

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA  
MEMORANDUM

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FROM: Bo Spurrier  
Engineer II, Engineering Design

DATE: October 30, 1992

TO: J.F. Hayek, Director, Water Works      SUBJECT: Final Environmental Impact Statement for the  
B.J. Lokkesmoe, Director, Operations      Proposed Federal Building - U.S. Courthouse  
M.J. Monahan, Director, Transportation/Special Projects  
S.A. Young, Director, Solid Waste and Recycling  
P.D. Damon, Sewer Design

The attached document is a summary table of adverse impacts related to the proposed Federal Building - U.S. Courthouse. This document is copied from the above referenced Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). If your Division is not aware of the recommendations or conclusion of this document, we recommend that you immediately obtain a copy of the document and determine whether there is an issue that should be addressed. Our comments should be returned by November 12, 1992.

A copy of the Final EIS is available for review in Sewer Design, Engineering Design, Third Floor, City of Lakes Building.

Comments related to the document must be sent to:

Mauren Pudlowski Strasheim  
General Services Administration  
110 South Fourth Street, Room 178  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401  
(612) 348-1450

Call me if you have any question related to the response.



SUMMARY

**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
NEW FEDERAL BUILDING-U.S. COURTHOUSE**

**MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA**

**Responsible Federal Agency:           General Services Administration**

**Responsible Official:                Ms. Maureen Pudlowski Strasheim  
General Services Administration  
Federal Building - U.S. Courthouse  
Room 178  
110 S. Fourth Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55401  
(612) 725-3815**

**I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION**

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) proposes to improve and expand space for the Federal Courts and related agencies in the downtown area of Minneapolis, Minnesota by either converting the existing Federal Building - U.S. Courthouse (FB-CT) to office space and constructing a new Federal Courthouse containing 167,000 occupiable square feet (osf) of space (the "Renovate/Build" Alternative), or constructing a new FB-CT containing 300,000 osf (the "Build" Alternative). Each of these development actions would expand, upgrade and consolidate space available for Federal offices and courts which are currently located in several buildings dispersed within the downtown area. The existing FB-CT is located on the southwest portion of the block bounded by Third Street South, Second Avenue South, Fourth Street South and Marquette Avenue. Under the "Renovate/Build" Alternative the existing FB-CT would be renovated to office space to accommodate Federal agencies associated with the courts while a new Courthouse would be constructed on the site of the surface parking lot north of the existing FB-CT. Under the "Build" Alternative a new FB-CT would be constructed on the block north of City Hall bounded by Third Street South, Fourth Avenue South, Fourth Street South and Third Avenue South. The new FB-CT ("Build" Alternative) would be implemented through a "Design/Build" contract, under which one development team

consisting of a developer, architects, engineers, a general contractor, consultants and subcontractors would be selected to design and construct the facility.

As part of the "Build" Alternative, GSA, the City of Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under which the City and the MCDA would assemble a development site and convey fee simple title to the property to GSA prior to award of the Design/Build contract for the FB-CT.

Renovation of the existing FB-CT for office use and construction of a new Courthouse ("Renovate/Build" Alternative) was recommended in a February 1990 GSA 11(b) Report that assumed Bankruptcy Court operations in leased space in the Towle Building would be relocated to the new Courthouse.

Dialogue between the GSA Planning staff and the U.S. Federal Judiciary has identified a significant need for Court expansion. Three of the four active District Court judges will be eligible for senior status by 1999, necessitating the addition of three senior courtrooms, chambers and adjunct space. Recently the Bankruptcy Court was relocated from the existing FB-CT (due to spacial constraints) to leased space. GSA and the U.S. Federal Judiciary consider this action as an inefficient, temporary arrangement. The existing Court facilities also exhibit a number of deficiencies.

GSA intends to address these problems by renovating the existing FB-CT for office use and constructing a new Courthouse, or by constructing a new FB-CT on a site two blocks to the east of the existing FB-CT.

## II. ALTERNATIVES

GSA examined several alternatives to provide additional space for expanding court-related operations. Alternatives which were initially evaluated and subsequently rejected due to various constraints included:

- **RENOVATE EXISTING BUILDING AND CONTINUE LEASING SPACE**

Certain tenants of the existing FB-CT would be relocated to provide swing space for a complete building renovation that would correct the current deficiencies and meet the expansion requirements of the District Court.

The Bankruptcy Court would remain in its current leased space. Agencies occupying 38,000 osf in the FB-CT would be relocated permanently to leased space. Relocation of non-court agencies would allow dedication of the existing building for use as a permanent Federal Courthouse. The next phase of Courts' expansion would be accommodated by vacating the second floor of the existing FB-CT and adding courtrooms. This alternative was rejected since court-related functions would remain dispersed. Agencies would continue to be located in leased space dispersed from the Courts. This alternative would also fail to correct certain building deficiencies such as the lack of a prisoner elevator, narrow and irregular building corridors, and column supports located in the center of the courtrooms.

- **LEASE 300,000 SQUARE FEET**

Under this alternative, GSA would lease 300,000 osf to meet the current expansion needs of Federal agencies now located in the FB-CT, Towle Building and Bridge Place. Existing leases in the Towle Building and Bridge Place would be maintained. The FB-CT would be vacated with the current tenants, including the Federal District Court, relocated into leased facilities.

Implementation of this alternative would entail vacating a sizable Government-owned facility. It would require leasing space from the private sector to house judicial functions which have been identified as priority occupants for Federally-owned buildings.

This option was not selected for detailed impact evaluation in this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) since the Courts and related activities would remain physically separated. Private sector space would also not be conducive to needs of the Courts due to certain design guidelines and constraints. Considerable modification to leased space would likely be required to accommodate court-related activities.

In this EIS, the following three alternatives were assessed with regard to their environmental, social, physical and economic consequences:

- **"NO-ACTION" ALTERNATIVE**

The "No-Action" alternative, under which a new FB-CT facility would not be constructed and renovation of the existing FB-CT would not occur, entails a continuation of the present operating conditions in Minneapolis, in which a majority of the Federally-occupied space would continue to be leased from the private sector.

GSA projections indicate that 123 additional Federal personnel would be assigned to the study area by 1996. Under the "No-Action" Alternative, Federal agencies would continue to be housed in substandard owned and leased space. Additional leased space would likely be required to accommodate the expected agency growth.

This alternative provides a baseline condition against which other alternatives were compared and evaluated.

- **"BUILD" ALTERNATIVE**

Under this alternative, a new FB-CT containing 461,500 gross square feet (300,000 osf) would be constructed on the block north of City Hall, providing sufficient space to meet the additional requirements of the Judiciary, including the U.S. District Court, the Bankruptcy Court, Probation, Pre-Trial, the Federal Public Defender, and other Federal Executive Agencies including the U.S. Trustees, U.S. Attorney, U.S. Marshal and the U.S. Customs Service. This facility would also include space for 225 vehicle parking spaces (80,400 gross square feet), assigned to judges, law enforcement agents and other Federal personnel, and a separate City garage containing up to 300 below-grade spaces.

GSA, the City, and the Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under which the City and MCDA would assemble a development site consisting of the block bounded by 3rd Street South, 4th Avenue South, 4th Street South and 3rd Avenue South with the exception of the Flour Exchange Building and the adjacent building addition to the west, located at the northeast corner of the block. The City and MCDA will convey fee simple title to the property to GSA prior to award of the Design/Build contract for the FB-CT. MCDA and the City have also agreed to fund construction of an up to 300-space, below-grade garage (City's garage) on the FB-CT development site which would be constructed by GSA but functionally separate from the 225-space Federal garage. GSA will be authorized to sell the existing FB-CT and deposit the proceeds into the Federal Buildings Fund.

The new FB-CT would be connected to City Hall by the existing tunnel that crosses under Fourth Street, and to the City Central Garage and Ramp (located on Fifth Avenue South between Third and Fourth Streets South) by a proposed tunnel beneath Fourth Street South that crosses under Fourth Avenue South.

A "worst-case" conceptual design was developed for analysis purposes (in the absence of an approved preliminary or final design) since it would generate the greatest number and most intensive impacts. This design concept addressed in the EIS does not represent a preliminary or final design for the new FB-CT under the "Build" Alternative.

The "Build" Alternative was selected for detailed evaluation in this EIS since it would provide a sufficient amount of suitable building space for Court and related agency functions. Building security would be enhanced by incorporating security requirements into the final design. Implementation of this alternative would also be cost-effective compared to other alternatives.

- **"RENOVATE/BUILD" ALTERNATIVE**

Under this alternative GSA would construct a new Courthouse consisting of 167,000 osf on the north side of the existing FB-CT, in an area currently occupied by a surface parking lot. The existing FB-CT would in turn, be converted to office space. The new Courthouse would include 80,400 gross square feet of enclosed parking to accommodate 225 vehicles. The new Courthouse would provide expansion space for executive and judicial agencies from the FB-CT. The new Courthouse would accommodate the Bankruptcy Court, which is presently located in the Towle Building.

The existing FB-CT would be renovated to provide Government-owned space for various Federal agencies. The new construction would serve as a permanent courthouse.

The "Renovate/Build" Alternative was selected for study in the EIS since it is the recommended alternative in the February 1990 11(b) Report, and would improve the quality of space in the existing FB-CT, and provide a permanent Federal courthouse.

### III. PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Certain short- and long-term impacts would occur as a result of the implementation of project alternatives. Short-term and long-term impacts would occur as a result of actions associated with site clearance conducted by the City and MCDA. Other impacts would be associated with construction-related activities conducted by GSA. These impacts are described below and compared (by alternative) in Table S-1.

#### A. LONG-TERM IMPACTS

##### 1. Socioeconomics and Land Use

###### a. Socioeconomics

Implementation of the "Build" Alternative would require the relocation of the businesses which currently occupy buildings on the site that would be demolished prior to construction. MCDA has indicated that it would provide relocation assistance for each affected business. One tenant has been relocated and another is presently being assisted by MCDA.

###### b. Land Use and Zoning

- Land Use - Implementation of the "No-Action" and "Renovate/Build" Alternatives would result in potential impact to land use trends since government services would continue to be located outside of the Government Center District established as part of the Metro 2000 Plan. Implementation of these alternatives would represent a lost opportunity to enhance the viability and reinforce the identity of the Government Center District.
- Zoning - Implementation of the "Renovate/Build" Alternative would result in a significant impact on the existing zoning since the total amount of square footage (consisting of the existing FB-CT and new courthouse construction) would exceed the amount permitted as of right under the B4-1 District.

##### 2. Historic Resources

Implementation of the "Build" Alternative will have a potential adverse effect on three historic buildings - the Flour Exchange, the Grain Exchange and City Hall. These three National

**Table S-1  
ADVERSE IMPACTS MATRIX**

TOPICS	"NO-ACTION" ALTERNATIVE	"BUILD" ALTERNATIVE	"RENOVATE/BUILD" ALTERNATIVE
Subsurface and Geological Conditions	X	X	X
Landforms	X	X	X
Vegetation and Wildlife	X	X	X
Natural Hazards	X	X	X
Air Quality	X	X	X
Noise Environment	X	X	X
Natural or Depletable Resources	X	X	X
Hazardous Materials	X	M	M
Land Use	S	X	S
Zoning	X	X	S
Neighborhood Character	M	X	M
Socioeconomics	X	X	X
Community Facilities	X	X	X
Open Space and Recreational Facilities	X	X	M
Commercial Activity	X	M	M
Archaeological Resources	X	M	X
Historic Resources	X	M	X
Water Supply Facilities	X	X	X
Steam and Gas Facilities	X	X	X
Sanitary and Storm Sewer Facilities	X	X	X
Electrical Facilities	X	X	X
Solid Waste Disposal	X	X	X
X = No Impacts M = Significant Impact which can be Mitigated S = Unmitigable Significant Impact			

TOPICS	"NO-ACTION" ALTERNATIVE	"BUILD" ALTERNATIVE	"RENOVATE/BUILD" ALTERNATIVE
Telephone Services	X	X	X
Traffic Operations	X	X	X
Parking	X	X	X
Pedestrian Flow Patterns	X	X	X
Public Transit Operations	X	X	X
Solar Access	X	M	X
Urban Character	X	X	X
Aesthetic Visual Resources	X	X	X
Court Operations	S	X	X

X = No Impacts  
 M = Significant Impact which can be Mitigated  
 S = Unmitigable Significant Impact

Register buildings within the area of potential effect were listed because of their architectural significance.

### 3. Transportation

No impacts to operational conditions or Level of Service (LOS) would be expected with the implementation of either the "Build" or "Renovate/Build" Alternative. Levels of Service under the "Build" and "Renovate/Build" Alternatives would not decrease from levels under the future "No-Action" condition except at the intersection of Fourth Street South and Fourth Avenue South, where a decrease in LOS from "B" to "C" would occur under the "Build" Alternative. The intersection of Washington Avenue and Third Avenue South would operate at LOS "F" under the "Build" and "Renovate/Build" Alternatives. However, LOS "F" would also be experienced under the future "No-Action" condition.

## **B. SHORT-TERM IMPACTS**

### 1. Physical Characteristics

- Air Quality

During the period of site demolition and clearance conducted by the City and MCDA, and excavation work conducted by GSA (particularly at the "Build" Alternative site), minor short-term air quality impacts would be anticipated. These localized impacts would be expected to occur primarily on-site and along construction access routes due to pollutant emissions associated with the following:

- Excavation and soil removal
- Consumption of fuel by construction vehicles and equipment
- Additional traffic and detouring caused by construction activity.

Demolition of existing buildings under the "Build" Alternative by the City and MCDA and the upgrading/conversion of the existing FB-CT by GSA under the "Renovate/Build" Alternative, may result in the generation of asbestos emissions. A program involving the investigation and removal of asbestos from the existing FB-CT would be conducted by GSA prior to project implementation.

- **Noise and Vibration**

- **Construction Noise** - Noise related to construction would be expected to be most noticeable during site clearance (by the City and MCDA) and excavation (by GSA particularly for the "Build" Alternative) when noise levels near the site would be higher than during other stages. These conditions would be due, in part, to the operation of pieces of equipment such as ram-hoes and jack hammers which produce relatively high noise levels.
- **Vibration** - Since vibration from construction activities conducted by GSA would be within accepted levels, no impacts would be expected on adjacent buildings such as the historic Flour and Grain Exchanges.

- **Hazardous Materials** - As part of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between GSA, the City of Minneapolis and MCDA (for the "Build" Alternative site), the City and MCDA are obligated to deliver an environmentally clean site to GSA. Therefore, several of the following short-term impacts would be associated with construction work conducted by the City and MCDA under the "Build" Alternative.

- **Asbestos** - Minor short-term asbestos-related impacts would be expected under the "Build" and "Renovate/Build" Alternatives.
- **Contaminated Soils** - Potentially contaminated soils in the vicinity of the underground storage tanks located on the "Build" Alternative and "Renovate/Build" Alternative sites would require separation from the general excavated soils and subsequent disposal in a secure and approved landfill.
- **Underground Storage Tanks** - Excavation on the "Build" Alternative site would require the removal of at least five underground storage tanks (UST's). Excavation on the "Renovate/Build" Alternative site would require the removal of at least three UST's.
- **Above Ground Environmental Hazards** - Several existing structures on the "Build" Alternative site contain above ground hazards such as drums, tanks, and other containers which would require removal and disposal as per applicable guidelines.

## 2. Socioeconomics/Land Use

- Land Use - Short-term impacts on existing land use would likely occur on the existing FB-CT site and the "Build" Alternative site during the early stages of construction by GSA.
- Socioeconomics - Short-term increases in construction-related employment would be expected under the "Build" and "Renovate/Build" Alternatives.

## 3. Historic and Cultural Elements

- Archaeological Resources - During the construction phase for the "Build" Alternative certain activities such as excavation could potentially affect the archaeological resources which may be contained on the site. Mitigation measures would be required to remove such resources from the site prior to construction. As part of the MOU between the City, MCDA and GSA, the City and MCDA would be responsible for satisfying City and State historical guidelines. The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between GSA, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Advisory Council (prepared in compliance with Section 106 guidelines) will recommend that the City/MCDA coordinate with the SHPO prior to site demolition.
- Historic Resources - Construction activities conducted by the City, MCDA and GSA under the "Build" Alternative could potentially impact adjacent historic resources such as the Flour Exchange, Grain Exchange and City Hall. Certain mitigation measures (to be identified in the MOA) would be required during site clearance, excavation and construction to reduce adverse impacts on proximate historic buildings. The MOA will also recommend that the City/MCDA coordinate with the SHPO prior to site demolition.

## 4. Utilities

Short-term construction-related impacts on certain utilities (associated with work provided by the City/MCDA and GSA) would be expected under the "Build" Alternative, particularly for facilities which may traverse the site and those beneath Fourth Avenue South if an underground pedestrian tunnel is constructed (by the City/MCDA). However, no short-term impacts would be expected for facilities which accommodate other proximate uses such as the Flour Exchange.

Solid waste materials would be generated during the site clearances and construction phases under either the "Build" or "Renovate/Build" Alternatives. Such wastes would include concrete, metal, wood, asphalt and packaging from new construction materials.

**5. Transportation and Parking**

Short-term disruption of vehicular and pedestrian traffic would occur during the site clearance and construction phases under both the "Build" and "Renovate/Build" Alternatives. Construction workers would arrive at and leave the site during periods outside the peak traffic hours. Some disruption to pedestrian flow may occur if sidewalks are closed for safety purposes. These impacts are not expected to be significant due to their short-term nature.