
U.S. General Services
Administration



**DRAFT
ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT**

Trout River
Land Port of Entry

Trout River,
New York
November 2024



Draft

Environmental Assessment

Trout River Land Port of Entry

Trout River, New York

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Prepared for:



U.S. General Services Administration – Region 2
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November 2024

**DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FOR
TROUT RIVER LAND PORT OF ENTRY
TROUT RIVER, NEW YORK**

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ABA	Architectural Barriers Act
APE	area of potential effect
CBP	U.S. Department of Homeland Security - Customs and Border Protection
CDC	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Centers for Disease Control
CEQ	U.S. Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CWA	Clean Water Act
EA	environmental assessment
EISA	Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007
ESA	Endangered Species Act
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	U.S. Department of Transportation - Federal Highway Administration
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
FWS	U.S. Department of the Interior - Fish and Wildlife Service
GPR	ground-penetrating radar
GSA	U.S. General Services Administration
HVAC	heating, ventilation, and air conditioning
IPaC	Information for Planning and Consultation
JD	Jurisdictional Determination
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
LPOE	land port of entry
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NRCS	U.S. Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NY SHPO	New York State Historic Preservation Office
NYS	New York State
NYSDEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
NYSDOT	New York State Department of Transportation

PEJA	Potential Environmental Justice Area
Phase I ESA	Phase I Environmental Site Assessment
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
TU	test unit
USACE	U.S. Department of Defense - Army Corps of Engineers
USC	United States Code
USGS	U.S. Department of the Interior - U.S. Geological Survey
HUC	Hydrologic Unit Code
USN	Unique Site Number

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) proposes to reconfigure, expand, and fully modernize the Land Port of Entry (LPOE) located north of the village of Trout River, New York. This environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared as required in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 ([NEPA]; 42 United States Code 4321 et seq.), the President’s Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1500–1508) (CEQ 1978), and GSA’s Public Building Services NEPA Desk Guide (GSA 1999). This EA is required to determine whether the Proposed Action would have significant environmental impacts.

Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of the project is to reconfigure, expand, and fully modernize the Trout River LPOE. The Proposed Action is intended to address operational inefficiencies, increase inspection rates, improve traffic flow, and accommodate the U.S. Department of Homeland Security - Customs and Border Protection (CBP) request for more space to accommodate additional support staff, functional program areas, and additional parking. The Proposed Action would improve efficiency for travelers and for Federal agency staff but is not expected to increase the volume of traffic through the LPOE. The Proposed Action would also improve security and ensure that CBP has the accommodations necessary to carry out its mission. The Proposed Action is needed to bring the LPOE into compliance with Federal infrastructure and security requirements and support the Government’s mission. The proposed project would bring the building up to current GSA Facilities Standards for the Public Buildings Service (P100). The existing facility does not meet the Government’s needs due to its space constraints and limitations associated with its aging infrastructure.

Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives

Under the Proposed Action, GSA would award a contract to modernize and expand the existing Trout River LPOE with new facilities connecting to the existing building including a new outbuilding to house the fire suppression system, water storage tank, and the emergency generator. The Proposed Action would bring the LPOE into compliance with current Federal infrastructure and security requirements and provide additional staff workspace, functional program areas, and adequate parking to meet the Government’s operational requirements. The EA analyzes two alternatives—the Proposed Action Alternative and the No-Action Alternative. Under the No-Action Alternative, GSA would not modernize or expand the Trout River LPOE facility. The existing facility would continue to operate in its current condition.

Environmental Impacts

The affected environment of the Proposed Action Alternative site and its immediate surroundings is discussed in Section 3 of this EA. The potential direct and indirect effects of implementing the Proposed Action and the No-Action Alternative are also identified in Section 3. Resource areas evaluated in this EA are water resources, including surface waters and wetlands; cultural resources, including archaeology and historical resources; socioeconomics and

environmental justice; and traffic, transportation, and parking. No significant impacts on these resources were identified.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) proposes to reconfigure, expand, and fully modernize the Land Port of Entry (LPOE) located north of the village of Trout River, New York. The existing Trout River LPOE building does not satisfy the mission requirements of the Government because the building is not large enough to accommodate additional support staff, provide functional program areas, or accommodate adequate parking. The existing Trout River LPOE also does not meet the Government's current security, infrastructure, and operational requirements. The Proposed Action would modernize and expand the existing LPOE in line with current design standards and support the Government's operational requirements.

This environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared as required in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 ([NEPA]; 42 United States Code [USC] 4321 et seq.), the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500–1508) (CEQ 1978), and GSA's Public Building Services NEPA Desk Guide (GSA 1999). This EA is required to determine if the Proposed Action would have significant environmental impacts.

1.1 Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, the GSA would award a contract to modernize and expand the existing Trout River LPOE with new facilities connecting to the existing building including a new outbuilding to house the fire suppression system, water storage tank, and the emergency generator. The Proposed Action would bring the LPOE into compliance with current Federal infrastructure and security requirements and provide additional staff workspace, functional program areas, and adequate parking to meet the Government's operational requirements.

1.2 Background

The Trout River LPOE is located in a mostly rural area of New York on the United States–Canada border. The crossing connects Athelstan, Quebec, to Constable, New York, and can be reached by New York State (NYS) Route 30 on the U.S. side and by Quebec Route 138 on the Canadian side (Figure 1).

The existing Trout River LPOE site is a 1.75-acre rectangular parcel located at the northwest intersection of NYS Route 30 and NYS Route 20 (Trout River-Westville Road) overlooking the Trout River. The Trout River LPOE faces northeast onto NYS Highway 30. The village of Trout River, New York, is located immediately east and south of the inspection station. The property is abutted on the west side by abandoned farmland in varying states of succession. All adjacent parcels to the east, south, and west of the Trout River LPOE parcel are privately owned.

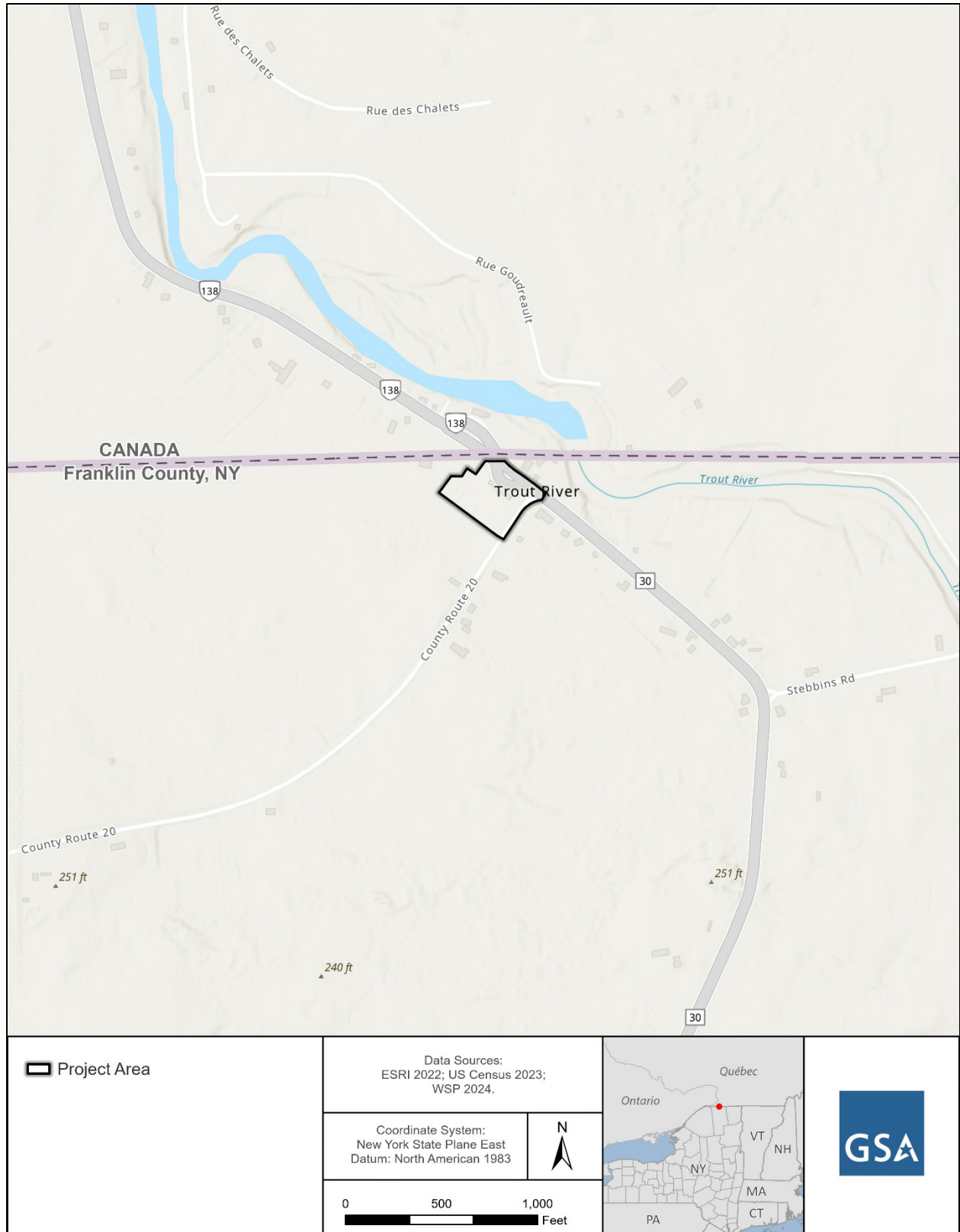


Figure 1. Location of the Project Area

The existing Trout River LPOE primary building is a rectangular plan, wood frame, two-story inspection station in a Colonial Revival style (Figure 2). The existing building, constructed in 1932, is considered historically significant and was placed on the National Register in 2007. The two-story main building is side-gabled with a gambrel roof, and on either side of the main building is a one-story, four-bay, hipped roof garage wing. Both wings and the primary building are clad in English bond brickwork and have roofs covered with green and purple slate tiles. A flat-roofed vehicular canopy that covers three bays is affixed to the front elevation of the inspection station. The front of the inspection station faces northeast, and the total building program runs axially from northwest to southeast. Three non-covered outdoor parking areas are available: one to the northwest, one at the southeast, and one at the south end of the building. Parking is limited and parking areas next to the building are considered seasonal. During the winter months the spaces are not usable because sliding ice and snow from the roof of the building would damage vehicles in these spaces and create safety concerns for staff and visitors.



Figure 2. Existing Trout River LPOE

The existing Trout River LPOE building does not support the operational requirements of CBP due to space constraints and issues associated with the aging infrastructure. The building is not large enough to accommodate additional support staff, provide functional program areas, or

accommodate additional parking. The LPOE does not meet current Federal security and infrastructure requirements and does not meet Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) accessibility standards (available at: <https://www.access-board.gov/aba/>).

In November 2020, GSA commissioned a feasibility study for modernizing and expanding the Trout River LPOE. The feasibility study assessed programmatic needs and considered a variety of options to make the aging facility more suitable for the mission and operation of CBP. The feasibility study took an iterative approach to identify potential solutions, evaluate them based on various aspects of feasibility, and identify a preferred alternative. Results of the feasibility study informed the development of a Proposed Action Alternative (preferred alternative), as described in Chapter 2. Alternatives that were evaluated in the feasibility study but not selected as the preferred alternative based on inefficiencies, logistical drawbacks, or other considerations are described in Section 2.3, Alternatives Considered but Not Carried Forward.

1.3 Purpose and Need for Proposed Action

The purpose of the project is to reconfigure, expand, and fully modernize the Trout River LPOE. The Proposed Action is intended to address operational inefficiencies, increase inspection rates, improve traffic flow, and to accommodate the CBP request for more space to accommodate additional support staff, functional program areas, and additional parking. The Proposed Action would improve efficiency for travelers and for Federal agency staff but is not expected to increase the volume of traffic through the LPOE. The Proposed Action would also improve security and ensure that the Government has the accommodations necessary to carry out its mission.

The Proposed Action is needed to bring the LPOE into compliance with Federal infrastructure and security requirements for LPOEs and support the operational needs of the Government. The proposed project would bring the building up to current GSA Facilities Standards for the Public Buildings Service (P100). The existing facility does not meet the operational needs of the Government due to its space constraints and limitations associated with its aging infrastructure.

1.4 Section 106 Consultation

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), 16 USC §§ 470 et seq., requires Federal agencies to consider the effects of their undertakings on cultural resources, including historic and archaeological resources, to consult with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) a reasonable opportunity to comment on ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects to cultural resources. The Trout River LPOE was constructed in 1931 and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 2007 as part of a Multiple Property Listing for U.S. Border Inspection Stations. GSA performed an archaeological assessment of the project area as part of the 2020 feasibility study and a Phase IA Historical, Cultural, Archaeological Resource Assessment and Phase IB Archeological Field Reconnaissance Survey (shovel tests) were

completed in 2023. GSA held an initial meeting with the SHPO on May 20, 2022, to provide an overview of the proposed project. Because the proposed project has the potential to affect historic and/or archaeological resources, GSA intends to undertake the project in a way that limits impact to the historic property. GSA consulted with the New York SHPO on the historic existing LPOE and has provided project and architectural details on the proposed plans for the rehabilitation of the existing LPOE for incorporating the existing historic building into the design of the expanded LPOE.

A Phase I archaeological survey was conducted including excavations within a previously identified late-nineteenth to early-twentieth century archaeological site (Trout River LPOE Historic Site). The survey report recommended a Phase II site evaluation be conducted. The SHPO concurred with this recommendation on September 15, 2023. A revised report was submitted to the SHPO in October 2023 to account for design changes. The revised report also included a Phase II workplan for the Trout River LPOE Historic Site. The SHPO approved the workplan on December 1, 2023.

Hartgen Archeological Associates, Inc. (Hartgen) conducted the Phase II archeological site evaluation of the Trout River LPOE Historic Site (USN 03309.000041). A two-phase approach was taken to study this site, including a ground-penetrating radar (GPR) survey to isolate and target specific GPR anomalies followed by standard test unit excavations to investigate the identified anomalies. Prior investigations had confirmed that the site was the former location of a historic hotel built in 1876 by Patrick H. Lahey and operated by Ed Dolan from 1884 to around 1930. The hotel and other neighboring buildings were demolished in 1932 to make way for the Trout River LPOE.

The GPR survey was conducted over approximately 3,245 square meters (m²) of the site, identifying four significant subsurface anomalies; after which the test unit (TU) excavations (Test Unit is a square or rectangular excavation), informed by the GPR survey, investigated these anomalies. These four anomalies were found to represent subgrade structural features (building foundations and a potential well) associated with the use of the site as a hotel. The artifacts recovered that were determined to be historic (rather than modern) all pointed to a typical domestic occupation of the site, which also would be consistent with a hotel assemblage. The nature and distribution of the identified deposits also suggests that much of the identified materials were removed from their original primary depositional context and redeposited in mixed secondary depositional contexts. The substantial number of identified modern materials intermixed with the historic artifacts also confirms that the archeological feature appears to have been heavily disturbed. This deposition pattern would limit further analyses of the site's occupation beyond its already confirmed residential character and general date of occupation. Consequently, it has been determined that the Trout River LPOE Historic site no longer retains sufficient aspects of integrity, as it has been significantly disturbed by intentional demolition and the installation of the LPOE facility in 1930s. Extensive buried utilities, including upgrades in

the early 2000s, also negatively affected the site. Hartgen recommended that the Trout River LPOE Historic site (Unique Site Number [USN] 03309.000041) was not eligible for inclusion on the National Register. The SHPO provided GSA with a concurrence letter dated August 30, 2024, stating that the Trout River LPOE Historic Site is not eligible for the NRHP, and no further archaeological work is necessary for this site.

1.5 Tribal Consultation

The SHPO provided GSA with a list of Tribes and other potentially interested parties to be included for Section 106 consultation. GSA contacted the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council via email on March 6, 2023, to propose a meeting to inform the Tribe of the Proposed Action and gain an understanding of Tribal perspectives, considerations, or concerns related to the proposed improvements to the Trout River LPOE. The Tribe responded that their members do not use the Trout River LPOE, are not concerned about potential impacts of the Proposed Action on Tribal resources, and do not wish to have further involvement in the NEPA process.

1.6 Section 404 Consultation and Jurisdictional Determination

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands. Proposed activities are regulated through a permit review process. An individual permit is required for potentially significant impacts. Individual permits are reviewed by the U.S. Department of Defense - Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), which evaluates applications under a public interest review, as well as the environmental criteria set forth in the CWA Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines. The USACE also conducts or verifies Jurisdictional Determinations (JDs). Because the proposed project has the potential to affect wetlands, GSA must consult with the USACE and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). GSA consulted with the NYSDEC concerning any wetlands under the jurisdictional of the State. There are no State regulated wetlands at or near the project site. GSA conducted a wetlands and waterbodies delineation to determine the presence and extent of freshwater wetlands and/or waterbodies within the project area. The fieldwork was conducted on October 15, 2022, and September 13, 2023. The USACE reviewed the delineated wetland boundaries on June 18, 2024. GSA is currently applying for a JD through the USACE. As applied, the Preliminary JD would assume that all wetland and waterbody features identified through the delineation would be federally jurisdictional. At any future point in the design/permitting process, an Approved JD could be pursued for wetland and/or waterbody features that are believed to be non-jurisdictional.

1.7 Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultation

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) requires Federal agencies to consult with the U.S. Department of Interior - Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) when any project or action it authorizes, funds, or carries out may affect a species listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA, species that are candidates for listing, or designated critical habitat. GSA held a virtual

meeting with the FWS on September 30, 2022, to provide an overview of the Proposed Action and solicit feedback and consultation.

The proposed action was reviewed for potential impacts to existing threatened and endangered species by consultation with the FWS via its Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) system. Information obtained from the FWS IPaC system's official species list indicated that there are no listed species at the project site, and therefore formal consultation is not required. The only ESA-listed or candidate species potentially occurring in the project area is the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). The monarch butterfly is a candidate for listing under the ESA but is not currently a listed species.

The FWS noted the Proposed Action does not require further consultation under ESA Section 7 and is "not likely to adversely affect" ESA-listed species. FWS provided letters and email communications (included in Appendix A) to document completion of ESA Section 7 consultation.

1.8 Other Agency Consultation

GSA held a virtual meeting with NYSDEC on September 16, 2022, to inform the agency of the Proposed Action and gather any concerns or information regarding wildlife and wildlife habitat that should be considered in the environmental analysis. During the meeting, NYSDEC indicated that there are no known State-listed species of concern within the project area. NYSDEC also confirmed that the project area is outside the range of protected bats and therefore would not provide roosting or foraging habitat. Consequently, NYSDEC did not recommend surveys in the project area.

The project will disturb more than 5,000 square feet of land and will therefore need to meet the requirements of Section 438 of the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA) of 2007. Under Section 438, Federal agencies are required to reduce stormwater runoff from Federal development and redevelopment projects to protect water resources and to restore the redevelopment hydrology to the maximum extent possible regarding temperature, rate, volume, and duration of flow. GSA will use various stormwater management systems to meet the EISA requirements.

Because the action would permanently convert soils designated as prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance, GSA consulted with the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in accordance with the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA). For the purposes of compliance with the FPPA, NRCS determined that the lands in question were not subject to the FPPA pursuant to review letter dated September 27, 2024 (included in Appendix A).

1.9 Public Participation

GSA held a virtual community engagement meeting on January 17, 2023. Thirty-eight people attended the meeting. The meeting was attended by diverse stakeholders representing Federal, State, and local government agencies; Canadian provincial government agencies; and members of the business community. Meeting attendees included representatives from CBP, the U.S. Department of Transportation - Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), Province of Quebec Government Relations, North County Chamber of Commerce, Franklin County, and Vinumport Duty Free store. During the meeting, GSA gave a presentation on the project background and goals. The presentation also provided an overview of the NEPA process and next steps for project planning and compliance. Two comments were received during the open discussion period that followed the presentation. Both comments were related to GSA's plans for the historic building. During the meeting GSA indicated that it plans to retain the building in some way, either by reusing all or a portion of it or through historic preservation. GSA noted that they have consulted with the New York SHPO on the historic existing LPOE and have provided project and architectural details on the proposed plans for the rehabilitation of the existing LPOE for incorporating the existing historic building into the design of the expanded LPOE. Consultation with the SHPO will continue as required. None of the participants expressed opposition to the proposed project.

1.9.1 Draft Environmental Assessment Review

This draft EA is available to the public at the GSA website (<https://www.gsa.gov/troutriverea>); at the Wead Library located at 64 Elm Street, Malone, New York 12953. The draft EA is available for a 30-calendar-day public review period. A Notice of Availability for the draft EA was published in *The Malone Telegram* announcing the availability of the document and initiation of the 30-day comment period. At the closing of the public review period, all comments received at the public meeting, via email or in the mail, will be addressed and included in Appendix A of the Final EA.

A virtual public meeting regarding the proposed project will be held at 6:00 p.m. on November 21, 2024, and is accessible from the GSA website at <https://www.gsa.gov/troutriverea>. Attendees will be provided the opportunity to comment on the proposed project during the public meeting.

Interested parties can submit all comments via email or via U.S. Postal Service and must be postmarked before the end of the 30-day comment period. Any questions or comments should be directed to Thomas Burke, GSA NEPA Program Manager, One World Trade Center, 55th Floor, Room 55W09, New York, NY 10007, thomas.w.burke@gsa.gov.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Description of the Proposed Action

In November 2020, the GSA commissioned a feasibility study for the Trout River LPOE to develop a solution to satisfy the current and long-term Federal asset and program needs. GSA identified the Proposed Action based on the results of the feasibility study.

The Proposed Action would modernize and expand the existing Trout River LPOE with new facilities connecting and adjacent to the existing building. The Proposed Action would bring the LPOE into compliance with current Federal infrastructure and security requirements and provide additional staff workspace, functional program areas, and adequate parking to meet the Government's operational requirements. The proposed renovated and expanded LPOE would include two inbound inspection lanes (with canopy), one primary non-commercial vehicle inspection booth, one commercial vehicle inspection booth, and a 100-foot by 25-foot outbound inspection canopy. The majority of the proposed renovated LPOE would be located within the existing 1.75-acre site. Land acquisition of approximately 2.0 acres would also be required on the west side of the LPOE parcel (currently a vacant lot) to accommodate the west parking area, snow removal, and stormwater management. In addition, land acquisition of up to approximately 0.25 acres would be required east of the existing facility to construct new inspection lanes located on NYS Route 30. During construction, the Trout River LPOE would close for 20 to 24 months, and traffic would be diverted to the Fort Covington LPOE in Fort Covington, New York and the Chateaugay LPOE in Chateaugay, New York.

The project is pursuing a Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) version 4 (v4) Gold-level certification, and a 30% energy reduction compared to the ASHRAE 90.1 2019 for the modernized and expanded LPOE. The facility will reduce its carbon emissions using an all-electric heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system, which will use high-efficiency ground source heat pumps and on-site renewable energy (photovoltaic panels).

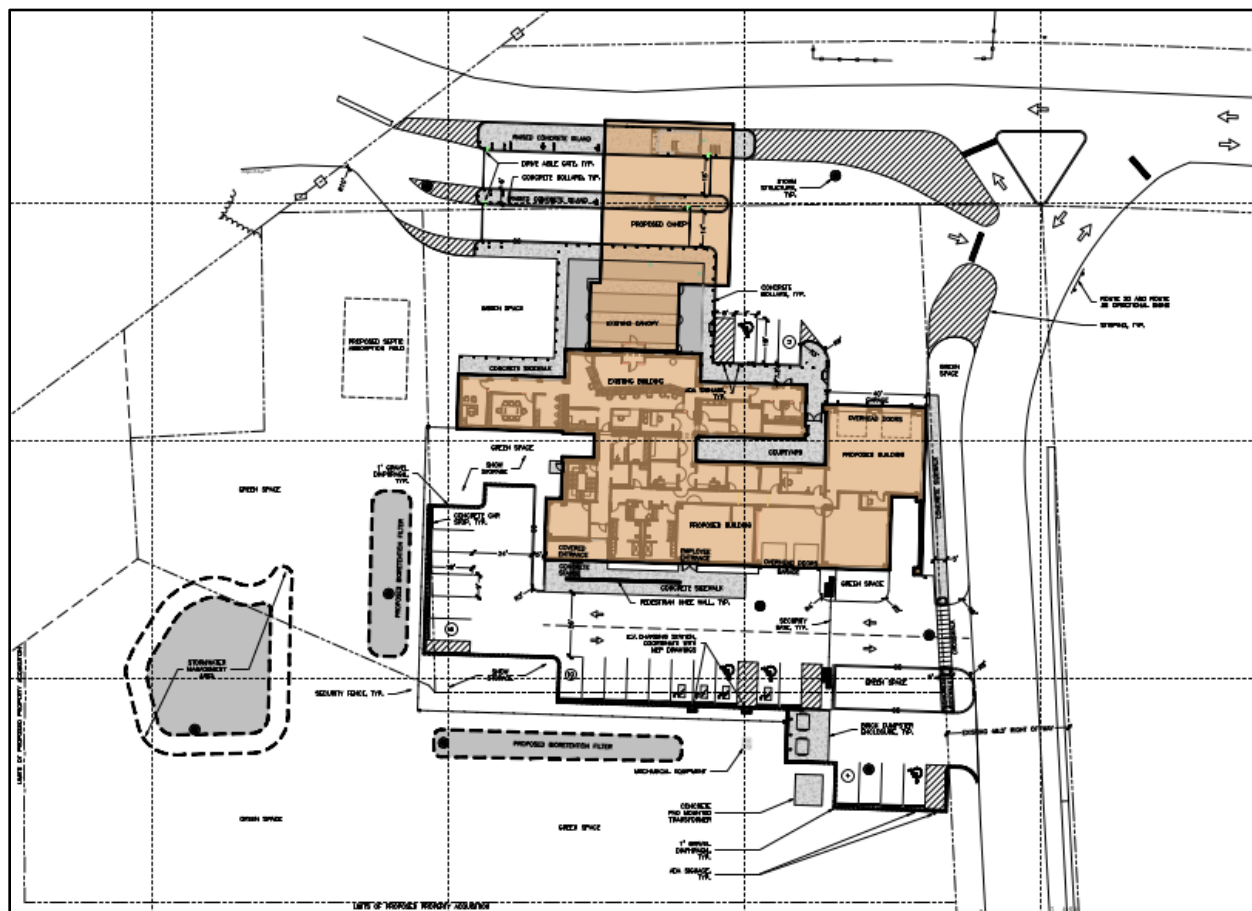


Figure 3. Proposed Site Plan

2.2 Alternatives

This EA analyzes the potential impacts of two alternatives: the No-Action Alternative and the Proposed Action Alternative.

2.2.1 No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, GSA would not modernize and expand the existing Trout River LPOE building, acquire adjacent land, and construct an expanded LPOE facility. The existing facility would continue to operate in its current condition.

The No-Action Alternative would not meet the Government's purpose and need because the existing facility is not large enough to accommodate additional support staff, provide functional program areas, or accommodate adequate parking needed to support the needs of CBP. Additionally, the existing facility does not comply with Federal infrastructure and security requirements for LPOEs.

2.2.2 Proposed Action Alternative (Preferred Alternative)

Under the Proposed Action, GSA would award a contract to modernize and expand the existing Trout River LPOE with new facilities connecting and adjacent to the existing building. The Proposed Action would bring the LPOE into compliance with current Federal infrastructure and security requirements and provide additional staff workspace, functional program areas, and adequate parking to meet the Government's operational requirements.

2.3 Alternatives Considered but Not Carried Forward

The Proposed Action was developed based on the findings of the 2020 feasibility study. The feasibility study considered various options and configurations to bring the Trout River LPOE into compliance with current Federal standards and to better support the Government's mission. Options considered in the initial phase of alternative development included renovating the existing LPOE, building an addition onto the existing structure, adding annexes onto the existing LPOE, and constructing a new LPOE in a different location. After evaluating these initial options, CBP indicated that none of the options completely fulfilled their mission and none of the options allow for development of future improvements. In response to CBP feedback, three additional options were developed and analyzed. These options included rehabilitating the existing LPOE and adding a one-story annex to the south, constructing a one-story addition onto the existing LPOE and demolition of the south garage wing, and constructing a new LPOE in the same location (Preferred Alternative). Overall, the feasibility study identified the Proposed Action (Preferred Alternative) as the most feasible option. Therefore, no other alternatives were carried forward for analysis in this EA. Alternatives analyzed in the feasibility study but not carried forward are described in the following subsections.

2.3.1 Renovation of Existing Land Port of Entry

This alternative would renovate the existing LPOE and house all programs within the existing facility. This option was found not to be feasible because the existing LPOE is not large enough to accommodate all program areas.

2.3.2 Addition to Existing Land Port of Entry

This alternative would construct an 8,000-square-foot, one-story addition to the rear of the existing LPOE. The design would include a new public entry foyer at the one-story addition around the corner from the existing south garage wing. The addition would connect to the existing building at two locations on the back side of the existing garage wings. Under this alternative the garage and storage spaces would be converted to office spaces. This alternative would also replace the canopy over the two outer vehicle lanes with a higher canopy to accommodate semi-tractor trailer trucks and provide additional parking at a level that would be adequate to support the Government's programmatic needs. While this alternative would provide several improvements compared to the existing LPOE facility, it would not provide adequate parking needed to meet the Government's program requirements. This alternative was eliminated

for further consideration based on its lack of parking, high degree of phasing complexity, and long construction schedule.

2.3.3 Existing Land Port of Entry with Annex (Front-of-House Existing Land Port of Entry)

This alternative would construct an 8,750-square-foot, two-story annex mostly at the rear of the existing LPOE. The annex would connect to the rear of the main block and the south garage wing. The connection at the main block would include new hallways into the existing building at the first floor and second floor and an elevator to facilitate wheelchair access at two levels. The existing building would continue to house front office functions for the LPOE. This alternative would replace the canopy over the two outer vehicle lanes with a higher canopy to accommodate semi-tractor trailer trucks. Additional parking would be added at a level that would be adequate to support the Government's programmatic needs. This alternative would also include a pull-off inspection area along the east side of NYS Route 30, directly across from the LPOE.

Constructing the annex would require that GSA acquire the property at the corner of NYS Route 20 and NYS Route 30 and demolish the historic house on the property. It would also require realignment of a portion of NYS Route 20. Overall, the feasibility study found that the two-story annex proposed under this alternative would not provide a strong programmatic benefit. This alternative was eliminated for further consideration based on its high degree of phasing complexity, long construction schedule, and high construction cost compared to other options considered. Additionally, this alternative would not allow for unobstructed views to the border from the canopy booth and agent counter.

2.3.4 Existing LPOE with Annex (Front-of-House in Annex)

This alternative would construct a 9,100-square-foot, one-story annex at the south side of the existing LPOE. The new annex would connect to the existing building at the south side of the south garage wing. This alternative would construct a new vehicle inspection canopy; however, the new canopy would be located at approximately twice the distance from the border as the existing canopy. Additional parking would be added at a level that would be adequate to support the Government's programmatic needs. This alternative would also include a pull-off inspection area along the east side of NYS Route 30. Like the alternative described in Section 2.3.3, constructing the annex would require demolition of the house at the corner of NYS Route 20 and NYS Route 30 and realignment of a portion of NYS Route 20. This alternative was eliminated for further consideration based on logistical concerns regarding the distance of the new inspection canopy from the border and obstructed views of the border from the canopy booth and agent counter, as well as its moderately high degree of phasing complexity and moderately high construction and operation costs.

2.3.5 New LPOE at New Location

This alternative would construct a new 11,300-square-foot, one-story LPOE building south of the existing LPOE. The existing LPOE building would be mothballed. This alternative would also

construct a new canopy; however, the new canopy would be located at approximately twice the distance from the border as the existing canopy. This alternative would also include a pull-off inspection area along the east side of NYS Route 30. Additional parking would be added at a level that would be adequate to support the Government's programmatic needs. Constructing the new LPOE south of the existing building would require demolition of the house at the corner of NYS Route 20 and NYS Route 30 along with four neighboring properties and realignment of a portion of NYS Route 20. This alternative was eliminated for further consideration based on logistical concerns regarding the distance of the new inspection canopy from the border and obstructed views of the border from the canopy booth and agent counter, as well as its moderately high construction and high operation costs compared to other options considered. Operating costs for this alternative would be higher than other options considered because there would be additional costs for upkeep and maintenance of the existing LPOE, which would be vacant under this alternative.

2.3.6 Rehabilitate Existing Land Port of Entry and Add a One-Story Annex to the South

This alternative would demolish the south garage wing and construct a 9,150-square-foot addition in its place. The new addition would be positioned at an approximately 45-degree angle to the existing LPOE. This would create a very different dynamic for views to the border as well as the view from the south. Approaching from the south, a visitor would see a new structure, while visitors coming from Canada would see the historic existing building. This option was not pursued based on the recommendation from GSA's Historic Preservationist during the alternative evaluation and review process.

2.3.7 Existing Land Port of Entry with One-Story Addition, Demolition of the South Garage Wing, and Reuse of the Remaining Existing Building

Like the alternative in Section 2.3.6, this option would demolish the south garage wing and construct a 9,150-square-foot addition in its place but at a smaller angle to the existing LPOE than under the previous alternative. This alternative would also construct additional spaces around the existing LPOE. This option was not pursued based on a recommendation from GSA's Historic Preservationist during a review meeting.

2.4 Summary and Comparison of Potential Impacts

Table 1 provides a summary and comparison of potential impacts on resources between the No-Action Alternative and the Proposed Action Alternative.

Table 1: Summary of Potential Impacts

Resource	No-Action	Proposed Action
Water Resources	No impacts	No adverse impacts on water resources. Potential temporary impacts during construction activities would be minimized by implementing appropriate erosion control and stormwater management best management practices.
Cultural Resources	No impacts	No adverse impacts on cultural resources.
Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice	No impacts	Short- and long-term, beneficial impacts on local employment and income. No/negligible impacts on children and environmental justice populations.
Traffic, Transportation, and Parking	No impacts	Long-term benefits for traffic during operations with short-term, adverse impacts during construction. Long-term benefits for parking.

3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This section describes the existing environment that may be affected by implementing the Proposed Action and serves as a baseline from which to identify and evaluate potential impacts. The description of the affected environment focuses on those resource areas that are potentially subject to impacts resulting from the Proposed Action.

3.1 Resources Dismissed from Full Analysis in this Environmental Assessment

CEQ regulations emphasize that NEPA documents should focus on issues of critical importance and only discuss insignificant issues briefly (CFR1502.2(b) (CEQ 1978). Consistent with this guidance, the following resources have been dismissed from full analysis in this EA.

3.1.1 Aesthetics and Visual

The Proposed Action would alter the existing visual landscape by replacing the existing Trout River LPOE with a modernized facility, but changes would not be adverse. The new LPOE would be one story in height and would comply with all zoning requirements. The new building would be located adjacent to the existing building footprint. Expanding the facility to accommodate the west parking area, snow removal, and stormwater management would alter the visual landscape on the west side of the LPOE parcel, which is currently a vacant lot. However, the visual impact would be consistent with the existing commercial development in the vicinity. Setbacks and vegetative buffers would further reduce the effect of potential visual impacts. Additionally, the improved facility would be designed to reduce light pollution and light trespass as reasonably achievable, consistent with current GSA Facilities Standards for the Public Buildings Service (P100). Therefore, this topic was dismissed from further analysis.

3.1.2 Air Quality

The project area is located in an attainment area for all national ambient air quality standards. Construction of the proposed expanded and modernized LPOE would result in temporary emissions of criteria pollutants through fugitive dust and exhaust from vehicles and equipment. Fugitive dust would result from construction equipment on disturbed soils, including during grading and filling activities. Air quality impacts during construction would be minimized by including standard construction dust control best management practices (see Section 5). Emissions during the construction period would be temporary and are not anticipated to have a noticeable effect on air quality. Operation of the proposed new facility would not result in increased emissions compared to existing conditions because traffic volume through the LPOE is not expected to increase. Therefore, the Proposed Action would not affect air quality over the long term. Overall, the Proposed Action would not result in significant impacts on air quality, so this topic was dismissed from further analysis.

3.1.3 Geology and Soils

The subject property parcels are in the Adirondack Highlands section of the Adirondack Physiographic Province. The project area is relatively flat with elevations ranging from approximately 213 feet above mean sea level on the northwestern-most portion of the site to 221 feet above mean sea level on the southeastern-most portion.

Soils in the proposed project area are classified as Moira stony loam (44%) and Hogansburg loam (56%). The Moira stony loam consists of drumlin ridges and till plains, with moderately decomposed plant material overlaying gravelly fine sandy loam to very gravelly sandy loam with slopes of 1% to 3%. The Moira stony loam is not hydric and is farmland of statewide importance. The Hogansburg loam consists of ridges and low hills, with loam overlaying fine sandy loam to gravelly loam with 3% to 8% slopes. Hogansburg loam is not hydric and is classified as prime farmland. Regional soils are classified as glacial till and glacial outwash. GSA consulted with the NRCS in accordance with the FPPA. The NRCS determined that the lands in question were not subject to the FPPA. For the purposes of compliance with the FPPA, pursuant to review letter dated September 27, 2024 (included in Appendix A).

The Proposed Action would require ground-disturbing activities such as excavation, grading, and clearing during construction. Erosion and sediment control measures would be developed and implemented prior to and during construction. Construction of the new facilities would convert approximately 0.31 acres of predisturbed soils to impervious surface to accommodate the new building and additional parking needed to support the Government's operational needs, resulting in permanent loss. The remaining ground disturbance would be temporary. After construction is completed, disturbed areas would be revegetated to reduce the potential for erosion. The project would not affect geology in the project area.

Based on the small amount of permanent loss of soils; the location of the proposed project within or adjacent to developed areas and previously disturbed soils; and the proposed best management practices, including revegetating temporarily disturbed areas; the Proposed Action would not significantly impact geology and soils. Therefore, this topic was dismissed from further analysis.

3.1.4 Wildlife and Habitat

The proposed project area includes upland forest and forested wetland habitats, as well as some open habitats (mostly turf grass) that provide habitat for wildlife, including mammals and resident and migratory birds. The Proposed Action would expand the Trout River LPOE, resulting in minimal losses of wildlife habitat. Most of the habitat loss would be adjacent to the LPOE in what is currently maintained turf grass habitat. This area does not provide high-quality habitat for most wildlife due to frequent noise, visual disturbance, and human presence associated with LPOE operations. The Proposed Action would result in temporary increases in noise and human presence during construction, but conditions would return to near baseline following construction because traffic volume through the LPOE is not expected to increase.

The GSA held a virtual meeting with NYSDEC on September 16, 2022, to inform the agency of the Proposed Action and gather any concerns or information regarding wildlife and wildlife habitat that should be considered in the environmental analysis. During the meeting, NYSDEC indicated that there are no known State-listed species of concern within the project area. NYSDEC also confirmed that the project area is outside the range of protected bats and therefore would not provide roosting or foraging habitat. Consequently, NYSDEC did not recommend surveys in the project area.

Similarly, the GSA held a virtual meeting with the FWS on September 30, 2022, to provide an overview of the Proposed Action, solicit feedback, and establish next steps for ESA Section 7 consultation. Information obtained from the FWS IPaC system indicated that the only species of concern potentially occurring in the project area is the monarch butterfly. This was confirmed in the official species list. The FWS noted that because the monarch butterfly is a candidate for listing under the ESA, but is not currently a listed species, and because no other ESA-listed species are present, the Proposed Action does not require further consultation under ESA Section 7. FWS provided a letter to document completion of ESA Section 7 consultation.

Based on the minimal amount of habitat loss and the temporary nature of increased noise and visual disturbances, the Proposed Action would not significantly impact wildlife and wildlife habitat. The Proposed Action would have no effect on federally or State-listed species because no listed species occur in the project area. Therefore, this topic was dismissed from further analysis.

3.1.5 Noise

Noise-sensitive receptors, including residences and businesses, are located adjacent to or in the vicinity of the proposed project area. Temporary noise impacts are anticipated through increases in noise levels associated with construction (e.g., clearing, demolition, and construction vehicle traffic). Increased noise would be limited to the construction period and noise levels would return to baseline conditions after construction is complete. The Proposed Action would not noticeably alter the existing acoustic environment over the long term because traffic volume through the LPOE is not expected to increase. Therefore, this topic of noise was dismissed from further analysis.

3.1.6 Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials

GSA completed a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (Phase I ESA) for the proposed project area in October 2022. The Phase I ESA found no records indicating the presence of potential Recognized Environmental Conditions on the four parcels that make up the project area. A review of regulatory records identified four underground and three aboveground petroleum storage tanks in the vicinity of the project area. Previous spills have been documented. However, all cases have been closed and the Phase I ESA Report concludes that potential for

migration of petroleum products to the parcels that compose the project area is unlikely. Therefore, no additional environmental investigations are warranted.

Any hazardous waste generated or stored on site by the Proposed Action would follow necessary disposal protocols and procedures. The Proposed Action would not have significant impacts on solid waste or hazardous materials. As a result, this impact topic was dismissed from further analysis.

3.1.7 Land Use

Land use in the vicinity of the Trout River LPOE consists of limited residential and commercial development. The Proposed Action would modernize and expand the Trout River LPOE. Although the existing footprint would be expanded, land use in the project area would be compatible with surrounding land uses. The Trout River LPOE would remain operational throughout construction. The Proposed Action would not significantly alter land use in the project area. Therefore, this impact topic was dismissed from further analysis.

3.1.8 Utilities

Public utilities that serve the existing Trout River LPOE include electricity and telecommunication services. Electricity is sourced from a utility-owned 50-kilowatt (kW) pole-mounted transformer with a 120/240-volt (V) secondary service, located on site. Emergency backup power is provided by an on-site diesel generator. The facility is not connected to public water or sanitary sewer systems. It is served by a private on-site well and septic system.

The Proposed Action would require minimal rerouting of electrical and telecommunication infrastructure. Temporary utility routing and connections would be needed during construction. The improved facility would be served by the same electrical and telecommunication service providers as the existing facility. Electric service to the improved facility would be provided from a utility-owned 150-kilo-volt-ampere (kVA) pad-mounted transformer located on the site. The Proposed Action could result in increased electricity demand because the facility would be expanded. However, because the Trout River Land Port of Entry project will be a “substantial renovation,” per Section 1.7.1 of the GSA P100 “Facilities Standards for the Public Buildings Service,” the facility will need to comply must achieve, at a minimum, a Gold rating through the LEED v4 Green Building Rating System of the U.S. Green Building Council. Obtaining a LEED Gold rating or higher would improve efficiency at the LPOE.

The new building would require a new well to provide potable water. Based on the proposed capacity of the new facility, the new well would be developed as a “Public Water Supply” in accordance with NYS Department of Health standards. The new facility would also require a new septic system.

Overall, the Proposed Action would not result in significant impacts on utilities. Rerouting of existing electrical and telecommunication utility infrastructure and connections would be

coordinated with utility providers. The Proposed Action would not require connection to new utility services. The potential for increased energy demand associated with the expanded LPOE would be partially offset by improved efficiency associated with the new LEED-certified facility. Therefore, this impact topic was dismissed from further analysis.

3.2 Resources Carried Forward for Full Analysis in this Environmental Assessment

3.2.1 Water Resources (Surface Waters and Wetlands)

Affected Environment

The project area is situated in the Trout River watershed (Hydrologic Unit Code [HUC] 04150308), which drains a 107-square-mile area within Franklin County, New York (USGS 2023). The Trout River watershed lies within the larger St. Lawrence River watershed (HUC 041503), which drains an area of nearly 300,000 square miles in northern New York. Within New York State, the watershed drains the northern and western Adirondack Mountains and the lake plain region of the Saint Lawrence Valley. The St. Lawrence watershed is considered to be, “the gateway between the North Atlantic and the Great Lakes” (NYSDEC 2023).

The Trout River is located immediately to the east of the project area on the opposite side of NYS Route 30. From the United States–Canada border, the Trout River flows northeast, converging with the Chateaugay River just south of Huntingdon, Quebec. South of the project area, the Trout River splits into two main branches: Trout River and Little Trout River.

GSA performed a wetland delineation on October 15, 2022, and September 13, 2023, to determine the Federal/jurisdictional boundaries of wetlands identified within the project area (Appendix B). The wetland delineation identified one wetland complex, classified primarily as Palustrine forested wetland with a small section of Palustrine emergent wetland. The wetland is located predominantly on parcels adjoining the LPOE property but extends onto the westernmost part of the LPOE parcel (Figure 4). No streams or open waters were identified during the delineation, but there is an ephemeral roadside ditch that directs flow into a culvert beneath NYS Route 20 located on the parcel south of the current LPOE property. A summary of wetlands identified in the proposed project area during the field delineation is provided in Table 2. The wetland delineation was verified in the field by the USACE on June 18, 2024. GSA is currently applying for a JD through the USACE. The applied for Preliminary JD would assume that all wetland and waterbody features identified through the delineation would be federally jurisdictional. At any future point in the design/permitting process, an Approved JD could be pursued for wetland and/or waterbody features that are believed to be non-jurisdictional. GSA also consulted with the NYSDEC concerning any wetlands under the jurisdictional of the State. There are no State regulated wetlands at or near the project site.



Figure 4. Wetlands

Table 2. Wetlands of the United States

Feature	Classification	Acreage Delineated	Acreage within Project Area
W01A	Palustrine Emergent	0.68	0.04
W01C	Palustrine Forested	4.23	0.24

Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action Alternative

The GSA intends to undertake the project in a way to avoid regulated activities in waters of the United States and State-regulated resources to the extent practicable. Under the Proposed Action, ground-disturbing activities, such as clearing, excavating, grading, and adding impervious surface for the modernized and expanded LPOE facility, would not result in direct or indirect, permanent adverse impacts on surface water resources, including wetlands. Although there are 0.28 acres of wetland within the project area, permanent impacts are not anticipated because the modernized and expanded LPOE facility has been designed to avoid existing wetlands.

Construction of the modernized and expanded LPOE facility may result in temporary adverse impacts on wetlands; however, impacts will be avoided through the implementation of construction best management practices for stormwater, erosion, and sediment control. Wetlands within the project area are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Wetlands within Project Area

Wetland Type	Acreage
Palustrine Emergent Wetland	0.04
Palustrine Forested Wetland	0.24

Floodplains

Because the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has no record flood analysis information available for the proposed project area, a Flood Risk Assessment Report was prepared to provide a risk assessment for potential flooding at the project site caused by the Trout River's 100-year and 500-year frequency rainfall storm events. The analysis in the Flood Risk Assessment Report determined that the proposed project area is outside the expected limits of both the 100-year and 500-year flood events; thus, no significant adverse impacts are anticipated. The proposed project area is not located within the New York State Coastal Zone Management boundary.

Ground disturbance during construction would disturb soils and increase the potential for erosion and the transport of sediment into surrounding surface waters and wetlands via overland stormwater runoff, which could result in temporary adverse impacts on surface waters. Additional temporary, indirect, adverse impacts could result from the operation of construction

equipment, which would increase the potential for accidental leaks or spills of fuel, lubricants, or other materials that could contaminate nearby surface water. Implementation of erosion and sediment control best management practices would minimize these impacts.

The area of impervious surfaces would be greater after construction is completed. Impervious surfaces would include the footprint of the LPOE building, inspection lanes, parking, and other paved areas. This increase could result in direct and indirect, long-term, adverse impacts from increased stormwater runoff, although implementation of stormwater best management practices would avoid or minimize these impacts on surface water resources.

As noted previously, the delineation was verified in the field by the USACE on June 18, 2024, and GSA is currently applying for a JD through the USACE. The Proposed Action would result in direct and indirect, short- and long-term, adverse impacts on wetlands and surface waters. These impacts would be minimized by implementing appropriate erosion control and stormwater best management practices. Mitigation for unavoidable impacts would be provided in consultation with the USACE and NYSDEC pursuant to CWA Section 404 and in accordance with Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands. Therefore, based on completion of mitigation, no significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, the existing facility would continue to operate in its current condition. There would be no change to the existing conditions in the proposed project area, and no impacts on water resources would occur.

3.2.2 Cultural Resources (Archaeology, Historical Resources)

Affected Environment

Historic Architecture

No previous formal historic surveys have been completed to identify potential historic properties eligible for inclusion in the NRHP that could be affected by the Proposed Action. However, background research conducted as part of Phase I archaeological surveys identified one known historic property within the Area of Potential Effect (APE). This property is listed on both the State Register and the NRHP.

The listed historic property is the Trout River U.S. Border Inspection Station (USN 03309.000006). This property is a brick-clad structure with a slate roof built in 1932. Subsequent alterations to the main building have included the addition of a commercial metal door to the main entrance, replacement vinyl window frames, and the addition of surveillance and security equipment to the façade. The station is considered to be significant as one of the first border control stations built in New York to address border crossing issues such as smuggling, immigration, and increased automobile traffic. The building is significant under

NRHP Criteria A and C. As a result, this undertaking would result in Historic Properties Affected under Section 106.

Archaeology

The Trout River site has been the subject of two previous Phase I archaeological surveys and one previous Phase IA archaeological assessment. The site was partially surveyed in 2004 (Anderson et al. 2007), partially assessed in 2020 (Bray 2020), and fully surveyed in 2023 (Venables 2023). The 2023 survey also included survey of an APE north of Route 30, although this area is no longer part of the APE under current design plans. The 2020 archaeological assessment found that the APE had a low to moderate potential for intact prehistoric resources and a moderate to high potential for intact historic resources. The 106 Group (Bray 2020) recommended that GSA consult with the SHPO to determine whether further cultural resource surveys or evaluations would be required. The previous surveys recorded one site within the APE, which was not reported to the SHPO in 2007 but was officially reported to the SHPO during the 2023 survey. The 2023 survey also recorded an area of historic artifact deposition on the north side of the APE. However, modern construction or flooding in the area had disturbed the deposits to an extent that Hartgen recommended that these deposits should not be recorded as a site and therefore were not eligible for the NRHP.

The 2023 survey also located the previously recorded Trout River LPOE historic site (03309.000041). This site, a late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century foundation with an associated artifact scatter, was delineated through the recovery of 345 historic artifacts from 18 positive shovel tests. Though the foundation identified by Micheal Baker during the 2007 survey was not located again, Hartgen found cobbles in some shovel tests that might be indicative of the foundation's location. Hartgen recommended that subsurface disturbances should be avoided within the Trout River LPOE historic site. A Phase II archaeological evaluation of the site to determine its eligibility for the NRHP was recommended if impacts to the site could not be avoided. The area of historic deposits on the north side of Route 30 was recommended as too disturbed to retain integrity or the potential for intact archaeological deposits, and no further work was recommended for that area or any other area within the APE. On September 15, 2023, the SHPO issued a concurrence finding for the 2023 survey, recommending that the site either be avoided or that a Phase II evaluation of the site be completed if avoidance is not feasible.

Environmental Consequences

This undertaking would result in Historic Properties Affected under Section 106, as the Trout River Border Inspection Station is a State Register- and NRHP-listed property. However, the GSA intends to undertake the project in a way to limit impacts to the historic property and is in consultation with the SHPO to identify means to avoid or minimize potential effects to the property. A Phase II site evaluation workplan was submitted to the SHPO in October 2023 and approved by the SHPO in December 2023. The Phase II archaeological evaluation to assess the

site's level of integrity and eligibility for the NRHP was conducted as documented in a report dated July 26, 2024. The Phase II evaluation recommended that the Trout River LPOE historic site (03309.000041) was not eligible for inclusion on the NRHP. The extensive damage to the site after the hotel's sale to the United States government and the use of the previous structures' footprints for refuse disposal indicates that further work on this site could produce significant numbers of artifacts but that these artifacts have lost their original and meaningful context, becoming part of a larger disorganized refuse disposal area. No further archeological work was recommended for this site. On August 30, 2024, the SHPO issued a concurrence finding for the Phase II evaluation, stating the site is not eligible for the NHRP and no further archaeological work is necessary.

3.2.3 Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice

Affected Environment

The following subsections describe the socioeconomic environment and identify potential environmental justice communities in the vicinity of the proposed project area in Franklin County and in New York State. Socioeconomic areas of discussion include local and county demographic and employment information. Environmental justice areas of discussion include minority, low-income, public health, and limited-English proficiency communities.

Demographics

Demographic characteristics of Franklin County and New York State are provided in Table 4. High school graduation rates and the percentage of the population over age 65 are similar between Franklin County and New York State. Franklin County has a slightly higher percentage of individuals under age 18 than New York State. The percentage of veterans is higher in Franklin County than in New York State. Franklin County has a significantly lower minority population percentage than New York State. Minority populations are discussed in further detail under Environmental Justice.

Table 4: Demographics for Franklin County, New York

Area	All Individuals	Population Under 18 Years of Age	Population over 65 Years of Age	Minority*	High School Graduates	Veterans
Franklin County, New York	47,459	20.3%	18.4%	17%	87%	8.2%
New York	19,994,379	20.6%	17%	46%	87.6%	4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022a,b,c,d.

* Minority populations include all races that are non-White and Hispanic populations that are White.

Employment and Income

Franklin County and New York State employment and income characteristics are detailed in Table 5. Franklin County has a lower median household income than New York State. Additionally, a higher percentage of the population in Franklin County is below the poverty level than in New York State. However, the unemployment rate in Franklin County is slightly lower than the unemployment rate in New York State.

Table 5: Employment and Income for Franklin County, New York

Area	Number of Households	Median Household Income	Population Below Poverty Level	Unemployment Rate (2022)
Franklin County, New York	18,933	\$60,270	17.9%	5.1%
New York	7,604,523	\$81,386	13.6%	6.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022e.

Commuting Patterns

A high percentage (86.4%) of workers in Franklin County use private vehicles for commuting to work, either driving alone or in a carpool. The average commuting time in Franklin County is approximately 20 minutes (U.S. Census Bureau 2022e).

Protection of Children

Executive Order 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks, requires that Federal actions be assessed for health impacts to children. No residences, schools, or other public or private facilities are in the vicinity of the proposed project area on the U.S. side.

Environmental Justice

As a result of Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, an evaluation of minority and low-income populations must be conducted to identify whether the Proposed Action would have a disproportionate adverse impact regarding environmental quality and health on minority and low-income populations.

GSA analyzed data from the 2018–2022 five-year American Community Survey to determine whether notable minority and/or low-income populations are present and if limited-English proficiency thresholds are met for the Proposed Action. Census data were analyzed at the block group level for this analysis. The Proposed Action would occur within Census Tract 9520, Block Group 2 (U.S. Census Bureau 2022a).

Block groups were found to have a notable environmental justice population if the minority or low-income population in the block group exceeds 50% or if the percentage of a minority or low-income population in the affected area is greater than the average percentage in the respective county.

Minority populations include all races that are non-White and include Hispanic populations that are White; low-income populations are defined as populations with a ratio of income to poverty level of 0 to 1.49 (150%).

Table 6 indicates that the block group where the Proposed Action would occur does not meet the environmental justice threshold for minority populations because the percentage of minority populations is lower than both the Franklin County and New York State percentage.

Table 7 indicates that the block group where the Proposed Action would occur does not meet the environmental justice threshold for low-income populations because the percentage of low-income populations in the affected area, Block Group 2 in Census Tract 9520, is lower than the Franklin County average.

Table 6: Presence of Minority Populations

Area	Total Population	Minority Population	
		Number	Percent
Census Tract 9520 Block Group 2	1,577	58	4%
Franklin County, New York	47,459	7,950	17%
New York	19,994,379	9,232,564	46%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022b.

Table 7: Presence of Low-Income Populations

Area	Total Population	Below 150% Poverty Level	
		Number	Percent
Census Tract 9520 Block Group 2	1,555	368	24%
Franklin County, New York	43,182	11,329	26%
New York	19,516,967	4,105,351	21%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022f.

The U.S. Department of Justice Safe Harbor threshold for limited-English proficiency is met when there is a language group that speaks English less than very well and that either has 1,000 adults or makes up 5% of the aggregate demographic study area population (with at least 50 adults). The block group where the Proposed Action would occur, Block Group 2 in Census Tract 9520, was used as the study area. Table 8 indicates that the block group does not meet the threshold for limited-English proficiency for any language group.

Table 8: Presence of Limited English Proficiency Populations

Area	Adult Population	Primary Language Group of Adults Who Speak English Less than Very Well							
		Spanish		Other Indo-European		Asian/Pacific Island		Other	
		Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Census Tract 9520 Block 2	1,168	0	0%	6	.51%	0	0%	0	0%
Franklin County, New York	37,812	347	.92%	132	.35%	55	.15%	147	.39%
New York	15,865,936	1,097,470	6.92%	558,294	3.52%	501,340	3.16%	91,534	.58%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022g.

New York State Potential Environmental Justice Areas

New York State has its own criteria for identifying environmental justice communities (NYSDEC n.d.). Potential Environmental Justice Areas (PEJA) in New York are U.S. Census block groups with populations that meet or exceed the following thresholds:

- At least 52.42% of the population in an urban area reported themselves to be members of minority groups.
- At least 26.28% of the population in a rural area reported themselves to be members of minority groups.
- At least 22.82% of the population in an urban or rural area had household incomes below the Federal poverty level.

Block Group 2, Census Tract 9520 is not identified as a PEJA. As a rural area, only 4% of the block group are members of minority groups, and 14.2% of the block group had household incomes less than the Federal poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau 2022h).

Climate and Economic Justice

The Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool does not identify Census Tract 9520 as a disadvantaged community. Communities are considered overburdened and underserved, and thus disadvantaged, if they are at or above the threshold for one or more environmental, climate, or other burdens and are also at or above the threshold for an associated socioeconomic burden. (CEQ 2024).

Environmental Justice Screening and Environmental Public Health

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Justice Screening Tool was also used to identify any other environmental justice concerns in the vicinity of the Proposed Action. Block Group 2 in Census Tract 9520, where the Proposed Action would occur, does not exceed the 60th percentile in New York State for any pollution or source variables (EPA 2024).

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Environmental Public Health Tracking Report provides public health information at the county level. Franklin County had zero days of unhealthy exposure to ozone in 2019 and had lower concentrations of fine particulate matter than the national standard (CDC 2024).

Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action Alternative

The Proposed Action is anticipated to result in short- and long-term beneficial impacts to local employment and income through increases in temporary employment during construction and through permanent employment at the expanded and modernized LPOE facility. The LPOE would remain open during construction of the expanded and modernized LPOE facility to avoid impacts on local commerce.

The community where the Proposed Action would occur does not meet environmental justice thresholds for low income or minority populations, does not meet limited-English proficiency thresholds, and is not identified as a disadvantaged community.

The Proposed Action is not likely to further affect residents in the community. During construction, effects on any nearby communities, such as from noise and dust, would be limited and controlled through best management practices that would minimize adverse effects on all adjacent populations.

No-Action Alternative

The Trout River LPOE facility would not be constructed under the No-Action Alternative. As a result, there would be no change in employment and income because neither temporary nor permanent jobs would be created. There would be no impacts on environmental justice as a result of the No-Action Alternative.

3.2.4 Traffic, Transportation, and Parking

Affected Environment

The Trout River LPOE is located on NYS Route 30 at its intersection with NYS Route 20. The LPOE is at the northbound terminus of NYS Route 20, which becomes Quebec Route 138 on the Canadian side of the border. From the LPOE, NYS Route 30 continues southward to Malone and terminates in the Saranac region, while Quebec Route 138 continues northwest approximately

50 miles to the city of Montreal. The Trout River LPOE handles both commercial and non-commercial traffic entering the U.S. The other U.S. LPOEs nearest to the Trout River LPOE are the Fort Covington LPOE, located approximately 11 miles to the west, and the Chateaugay LPOE, approximately 16 miles to the east.

Parking at the Trout River LPOE is available in three areas: one to the northwest, one at the southeast, and one at the south end of the building. None of the parking areas are covered. Parking areas next to the building cannot be used during the winter months due to risk of injury to persons or damage to property from ice and snow sliding from the roof. CBP has indicated that additional parking is needed to meet its operational requirements.

Trout River LPOE sees the expected vehicular traffic for a small LPOE. In 2022 and 2023, an average of 22,238 personally owned vehicles and an average of 1,091 commercial trucks crossed the border at Trout River annually, an average of 23,329 vehicles total. Table 9 provides the annual breakdown of crossings by vehicle type. An average of 50,000 pedestrians cross the border at Trout River annually (GSA 2024). The two other U.S. LPOEs nearest to the Trout River LPOE, Fort Covington LPOE and Chateaugay LPOE, had an average of 38,543 and 31,545 annual vehicle crossings, respectively.

Table 9: Vehicle Traffic at Trout River LPOE

Vehicle Type	Year	Number of Crossings
Personally Owned	2022	17,481
	2023	26,995
Commercial Trucks	2022	983
	2023	1,198

Traffic in the vicinity of the proposed site is rare given the rural setting. There are no notable public transit services to Trout River LPOE or in the surrounding community. CBP staff commute primarily via passenger vehicle.

Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action Alternative

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, parking access would be expanded and improved for employees and visitors. A parking area would be added to the west side of the renovated and expanded LPOE, providing approximately 15 additional parking spaces.

The proposed renovated and expanded LPOE would include two inbound inspection lanes (with canopy), one primary non-commercial vehicle inspection booth, one commercial vehicle inspection booth, and a 100-foot by 25-foot outbound inspection canopy. Beneficial impacts to

traffic conditions are expected in the long term through simpler traffic patterns and a more streamlined system for vehicles passing through the LPOE.

During construction, the Trout River LPOE would close for 20 to 24 months, and traffic would be diverted to the Fort Covington LPOE in Fort Covington, New York and the Chateaugay LPOE in Chateaugay, New York. The 11-mile drive from Trout River LPOE to Fort Covington LPOE would take approximately 16 minutes and the 16-mile drive from Trout River LPOE to Chateaugay LPOE would take approximately 26 minutes. However, if drivers are aware of the closure and adjust their routes before arriving at Trout River LPOE, the additional trip time and distance from the diversion would be less. For example, the 16-minute, 11-mile drive from Malone, New York to Trout River LPOE would only increase to a 20-minute, 11-mile drive to Fort Covington LPOE or a 24-minute, 18-mile drive to Chateaugay LPOE.

The diversion of existing Trout River LPOE traffic would result in an approximate 30% increase in vehicle crossings at Fort Covington LPOE and an approximate 37% increase in vehicle crossings at Chateaugay LPOE, assuming if half of the diverted traffic would go to each LPOE. However, during the period of closure, CBP personnel would be reassigned to the Fort Covington and Chateaugay LPOEs to assist with any additional traffic flow. Impacts on traffic and transportation would be temporary during construction.

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, there would be no change to the existing traffic, transportation, and parking conditions in the area. Parking at the Trout River LPOE facility would remain inadequate to meet CBP staff and visitor needs.

4.0 REASONABLY FORESEEABLE ACTIONS AND CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

According to CEQ regulations, the cumulative effects analysis of an EA should consider the potential environmental impacts resulting from “the incremental effects of the action when added to the effects of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions.” (40 CFR 1508). Cumulative effects can “result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.” Cumulative effects may occur when there is a relationship between a proposed action, or alternative and other actions expected to occur in a similar location or during a similar timeframe. The effects may then be incremental and may result in cumulative impacts. Actions overlapping with or in proximity to the proposed action or alternatives can reasonably be expected to have more potential for cumulative effects on “shared resources” than actions that may be geographically separated. Similarly, actions that coincide in the same timeframe tend to offer a higher potential for cumulative effects.

4.1 Cumulative Impacts Analysis

The effects of the Proposed Action would be localized in the vicinity of the proposed LPOE site and largely temporary, with most environmental effects ending once construction is completed. The scope of the cumulative effects analysis involves both the geographic extent of the effects and the timeframe in which the effects could be expected to occur, as well as a description of what resources could potentially be cumulatively affected. GSA has attempted to identify actions on or near the affected areas that are under consideration and in the planning stage at this time to assess the incremental contribution of the alternative to impacts on affected resources from all factors. There were no planned developments or other projects adjacent to the project site. There were no cumulative impacts identified.

5.0 MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION MEASURES

This section summarizes the proposed management and mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential adverse effects of the Proposed Action. Under the Proposed Action Alternative, construction contractors would implement the best management practices listed in Table 10 and satisfy all applicable Federal, State, and local regulatory requirements associated with the design, construction, and operation of the proposed renovated LPOE. Additional management and mitigation measures may be adopted or required through ongoing agency consultations and public engagement.

Table 10. Management and Mitigation Measures

Resource	Measure
Air Quality	<p>Use appropriate dust suppression methods (such as the use of water, dust palliatives, covers, and suspension of earth moving in high-wind conditions) during on-site construction activities.</p> <p>Stabilize disturbed area through revegetation or mulching if the area is inactive for several weeks or longer.</p> <p>Implement measures to reduce diesel particulate matter emissions from construction equipment, such as reducing idling time and using newer equipment with emissions controls.</p> <p>Comply with the applicable NYSDEC air quality regulations. Secure any required minor air emissions permits from NYSDEC prior to construction. Positive impacts due to installation of an all-electric HVAC system using geothermal ground source heat pumps and photovoltaic panels.</p>
Noise	<p>Limit construction and associated heavy truck traffic to daytime hours.</p> <p>Shut down noise-generating heavy equipment when it is not needed.</p> <p>Maintain equipment per manufacturer’s recommendations to minimize noise generation.</p> <p>Encourage construction personnel to operate equipment in the quietest manner practicable (such as speed restrictions, retarder brake restrictions, engine speed restrictions).</p> <p>Conduct all construction activities in compliance with local noise ordinances.</p>
Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials	<p>Comply with applicable Federal and State laws governing the use, generation, storage, transportation, and disposal of solid and hazardous materials and medical wastes.</p>
Utilities	<p>Comply with applicable guidance in accordance with USACE and NYSDEC permit conditions pertaining to trenching activities along electrical and telecommunications utility lines and utility line activities for water and other substances.</p>
Geology and Soils	<p>Control soil erosion impacts during construction by implementing erosion prevention measures and complying with the conditions specified in the USACE Section 404 permit and in accordance with NYSDEC guidance. Measures could include the use of earth berms, vegetative buffers and filter strips, and spill prevention and management techniques.</p>

Resource	Measure
Water Resources (Surface Waters and Wetlands)	<p>Control soil erosion and sedimentation impacts during construction by implementing erosion prevention and stormwater management measures and complying with the conditions specified in the USACE Section 404 permit and in accordance with the NYSDEC Section 401 Water Quality Certification and Article 24 guidance.</p> <p>Control any discharge of pollutants into surrounding water bodies by complying with the conditions specified in the EPA Section 402 of the CWA and obtaining an NPDES permit prior to construction as needed.</p> <p>Ensure that the design of the LPOE includes sufficient stormwater management so water quantity/quality in receiving waters and/or off-site areas are not adversely affected.</p>
Wildlife and Habitat	<p>Management and mitigation measures that would be implemented to minimize or mitigate impacts to surface waters and wetlands would also minimize or mitigate impacts on wildlife habitat.</p>
Cultural Resources	<p>Should potentially historic or culturally significant items be discovered during project construction, immediately cease work in the area until GSA, a qualified archaeologist, and the SHPO are contacted to properly identify and appropriately treat discovered items in accordance with applicable Federal and State laws.</p>
Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice	<p>Secure the construction area to prevent unauthorized access.</p>
Traffic, Transportation, and Parking	<p>GSA's selected design/construction contractor, in consultation with NYSDOT, would determine final, reasonable mitigation measures. Traffic would be diverted to the Fort Covington LPOE in Fort Covington, New York and the Chateaugay LPOE in Chateaugay, New York during construction activities. CBP personnel would be reassigned from Trout River LPOE to the Fort Covington and Chateaugay LPOEs to assist with any additional traffic flow.</p>

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