

MITIGATED FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

California Area Indian Health Service

Property Transfer of the U.S. Army Reserve Center

Santa Barbara, California

The California Area Office of the Indian Health Service (IHS), an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) proposes the transfer of the former U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) Center, Fremont Hall and Organizational Maintenance Shop (OMS) to American Indian Health and Services, Inc. (AIHS). The property is located at 3237 State Street, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County, California (hereinafter the Center). IHS is the Federal agency with primary responsibility for the health care and health advocacy of American Indian and Alaska Native people. The mission of IHS is to raise the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level. IHS provides a comprehensive health service delivery system that includes the provision of health services through direct services, contracts and compacts with Indian Tribes and Tribal Organizations via the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, and contracts and grants with urban Indian organizations via Title V of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA), codified as amended, 25 U.S.C. §§ 1651-1660i. The AIHS is a Santa Barbara based non-profit that provides medical, dental, pediatric and behavioral services to meet the growing healthcare needs of urban Indians pursuant to Title V of the IHCIA.

Pursuant to Title V of IHCIA, IHS provides contract and grant funding to urban Indian organizations “for the provision of health care and referral services for urban Indians residing in the urban centers in which such organizations are situated.” 25 U.S.C. § 1653(a). AIHS is an urban Indian organization under contract with IHS, providing health care and referral services to urban Indians in Santa Barbara, California. AIHS currently operates in a small retail plaza and during the last decade, its patient population has more than quadrupled. In 2017, AIHS patient encounters, Urban Indian and non-Urban Indian totaled more than 34,000. Without AIHS, the next nearest, full ambulatory Urban Indian Health Provider is located over 200 miles in San Diego. The AIHS campus has grown significantly over the past decade in order to address the unmet health needs of the community. Historically, AIHS has leased close to 16,000 square feet of retail space converted into clinic space for pediatric, medical and dental services. The space is not contiguous and its disconnected configuration leads to significant inefficiencies and barriers to providing optimal services. Furthermore, space is utilized under short-term leases, some of which have or are about to expire leaving AIHS few viable options to remain centrally located within its service area.

In October 2023, the IHS prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed transfer of the former Center, Fremont Hall and Organizational Maintenance Shop (OMS) from the IHS to the AIHS. The transfer of the Center would have few actual, direct environmental impacts; however, once the Center has been transferred to AIHS the redevelopment of the Center into a health care facility could potentially have future impacts, which would be subject to state and local regulations, any state and local reviews, the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) executed for the protection of historic properties, and any deed restrictions made a part of the transfer. Any potential direct, indirect and/or cumulative impacts associated with future actions would be addressed in applicable state and local reviews. The Department of Health and Human Services – Indian Health Service (IHS) California Area Office is not a project proponent nor future developer of the site.

The EA was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 U.S.C. §§ 4321-4347; Public Law 91-190), the Council on Environmental Quality regulations [40 Code of Federal

Regulations (C.F.R.) Parts 1500-1508] for implementing NEPA, the DHHS General Administrative Manual, Part 30, Environmental Protection, and the IHS Environmental Review Manual.

The affected environment, a description of the Proposed Action and analyses of potential impacts are included in the EA, which is incorporated herein by reference. The EA also includes a “No Action Alternative.” IHS examined potential impacts to the following environmental resources: recreation, soundscape resources, historic properties, socioeconomic, environmental justice, land use, public services and infrastructure, and hazardous materials and hazardous waste. Considering the findings in the EA, the IHS has made a determination that the action will not have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment through implementation of the project’s mitigation measures as identified in the Environmental Assessment.

The following supports the Finding of No Significant Impact:

Recreation

The Proposed Action was reviewed and analyzed for potential impacts to recreation. The Property is located adjacent to MacKenzie Park and approximately 0.1 mile from the Santa Barbara Golf Club. The Proposed Action would not impact recreational resources as the amount of parkland used by the City would not change. Future use of the Center as an AIHS health care facility would not impede recreation at either MacKenzie Park or the Santa Barbara Golf Club.

Soundscape Resources

The Proposed Action was reviewed and analyzed for potential impacts to soundscape resources. The Property is located in a heavily urbanized area, with a soundscape consisting of heavy traffic along State Street and users of the adjacent MacKenzie Park. The Property, which is currently occupied by AIHS, through an agreement with the federal government, and operates as a community healthcare center, generates minimal noise. The Proposed transfer of the Center does not include construction, demolition, or the use of trucks or heavy machinery. However, any future development, construction and/or demolition would be subject to the MOA, California environmental laws and local regulations and requirements as applicable. Ownership transfer of the Center to AIHS and subsequent Property transition into a health care services clinic, would increase the number of individuals and families visiting the site daily. However, the increased noise from traffic created by more visitors would not result in any noticeable changes to the local soundscape. Therefore, the Proposed Action of transferring the property would not adversely impact soundscape resources.

Historic Properties

The Proposed Action was reviewed and analyzed for potential affects to historic properties in accordance with Sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), 54 U.S.C. §§ 306108 and 306101, and its Section 106 regulations at 36 C.F.R. Part 800. The USAR Fremont Hall significance evaluation was updated by a qualified architectural historian who meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards, pursuant to 36 CFR Part 61, for Architectural History. Results of the updated evaluation of the property indicate that the Fremont Hall USAR Center and the OMS remain an excellent example of a regionally-modified Reisner & Urbahn sprawling plan, 200-man facility and retain all aspects of historical integrity. The property’s period of historical significance under National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Criterion 3 is 1956-1961, beginning with the completion of construction of the

main building and ending with the 1961 construction of the assembly hall and the OMS building. Subsequent alterations to the building have not compromised the character-defining features of Reisner & Urbahn's design. Therefore, the Center and the OMS are still considered historic properties for the purposes of Section 106 of the NHPA.

The Proposed Action would transfer the building at 3237 State Street out of federal ownership/control to a non-profit organization (AIHS), which has been considered by IHS to be an adverse effect to historic properties. In addition, the Property is subject to other potential adverse effects that may occur in the future, such as redevelopment of the Center into a healthcare facility, as a result of the Proposed Action. Following consultation with the California Office of Historic Preservation (SHPO) and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (AHCP), IHS, the SHPO, the City of Santa Barbara, and the AIHS executed a legally binding Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to ensure the long-term preservation of the property's historical significance, and included stipulations for conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, specifically the Standards for Rehabilitation, and any National Park Service (NPS) Preservation Briefs. With execution of the MOA and Quitclaim Deed, adverse effects associated with the property transfer will be adequately mitigated.

Socioeconomics

The Proposed Action was reviewed and analyzed for potential impacts to socioeconomics. The Proposed Action would not have any direct impacts to the demographics, employment, income, or housing of Santa Barbara. The future redevelopment and expansion of a modern AIHS health care services center would increase employment opportunities for local residents and increase availability of affordable and accessible health care for all members of the Native American, American Indian, and Alaska Native populations. Demographics and housing stock in Santa Barbara would not be impacted by the negligible increase in staff needed to operate the clinic as it is assumed that staff is currently residing in the immediate area. In addition, since the AIHS is exempt from federal, state, and local taxes, the healthcare facility would not generate tax revenue. Since the beneficial impacts of the AIHS clinic would not have a measurable effect on demographics, employment, incomes, or housing in the City of Santa Barbara, the social impacts of the Proposed Action are less than significant.

Environmental Justice

The Proposed Action was reviewed and analyzed for potential impacts to environmental justice. More than 40% of the City of Santa Barbara's population is composed of minority individuals, with approximately 13.7% of the population living below the poverty line. The Proposed Action and subsequent conversion of the Center into a healthcare clinic would not displace or cause disproportionate adverse effects to minority or low-income populations in Santa Barbara. Rather, the development of an AIHS health care facility would have beneficial impacts to American Indian and Alaska Native communities by providing additional health care services. Impacts would be less than significant.

Land Use

The Proposed Action was reviewed and analyzed for potential impacts to land use. The transfer of the Center ownership from IHS to AIHS would not affect the existing land use at the site or the site's current inconsistency with the RS-7.5 zoning designation (Residential Single Unit with a 7,500 square foot minimum lot size) and Property land use designation. However, to convert the Center from the USAR

facilities to a health care facility, AIHS has applied for a General Plan Amendment and Specific Plan/Rezone with the Santa Barbara Planning and Zoning Department. Hearings for the General Plan Amendment and Specific Plan/Rezone with the Santa Barbara City Planning Commission and City Council are anticipated to occur in Fall 2023 and Winter 2024. With approval of the General Plan Amendment and Specific Plan/Rezone acquisition of a conditional use permit or the amendment of current zoning designations, any land use inconsistency would be resolved. The impacts of the Proposed Action on land use would be less than significant.

Public Services and Infrastructure

The Proposed Action was reviewed and analyzed for potential impacts to public services and infrastructure. The Proposed Action would not affect public services because service providers to the site would remain the same. Future use of the property as an AIHS health care facility could potentially increase the volume of water, electricity, and natural gas used at the site and produce a higher volume of sewage and solid waste. There could potentially be a minor increase in demands for local law enforcement, emergency fire services and public transportation; however, these demands would not exceed those that are typical of an urbanized area and would not exceed the capabilities of service and infrastructure providers. According to 2030 traffic modeling for nearby intersections and highway onramps, traffic generated by the health care facility would be negligible, constituting less than one percent of traffic capacity at these locations. Therefore, project-specific traffic effects are not anticipated as a result of the Proposed Action and the increased demands of public services and infrastructure would be less than significant.

Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste

The Proposed Action was reviewed and analyzed for potential impacts from hazardous materials and hazardous waste. The Proposed Action would not result in any impacts from hazardous materials and hazardous waste because the property transfer would not involve any hazardous materials or wastes. During any activities that disturb asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paint, these materials would be managed and disposed of in accordance with applicable regulatory standards to prevent contamination. The AIHS use of the Property as a health care facility would regularly produce medical waste, as well as small quantities of janitorial products. In accordance with applicable laws and regulations, all hazardous materials and hazardous waste generated by the health care facility would be required to be stored and disposed of properly. Future use of the Center as an AIHS health care facility would not have an adverse impact on generation or storage of hazardous waste.

Other Resources

The Proposed Action was found to have insignificant or beneficial impacts on the following resources and/or issues due to the nature and/or location of the Proposed Action: Air Quality, Water Resources, Soil and Geologic Resources, Vegetation Resources, Wildlife Resources (including threatened and endangered species and invasive species), and Visual Resources. Additionally, no significant adverse cumulative impacts would result from the Proposed Action.

Public Review

The EA, Notice of Availability, and Draft Mitigated Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were posted on the IHS website (<https://www.ihs.gov/california/index.cfm/about-us/oehe/ofc-assoc-dir/nepa/>). The IHS/CAO made these documents available for a 30-day review period, November 17, 2023 to December 17, 2023. Copies of the documents were also available at the locations listed below.

- American Indian Health & Services located at 3237 State St, Santa Barbara, CA 93110
- Santa Barbara Public Library located at 40 E Anapamu St, Santa Barbara, CA 93101
- City of Santa Barbara Community Development Planning Counter located at 630 Garden St, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

The IHS took no administrative action on the above-described Proposed Action prior to expiration of the comment period and review of all comments received. No comments were received by IHS by the close of the public comment period on December 17, 2023.

Finding

After review of the EA and the execution of the Memorandum of Agreement for historic properties, the IHS/CAO has determined the proposed project will have no significant impact on the quality of the human environment; therefore, requiring the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not warranted.

The FONSI is hereby approved and will be available to any agency or individual upon request by contacting Donna M. Meyer, CEM, HPS, Environmental Protection Specialist, 650 Capitol Mall, Suite 7-100, Sacramento, CA 95814, 916-930-3981 x 342, donna.meyer@ihs.gov.

Approved:

Date: December 19, 2023

Beverly Miller
Director
California Area Indian Health Service