



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT



VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System
Highland Drive Division Facility

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I. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

A. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Department of Veterans Affairs Pittsburgh Healthcare System (VAPHS) Highland Drive Division has ceased operations as a veterans' medical care facility at the Highland Drive Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC). The VAPHS is in the process of permanently closing the facility. Therefore, the VAPHS has concluded that there is a need to evaluate the environmental impacts associated with proposed future actions for the Highland Drive facility, with the goal of advancing for implementation the most feasible, cost-effective, and environmentally sensitive action following the closure of the facility.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Highland Drive campus is located in western Pennsylvania approximately seven miles northeast of downtown Pittsburgh in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania (Figure 1). The facility is situated in the Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar neighborhood of the City of Pittsburgh. The primary access to the facility is from Washington Boulevard (PA 8) to Highland Drive. Washington Boulevard (PA 8) intersects with Allegheny River Boulevard (PA 130) just south of the Highland Park Bridge. The Highland Park Bridge spans the Allegheny River and provides a connection between two major north/south roadways that parallel the Allegheny River: the Allegheny Valley Expressway (PA 28) on the north and Allegheny River Boulevard (PA 130) on the south (Figure 2).

President Harry S. Truman authorized the construction of a neuropsychiatric hospital at the site of the existing Highland Drive facility in the late 1940s (VAPHS 2012). Construction of the hospital began in the spring of 1950. Extensive grading was performed to construct the hospital, which resulted in the removal of large quantities of overburden and coal from the site. The cost to construct the hospital was calculated to be \$19,447,176.00. Originally, the facility included five patient treatment buildings, roads, parking lots, sidewalks, and a 50,000 gallon water tower. Dedication of the Leech Farm Road Hospital occurred on November 29, 1953. Beginning in 1954 research studies on schizophrenia and neurological disorders were conducted at the facility. In 1975 the name of the hospital was changed from Leech Farm Road to Highland Drive. Although the name was changed in 1975, over the years the Highland Drive facility has served as a stand-alone VAMC providing both medical and surgical services to veterans.

In 1996, the Highland Drive VAMC consolidated with two other VA facilities in the Pittsburgh area, the H. John Heinz III Progressive Care Center and University Drive VAMC, to become the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (Figure 3). The VAPHS serves veterans throughout the tri-state area of western Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia. The H.J. Heinz campus is located northeast of Pittsburgh in O'Hara Township, Pennsylvania. Classified as a Geriatric Center of Excellence, the 262 bed community living center has transitional care beds and offers outpatient services including audiology and speech pathology, dental services, primary care, and a pharmacy (VAPHS 2012). Recently completed construction projects at the H.J. Heinz, III campus include the Ambulatory Care Center, Administration Building, and the Veterans Recovery Center. The University Drive Division of the VAPHS is located in the Pittsburgh neighborhood of Oakland adjacent to the University of Pittsburgh's Petersen Events Center. The facility has 146 medicine, surgery, neurology, and critical care beds. In addition, the facility receives the most outpatient visits of all VAPHS facilities. Recent construction projects at the University Drive campus include a \$75.8 million Consolidation Building that will provide outpatient services and 78 secure, private psychiatric beds; a \$32 million Research Office Building; and the Fisher House, which provides accommodations for veterans' family members to stay while the veteran is hospitalized (VAPHS 2012).

B. PROJECT SETTING

The Highland Drive VAMC is a campus-style facility that is comprised of 24 buildings and structures located on an approximately 168 acre lot (Figure 4). The campus is situated on a plateau that is located between the residential neighborhood of Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar to the south and the Allegheny River valley to the north. Land use in the community surrounding the Highland Drive facility is predominantly residential with a limited amount of commercial properties.

C. PURPOSE AND NEED

The VA operates one of the largest health care systems in the county. Although it has numerous buildings and properties to support this effort, many of the facilities were constructed more than 50 years ago and are not sufficient to serve the current needs of providing modern, cost-effective health care. The VA has increased its emphasis on providing outpatient care rather than inpatient hospital-based care. From 1995 to 2002, the VA changed from an inpatient model of care characterized by a limited number of specialized facilities, to an outpatient model with more than 1,300 access sites in veterans' communities across the United States (Veterans Affairs Department 2003). The reorganization divided the VA system into 21 Veterans Integrated Service Networks commonly referred to as "VISNs." The VAPHS is included in the VISN 4 Network.

At the beginning of the last decade, the VA began a process known as the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES). This process was to provide a comprehensive, long-range assessment of the VA's health care system's capital asset requirements with the objective being to enhance outpatient and inpatient care through appropriate sizing, upgrading, and locating of VA facilities (United States Government Accountability Office 2007). CARES was in response to a 1999 Government Accountability Office assessment and conclusion that better management of the VA's aged capital assets could result in enhanced health care services for veterans (U.S. Medicine 2009). The CARES process provided the VA with a blueprint for capital planning of the VA's health care system and included such efforts as the adaptation of a model by the VA that would estimate the demand for health care services and the evaluation of current capacity within the VA system to meet the demand (United States Government Accountability Office 2007). In addition to the model, the VA performed numerous studies during the CARES process including facility condition assessments of the VA's real property holdings.

Several milestones occurred during the CARES process that included the development of a Draft National CARES Plan (DNCP) prepared by the VA, the formation of a CARES Commission whose members were appointed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and tasked with making recommendations to the Secretary based on the DNCP, and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs CARES decisions that were based on a review of the CARES Plan and Commissions recommendations.

During the CARES process two significant capital realignment issues were identified for the VAPHS. These two issues involved the Highland Drive facility and included the following: the facility had some buildings that were in poor condition and not designed for modern health care, and the facility had a considerable amount of vacant space (United States Government Accountability Office 2007). To address these issues, several capital asset alignment alternatives were considered during the CARES process and included: status quo; consolidate the three Pittsburgh area facilities into two that could include closure of the Highland Drive facility; renovate/expand the facility; or lease the space at the Highland Drive facility. The recommendation included in the DNCP for the VAPHS was that current services at Highland Drive would be transferred to the University Drive and H.J. Heinz, III campuses, with new facilities for psychiatry, mental health, and related research and administrative services constructed at these sites (Veterans Affairs Department 2003). The VA would no longer provide health care services at the Highland Drive Division facility.

The decision was made by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop a master plan to guide the closure of the Highland Drive facility and integrate the three VAPHS facilities into two facilities (Veterans Affairs Department 2003). The *VA Pittsburgh Strategic Master Facility Plan 2008-2017* incorporates the VAPHS consolidation from three to two campuses into a strategic plan (PDA Health Planning Management Services and IKM 2008).

With the construction of several new buildings at the H.J. Heinz, III and University Drive facilities the services and staff associated with the Highland Drive facility have been transferred and integrated into the remaining facilities and the Highland Drive facility has been closed. As a result, the VAPHS has concluded that there is a need to evaluate the environmental impacts associated with proposed future actions for the Highland Drive facility, with the goal of advancing for implementation the most feasible, cost-effective, and environmentally sensitive action following the closure of the facility.

II. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

A. ALTERNATIVES

In response to the national initiative of the VA to realign resources in order to enhance health care for the nation's veterans, the VAPHS has an ongoing consolidation program to relocate and realign healthcare services from a three-division system to a two-division system. The program has included major construction projects at the University Drive and H.J. Heinz, III facilities in an effort to provide improved health care delivery at these locations. With expanded services and capacity at these locations the VAPHS has been realigning services from the Highland Drive facility to University Drive and H.J. Heinz, III campuses. As a result of the realignment, the Highland Drive facility no longer provides medical services to veterans.

The VAPHS has initiated this Environmental Assessment (EA) to study and determine the environmental consequences of alternative actions that address future actions associated with the closure of the Highland Drive Division facility. These actions include: (1) Proposed Action - demolish the Highland Drive facility buildings, remediate the site of any hazardous materials and substances, and restore the site through re-grading and reseeded; (2) No Action - buildings and infrastructure at the Highland Drive facility would remain intact and maintained by the VAPHS.

1. No Action

Environmental regulations, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), require that the VAPHS study the resulting impact associated with taking No Action. The No Action Alternative is utilized for comparison of other alternatives during the EA process. The No Action Alternative for the project would involve vacating the buildings of all remaining staff and administrative services. Following this activity, an inventory of remaining items, including any hazardous materials present at the facility, would be performed. Utility services would be discontinued with the exception of those services required for maintenance of the buildings. The vacant buildings and property would be maintained to deter any further deterioration. The site would continue to be secured by maintaining the existing perimeter fence and patrols by VA Police. Visitors to the site would be required to obtain authorization prior to entering the property.

2. Proposed Action

Demolition Alternative 1 – Building Implosion

This action would include the use of explosive charges (building implosion) to demolish the buildings on the Highland Drive Division property.

Implosion techniques are not required for demolition due to the nature and construction of the buildings on the site. Implosion would require additional permitting and involvement of additional agencies (i.e., police and fire departments, ambulance services), vibration monitoring, public awareness, and numerous meetings with various city and county agencies. Demolition by implosion would require the services of a demolition expert to oversee and review the implosion contracts. No time savings would be obtained by demolishing the structures by implosion. Structures require pre-implosion preparation. In addition, the actual setting of the explosive devices would require additional time and costs. Demolition by implosion would require the same amount of time as other means of building demolition to separate the recyclable materials from the construction debris.

For these reasons, the demolition of buildings at the Highland Drive facility by use of building implosion is not considered a reasonable and cost-effective alternative and was not advanced for further consideration in the EA.

Demolition Alternative 2 – Mechanical Demolition

This action would include the conventional (mechanical) demolition and complete removal of all existing buildings, supporting structures, utilities, driveways, parking lots, sidewalks, retaining walls, signage, and miscellaneous site structures.

Mechanical demolition would involve the use of heavy construction equipment to dismantle and demolish building structures. The removal of buildings would include the entire structure including basement areas, slabs on grade, utility tunnels, footings and foundations. In addition, demolition activities would include removal of concrete, bituminous paving, sub-base material, and any curbing associated with removal of secondary roads, driveways, parking lots, and sidewalks. The perimeter chain link security fence would remain. The main access road would remain. Hazardous materials would be removed from the buildings prior to demolition and disposed of following all proper local, state, and federal regulatory procedures for disposal. All utilities would be removed from the site. Excavations left by building removal would be backfilled followed by final grading and seeding. The site would continue to be secured by maintaining the existing perimeter fence and patrols by VA security staff. Visitors to the site would be required to obtain authorization prior to entering the property.

This alternative was advanced for further consideration in the EA and is herein referred to the Proposed Action.

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A. Socioeconomic Setting/Resources

1. Land Use

Affected Environment

The Highland Drive facility is located in the Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar neighborhood of the City of Pittsburgh. The neighborhood is located on the eastern edge of the city, adjacent to the neighboring municipality of Penn Hills. It is approximately seven miles to downtown Pittsburgh from most points in the neighborhood. The principal collector streets within the neighborhood are Lincoln Avenue, Lemington Avenue, and Highland Drive.

The Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar neighborhood is defined by the Pittsburgh City Planning Department (PCPD) as the area between the bluff rising from the Allegheny River on the north, Washington Boulevard on the west, Lincoln Avenue, Apple Street, and Stranham Street to the city limits on the south, and due north from the intersection of Oberlin Street and Stranham Street (the city limits) to Allegheny River Boulevard (PCPD 2003). Based on the U.S. Census, 4,343 people live in the neighborhood (United State Census Bureau [USCB] 2010a). The official boundary of the neighborhood also includes a small section of heavily developed land across the Allegheny River. That portion of the neighborhood is not being analyzed in the EA because it is separated from the neighborhood proper by distance and character. The study area is shown on Figure 5.

The neighborhood is primarily residential in nature with single family homes, residential duplexes, houses converted into multi-rental units, and apartment buildings all found there. In total, there are over 2,100 residential units in the neighborhood. Less than half of the residential units are owner-occupied (44.5 percent) and almost 20 percent are vacant (USCB 2010a). In addition to the residential properties, there are a small number of businesses, churches, and community facilities scattered throughout the neighborhood. Many of the businesses, however, are closed. Some of the churches are also closed and have been converted to other uses. Some homes have been demolished over the years and their lots remain vacant. Because of the steep hillsides found throughout the neighborhood, there is a considerable amount of undeveloped green space and woodlands in the area.

The Highland Drive facility is located on approximately 168 acres at the northern end of the neighborhood. The facility is separated from the rest of the Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar neighborhood by steep topography and wooded land cover. There are two entrances to the facility. The main entrance is on Highland Drive and can be accessed from both Highland Drive and Wiltsie Street. A secondary entrance is located on Campania Avenue. Highland Drive provides direct access to Washington Boulevard, a main north-south arterial for the City of Pittsburgh. Campania Avenue is a relatively short and steep street that connects the facility property to Lincoln Avenue. Wiltsie Street also connects with Lincoln Avenue. Most traffic visiting the facility arrives *via* Highland Drive with no need to travel through the residential areas of the neighborhood. As a result, the facility is both geographically and functionally isolated from the rest of the neighborhood. Several other public facilities are located adjacent to the Highland Drive facility, including an Army Reserve Center, a state-operated veterans nursing home, the Shuman Center (a residential youth facility), and a Pittsburgh Job Corps Center.

The Highland Drive campus includes buildings, roads, parking lots, recreation facilities, open space, and ancillary equipment. Although the main patient care buildings are in overall good condition, some areas are functionally antiquated. A complete list of the buildings and structures located at the facility is shown on Figure 4 and listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Buildings/Structures Located at the Facility

No.	Function	No.	Function
1	Patient Care/Administration	17	Residence Garage
2	Patient Care	18	Electrical Sub-Station
4	Patient Care/Administration	18A	Switchgear
5	Patient Care/Domiciliary	19	Flagpole
6	Transitional Care Center	21	Water Tower
7	Nutrition and Food Service	22	Bottle Gas Storage
8	Recreation	23	Greenhouse
9	Gymnasium/Pool	24	Outdoor Toilet
10	Chapel	25	A/C Cooling Tower
11	Female Veteran's Center	26	Exterior Chapel Sign
12A	Administrative Offices	27	Entrance Sign - Campania Street
12B	Staff Residence	28	Main Entrance Sign - Highland Drive
13	Research	29	8" Water Supply Meter Pit
14	Administrative Offices	30	12" Water Supply Meter Pit
15	Engineering	32	Laundry
16	Supply Warehouse	33	Incinerator/ Storage

Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, the facility would be closed and the VA would maintain the property in a mothballed status. Although some traffic would still need to access the facility, it would be limited to occasional visits by maintenance crews and the VA Police. There would be no effect on land use.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, some maintenance and security functions associated with the property would remain (similar to the No Action Alternative). Land use would change from institutional to vacant open space.

Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

2. Aesthetics/Visual Resources

Affected Environment

The study area is located along the Allegheny River valley within the dissected Appalachian Plateau of western Pennsylvania, specifically within the Pittsburgh Low Plateau Section (Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources [DCNR] 2000). The Pittsburgh Low Plateau is characterized by smooth to irregular, undulating surface and valleys. The land on which the facility sits overlooks the Allegheny River valley and is characterized by moderate to steep slopes and wooded hillsides. Land elevation in the area ranges from approximately 720 feet at the Allegheny River to 1,140 feet on the VA property.

A historic structures survey and Determination of Eligibility (DOE) report was prepared for standing structural resources 50 years and older located within the campus. A total of 18 individual resources 50 years or older were identified and documented as a historic district. The district was recommended eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) (Tetra Tech 2012). All of the buildings on the campus are well kept and offer pleasing aesthetics for patients, employees, and visitors alike.

The existing visual character of the facility offers views of downtown Pittsburgh, Oakland (especially the Cathedral of Learning on the University of Pittsburgh campus), and the hilltops surrounding the Allegheny River. The best view of downtown is from the vicinity of the Campania Avenue entrance and the best view of Oakland is from the main entrance. A distant view of a power plant in Cheswick is also possible from the bottom of the facility's water tower, but most views of the surrounding hilltops downstream and upstream of the Allegheny River are non-descript and difficult to interpret. Thick vegetation currently blocks any possible view of the Allegheny River or the valley floor. Views of the facility from the surrounding area are limited, but the upper floors of Building 1, the main administrative and patient center, can be seen from the opposite side of the Allegheny River, especially from the Allegheny Valley Expressway and the Waterworks Mall. The southern end of the campus is also visible from Campania Avenue. It is impossible to see the facility from either Washington Boulevard or Allegheny River Boulevard. Generally, views of the facility from most vantage points around the area would be of the vegetated edges of the property.

Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, the views of the facility and from the facility would remain as is. Some views could become obstructed if tree limbs and heavy brush are not trimmed periodically. Adverse effects to the aesthetics of existing buildings could occur over time if the abandoned buildings and structures begin to deteriorate.

Proposed Action

By demolishing the facility, the Proposed Action would remove buildings and eliminate a built environment. The view of various styles of architecture would be replaced by a view of an open area. The existing view of Building 1 would also be eliminated from across the Allegheny River.

The Proposed Action would also result in temporary, short-term visual effects from construction activities. Demolition activities would result in temporary visual effects from debris being stockpiled and removed from the site. These activities would not be visible outside of the facility perimeter except for the increased vehicle presence. Construction barriers and silt fencing would also be erected temporarily. Construction vehicles would use Highland Drive and Washington Boulevard as access routes to off-site construction disposal areas.

Mitigation

All disturbed areas will be re-vegetated utilizing a native seed mixture and landscaped upon completion of construction. Construction vehicles should not utilize Campania Avenue or Wiltsie Street for access to the Highland Drive facility. Construction vehicles should also use tire washes at the site entrances to minimize mud on the surrounding public roads.

3. Community Services

Affected Environment

Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar is a Pittsburgh neighborhood bordered by Highland Park and Larimer to the west, Homewood to the south, and Penn Hills to the east. The City operates under a mayor-council form of government, with the mayor and council being popularly elected to four-year terms. Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar is in City Council District 9.

The study area is serviced by the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Zone 5 police station, which is located directly across Washington Boulevard from Highland Drive. In addition, the VA provides police protection at the Highland Drive facility. The Pittsburgh Bureau of Fire Station 15 is located on Lemington Avenue and responds to emergency situations in the study area. Across the Allegheny River, along Freeport Road, is the closest medical facility to the study area, UPMC St. Margaret Hospital. Ambulance service is provided by Pittsburgh EMS.

Several other governmental facilities are located near the VA Highland Drive facility. The Southwestern Veterans Center, a state run facility, is located along Highland Drive to the southwest. The center serves approximately 240 veterans and their spouses with the full range of nursing home care (Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs 2012). The United States Army Reserve Center – Leech Farm Center is located to the west of the VA and houses the 336th Military Police. Another federal facility, the Pittsburgh Job Corps Center, is located on Highland Drive opposite from the Army Reserve Center. The Job Corps provides career and academic training to students ages 16-24 in a residential setting. The Shuman Juvenile Detention Center, an Allegheny County facility, is also located to the west of the VA but it is buffered by woods.

Neighborhood children attend the Lincoln Technology Academy (grades K-5), Faison (grades K-5), and Westinghouse (grades 6-12) Pittsburgh Public Schools, none of which is located within the study area. The closest public library to the study area is the Homewood branch of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. The East Liberty Post Office provides mail service to Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar.

Two public parks are located within the neighborhood: Chadwick Playground and Paulson Playground. Bounded by Mingo and Oberline streets, Chadwick Playground provides a basketball court, playground, and a ball field. Paulson Playground is located on Paulson Avenue and consists of a playground, a ball field, and a basketball court. In addition, Paulson Community Recreation Center, also on Paulson Avenue, offers various indoor recreation activities to the community. The Bud Harris Cycling Track is located just outside of the study area along Washington Boulevard in Highland Park.

The study area community service locations can be found on Figure 5.

Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, the facility would be closed and mothballed. All remaining functions would be transferred to the other two VA facilities in the Pittsburgh area. Eligible veterans would not receive a reduction in quality of care or incur higher costs of care. Since the facility only provided health care services to local veterans, other residents of Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar would not be adversely affected. The VA provides police protection for the Highland Drive facility and would continue to do so. No community services would be adversely or beneficially affected under the No Action Alternative.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, the facility would be closed and the buildings demolished. All remaining functions would be transferred to the other two VA facilities in the Pittsburgh area. Eligible veterans would not receive a reduction in quality of care or incur higher costs of care. Since the facility only provided health care services to local veterans, other residents of Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar would not be adversely affected.

Temporary impacts could include the necessity for emergency service providers to respond to demolition-related accidents or accidental hazardous waste spills. However, responses to these accidents would be within the capacity of the city’s emergency management system and would not result in an adverse effect to the community. No other community services would be adversely or beneficially affected under the Proposed Action. As a result, there would be no adverse effects anticipated under the Proposed Action.

Mitigation

During demolition, proper coordination should be undertaken with the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Zone 5, Pittsburgh Bureau of Fire Station 15, and Pittsburgh EMS.

4. Local Employment and Economics

Affected Environment

The facility is located within the City of Pittsburgh, the largest municipality in Allegheny County. Pittsburgh is considered the social, political, and economic center of western Pennsylvania. Long recognized as a manufacturing center, Pittsburgh has transitioned to a service-based economy over the past several decades (Allegheny County Department of Economic Development 2008). Today, only about 4.9 percent of employed residents of Pittsburgh work in manufacturing, but 19.8 percent are employed in service-related industries (USCB 2010b).

Approximately 161,000 people are in the labor force within the City of Pittsburgh, about 13.3 percent of the regional labor force and about 25.0 percent of the county labor force (USCB 2010b). Table 2 provides a comparison of employment for the City, Allegheny County, and the metropolitan area. The Pittsburgh metropolitan area includes Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Washington, and Westmoreland counties.

**TABLE 2
Comparison of Regional Employment**

Factor	Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area	Allegheny County	City of Pittsburgh
Labor Force	1,209,600	644,000	161,191
Unemployment Rate	8.7%	8.3%	11.2%
Total Employed	1,102,914	589,876	143,038
Type of Occupation			
Management, Business, Science, and Arts	411,380	246,412	59,431
Service	197,603	103,112	31,887
Sales and Office	275,676	151,156	33,838
Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance	88,066	37,045	7,036
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving	130,189	52,151	10,846

TABLE 2 (Continued)
Comparison of Regional Employment

Factor	Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area	Allegheny County	City of Pittsburgh
Type of Industry			
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining	9,129	2,044	101
Construction	62,889	29,394	4,457
Manufacturing	108,625	45,760	7,858
Wholesale Trade	34,606	16,253	3,070
Retail Trade	131,169	66,817	14,948
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	63,030	27,863	5,803
Information	21,070	13,125	2,579
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing	78,406	51,590	12,887
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management Services	108,999	64,534	13,590
Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance	296,538	170,789	49,044
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food services	99,323	55,039	16,105
Other Services	52,007	27,198	6,099
Public Administration	37,123	19,470	6,497

Source: USCB 2010b

Unemployment in Pittsburgh stood at 11.2 percent in the year 2010, higher than both the regional unemployment rate of 8.7 percent and the county rate of 8.3 percent (USCB 2010c). More recent unemployment figures for the region indicate that the unemployment rate has dropped in both the region and Allegheny County. Unemployment in both the region and Allegheny County now stands at 6.7 percent (United States Department of Labor 2012). While updated information is not available for the city yet, there is no reason to suspect that it has not decreased, too.

Median household income in the region is \$46,700. Average household income is considerably higher at \$63,485. In Allegheny County, median household income is about the same (\$47,505) as for the region while average household income is slightly higher at \$67,707. In the city, average household income and median household income are significantly less at \$36,196 and \$55,057, respectively (USCB 2010c). Income statistics are not available at the neighborhood level. Median household income identifies the halfway point between all household income by dividing households into two equal segments with the first half of households earning less than the median household income and the other half earning more. Median income is not affected by unusually high or low values.

As a federal facility, no local, county, or state property taxes are generated at the VA Highland Drive location. Employees at the facility are individually responsible, however, for an annual occupation tax known as the Local Services Tax. The tax is collected by the City of Pittsburgh on individuals for the privilege of engaging in an occupation within city limits. The current tax rate is \$52 per year. Approximately \$13 million is generated citywide through this tax.

Environmental Consequences

No Action

No employees will be furloughed from employment. When the Highland Drive facility is permanently closed the remaining employees will be transferred to one of the other two VA facilities depending on their job and the needs of the other facilities. There would be no effect on overall employment rates, incomes in the region, the county, or the city as a result of mothballing the facility.

There would be some revenue loss to the City of Pittsburgh as a result of losing the annual Local Service Tax for the facility's employees. Those employees re-assigned to the University Drive VAMC would continue to pay the Local Service Tax to the City of Pittsburgh because their jobs would be physically located within city limits. Those employees re-assigned to the John Heinz III Progressive Care Center, however, would no longer pay the tax to the City of Pittsburgh because those jobs are physically located in O'Hara Township. The loss would be negligible, however, when compared to the amount of Local Service Tax collected citywide.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, the buildings would be demolished. All functions and employees would be transferred to the other two VA facilities in the Pittsburgh area. Because employees of the facility come from various areas of the region, there would be no effect on overall employment rates or incomes in the region, the county, or the city. There would be a minimal revenue loss to the City of Pittsburgh as a result of losing the annual Local Service Tax for those employees who are re-assigned to the H. John Heinz III Progressive Care Center in O'Hara Township. The loss would be negligible, however, when compared to the amount of Local Service Tax collected citywide.

There would be a small temporary benefit to the area as a result of the Proposed Action. A small number of construction jobs could be created as a result of demolishing the facility. The salaries and wages paid these employees could contribute to the local economy for a short term.

Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

5. Transportation

Affected Environment

As noted earlier, there are two entrances to the facility. The main entrance is on Highland Drive and a secondary entrance is on Campania Avenue. Highland Drive provides direct access to Washington Boulevard and Campania Avenue connects the facility property to Lincoln Avenue. Most traffic visiting the facility arrives via Highland Drive. Highland Drive also serves the other nearby community facilities.

Washington Boulevard is designated as PA 8 and Allegheny River Boulevard is designated as PA 130. The most recent traffic counts by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) on the area roadways show Washington Boulevard with 11,929 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT), Allegheny River Boulevard with 20,213 AADT, Lincoln Avenue with 5,758 AADT, and Highland Drive/Lemington Avenue with 2,813 AADT (PennDOT 2012).

Bus service in the area is provided by the Port Authority of Allegheny County. The Port Authority's Route 74 (Homewood-Squirrel Hill) provides direct service to the facility. Route 74 operates six days a week, from 6:00 AM to 11:30 PM, Monday through Friday and from 8:00 AM to 11:30 PM on Saturday. Bus service runs Monday through Friday approximately every 40 minutes. On Saturday, buses operate approximately every 45 minutes. Port Authority routes 82 (Lincoln) and P17 (Lincoln Flyer) provide additional service to the Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar neighborhood along Lincoln Avenue, but neither of these routes serves the VA facility directly.

There are five bus stops located within the facility proper, in front of Buildings 1, 2, 6, 7, and 8. Passenger shelters are located in front of Buildings 6 and 7. Another shelter is located just off the facility property on Highland Drive.

Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be a decrease in traffic on the roads serving the facility, but compared to overall traffic volumes, the decrease would be negligible. The Port Authority of Allegheny County would no longer serve the facility, but bus service to the adjacent neighborhood and nearby community facilities would continue.

Proposed Action

With demolition of the facility under the Proposed Action, there would be a similar decrease in traffic on the roads serving the facility. Once again, compared to overall traffic volumes, the decrease would be negligible. With demolition of the facility, there would also be no need for the Port Authority of Allegheny County to provide bus service to the facility. Nonetheless, bus service to the adjacent neighborhood and nearby community facilities would continue.

The Proposed Action would also have minimal temporary and short-term adverse effects from construction activities. There would be a slight increase in traffic during demolition activities, from construction workers arriving at the site, the movement of equipment to and from the site, and trucks carrying debris away from the area. There would also be a slight increase in traffic at both the University Drive and H.J. Heinz, III campuses as result of receiving patients, employees, and visitors from the Highland Drive campus.

Mitigation

A transportation plan for the removal of construction debris should be developed and copies provided to PennDOT District 11-0 and the City of Pittsburgh Department of Public Works. Coordination with these agencies should occur while construction schedules are being developed. The nearby community facilities should also be contacted.

The Port Authority of Allegheny County should be notified about the pending demolition of the facility. This will allow the transit agency adequate time to adjust its bus schedules in the area and make any needed changes. Other existing bus routes already serve the other two VA facilities in the area.

6. Environmental Justice

Affected Environment

Executive Order 12898 of February 11, 1994, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations*, requires that the proposed project be assessed to determine whether or not it will have a disproportionately high impact on minority or low-income populations within the area (Office of the President of the United States of America 1994). There are three fundamental principles at the core of environmental justice:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in, the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

The Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar neighborhood is comprised of U.S. Census Tract 1203/Block Groups 1 and 2, Census Tract 5619/Block Groups 1 and 2, and Census Tract 9818/Block Group 1. As noted earlier, the “official” boundary for administrative purposes includes a small tract of land across the Allegheny River but that portion of the neighborhood is not being addressed here. The neighborhood, including the relevant block groups, is shown in Figure 6.

The population of the neighborhood is 4,343. The neighborhood is predominately African American, with 3,855 African American residents, or 88.8 percent. In Pittsburgh as a whole, 26.1 percent of the population is African American. In all of Allegheny County, 13.2 percent of the population is African American. Other minorities account for 3.0 percent of the neighborhood while in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, they account for 7.9 percent and 5.2 percent, respectively. Information on population and minority composition is provided in Table 3.

**TABLE 3
Population and Minority Composition**

Population	Allegheny County		City of Pittsburgh		Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar	
Total	1,223,348	--	305,704	--	4,343	--
White	997,295	81.6%	201,766	66.0%	356	8.2%
African American	161,861	13.2%	79,710	26.1%	3,855	88.8%
Other Minority	64,192	5.2%	24,228	7.9%	132	3.0%

Source: USCB 2010a

Block group statistics for income and poverty are not readily available from the 2010 U.S. Census, but statistics at the census tract level are. In order to determine the incidence of poverty for the neighborhood, the percentages of individuals in each census tract that have incomes below the poverty level were applied to the block groups. Although this method could inflate the overall incidence of poverty in the neighborhood if block groups were unaccounted for, the five block groups that make up the Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar neighborhood make up U.S. Census Tracts 1203, 5619, and 9818 in total. Therefore, this method allows for an accurate comparison of the neighborhood to the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County.

Within Pittsburgh, approximately 20.6 percent of the population has incomes below the poverty level. In Allegheny County, approximately 11.6 percent of the population has incomes below the poverty level. In the Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar neighborhood, the three census tracts that form the study area have sub-poverty level percentages of 18.6 (Census Tract 1203), 26.3 (Census Tract 5619), and 90.7 (Census Tract 9818). Census Tract 9818 includes the VA Highland Drive facility, the Southwestern Veterans Center, and a small cluster of homes near the north end of the study area. The high incidence of poverty in that particular census tract can be mostly attributed to the residents of the Southwestern Veterans Center who are on limited fixed-incomes or have no income. For the remainder of the study area, the incidence of

poverty in the neighborhood is slightly below or slightly higher than the rest of Pittsburgh. The incidence of poverty is higher in the neighborhood than in Allegheny County.

Environmental Consequences

Minority and low income populations were evaluated by comparing the percentages of minorities and persons with low-incomes living in the Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar neighborhood with county and city percentages. In effect, the county and city percentages form a threshold by which to measure environmental justice populations in the immediate neighborhood. If the thresholds are exceeded, the project could have a disproportionate impact on environmental justice populations when compared to the non-environmental justice populations.

In the initial comparison, it was determined that the percentage of African Americans living in the Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar neighborhood exceeded that of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. Approximately, 88.8 percent of the neighborhood is African American, yet only 26.1 percent of Pittsburgh and 13.2 percent of Allegheny County is African American. In terms of income, there are a considerable number of people with low-incomes living in the study area. Some areas of the neighborhood exceed the citywide threshold of 20.6 percent persons with incomes below the poverty level. All areas of the neighborhood exceed the countywide threshold of 11.6 percent.

No Action

No impacts to Environmental Justice populations are expected to occur with the No Action Alternative.

Proposed Action

The facility itself is not representative of the neighborhood. The VAPHS has transferred all patients to other VAPHS facilities. No patients will occupy the buildings following closure of the facility. No impacts to Environmental Justice populations are expected to occur with the demolition of the buildings on the Highland Drive campus.

Mitigation

Any existing patients in the surrounding neighborhood that walked to the Highland Drive facility in the past could use the ACCESS program for transportation to either of the other two campuses. ACCESS is a shared-ride, advance-reservation paratransit service that operates throughout Pittsburgh and Allegheny County from 6:00 AM to midnight every day of the year. The service provides door-to-door transportation for persons with disabilities and persons 65 years of age and older. ACCESS is sponsored by Port Authority of Allegheny County and is operated by ACCESS Transportation Systems, Inc., a subsidiary of Veolia Transportation. Transportation to the other two campuses is also available throughout the region and from neighboring states by calling the VA Hospital Service Coordinator/Volunteer Transportation Network Coordinator. This in-network transportation service operates on specific days from various locations. Some locations transport patients on a set schedule, but others operate on a “by appointment” basis.

No other mitigation is required.

7. Potential for Generating Substantial Controversy

The release of the CARES report in 2004 and the recommendation to close or restructure some VA facilities generated controversy from veteran’s groups and legislators when first announced (U.S.

Medicine 2009). Over the years since the CARES report was released, several local newspapers, television stations, and radio stations have reported on the consolidation efforts within the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. Most recently (early May 2012), articles on the consolidation appeared in both the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and the *Tribune Review*, Pittsburgh's two daily newspapers. News segments on the consolidation have also aired on KDKA-TV, WTAE-TV, and local radio stations.

The VA has developed both a master plan and a strategic master facility plan to guide the closure of the Highland Drive campus and integrate the three VAPHS facilities into two. These plans have guaranteed that all services currently being provided at Highland Drive will be continued at one of the other two facilities in the Pittsburgh area with no loss of services to veterans. With the needs of veterans assured and no substantive, local issues raised, the project has little potential to generate controversy in the future.

B. NATURAL SETTING/RESOURCES

The study area investigated for the natural resources of this project included the VA Highland Drive campus area that is generally depicted on Figure 4.

1. Wetlands

Affected Environment

Wetland resources are protected by both state and federal regulations in Pennsylvania. State protection of wetlands falls under Pennsylvania Code, Title 25, Environmental Protection § Chapter 105, Dam Safety and Waterway Management. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) is the lead state agency for the jurisdiction of wetlands in Pennsylvania. Federal protection for wetlands falls under Section 404 of the *Federal Clean Water Act*. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is the lead federal agency for the jurisdiction of wetlands in Pennsylvania.

The study area was investigated for the presence of jurisdictional wetlands on June 8, 2012. The wetlands investigation was conducted in accordance with the *Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual* (Technical Report Y-87-1) (USACE 1987); the *Interim Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Eastern Mountains and Piedmont Region* (ERDC/EL TR-10-9) (USACE 2010); and Section 404 of the *Federal Clean Water Act*. As a result of this investigation, no wetlands were identified within the limits of the study area (Figure 4).

Environmental Consequences

No Action

Because no wetlands have been identified within the study area and no physical changes to the site would occur under this alternative, no adverse effects to wetlands are anticipated under the No Action Alternative.

Proposed Action

Because no wetlands have been identified within the study area, no adverse effects to wetlands are anticipated under the Proposed Action.

Mitigation

Because there are no wetlands present within the study area, no impacts to wetlands will occur as a result of this project. Therefore, compensatory mitigation for wetland impacts is not applicable to this project.

2. Surface Waters

Affected Environment

The VA Highland Drive facility is located in the Allegheny River watershed. This facility can be found on the United States Geological Survey (USGS), Pittsburgh East, PA 7.5 minute topographical quadrangle (1997). The facility is located on top of a bluff overlooking Pool 2 of the Allegheny River. No jurisdictional surface water resources (i.e., waters regulated by federal or state agencies) were observed within the limits of the study area (Figure 4) during field investigations on June 8, 2012. Surface water runoff from the property is directed into a storm sewer system. The drainage from the perimeter of the site is directed and discharged away from the developed portions of the site at concrete headwalls. Drainage from the center of the facility is collected in a separate storm sewer system that directs run-off to the southwestern area of the facility where it joins a storm sewer line that is owned by the City of Pittsburgh.

An unnamed tributary to Shades Run is located on the eastern side of the facility, beyond the study area, as shown on the Pittsburgh East, PA topographical quadrangle map (USGS 1997). Shades Run flows into the Allegheny River. Topography on the southwestern and western sides of the facility provides drainage to the Allegheny River through storm sewers or sheet flow. A topographical feature on the southwestern side of the facility directs surface flow to Washington Boulevard, an area which has been historically problematic for flooding during heavy rain events. According to the Pennsylvania Code, Title 25, Environmental Protection § Chapter 93, Water Quality Standards, the Allegheny River is managed for Warm Water Fishes; Shades Run and its tributaries are also managed for Warm Water Fishes.

Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, stormwater would continue to be collected and discharged through the existing storm sewer system present on the site. There would be no adverse effect to jurisdictional surface waters or water quality from this action.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, the buildings, parking lots, and internal roadways would be removed. A perimeter roadway will remain for security and maintenance access to the site. Removal of the buildings, parking lots, and internal roadways will make the central storm sewer system unnecessary; however, the network of drainage pipes associated with the perimeter roadway will remain in place. The central storm sewer system would be removed. These areas would be covered with top soil, graded, and vegetated. The removal of these existing impervious surfaces present at the site would result in less surface water runoff generated from the site as the natural processes of infiltration and transpiration would take effect and absorb and use some of the direct precipitation that would fall on the site during storm events. Any precipitation that would run off of the site would be carried via sheet flow to the existing drainage features that surround the site. The removal of the existing impervious surfaces may provide some relief to the existing flooding conditions that occur along Washington Boulevard, which is located west of the site.

Mitigation

No impacts to watercourses will occur as a result of this project. Therefore, compensatory mitigation for stream impacts is not applicable to this project. Erosion and sedimentation control measures will be implemented prior to building demolition activities.

3. Floodplains

Affected Environment

The proximity of the site to local floodplains was determined through review of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (1995) (Figure 7). Review of this map determined that the Highland Drive facility is not located in a FEMA defined floodplain. The elevation of the site is approximately 1,140 feet; the elevation of the nearest defined FEMA floodplain is approximately 740 -760 feet, which is located along the Allegheny River.

Environmental Consequences

No Action

Because no FEMA floodplains have been identified at the VA Highland Drive facility and no physical changes to the site would occur under this alternative, no adverse effects to floodplains are anticipated under the No Action Alternative.

Proposed Action

Because no floodplains have been identified at the VA Highland Drive facility, no adverse effects to floodplains are anticipated under the Proposed Action.

Mitigation

Because there are no floodplains present at the VA Highland Drive facility, no impacts to floodplains will occur as a result of this project. Therefore, compensatory mitigation for floodplain impacts is not applicable to this project.

4. Terrestrial Habitat

Affected Environment

The land on which the VA Highland Drive facility is located has been developed into an urban type landscape. Undeveloped land is present north and west/northwest adjacent to the site due to steep slopes. Steepness varies from 15-25% + slopes which may provide some limits to development on the periphery of the site (Perkins Eastman 2004).

Most of the native vegetation has been removed and replaced with ornamental vegetation which includes herbs, shrubs, and trees. Some of the tree species observed on the campus include black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), pin oak (*Quercus palustris*), ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*), red oak (*Quercus rubra*), and blue spruce (*Picea pungens*).

Wildlife habitat present at the site would be suited to generalist type avian and mammalian species. Some minor forest interior type habitat may be available on the slope north of the site, but the site itself does not

provide this type of specialized habitat. Wildlife observed at the site included red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), mourning doves (*Zenaida macroura*), northern cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), and American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*). Coordination with facility staff determined that white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*), groundhog (*Marmota monax*), other unidentified rodent species, as well as woodpecker and hawk species.

Environmental Consequences

No Action

The existing terrestrial habitat present at the site would remain unchanged under the No Action Alternative.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action involves the mechanical removal of buildings and parking lots located throughout the campus. A perimeter road will be maintained to allow security and maintenance access to the site. Buildings, parking lots, and roadways to be removed will be excavated and the ground will be re-graded following demolition and disposal activities. The re-graded ground will be seeded with an appropriate grass seed mixture. Any trees and shrubs that will not interfere with the demolition and disposal activities will remain. The restoration activities associated with the demolition and disposal should improve the existing terrestrial habitat for generalist species suited to a grassy, meadow type habitat.

Mitigation

Following demolition and disposal activities the site will be re-graded and vegetated with an appropriate grass seed mixture. No other mitigative activities are proposed for the site, as the Proposed Action does not result in a negative effect on the existing terrestrial environment.

5. Threatened and Endangered Species

Affected Environment

The Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program (PNHP) Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) On-Line Review Tool (PNHP 2012) was accessed to determine if the proposed project would have an adverse effect on sensitive species protected under state or federal regulations. This search acts as a coordination effort with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), DCNR Bureau of Forestry, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. This search determined that there is a potential conflict with species under the jurisdiction of the DCNR and the PFBC. A coordination letter was submitted to both agencies on May 29, 2012. The DCNR reviewed the project and responded that “no impact [is] anticipated” based on the nature of the project. The PFBC reviewed the project and responded that “no adverse impacts expected from the proposed project.” Copies of the coordination letters are provided in the Appendix.

Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no change to the existing property and therefore no change in the existing environment.

Proposed Action

Through coordination with the DCNR and PFBC it has been determined that the proposed project would not result in an impact to species under the jurisdiction of either agency. The DCNR stated that although there is an occurrence of species of special concern within the vicinity of the project, impacts to these species are unlikely due to the nature of the project. The PFBC stated that “no adverse impacts expected from the proposed project.”

Mitigation

As no impacts to species of special concern are anticipated as a result of this project, mitigation to offset such impacts does not apply to this project. The PNDI search will be updated annually until completion of the project to ensure that there are no impacts to species of special concern as a result of this project.

6. Geology, Soils, and Groundwater

Affected Environment

The VA Highland Drive facility is located within the Pittsburgh Low Plateau section of the Appalachian Plateaus province. In general, the dominant topographic form is “a smooth undulating surface cut by numerous, narrow, relatively shallow valleys” (DCNR 2009). The topography of the site is mostly level with some minor undulations. Underlying rock is composed of sandstone, siltstone, shale, and limestone.

The United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA, NRCS 2012) *Web Soil Survey* was accessed to determine mapped soil units present within the project site. The dominant soil map unit illustrated within the site limits is classified as Urban land-Culleoka complex, gently sloping (UCB). Additional soil map units within the site limits include Urban land-Culleoka complex, moderately steep (UCD) and Urban land-Culleoka complex, steep (UCE). Review of the county soil survey determined that the Urban land-Culleoka complex soils are typically comprised of about 75% urban land, 15% Culleoka soils, and 10% other soils. A characteristic of this complex is that much of the natural soils and bedrock have been disturbed, cut in some areas, and filled in others (USDA, Soil Conservation Service 1981). The parent material of this complex “consists of residuum weathered from nonacid siltstone, fine-grained sandstone, and shale” (USDA, NRCS 2012). The depth to bedrock for this complex ranges from 20 to 40 inches. This complex is classified as being well drained. Water movement through the most restrictive layer of the UCB soil map unit is classified as moderately high. The soil is neither flooded nor ponded. There is no zone of water saturation within a depth of 72 inches.

The site overlies the Casselman formation (Penn State 2012). Groundwater yields within this formation are highly variable depending on local effective porosity; higher yields are expected from sandstone. Water is of fair quality (Geyer and Wilshusen 1982). Wells for the purpose of extracting groundwater are not present on the site.

Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, no physical changes to the property would occur and there would be no effect to the geology, soils, or groundwater found at the site.

Proposed Action

The proposed demolition for buildings, parking lots, and unnecessary roadways within the site includes mechanical removal utilizing heavy equipment following removal of non-structural components of the buildings. Upon removal of buildings and parking lots the site will be re-graded and vegetated. The Proposed Action would not have a significant adverse effect on the existing geology, soils, or groundwater of the site.

Mitigation

No mitigation will be required for the Proposed Action, as the activity will not have an adverse effect on the existing geology, soils, or groundwater of the site.

C. CULTURAL SETTING/RESOURCES

Consideration of effects by a federal undertaking to historic properties is mandated by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended in 1999 and 2004, and the regulations (36 CFR 800) of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as revised in 1999 and 2004. Federal undertakings include any action proposed by a federal agency or any action proposed by others that will receive funding, permits, licenses, or authorizations from a federal agency. Historic properties include archaeological resources, buildings, structures, historic districts, objects, or sites which are either listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP.

In order to fulfill Section 106 compliance responsibilities, a cultural resources assessment of archaeological and historic structures resources at the VAPHS' Highland Drive Division Campus was conducted in October 2011. The methods used during the cultural resources assessment included: establishment of the Area of Potential Effects (APE), archival research, fieldwork, and report preparation. The APE used for the cultural resources assessment included the approximately 168 acre Highland Drive Division Campus property, which encompasses various medical, administrative, maintenance, and recreational buildings as well as large tracts of undeveloped sloped woodland. The results of the cultural resources assessment are reported in: *Final Report Submittal Cultural Resource Assessment for VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System Highland Drive Division Campus, Pittsburgh, PA* (Tetra Tech, Inc. 2012). A summary of those results and their review by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), Bureau for Historic Preservation (BHP) follows.

1. Archaeological Sites

Affected Environment

A search of the Pennsylvania Cultural Resource Geographic Information System (CRGIS) revealed no previously recorded archaeological sites within the archaeological APE. Additional archival research conducted revealed that extensive excavation and grading were necessary to create a level building site during the original construction of the Highland Drive Division Campus in 1950. This extensive grading has effectively destroyed any intact sediments with the potential to contain in situ archaeological remains dating prior to 1950. Comparison of pre-construction and post-construction topographic maps and aerial photographs indicate that the flat hilltop on which the campus is currently located was lowered as much as 140 feet in elevation during construction of the campus with over 650,000 cubic yards of materials and 6,000 tons of coal removed. Based on the archival research, it was determined that the APE had no potential to contain archaeological resources and that fieldwork was not warranted.

In a March 26, 2012 letter to the VAPHS, PHMC, BHP concurred with Tetra Tech's archaeological resource assessment, and determined that no archaeological resources would be affected by the project, in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended in 1980 and 1992, and all other applicable federal and state regulations.

Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative there would be no impact to archaeological resources because the ground would not be disturbed.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, there would be no impact to archaeological resources because there is no potential for archaeological resources to be preserved within the Highland Drive Division Campus.

Mitigation

No mitigation is necessary.

2. Historic Structures

Affected Environment

Archival research for the historic structures assessment was conducted in order to gather information on the history and evolution of the Highland Drive Division Campus for development of an historic context. Primary and secondary sources included VA records, state and county histories, periodicals, newspaper articles, cultural resource reports and inventory files, as well as web-based sources including the CRGIS. A search of the Pennsylvania CRGIS revealed that the Highland Park Historic District is located approximate one mile to the west, and the clubhouse of the Longue Vue Club, a NRHP listed property, is located approximately one mile to the east of the facility. Subsequent to the background research, a site visit, photographic recordation of the campus, interviews with employees, and reconciliation of the number and relationships of mapped structures were conducted. A Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form for the Highland Drive Division Campus was completed and a DOE report (Tetra Tech 2012) prepared. The historic structures assessment identified and recorded 18 individual resources, 50 years or older on the VAPHS Highland Drive Division Campus, which comprise a single historic district.

Based on the results of the historic structures assessment, the Highland Drive Division Campus was recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A for its association with the development of federally mandated mid-20th century Veterans Hospitals to treat mental illness, and under Criterion C for its minimalist architecture. One non-contributing element, Building 32, was constructed in 1985 and does not meet NRHP criterion.

In a March 26, 2012 letter to the VAPHS, PHMC, BHP concurred with the historic structures assessment and eligibility recommendation, and determined that the project's proposed demolition would adversely affect the historic and architectural qualities that make the campus eligible for listing in the NRHP as a historic district.

Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative no impacts to historic properties would occur because the buildings comprising the Highland Drive Division Campus would not be demolished and historic and architectural qualities that make the property eligible for listing in the NRHP would be preserved.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, the NRHP eligible Highland Drive Division Campus would be adversely affected by demolition because the historic and architectural qualities that make the property eligible for listing in the NRHP would be destroyed.

Mitigation

PHMC, BHP has recommended that because the Proposed Action will have adverse effects on the Highland Drive Division Campus Historic District, the Department of Veterans Affairs should comply with the regulations of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, following the procedures outlined in 36 CFR 800.6, and that they should notify the Advisory Council of the effect finding and continue to consult with the PHMC, BHP and other consulting parties to seek ways to avoid, reduce, and mitigate the effects on the district.

A mitigation strategy will need to be determined as part of the 36 CFR 800.6 process.

D. AIR QUALITY AND NOISE

1. Air Quality

Affected Environment

The VA Highland Drive facility is located in the Allegheny County Air Basin as defined in 25 Pa. Code 121.1. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) classifies Allegheny County as being in non-attainment for the 8-hour ozone (O₃) and particulate matter less than 2.5 microns (PM_{2.5}).

Stationary air emission sources associated with the current/past use of the property include boilers and an incinerator. The hazardous materials that can potentially become airborne (e.g., asbestos, lead, etc.) are discussed in Section E: Solid and Hazardous Waste.

Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, all buildings would remain intact. There would be no emissions from demolition and no adverse effect to air quality.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, there would be additional mobile source air emissions from trucks and heavy equipment. However, the additional amounts would be temporary and not great enough to affect the

attainment status of the six priority pollutants. During demolition, the use of water and other engineering controls would be required to control dust emissions.

The Proposed Action would result in temporary increases in mobile source emissions and airborne particulate matter that will be controlled by applying water and other engineering controls as necessary. However, the demolition activity is not anticipated to have any long-term adverse effects on the air quality of the region or surrounding area.

Mitigation

During demolition, the use of water and other engineering controls would be required to control dust emissions. A site-specific demolition plan will be prepared during the demolition phase of the project. This plan will address potential pollutants associated with the demolition project.

2. Noise

Affected Environment

The VA Highland Drive facility's existing acoustical environment is comprised of vehicular traffic noise as well as building HVAC noise influences. The local roadways and facility access are low volume/low speed collector/distributor roadways and produce some intermittent noise as vehicles pass. There are noise sensitive areas (e.g., residential areas) directly adjacent to the facility.

Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, all buildings would remain intact. The acoustical environment would remain the same and temporary increases associated with the demolition would not occur. There would be no adverse effect to the acoustical environment.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, there would be a temporary increase in ambient noise at the site due to the demolition and debris removal. The loading and unloading of debris from dump trucks will be the primary noise source. However, the demolition activity is not anticipated to have any long-term adverse effects on the acoustical environment in the surrounding area. Once demolition is complete, the adjacent areas should have lower ambient sound levels associated with the reduction of traffic to the site.

Mitigation

During demolition, the use of manufacturer rated mufflers on all construction equipment will be required. The demolition and debris removal activities will be conducted during daylight hours to minimize the effects of noise to the surrounding areas. A complaint network will be developed by the contractor to address any noise issues that may arise with the local residents. Truck routes for debris removal will avoid residential areas as much as possible. A site-specific demolition plan will be prepared during the demolition phase of the project. This plan will address potential noise issues associated with the demolition project.

E. SOLID AND HAZARDOUS WASTE

Asbestos surveys of the VA Highland Drive facility buildings and a limited Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) were conducted on June 5, 2008 by Veteran Partners Corporation. The last Asbestos

Hazard Emergency Response Act re-inspections of the VA buildings were conducted by Veteran Partners Corporation in 2009. A Pre-Demolition Environmental Assessment report will still be required prior to any building demolition.

1. Asbestos

Affected Environment

There are 24 buildings/structures at this facility. The buildings located at the facility and their functions can be found on Figure 4. The asbestos surveys indicated the use of both friable and non-friable asbestos-containing materials (ACM) throughout the VA buildings. Buildings 17, 18, 18A, 21, 22, 25, and 33 still require an asbestos survey to be conducted.

Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, ACM would remain in the VA buildings. The condition of the ACM would start to deteriorate.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, additional investigate sampling of exterior building components and buildings exempt from the initial asbestos inspection would need to be sampled. All buildings will require a review along with a review of inaccessible areas as feasibly possible.

Mitigation

Prior to demolition all ACM shall be removed and properly disposed in an appropriate landfill adhering to federal, state, and Allegheny County Department of Health Article XXI regulations. The buildings would be prepared for demolition in accordance with 40 CFR 61 subpart M – *National Emission Standards for Asbestos*, standard for demolition and renovations.

Air monitoring and final air clearance sampling would be conducted during demolition to ensure that no ACM is released to the environment.

2. Underground and Above Ground Storage Tanks

Affected Environment

The VA Highland Drive facility has seven storage tanks on the site with potential liquids remaining in the tanks. Buildings 1, 4, 7, and 15 contain fuels for the emergency generators. Building 15 has vehicle pumping stations and underground storage tanks (USTs) for gasoline and diesel.

The seven storage tanks are as follows:

- 3 – 3,000 gallon diesel fuel tanks
- 2 – 4,000 gallon diesel fuel tanks
- 1 – 10,000 gallon diesel fuel tank
- 1 – 4,000 gallon gasoline storage tank

Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, the storage tanks and fuels would remain in place. There would be no adverse effect to jurisdictional soil or water from this action.

Proposed Action/Mitigation

Under the Proposed Action, the storage tanks and fuels would be removed and closed per PADEP regulations.

3. Hazardous and Bio-Hazardous Materials

Affected Environment

A facility assessment of the VA Highland Drive facility would need to be conducted of the structures and equipment as part of the Pre-Demolition Environmental Assessment to identify items of environmental and bio-hazard interests that would require remediation measures. The items of concern are chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCBs) containing equipment, mold, fluid filling piping, mercury containing equipment, oil filled machinery, self-illuminating exit signs, smoke detectors, paint booths, lead walls and doors, pits, sump and trench drains, batteries, sink drains, pesticide storage, lead-based paints, bio-hazard storage areas, and refrigerants.

Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative the hazardous materials would remain in place. There would be no adverse effect to hazardous and bio-hazardous materials from this action.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, the hazardous and bio-hazard materials would be removed and properly disposed of prior to any building demolition. A Pre-Demolition Environmental Assessment would be required to identify items of environmental interest that would require remediation measures.

Prior to demolition activities, regulated materials would be removed from the buildings and recycled or disposed of in an appropriate manner in accordance with federal, state, and Allegheny County regulations. Items of concern such as CFCs, PCBs, and fluid filled pipes would be investigated further to identify the appropriate level of decontamination required prior to building demolition.

Mitigation

Removal of the hazardous and bio-hazardous materials from the buildings is required prior to any demolition activities.

Lead shielding in select room walls, ceilings, and doors, and associated equipment, and roof top vents shall be treated as lead-containing materials, and shall be disposed of or recycled in accordance with USEPA and Pennsylvania universal waste regulations and guidelines. The painted materials in the building and water tower should be assumed to contain lead. In accordance with 29 CFR 1926.62, the

contractor is required to notify all employees involved in the construction, alteration, and/or repair of lead-containing building components, regardless of the exposures, of the presence of lead, prior to project commencement. The contractor will be required to conduct an initial Employee Exposure Assessment in accordance with 29 CFR 1926.62 (d)(1)(i). Prior to any torch cutting, sanding, or grinding of painted structures, lead paint shall be abated.

All mercury-containing lamps, thermostats, thermometers, gauges, switches, and drain traps shall be removed from the building prior to the commencement of demolition activities. The term lamp refers to mercury-containing lamps including fluorescent bulbs, metal halide, high-pressure halide, high-pressure sodium, and mercury-vapor lamps. All mercury-containing materials must be handled, stored, and transported in such a manner that they are protected from damage. Mercury-containing lamps, thermostats, thermometers, gauges, switches and drain traps shall be disposed of or recycled in accordance with USEPA and Pennsylvania universal waste regulations and guidelines.

All PCB-containing fluorescent lamp ballasts, transformers, and other PCB-containing equipment shall be removed from each structure prior to the commencement of demolition activities. All PCB-containing fluorescent lamp ballasts, transformers, and other equipment must be handled, stored, and transported in such a manner that they are protected from damage and not broken. Leaking PCB-containing ballasts, transformers, or other equipment are considered PCB waste and must be disposed of by incineration at a USEPA-approved PCB incinerator. All materials that contact leaking PCB-containing ballast, transformers, or equipment are considered PCB waste and must be disposed of by incineration at a USEPA-approved PCB incinerator. PCB-containing fluorescent lamp ballasts, transformers, and other PCB-containing equipment shall be disposed of in accordance with USEPA and Pennsylvania hazardous waste regulations and guidelines.

All chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) shall be recovered from the equipment prior to the commencement of demolition activities. Only properly licensed personnel should handle and recover the CFCs, abiding by all federal and state regulations.

All loose batteries and batteries associated with equipment shall be properly removed and disposed of prior to demolition activities. Disposal of the batteries shall be in accordance with USEPA and Pennsylvania universal waste regulations and guidelines.

All equipment oils and fluids shall be drained and purged from the equipment prior to the commencement of demolition activities. Only properly trained personnel should handle and drain the oils and fluids, abiding by all federal and Pennsylvania regulations. Equipment fluids shall be disposed of or recycled in accordance with USEPA and Pennsylvania regulations and guidelines.

Biological contaminants may be encountered during this work in the form of mold, latent bacteria, and viruses in used hospital equipment. Provide proof of disposal of waste containing biological contamination. Collect the material in double-plastic bags, 55-gallon drums or other secure container for disposal. This material shall be disposed of at a municipal waste landfill. Make arrangements with the landfill operator to accept the waste prior to transportation.

Electronic equipment shall be disposed of or recycled in accordance with USEPA and Pennsylvania waste regulations and guidelines.

All stored hazardous materials shall be collected and removed from the building prior to the commencement of abatement/demolition activities. Stored materials shall be disposed of or recycled in accordance with USEPA and Pennsylvania regulations and guidelines.

F. UTILITIES

Affected Environment

Water

The VA Highland Drive facility receives its water from the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA) via two mains which enter the facility from the southwest portion of the site. A 12" main enters the site at a meter pit located just north of East Chester Street. The 12" line passes through a right-of-way and under Campania Avenue and along Fischel Street to the water tower located on the site and owned by the VAPHS. A second line comes from another main owned by the PWSA that runs along Campania Avenue. This second line is controlled by a valve located within Campania Avenue. This secondary feed line also supplies water to the water tower. From the tower the complete complex is supplied by two 10" lines.

Sanitary

The VAPHS facility sanitary sewer system at Highland Drive empties into the PWSA sewer system and eventually ends up at the Allegheny County Sanitary Authority Waste Water Treatment Plant. The sanitary waste enters into PWSA system via one 8" line culminating into the PWSA Chamber #2 and a second 8" line terminates into the 21" outlet line from Chamber #2.

Steam and Chilled Water Systems

Both steam and chilled water systems originate on the VAPHS facility. These two systems independently service the buildings with heating and cooling capabilities. The heating system is made up of steam supply lines and condensate return lines while the cooling system consists of chilled water supply lines and associated return lines. The source of the steam is located within Building 15 while the chilled water supply and return originates from structure 25 - A/C Cooling Tower.

Gas

Gas is supplied to the facility by Equitable Gas Company via a gas metering station located at the south end of Building 16 – Supply Warehouse. The facility is supplied by a 6" line and reduces to as small as 2 inches at the furthest point from the meter. All of the gas supply lines only service the VAPHS facility.

Electric

Electric service enters the site at the southernmost point near Building 16. Electrical power is furnished by Duquesne Light Company at substation - 18 at 4140V then passes to Switchgear – 19A at 4160V, which is then distributed throughout the site by underground service at 4160V to each of the buildings.

Communications

The principal telephone service is provided by Verizon, with service that comes in from the Campania Avenue site entrance. There is also an incoming fiber service owned by Duquesne Light Electric, which enters the site near the main entrance from Washington Boulevard. The demarcation point for both telephone services is in Building 1, Room 016W.

Stormwater

The storm system is made up of two systems. System one consists of various stormwater catch basins around the perimeter of the complex and these daylight at specific headwalls for drainage. System two is the main stormwater collection system for the main campus. This system consists of catch basins for parking lots and roadways and it also collects runoff from the building roofs. This system exits the campus on the southwestern portion of the site *via* a 30" diameter line and ties into a 36" diameter line owned and operated by the PWSA.

Environmental Consequences

No Action

The No Action Alternative would not have an adverse effect to similar utility services in the surrounding communities.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, service for all utilities will be discontinued and capped, closed, or otherwise disconnected during the demolition process. All related infrastructure will be removed from the site.

Portions of the stormwater drainage system would remain in order to maintain the site in a safe manner, from stormwater runoff. As part of the demolition and the final grading of the site, the existing stormwater system will continue to play an integral part in the control of runoff from the site. Precautions will be instituted following a stormwater study of the final site grading. This could include stormwater controls and retention ponds, as required, to meet the regulatory stormwater requirements.

The sanitary utility lines will be terminated and removed to existing manholes designated as MH-O and MH-U (Figure 8). Removal to these two points would allow for potential tie-ins from future development.

It is not anticipated that the Proposed Action would adversely affect utility services to the surrounding community. The Proposed Action would not have any additional adverse effects on utilities.

Mitigation

Mitigation activities involving the removal of the utility infrastructure would include continued close coordination with the impacted utility service providers throughout the demolition process. All utility providers to the VA Highland Drive facility should be kept updated on the status of the project and anticipated schedule of demolition activities.

G. DEMOLITION AND DEBRIS

Affected Environment

The VA Highland Drive Division is a campus-style facility comprised of 24 buildings and structures. Since the opening of the facility, various modifications to the facility have occurred that have included the construction of additional buildings. Currently, the campus is comprised of various buildings and associated infrastructure that includes roads, driveways, parking lots, and utilities. The composition of the buildings and campus infrastructure includes both materials that provide the opportunity to be

recycled and reused and those materials that would require disposal in an approved facility such as a landfill.

Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, no demolition of buildings or infrastructure would occur and no demolition debris or materials would be created.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, the VA Highland Drive facility buildings and infrastructure would be demolished and would include removal of existing buildings and infrastructure. With the demolition there would be reclamation and recycling of materials from the demolished buildings and structures of the campus. The recycling of these materials offers the opportunity to reduce the project costs. The following are typical items that would be salvaged:

- Emergency generators and associated switchgear
- Copper pipe and electric cabling
- Mechanical equipment
- Stainless steel cafeteria equipment
- Structural steel
- Extracted bearing piles
- Elevated water tower
- Miscellaneous metals (i.e., manhole covers, storm grates, metal decking, piping, electrical conduit and panels, metal flashing, aluminum etc.)
- Metal doors and door frames.
- Storage tanks
- Transformers and switchgear (unless retained by utility company).
- Reinforcement steel from the crushed concrete
- Poles from the site lighting
- Steel stairways and handrails
- Elevators and associated equipment
- Bus stop shelters (retained by the Port Authority of Allegheny County)

The following is a list of materials that could be recycled back into the project as clean structural backfill after crushing to a specified size:

- Concrete
- Asphalt paving
- Masonry
- Roadway, sidewalk, and pavement sub-base

All concrete, masonry, asphalt pavement and sub-base materials would be required to be processed by an onsite crusher to a specified size and be reused as backfill material. Excavations left by removal of buildings and other structures will require backfilling that could be performed utilizing the accepted crushed materials. This would reduce or eliminate the need and cost to transport additional fill material to the site for backfilling of building demolition sites or other areas of the site that may require backfill material.

The demolition materials that are not salvaged and/or recycled (after environmental remediation) would require proper handling, processing, and disposal into a landfill permitted for the acceptance of construction materials. Such materials would be:

- Drywall
- Suspended ceiling tiles
- Plaster
- Insulation
- Roofing materials
- Wood and glass materials
- Carpeting and floor tile
- Bathroom fixtures
- Extraneous materials left by owners

Mitigation

Prior to proceeding with design and demolition activities, the VAPHS will obtain all required regulatory clearances for the project. However, it is assumed that certain permits and approvals will be the responsibility of the contractor selected to perform demolition services. Demolition activities and disposal of demolition materials will be performed in accordance with approved permits and the requirements of all federal, state, county, and local regulations. Demolition materials that are non-hazardous will be disposed of in a landfill that is approved for construction/demolition materials. Hazardous materials will be transported to facilities or landfills that are approved for disposal of hazardous waste.

H. CUMULATIVE AND SECONDARY IMPACTS

Guidelines prepared by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) for carrying out NEPA requirements broadly define secondary impacts as those that are caused by an action and are later in time or further removed in distance, but are still foreseeable (CEQ 1978). Secondary impacts can be associated with development that may result from the construction of a facility, but differ from impacts directly associated with the construction and operation of the facility itself. Secondary impacts may result in increased development pressure on open space and natural resources. Cumulative impacts, on the other hand, result from the incremental consequences of an action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions (CEQ 1997), regardless of what agency, person, or organization undertakes such actions. Cumulative impacts result from past, present, and future actions. When considered as a whole and in concert with other foreseeable developments and projects, they can result in a combined effect greater than considering separate elements independently.

1. Cumulative Impacts

Taken individually, the impacts from an action may have little effect on the environment. When viewed as a sequence of events, however, different actions may add up to, or cause, additional effects over time. Thus, the cumulative impact may be of more consequence than isolated, individual impacts.

A concerted effort by the City of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, and the private sector has occurred since the 1950s to bring about economic redevelopment in the area. Several initiatives have contributed in this effort to revitalize the area, including improvements to the transportation system, extensions of public water and sewer systems, construction of new commercial centers, enhancement of recreational facilities, and new residential development. In total, these efforts have enhanced the quality of life for the area's citizens and businesses without imposing an inordinate cumulative impact on the natural, cultural, or

socioeconomic environment. While these improvements, when taken as a whole, have had a cumulative effect on the area in the past and present, with plans and development controls in place, future cumulative effects are expected to benefit the community rather than harm it.

2. Secondary Impacts

Secondary impacts are those normally associated with development that may result from the construction of a facility, but differ from those impacts directly associated with the construction and operation of the facility itself. Secondary impacts are commonly referred to as induced development. Generally, these impacts are stimulated by an initial action and comprise a wide variety of secondary effects, such as changes in land use, development patterns, economic activity, utility service capacity, and population density. Factors that typically induce secondary, or indirect, development are new access to potential development areas, increased roadway capacity, existing development plans, suitable terrain, and economic incentives. The potential for indirect development to occur in any particular area is determined in great part by individual municipal planning objectives.

Induced development is unlikely to occur from this project, but if it does, it can be accommodated in an orderly manner. Avoidance and minimization of any adverse impacts related to induced development will be accomplished through comprehensive planning and land use controls. Strict land use controls are currently present in the area.

IV. AGENCY COORDINATION

US Army Corps of Engineers – Pittsburgh District

2200 William S. Moorhead Federal Building
1000 Liberty Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222
Phone: (412) 395-7500

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Southwest Regional Office – Bureau of
Environmental Cleanups and Brownfields
400 Waterfront Drive
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222
Phone: (412) 442-4000

US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3

Office of Public Affairs
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103
Phone: (215) 814-5000

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Southwest Regional Office – Bureau of Waste
Management
400 Waterfront Drive
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222
Phone: (412) 442-4000

US Fish and Wildlife Service – Northeast Region

Endangered Species Section
315 South Allen Street, Suite 322
State College, Pennsylvania 16801
Phone: (814) 234-4090

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Southwest Regional Office – Office of Water
Management
400 Waterfront Drive
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222
Phone: (412) 442-4000

Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development

Commonwealth Keystone Building
400 North Street, 4th Floor
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120-0225
Phone: (888) 223-6837

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

Engineering District 11-0
45 Thoms Run Road
Bridgeville, Pennsylvania 15017
Phone: (412) 429-5000

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Bureau of Forestry
Ecological Services Division
400 Market Street
PO Box 8552
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105
Phone: (717) 787-3444

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

Division of Environmental Services
450 Robinson Lane
Bellefonte, Pennsylvania 16823-7437
Phone: (814) 359-5100

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Southwest Regional Office – Bureau of Air Quality
400 Waterfront Drive
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Pennsylvania Game Commission

Bureau of Wildlife Habitat Management
Division of Environmental Planning and Habitat Protection
2001 Elmerton Avenue
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17110
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Pennsylvania State Historical and Museum Commission

Bureau for Historic Preservation
Commonwealth Keystone Building, Second Floor
400 North Street
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City of Pittsburgh

Department of City Planning
200 Ross Street
Fourth Floor
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219
Phone: (412) 255-2200

Allegheny County Conservation District

400 North Lexington Street
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Southwest Pennsylvania Commission

Two Chatham Center, Suite 500
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VI. LIST OF ACRONYMS

AADT Average Annual Daily Traffic

ACM Asbestos-Containing Materials

APE Area of Potential Effect

BHP Bureau for Historic Preservation

CARES Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services

CEQ Council on Environmental Quality

CFC Chloroflourocarbons

CFR Code of Federal Regulations

CRGIS Cultural Resource Geographic Information System

DOE Determination of Eligibility

DCNR Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

DNCP Draft National CARES Plan

EA Environmental Assessment

ESA Environmental Site Assessment

FEMA Federal Emergency Management Agency

NEPA National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

NRHP National Register of Historic Places

O₃ Ozone

PADEP Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

PCB Polychlorinated Biphenyls

PCPD Pittsburgh City Planning Department

PennDOT Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

PFBC Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
PHMC Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
PNDI Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory
PNHP Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program
PWSA Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority
SCS Soil Conservation Service
USACE United States Army Corp of Engineers
USCB United States Census Bureau
USEPA United States Environmental Protection Agency
USGS United States Geological Survey
UST Underground Storage Tank
VA Department of Veterans Affairs
VAMC Veterans Affairs Medical Center
VAPHS Department of Veterans Affairs Pittsburgh Healthcare System

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Cultural Resources

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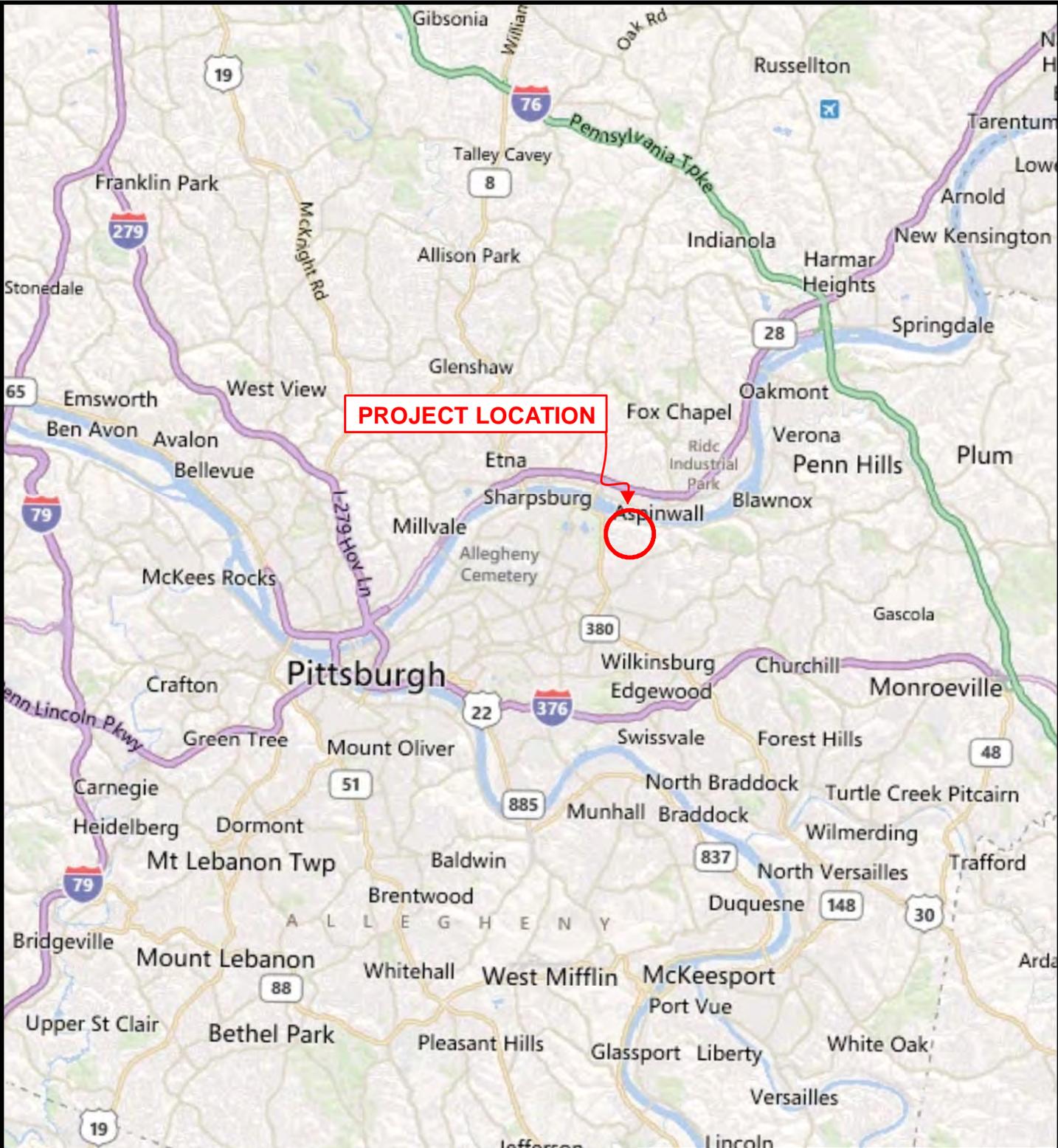
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B.S. Regional Planning
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Michael J. Zizan

B.S. Agronomy
28 years of experience
Purpose and Need, Alternatives, Demolition Debris

FIGURES

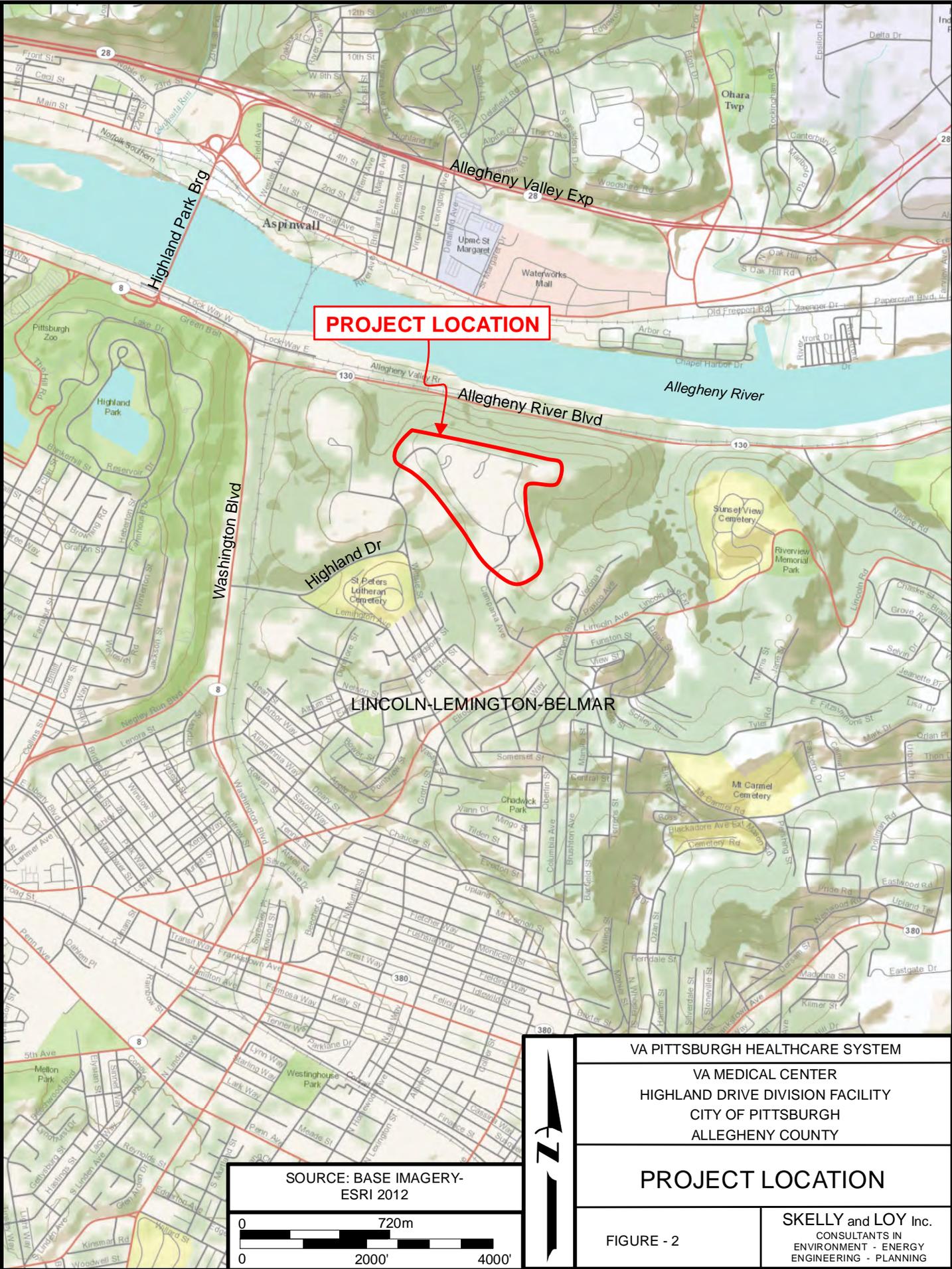


PROJECT LOCATION

SOURCE: BASE IMAGERY - MICROSOFT CORP. 2012



VA PITTSBURGH HEALTHCARE SYSTEM	
VA MEDICAL CENTER HIGHLAND DRIVE DIVISION FACILITY CITY OF PITTSBURGH ALLEGHENY COUNTY	
PROJECT REGION	
FIGURE - 1	SKELLY and LOY Inc. CONSULTANTS IN ENVIRONMENT - ENERGY ENGINEERING - PLANNING



PROJECT LOCATION

LINCOLN-LEMINGTON-BELMAR

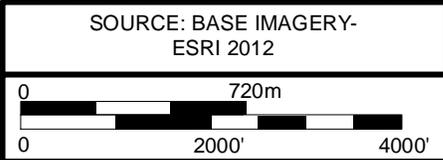
VA PITTSBURGH HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

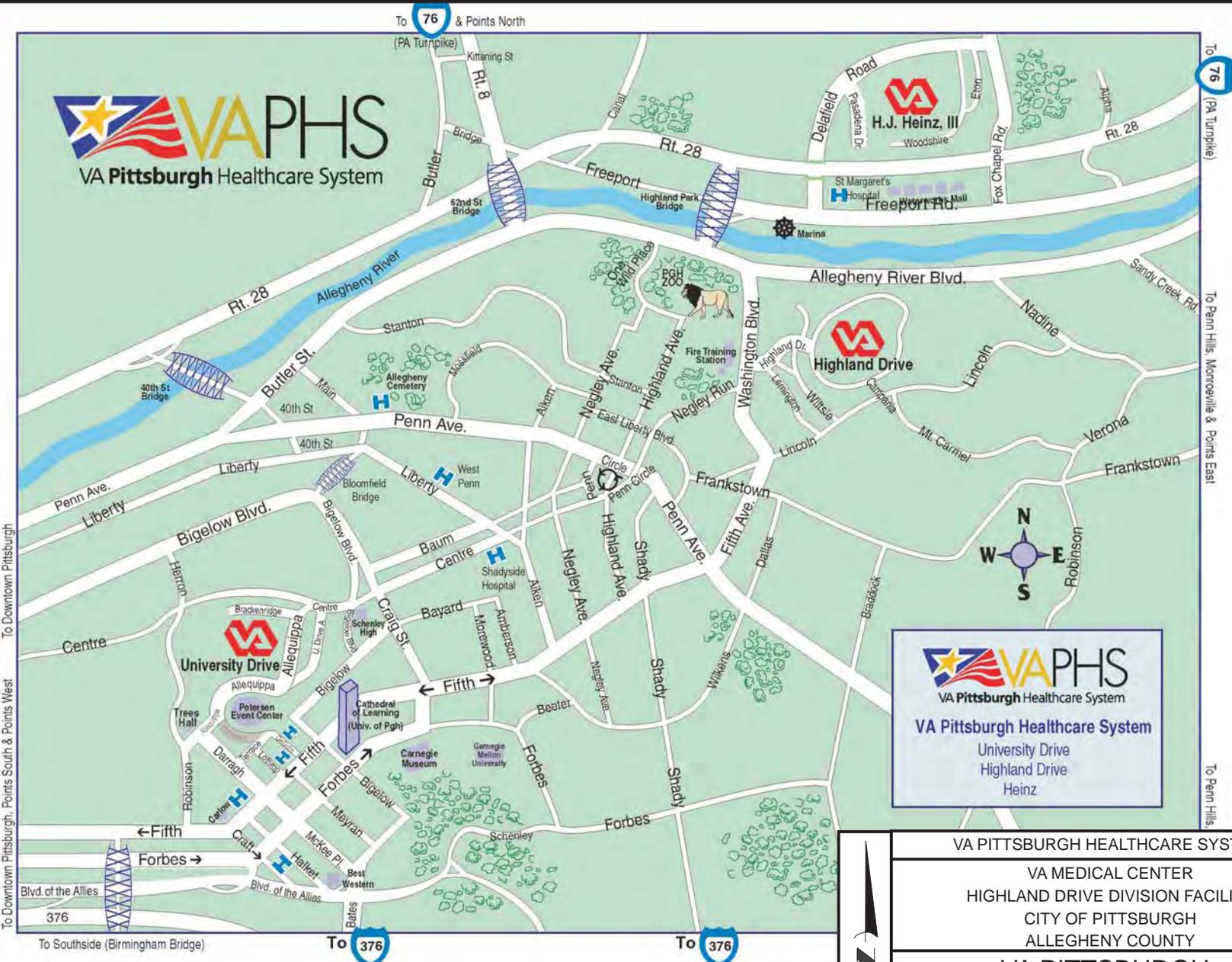
VA MEDICAL CENTER
 HIGHLAND DRIVE DIVISION FACILITY
 CITY OF PITTSBURGH
 ALLEGHENY COUNTY

PROJECT LOCATION

FIGURE - 2

SKELLY and LOY Inc.
 CONSULTANTS IN
 ENVIRONMENT - ENERGY
 ENGINEERING - PLANNING





VA PITTSBURGH HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

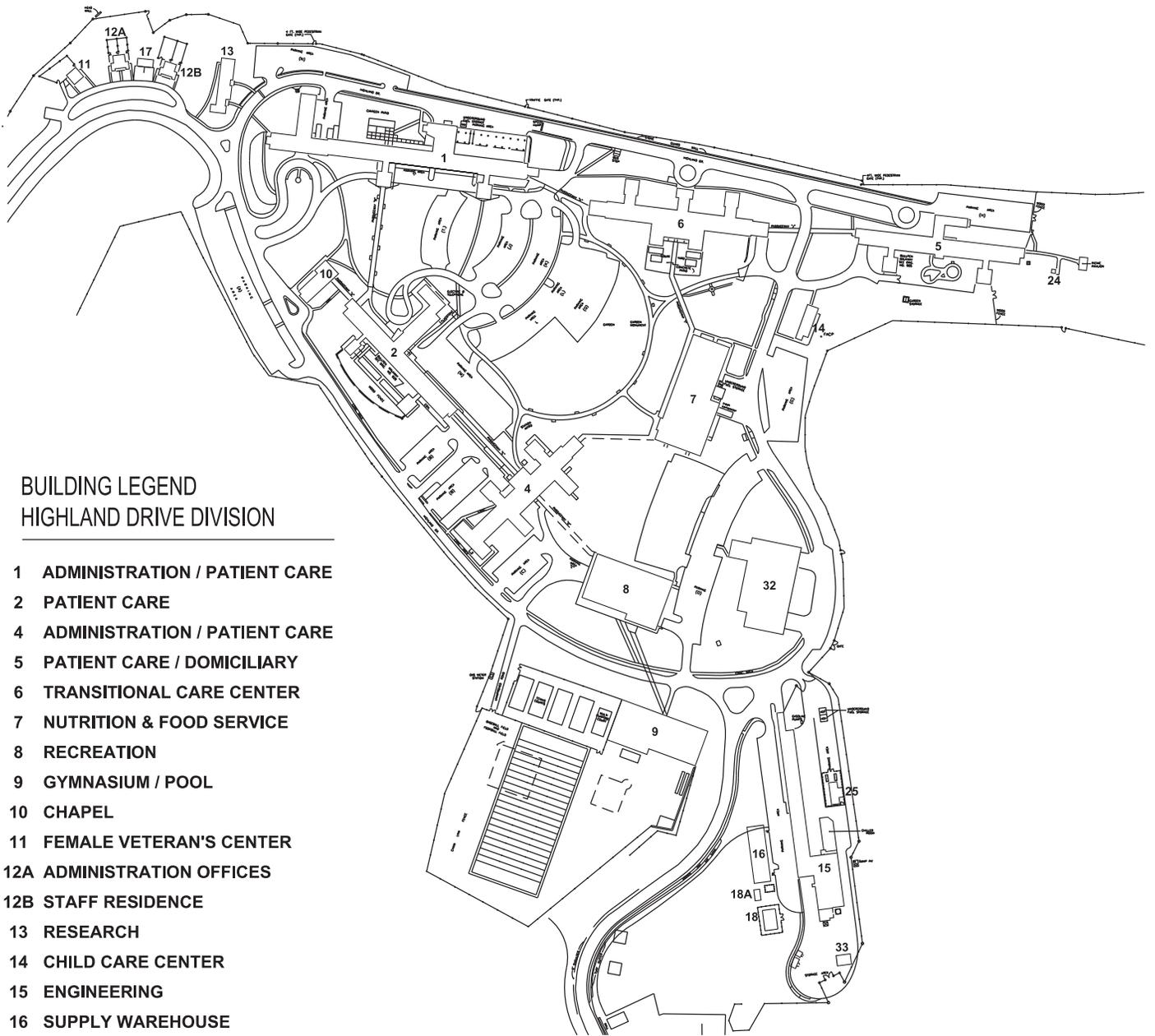
VA MEDICAL CENTER
 HIGHLAND DRIVE DIVISION FACILITY
 CITY OF PITTSBURGH
 ALLEGHENY COUNTY

**VA PITTSBURGH
 HEALTHCARE SYSTEM**

FIGURE - 3
 NOT TO SCALE

SKELLY and LOY Inc.
 CONSULTANTS IN
 ENVIRONMENT - ENERGY
 ENGINEERING - PLANNING

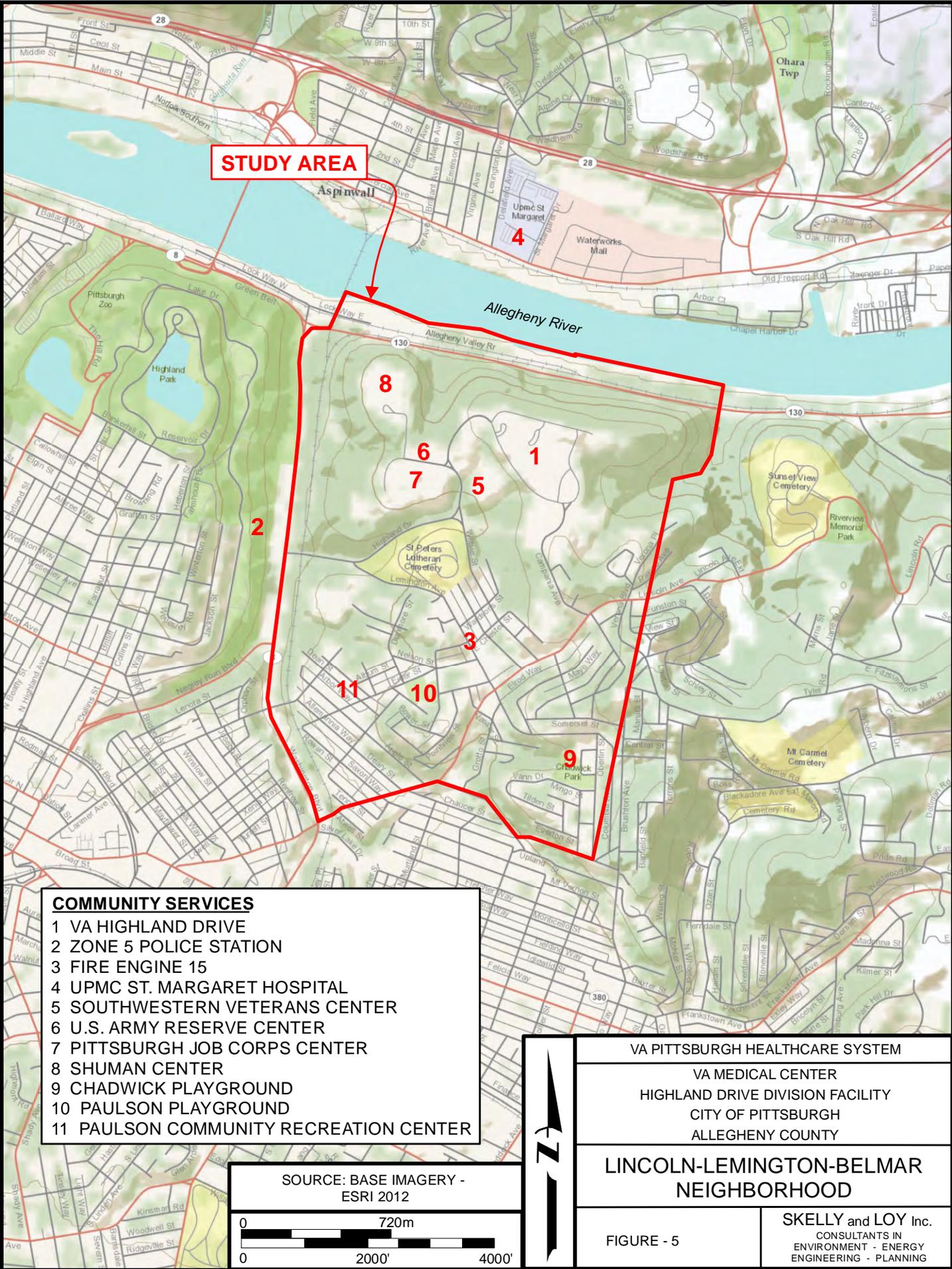
SOURCE: VAPHS 2012



**BUILDING LEGEND
HIGHLAND DRIVE DIVISION**

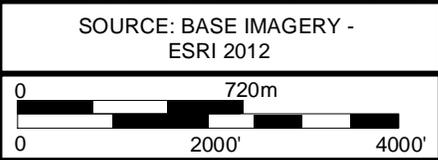
- 1 ADMINISTRATION / PATIENT CARE
- 2 PATIENT CARE
- 4 ADMINISTRATION / PATIENT CARE
- 5 PATIENT CARE / DOMICILIARY
- 6 TRANSITIONAL CARE CENTER
- 7 NUTRITION & FOOD SERVICE
- 8 RECREATION
- 9 GYMNASIUM / POOL
- 10 CHAPEL
- 11 FEMALE VETERAN'S CENTER
- 12A ADMINISTRATION OFFICES
- 12B STAFF RESIDENCE
- 13 RESEARCH
- 14 CHILD CARE CENTER
- 15 ENGINEERING
- 16 SUPPLY WAREHOUSE
- 17 RESIDENCE GARAGE
- 18 ELECTRIC SUB-STATION
- 18A SWITCHGEAR
- 19 FLAGPOLE
- 21 WATER TOWER
- 22 BOTTLE GAS STORAGE
- 23 GREENHOUSE
- 24 OUTDOOR TOILET
- 25 A/C COOLING TOWER
- 26 EXTERIOR CHAPEL SIGN
- 27 ENTRANCE SIGN - CAMPANIA STREET
- 28 MAIN ENTRANCE SIGN - HIGHLAND DRIVE
- 29 8" WATER SUPPLY METER PIT
- 30 12" WATER SUPPLY METER PIT
- 32 LAUNDRY
- 33 INCINERATOR / STORAGE

	VA PITTSBURGH HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
	VA MEDICAL CENTER HIGHLAND DRIVE DIVISION FACILITY CITY OF PITTSBURGH ALLEGHENY COUNTY
	SITE PLAN
FIGURE - 4 NOT TO SCALE	SKELLY and LOY Inc. CONSULTANTS IN ENVIRONMENT - ENERGY ENGINEERING - PLANNING



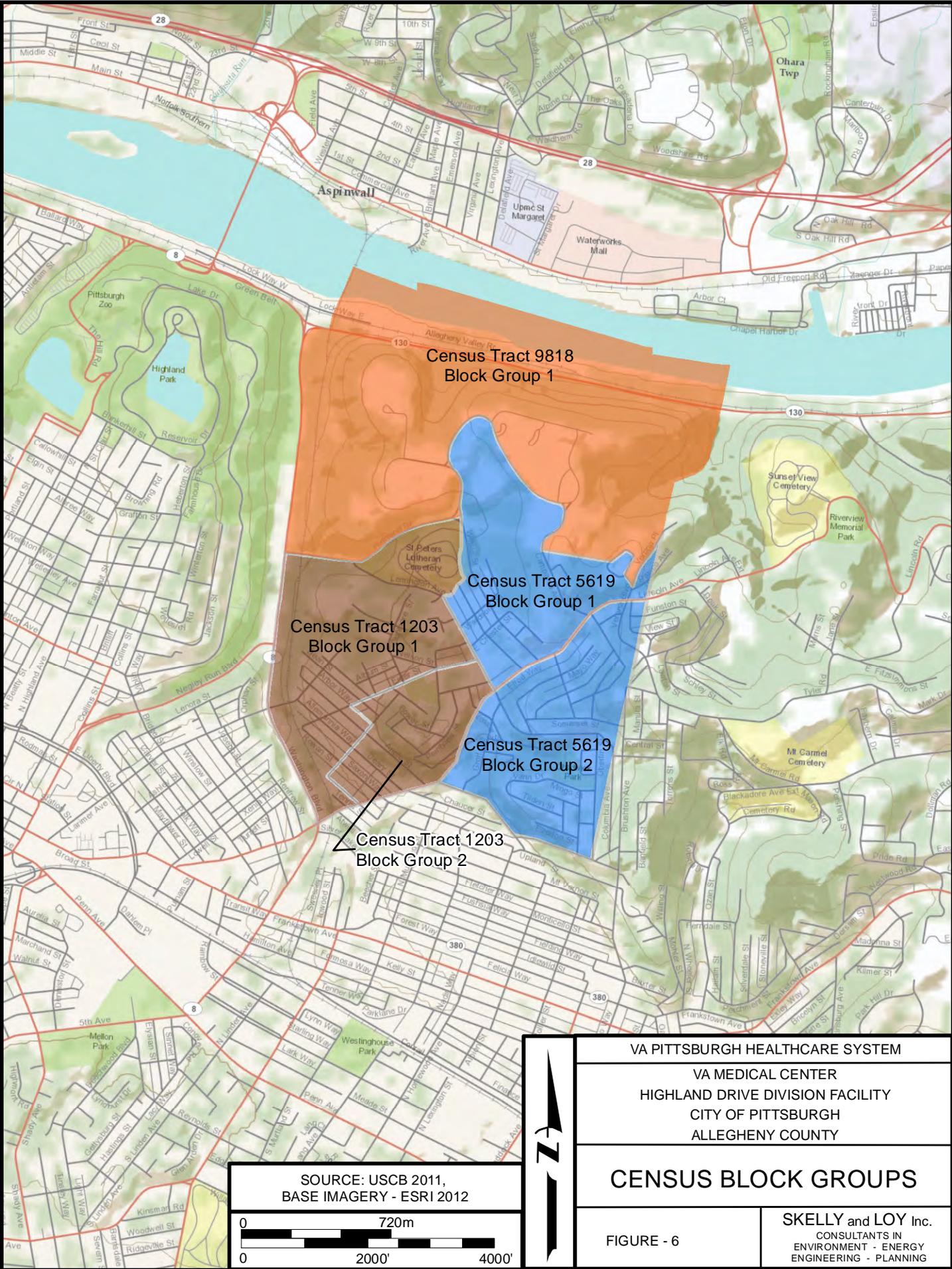
STUDY AREA

- COMMUNITY SERVICES**
- 1 VA HIGHLAND DRIVE
 - 2 ZONE 5 POLICE STATION
 - 3 FIRE ENGINE 15
 - 4 UPMC ST. MARGARET HOSPITAL
 - 5 SOUTHWESTERN VETERANS CENTER
 - 6 U.S. ARMY RESERVE CENTER
 - 7 PITTSBURGH JOB CORPS CENTER
 - 8 SHUMAN CENTER
 - 9 CHADWICK PLAYGROUND
 - 10 PAULSON PLAYGROUND
 - 11 PAULSON COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER

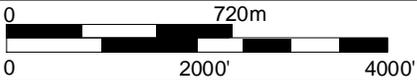


	VA PITTSBURGH HEALTHCARE SYSTEM VA MEDICAL CENTER HIGHLAND DRIVE DIVISION FACILITY CITY OF PITTSBURGH ALLEGHENY COUNTY
	LINCOLN-LEMINGTON-BELMAR NEIGHBORHOOD
	FIGURE - 5

SKELLY and LOY Inc.
 CONSULTANTS IN
 ENVIRONMENT - ENERGY
 ENGINEERING - PLANNING



SOURCE: USCB 2011,
BASE IMAGERY - ESRI 2012



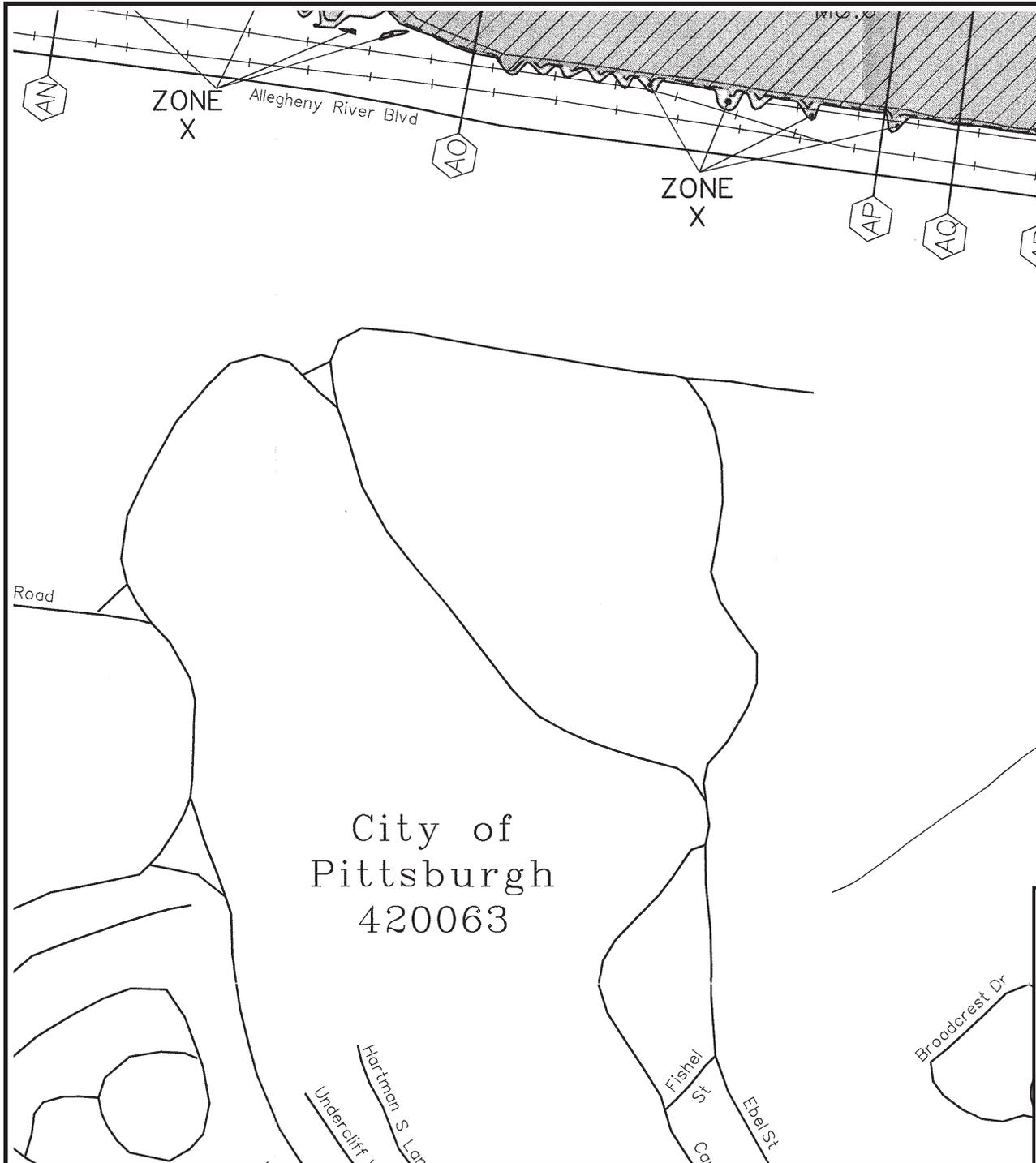
VA PITTSBURGH HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

VA MEDICAL CENTER
HIGHLAND DRIVE DIVISION FACILITY
CITY OF PITTSBURGH
ALLEGHENY COUNTY

CENSUS BLOCK GROUPS

FIGURE - 6

SKELLY and LOY Inc.
CONSULTANTS IN
ENVIRONMENT - ENERGY
ENGINEERING - PLANNING



NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM

FIRM
 FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP
 ALLEGHENY COUNTY,
 PENNSYLVANIA
 (ALL JURISDICTIONS)

PANEL 357 OF 558

(SEE MAP INDEX FOR PANELS NOT PRINTED)

CONTAINS:

COMMUNITY	NUMBER	PANEL	SUFFIX
ASPINWALL, BOROUGH OF	420005	0357	G
FOX CHAPEL, BOROUGH OF	420056	0357	G
O'HARA, TOWNSHIP OF	420088	0357	G
PENN HILLS, MUNICIPALITY OF	420092	0357	G
PITTSBURGH, CITY OF	420063	0357	G

Notice to User: The MAP NUMBER shown below should be used when placing map orders; the COMMUNITY NUMBER shown above should be used on insurance applications for the subject community.

MAP NUMBER
 42003C0357 G

MAP REVISED :
 SEPTEMBER 21, 2001



Federal Emergency Management Agency

VA PITTSBURGH HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

VA MEDICAL CENTER
 HIGHLAND DRIVE DIVISION FACILITY
 CITY OF PITTSBURGH
 ALLEGHENY COUNTY

FLOODPLAINS

FIGURE - 7
 NOT TO SCALE

SKELLY and LOY Inc.
 CONSULTANTS IN
 ENVIRONMENT - ENERGY
 ENGINEERING - PLANNING

APPENDIX



BUREAU OF FORESTRY

June 8, 2012

PNDI Number:20120301341804

Jason Harkcom
Skelly & Loy, Inc.
Fax 412-828-1475

Re: VA Pittsburgh Demolition and Disposal Project
City of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County

Dear Mr. Harkcom,

Thank you for the submission of the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) Environmental Review Receipt Number 20120301341804 for review. PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources screened this project for potential impacts to species and resources of concern under DCNR's responsibility, which includes plants, terrestrial invertebrates, natural communities, and geologic features only.

No Impact Anticipated

PNDI records indicate species or resources of concern are located in the vicinity of the project. However, based on the information you submitted concerning the nature of the project and it avoiding disturbance of the surrounding forested areas, DCNR has determined that no impact is likely. If plans change to include disturbance of the surrounding forested areas, please resubmit the project to our office for further review.

This response represents the most up-to-date summary of the PNDI data files and is valid for one (1) year from the date of this letter. An absence of recorded information does not necessarily imply actual conditions on-site. Should project plans change or additional information on listed or proposed species become available, this determination may be reconsidered.

Should the proposed work continue beyond the period covered by this letter, please resubmit the project to this agency as an "Update" (including an updated PNDI receipt, project narrative and accurate map). If the proposed work has not changed and no additional information concerning listed species is found, the project will be cleared for PNDI requirements under this agency for an additional year.

This finding applies to impacts to DCNR only. To complete your review of state and federally-listed threatened and endangered species and species of special concern, please be sure the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, PA Game Commission, and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission have been contacted regarding this project as directed by the online PNDI ER Tool found at www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Rohrbaugh', is written over a horizontal line.

Andrew Rohrbaugh, Environmental Review Specialist FOR Chris Firestone, Wild Plant Program Mgr.
Ph: 717-705-2823 ~ c-arohrbau@pa.gov



established 1866

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

FAX to: 412-828-1475

Division of Environmental Services
Natural Diversity Section
450 Robinson Lane
Bellefonte, PA 16823-9620
(814) 359-5237 Fax: (814) 359-5175

June 27, 2012

IN REPLY REFER TO
SIR # 38869

JASON HARKCOM
SKELLY AND LOY
3280 WILLIAM PITT WAY
PITTSBURGH, PA 15238

**RE: Species Impact Review (SIR) - Rare, Candidate, Threatened and Endangered Species
VA HOSPITAL DEMOLITION - PLANNING
PNDI Search Number (if available): 20120301341804
PITTSBURGH Township/Borough, ALLEGHENY County, Pennsylvania**

This responds to your inquiry about a Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) Internet Database search "potential conflict" or a threatened and endangered species impact review. These projects are screened for potential conflicts with rare, candidate, threatened or endangered species under Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission jurisdiction (fish, reptiles, amphibians, aquatic invertebrates only) using the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) database and our own files. These species of special concern are listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the Wild Resource Conservation Act, and the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Code (Chapter 75), or the Wildlife Code. The absence of recorded information from our files does not necessarily imply actual conditions on site. Future field investigations could alter this determination. The information contained in our files is routinely updated. A Species Impact Review is valid for one year only.

X **NO ADVERSE IMPACTS EXPECTED FROM THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

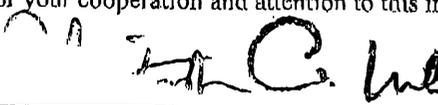
X Except for occasional transient species, rare, candidate, threatened or endangered species under our jurisdiction are not known to exist in the vicinity of the project area. Therefore, no biological assessment or further consultation regarding rare species is needed with the Commission. Should project plans change, or if additional information on listed or proposed species becomes available, this determination may be reconsidered.

_____ An element occurrence of a rare, candidate, threatened, or endangered species under our jurisdiction is known from the vicinity of the proposed project. However, given the nature of the proposed project, the immediate location, or the current status of the nearby element occurrence(s), no adverse impacts are expected to the species of special concern.

If you have any questions regarding this review, please contact the biologist indicated below:

_____ Chris Urban 814-359-5113 _____ Kathy Gipe 814-359-5186
X Nevin Welte 412-586-2334 _____ Bob Morgan 814-359-5129

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and attention to this important matter of species conservation and habitat protection.

SIGNATURE:  DATE: June 27, 2012
Christopher A. Urban
Chief, Natural Diversity Section

Our Mission:

www.fishandboat.com

To protect, conserve and enhance the Commonwealth's aquatic resources and provide fishing and boating opportunities.