

# Appendix E. Environmental Impact

## National Environmental Policy Act and VA Implementing Regulations Requirements

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is required to evaluate all major actions in accordance with the regulations set forth by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Title 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508; and VA Implementing Regulations, Environmental Effects of VA Actions, Title 38 CFR, Part 26 (51 FR 37182, Oct. 20, 1986).

Sec. 1501.2 requires federal agencies to integrate the NEPA process with other planning at the earliest possible time to ensure that planning and decisions reflect environmental values, avoid delays later in the process, and head off potential conflicts. As such, the NEPA process was informally initiated within VA concurrent with development of the Draft Master Plan.

VA Implementing Regulations Part 26.4 Policy.

1. VA must act with care in carrying out its mission of providing services for veterans to ensure it does so consistently with national environmental policies. Specifically, VA shall ensure that all practical means and measures are used to protect, restore, and enhance the quality of the human environment; to avoid or minimize adverse environmental consequences, consistently with other national policy considerations; and to attain the following objectives:
  - a. Achieve the fullest possible use of the environment, without degradation, or undesirable and unintended consequences;
  - b. Preserve historical, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, while maintaining, where possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety and individual choice;
  - c. Achieve a balance between the use and development of resources, within the sustained capacity of the ecological system involved; and,
  - d. Enhance the quality of renewable resources while working toward the maximum attainable recycling of nonrenewable resources.
2. VA elements shall:
  - a. Interpret and administer the policies, regulations, and public laws of the United States in accordance with the policies set forth in the NEPA and CEQ Regulations;
  - b. Prepare concise and clear environmental documents which shall be supported by documented environmental analyses;
  - c. Integrate the requirements of NEPA with Department planning and decision-making procedures;
  - d. Encourage and facilitate involvement by affected agencies, organizations, interest groups and the public in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment; and,
  - e. Consider alternatives to the proposed actions which are encompassed by the range of alternatives discussed in relevant environmental documents, and described in the environmental impact statement.

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