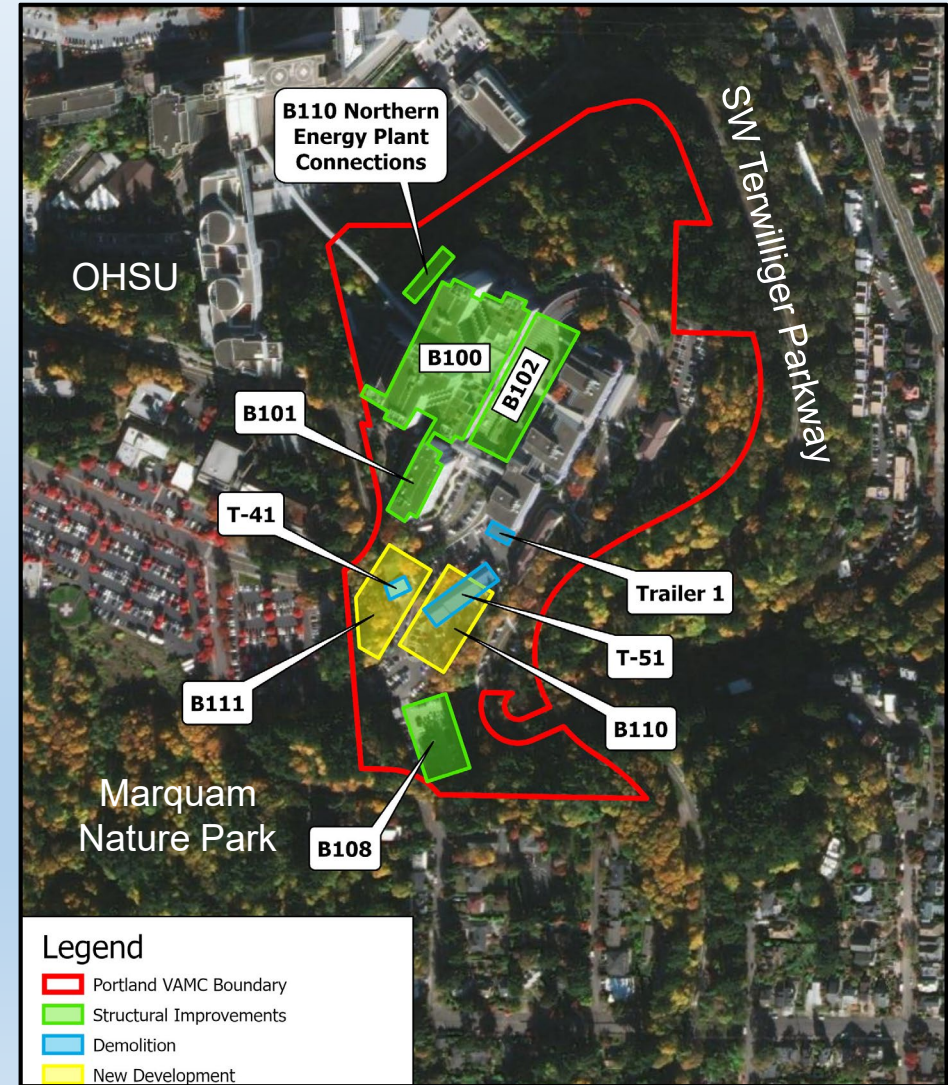
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# Wildlife and Habitat

- Construction would require limited removal of vegetation.
- Any disturbance to vegetation will be avoided during nesting season from April 15 to July 31 to avoid impacts to nesting birds in accordance with the **Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)**.
- After reviewing information from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, VA determined that the site does not contain essential or critical habitats for any of the state or federally listed species.

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# Wildlife and Habitat

- Stormwater from the site would continue to be collected and conveyed to the Columbia Boulevard Wastewater Treatment Plant for treatment and would not impact essential fish habitat within the Lower Willamette or Columbia Rivers.
- A Construction Stormwater and Erosion Control Plan, **Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)**, and related best management practices would be implemented during and after construction.
- VA will apply for an **Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) 1200-C Construction General Stormwater** permit.
- Appropriate treatment features would be implemented after construction to treat and store stormwater runoff, in compliance with Federal, State, and local regulations including the City of Portland's **Storm Water Management Manual (SWMM)**.



*Best management practices for protecting water quality from sediment in stormwater runoff will be implemented during construction.*

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# Traffic, Transportation, & Parking

- VA conducted a revised traffic study in January 2022 to reflect changes in construction phasing and the elimination of parking garage B112 from the project components considered. B112 was initially proposed to add approximately 450 parking spaces.
- VA has provided the Traffic Study and Analysis to Portland Bureau of Transportation.
- The proposed action would add a net total of 600 new parking spaces to the VAMC campus to increase the available parking spaces for staff, patients, and visitors and improve access to the Portland VAMC while improving traffic flow on the campus.
- The proposed action is projected to result in a maximum of 746 new trips on SW Terwilliger Parkway, which is an increase of approximately 6.89% in overall projected average daily trips.

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# Traffic, Transportation, & Parking

- **The proposed action would result in negligible impacts to traffic:**
  - Under the no action alternative there are 10,831 average daily trips projected on SW Terwilliger Parkway in 2030 when assuming one percent annual growth.
  - Under the proposed action there are approximately 11,577 daily trips projected on SW Terwilliger Parkway in 2030, which is only a difference of up to 746 new trips.
- The upgrades and improvements proposed would not be the primary cause for projected growth or related increases in traffic on adjacent roadways.
- Regardless of whether the proposed action is to be implemented, VA recognizes and supports the planning and implementation of future non-VA traffic minimization measures to address the operational issues.
- Prior to project construction, internal Traffic Management/Circulation and Minimization Plans would be reviewed and approved by the VAMC for implementation to alleviate onsite traffic issues and congestion during construction.
- Although not anticipated, VA would coordinate and obtain approval from the City of Portland on any temporary partial road closures resulting from construction activities.

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# Summary of Potential Environmental Impacts

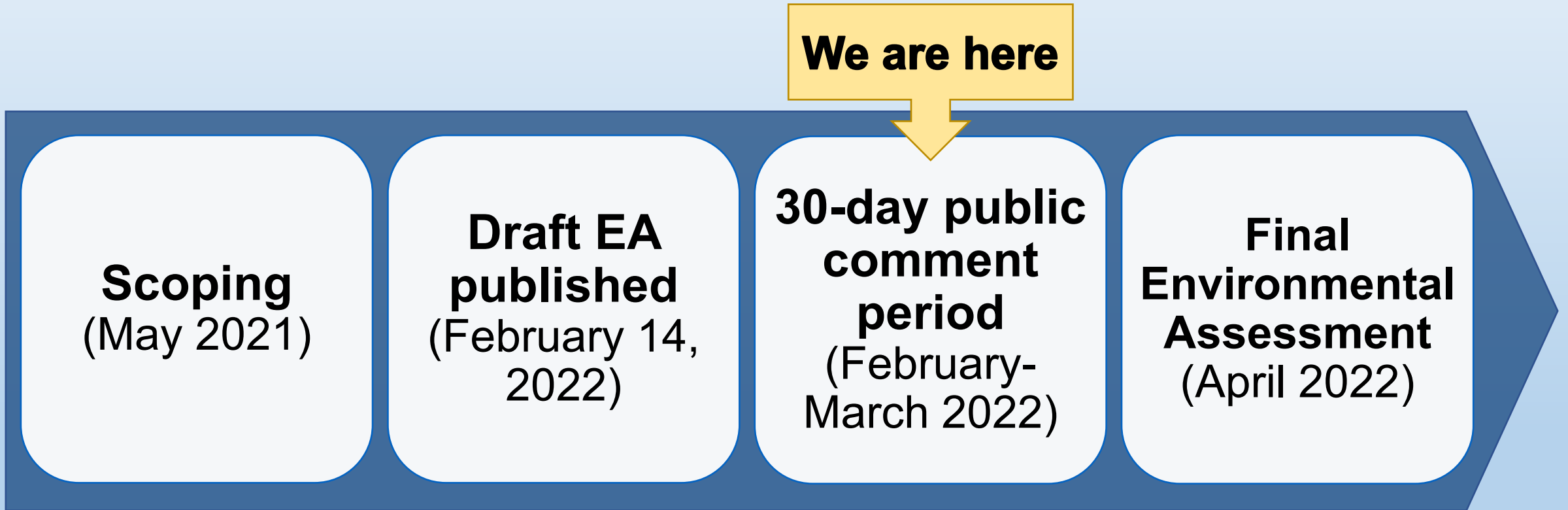
- No significant impacts to any resource areas.
- Minor impacts to existing traffic conditions with the projected increased traffic near the VAMC campus.
  - Implementation of Traffic Management/Circulation and Minimization Plans would alleviate congestion during construction.
- Reasonably foreseeable future actions would not result in the proposed action having significant cumulative impacts.
- Protection measures, best management practices, and compliance with regulatory requirements would further reduce impacts.
- Beneficial impacts include a temporary increase in employment opportunities during construction and enhanced provision of health care to Veterans in the region.

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# NEPA Process and Timeline



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# How to Submit Comments

*Tonight, you can ask questions until 8:00 PM PST using the Chat function of this Zoom meeting!*

- **Draft EA available:**
  - Online at <https://www.cfm.va.gov/environmental/index.asp>
  - Hardcopy at Multnomah County Central Library.
- Comments are due **March 15, 2022**.
  - Email comments to [VACOEnvironment@va.gov](mailto:VACOEnvironment@va.gov)
  - Please use the subject line “Portland VAMC Draft EA”.
- For questions contact Mr. Patrick Read at [Patrick.Read@va.gov](mailto:Patrick.Read@va.gov)

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