

DRAFT

Finding of No Significant Impact
Privatization of Army Lodging Program
Fort Carson, Colorado

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations (Title 40 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* [CFR] Parts 1500–1508) for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (Title 42 of the *United States Code* 4321 *et seq.*) and 32 CFR Part 651 (Environmental Analysis of Army Actions), Fort Carson, Colorado, conducted an environmental assessment (EA) of the potential environmental and socioeconomic effects associated with executing a lease at Fort Carson under the Army’s Privatization of Army Lodging (PAL) program.

Proposed Action

The Army proposes to transfer ownership and operation of its transient lodging facilities to a private-sector development company. Under the proposed action, the Army would convey its lodging facilities to a developer and provide long-term leases for the underlying land. In return, the Army would obtain the benefit of modern facilities and services that equal the standards prevailing in the commercial sector. The Army has competitively selected Lend Lease as its development entity to privatize the Army lodging at Fort Carson. Lend Lease has formed a special-purpose entity, Rest Easy, LLC (Rest Easy) to execute the lease. Lend Lease would perform the redevelopment of the lodging facilities, and InterContinental Hotels Group, its contracted hotelier, would take over the lodging operations.

Implementing the PAL program at Fort Carson would result in the conveyance of one parcel of land, four existing lodging facilities, and a barracks to Rest Easy for renovation for either short-term (about 7 years) or long-term (46 years) use, as shown in Table 1. These actions would occur over about a 7-year initial development period beginning in 2013 and provide a final inventory of about 186 lodging units. This would be accomplished by constructing two new hotels, a 123-room Candlewood Suites and a 63-room Candlewood Suites, to replace all the existing lodging. The existing lodging facilities would be utilized during the initial development period to maintain available lodging inventory while new lodging was being built. These buildings would undergo minor renovations, such as making any necessary life safety and critical repairs and improving the interiors of the guest rooms and public spaces. As required by the new hotels’ final siting on the parcel, or as the new hotels became operational, the existing lodging would be demolished. The barracks building is not lodging, but is being included in the PAL footprint to allow for maximum flexibility in siting the new hotels, parking, and associated improvements. The barracks would not undergo any renovations but would be demolished.

Table 1.
Fort Carson PAL Preferred Alternative

Parcel	Acres	Building(s)	Lodging units		PAL action
			Beginning state	End state	
Parcel A	37.38	B7301	18	0	Make necessary life safety upgrades or modifications or both to existing lodging units as required for short-term use. Demolish as new units become available to make way for additional new lodging.
		B7302	77	0	
		B7303	0	0	
		B7304	74	0	
		B7305	8	0	
		N/A	0	123	Build a 123-room Candlewood Suites.
N/A	0	63	Build a 63-room Candlewood Suites.		
Total lodging units			177	186	

Note: N/A = not applicable

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed action is to transfer ownership and operation of transient lodging to the private sector under a long-term lease. The proposed action is needed to improve the quality of life for Soldiers, their families, and other personnel eligible to use Army lodging.

Alternatives Considered

An alternative to the Preferred Alternative that was considered is reliance on the off-post hotel market. In lieu of privatizing the function, the Army could exit the lodging business, resulting in patrons' reliance on off-post hotels and motels for similar services. The use of off-post lodging, however, would lengthen Soldiers' workdays because of commuting and increased transportation costs. In some instances, Soldiers would encounter shortages of lodging in adjacent communities. Terminating the Army's lodging program at Fort Carson would result in abandoning four buildings. The combination of the buildings standing idle until alternative uses could be determined and the time needed to achieve such uses would contravene the Army's policy to manage its resources to their optimal potential. For those reasons, the off-post hotel market alternative is not feasible and was not evaluated in detail. As prescribed by the CEQ regulations, the EA also evaluates the No Action Alternative, which would consist of the Army's not implementing the PAL program at Fort Carson.

Factors Considered in Determining that No Environmental Impact Statement is Required

The EA, which is attached hereto and incorporated by reference into this Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI), examines the potential effects of the proposed action and the No Action Alternative on resource areas and areas of environmental and socioeconomic concern: land use, aesthetic and visual resources, air quality, noise, geology and soils, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, socioeconomics (including environmental justice and protection of children), transportation, utilities, and hazardous and toxic materials.

Implementing the proposed action would be expected to result in a combination of short- and long-term minor adverse and beneficial effects. Short-term minor adverse effects on aesthetics and visual resources, air quality, noise, soils, surface and groundwater, biological resources, and transportation would be expected, primarily associated with construction and renovation activities. Long-term minor adverse effects would be expected on utilities from the increase in solid waste (construction and demolition debris). Long-term minor adverse effects would be expected on water resources, primarily associated with potential soil compaction resulting from renovation, construction, and demolition activities that could result in an increase in stormwater runoff and a decrease in infiltration to groundwater. Short-term minor beneficial effects on the local economy would be expected from expenditures and employment associated with lodging renovation and construction. Long-term minor beneficial effects on aesthetic and visual resources cultural, and socioeconomics (quality of life) would be expected from the overall improved quality of the lodging facilities. Long-term minor beneficial effects on surface and groundwater would be expected from replacing formerly impervious surfaces with vegetated cover. Long-term minor beneficial effects on utilities would result from the modernized lodging facilities with energy-efficient and low-usage utility systems, appliances, and fixtures. Long-term beneficial effects, such as the overall reduction in risk to human health and the environment would result from the removal of ACM and LBP from facilities at Fort Carson.

Mitigation actions are used to reduce, avoid, or compensate for significant adverse effects. The EA does not identify any potentially significant adverse effects or the need for any mitigation measures.

Public Review

The final EA and draft FNSI are available for review and comment for 30 days, beginning upon publication of a notice of availability the *Colorado Springs Gazette* (Colorado Springs, Colorado) and the *El Paso County Fountain Valley News* (Fountain, Colorado). Copies of the EA and Draft FNSI are available for review and comment at the following local libraries: Grant Library, Fort Carson, Colorado; Fountain Library, Fountain, Colorado; Penrose Public Library, Colorado Springs, Colorado; Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library, Pueblo, Colorado. They are also online at www.carson.army.mil/DPW. Comments on the EA and draft FNSI should be submitted to the Environmental Division, Directorate of Public Works, 1626 Evans Street, Attention: NEPA Program Manager, Fort Carson, CO 80913, or by e-mail to usarmy.carson.imcom-central.list.dpw-ed-nepa@mail.mil. Comments on the EA and draft FNSI should be submitted to the above mailing or e-mail addresses no later than the end of the 30-day review period.

Conclusions

On the basis of the EA, it has been determined that implementing the proposed action would have no significant adverse effects on the quality of human life or the natural environment. Preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required before implementing the proposed action.

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Date