

B. Take No Action

This alternative assumes the existing facility would be maintained in its current condition. Existing processing capacities would become increasingly more inadequate as the volume of border traffic, particularly trucks, continues to increase. Increased traffic and processing delays would result in queuing conditions at the POE and possible also on State Route 543 north of the POE and into Canada. The absence of adequate facilities at Pacific Highway and associated delays may ultimately force truck traffic to utilize smaller border crossings not located along a major state highway. The inefficiencies and disadvantages associated with inadequate facilities would be worsened if the Take No Action Alternative were selected.

IV. Environmentally Preferred Alternative

As required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a lead agency must identify its preferred alternative. The environmentally preferred alternative is the alternative which best promotes the national environmental policies incorporated in NEPA. In general, this would be the alternative resulting in the least damage to the natural environment and which best protects natural and cultural resources.

While Design Alternative 3B and 5 are similar, Design Alternative 5, is identified as GSA's environmentally preferred alternative. Design Alternative 5 would impact the least amount of wetlands by shifting the development focus on the western side of the site farther south than Design Alternative 3B. Design Alternative 5 would also include additional northbound truck parking to the east of State Route 543 for use by our client agencies.

V. Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

In terms of environmental harm, this alternative would have only minor impacts to: topography; soils; hydrology; visual resources; fiscal considerations; land use and zoning; transportation; and noise. However, moderate impacts would occur to biological resources (wetlands). No significant impacts were identified.

All practicable means to alleviate, minimize and/or compensate environmental harm will be considered in the development of the project. Although several mitigation measures were recommended in the Draft EIS, only those that can be implemented under the authority of GSA were

adopted. For example, additional land is to be purchased to minimize the loss of wetlands. GSA shall monitor the implementation of those adopted mitigation measures necessary to assure measures specified in the Draft and the Record of Decision are carried out.

VI. Conclusion

Environmental and other relevant concerns presented by interested agencies and private citizens have been addressed sufficiently in the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and are hereby acknowledged and incorporated into this ROD by reference. The General Services Administration believes there are no outstanding environmental issues to be resolved with respect to the proposed project and which are within the mission capabilities of this agency.

After consulting with the GSA staff, reviewing both the Final EIS and the Final Supplemental EIS and all of its related materials, it is my decision the GSA will proceed with Design Alternative 5 as the environmentally preferred alternative for the expansion of the Pacific Highway Port of Entry in Blaine, Whatcom County, Washington.

Dated: December 23, 1996.

L. Jay Pearson,

Regional Administrator.

[FR Doc. 97-525 Filed 1-8-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6820-23-M

Office of Acquisition Policy; Change in Solicitation Procedures Under the Small Business Competitiveness Demonstration Program

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Title VII of the Business Opportunity Development Reform Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-656) established the Small Business Competitiveness Demonstration Program and designated nine (9) agencies, including GSA, to conduct the program over a four (4) year period from January 1, 1989 to December 31, 1992. The Small Business Opportunity Enhancement Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-366) extended the demonstration program until September 1996 and made certain changes in the procedures for operation of the demonstration program. The program has been extended for an additional one-year period by the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act (Public Law 104-208). The law designated four (4) industry groups for testing whether the competitive capabilities of the specified industry groups will enable them to

successfully compete on an unrestricted basis. The four (4) industry groups are: construction (except dredging); architectural and engineering (A&E) services (including surveying and mapping); refuse systems and related services (limited to trash/garbage collection); and non-nuclear ship repair. Under the program, when a participating agency misses its small business participation goal, restricted competition is reinstated only for those contracting activities that failed to attain the goal. The small business goal is 40 percent of the total contract dollars awarded for construction, trash/garbage collection services, and non-nuclear ship repair and 35 percent of the total contract dollars awarded for architect-engineer services. This notice announces modifications to GSA's solicitation practices under the demonstration program based on a review of the agency's performance during the period from October 1, 1995 to September 30, 1996. Modifications to solicitation practices are outlined in the Supplementary Information section below and apply to solicitations issued on or after January 1, 1997.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tom Wisnowski, Office of GSA Acquisition Policy, (202) 501-1224.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Procurements of construction or trash/garbage collection with an estimated value of \$25,000 or less will be reserved for emerging small business concerns in accordance with the procedures outlined in the interim policy directive issued by the Office of Federal Procedure Policy (58 FR 13513, March 11, 1993).

Procurements of construction or trash/garbage collection with an estimated value that exceeds \$25,000 by GSA contracting activities will be made in accordance with the following procedures:

Construction Services in Groups 15, 16, and 17

Procurements for all construction services (except solicitations issued by GSA contracting activities in Regions 2, 7, and 8 in SIC Group 15, the National Capital Region in individual SIC code 1794, and Regions 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9 in individual SIC code 1796) shall be conducted on an unrestricted basis.

Procurements for construction services in SIC Group 15 issued by GSA contracting activities in Regions 2, 7, and 8, and individual SIC code 1794 in the National Capital Region, and in individual SIC code 1796 in Regions 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9, shall be set aside for

small business when there is a reasonable expectation of obtaining competition from two or more small businesses. If no expectation exists, the procurements will be conducted on an unrestricted basis.

Region 2 encompasses the states of New Jersey, New York, and territories of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Region 3 encompasses the states of Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia, Maryland (except Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties), and Virginia (except the city of Alexandria and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William).

Region 5 encompasses the states of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

Region 6 encompasses the states of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska.

Region 7 encompasses the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas.

Region 8 encompasses the states of Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.

Region 9 encompasses the states of Arizona, California, Hawaii, and Nevada.

The National Capital Region encompasses the District of Columbia, Montgomery and Prince Georges counties in Maryland, and the city of Alexandria and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William in Virginia.

Trash/garbage Collection Services in PSC S205

Procurements for trash/garbage collection services in PSC S205 will be conducted on an unrestricted basis.

Architect-Engineer Services (All PSC Codes Under the Demonstration Program)

Procurements for all architect-engineer services (except procurements issued by contracting activities in GSA Regions 4, 5, 9, and the National Capital Region) shall be conducted on an unrestricted basis.

Procurements for architect-engineer services issued by contracting activities in Regions 4, 5, 9, and the National Capital Region shall be set aside for small business when there is a reasonable expectation of obtaining competition from two or more small businesses. If no expectation exists, the procurements may be conducted on an unrestricted basis.

Region 4 encompasses the states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

Region 5 encompasses the states of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

Region 9 encompasses the states of Arizona, California, Hawaii, and Nevada.

The National Capital Region encompasses the District of Columbia, Montgomery and Prince Georges counties in Maryland, and the city of Alexandria and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William in Virginia.

Non-Nuclear Ship Repair

GSA does not procure non-nuclear ship repairs.

Dated: December 16, 1996.

Ida M. Ustad,

Deputy Associate Administrator for Acquisition Policy.

[FR Doc. 97-526 Filed 1-8-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6820-61-M

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics: Meetings

Pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the Department of Health and Human Services announces the following advisory committee meetings.

Name: National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics (NCVHS), Subcommittee on Health Data Needs, Standards, and Security.

Times and Dates:

9:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m., January 21, 1997.

9:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m., January 22, 1997.

9:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m., February 10, 1997.

9:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m., February 11, 1997.

Place: Room 503A, Hubert H. Humphrey Building, 200 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, D.C. 20201.

Status: Open.

Purpose: Under the Administrative Simplification subtitle of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (Pub. L. No. 104-191), the Secretary of Health and Human Services is required to adopt standards for specified transactions to enable health information to be exchanged electronically. The law requires that, within 24 months of adoption, all health plans, health care clearinghouses, and health care providers who choose to conduct these transactions electronically must comply with these standards. The Secretary is required to consult the NCVHS in complying with these provisions. As part of the consultation process, the Committee will submit recommendations to the Secretary during 1997.

To assist in the development of the NCVHS recommendations to HHS, the NCVHS Subcommittee on Health Data Needs, Standards, and Security is holding a series of public meetings to obtain the views, perspectives and concerns of interested and affected parties. The Subcommittee recognizes that there are natural tensions which exist between those who generate the

information which goes into these transactions and those who use the information. At the meetings, the Subcommittee will discuss these and other issues which may arise when a uniform set of standards must be implemented by all data generators and users. Generators of this data include hospitals, physicians, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, and other providers of health care. Users of this data include health insurers, health plans, researchers, and managers of quality, utilization and risk.

For the meetings, specific organizations representing both the generators and users of this data will be invited by the Subcommittee to provide answers to the following questions in writing, to make brief oral presentations of their answers, and to answer further questions from the Subcommittee. Representatives of ANSI accredited Standards Developing Organizations will be asked to present their views of these issues as well.

Questions To Be Addressed

1. What are your organization's expectations for the results of the Administrative Simplification standards requirements in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)? In what ways will the outcome affect the members of your organization, both positively and negatively?

2. Does your organization have any concerns about the process being undertaken by the Department of Health and Human Services to carry out the Administrative Simplification requirements of this law? If so, what are those concerns and what suggestions do you have for improvements?

3. What major problems are experienced by the members of your organization with the current transactions specified under the HIPAA? For generators of the data, how readily available is the information that you need to provide for the transactions and how meaningful is that information from a clinical perspective? For users of the data, are you receiving the information you need from the transactions to pay the bill, manage the care process, etc., and what is your perception of its quality?

4. How can the goal of administrative simplification best be achieved while meeting the business needs of all stakeholders?

In addition, the Subcommittee will receive a presentation from the Health Care Financing Administration on unique identifiers for providers and payers on January 21. On January 22, the Subcommittee will discuss other business consistent with its charge.

Notice: In the interest of security, the Department has instituted stringent procedures for entrance to the Hubert H. Humphrey building by non-government employees. Thus, persons without a government identification card should plan to arrive at the building each day either between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m. or 12:30 and 1:00 p.m. so they can be escorted to the meeting. Entrance to the meeting at other times during the day cannot be assured.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Substantive program information