

**U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION, U.S. BORDER PATROL
WELLESLEY ISLAND, NY AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (AOR)
PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION**

THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

BACKGROUND. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 was enacted to address concerns about environmental quality. NEPA establishes a national policy for attaining **“harmony between people and nature,”** for promoting efforts to eliminate damage to the environment, and for better understanding of ecological systems and natural resources. **NEPA’s main objectives are as follows:**

- Ensure that Federal agencies evaluate the potential environmental impacts of proposed programs, projects, and actions before decisions are made to implement them;
- Inform the public of Federal agency-proposed activities that have the potential to significantly affect environmental quality; and
- Encourage and facilitate public involvement in the decision-making processes.

WHAT IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT? The purpose of an Environmental Assessment (EA) is to determine the significance of the environmental effects and to look at alternative means to achieve the agency’s objectives. The EA process concludes with either a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), if applicable, or a decision to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT. Opportunities to participate in the NEPA process include submitting comments during the scoping period and on the Draft EA and attending public information sessions on the Draft EA. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has made documents publicly available and is currently conducting public information sessions.

AGENCY COORDINATION. NEPA mandates that local, state, and federal agencies within the affected project area be given the opportunity to comment on proposed actions. CBP has met with federal, state, and local agencies; invited agencies to review and comment on the Draft EA; and will continue to work with these agencies to minimize environmental impacts.



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STEPS IN THE EA PROCESS

Previous Steps:

- August 2021: 30-day public scoping period was held.
- February 2022: Draft Environmental Assessment released to the public for a 30-day review period.
- September 2022: CBP sent letters and distributed a press release to inform the public that that CBP remained interested in the proposed action location and planned to conduct additional surveys at the proposed action location and alternative sites.
- December 2023: CBP sent letters to inform the public that a Draft Supplement Environmental Assessment (SEA) would be published to address the alternative location.
- April 2024: First scoping letter for the Draft SEA was sent out.
- May 2024: Second scoping letter sent that announced the public involvement open houses and extended comment period.

Current Action:

- Draft SEA Scoping period: community feedback requested by July 12, 2024.

Next Steps:

- Draft SEA estimated to be available for public review in Fall of 2024.



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PURPOSE & NEED

CBP proposes to construct, operate, and maintain a new Border Patrol Station (BPS) in the Wellesley Island AOR to provide modernized space and infrastructure to support the USBP border security mission along the northern international border.

The need for the new BPS is to eliminate the overcrowded conditions, safety concerns, and accessibility issues that exist at the current Wellesley Island BPS.

Limitations at Current Site Include:

- The BPS was designed for 14 agents, but current capacity is 3x higher.
- Current facility is eligible for listing in NRHP therefore, renovation/expansion is not feasible.
- Not centrally located in the AOR.
- Not operationally efficient. Agents are often delayed crossing the Thousand Islands Bridge.
- Facility contains lead-based paint.
- High levels of coliform and E. coli are present in the water source.

Criteria for Site Selection:

- Adequate size and site shape (rectangular parcel)
- Main administrative building set back from shoreline
- Direct waterfront access for boat dock and ramp
- Approximately 10+ acres
- Centrally located in AOR
- Ease of access for emergency response
- Least environmentally damaging
- Access to public utilities
- Constructability, practicable alternative



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PROPOSED ACTION

CBP proposes to construct, operate, and maintain a new Border Patrol Station (BPS) in the Wellesley Island AOR to provide modernized space and infrastructure to support the USBP border security mission along the northern international border.

The proposed new Wellesley Island BPS would include construction of a main administration building with parking and boat dock and ramp onsite in the St. Lawrence River.

Site Specifications:

- 17,322 ft² single level main administration building
- 16,475 ft² of support space
 - Short-stay canine facility
 - ATV/snowmobile storage facility
 - Marine storage facility
 - One-bay indoor vehicle wash
 - One-tank fuel island
 - Communication tower
 - Perimeter fencing
 - Boat dock and ramp adjacent to the facility in the St. Lawrence River
- Enclosed parking to accommodate 33 vehicles
- Outdoor parking to accommodate up to 100 vehicles



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SITE COMPARISON

	TILT Property	Storandt Property (Dockside Cottages)
Parcel	18.9-acre parcel of undeveloped land along New York State Route 12 (NY-12) with waterfront access.	18.7-acre parcel of partially developed land with approximately 100 linear feet of waterfront located at 40263 NY-12, Clayton, New York.
Wildlife	Located next to Blind Bay, the site may contain spawning habitat for muskellunge fish. Surveys to confirm the absence or presence of the fish, federally-endangered Indiana Bat, and federally-threatened Northern Long-Eared Bat are currently delayed due to lack of real estate access.	No species protected under the Endangered Species Act were identified during the surveys.
Wetland	A 0.1-acre linear wetland traverses the center portion of the site.	A 0.14-acre linear wetland traverses the northern portion of the site.
Viewshed	Viewshed analysis conducted to consider visual impacts on the Historic District, as well as NRHP-listed Rock Island Light Station, Methodist-Protestant Church at Fisher's Landing, and the NRHP-eligible Fisher's Landing Post Office.	Viewshed analysis conducted to consider visual impacts. No properties on or near the site are considered eligible for listing in the NRHP.
Social	Strong public opposition due to the proximity to waterfront homes and potential impacts to tourism/economy and environmental impacts on the river.	Strong public opposition due to the proximity to waterfront homes and potential impacts to tourism/economy and environmental impacts on the river.
Cultural	No historic or archaeological resources were identified. A structure adjacent to the property, was identified as potentially eligible for listing in the State and NRHP. The underwater cultural resource survey has been delayed due to lack of real estate access.	No properties on the site are considered eligible for listing in the NRHP. No historic or archaeological resources or submerged, underwater cultural resources were identified.



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TILT PROPERTY



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**STORANDT PROPERTY
(DOCKSIDE COTTAGES)**



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SECTION 7 CONSULTATION

WHAT IS SECTION 7? The Endangered Species Act of 1973 requires that Federal agencies consult with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on any agency action with the potential to affect endangered species or their designated habitat.

HOW MANY FEDERALLY LISTED SPECIES ARE LOCATED IN THE PROJECT AREA?

- Four federally-listed species are known to occur in Jefferson County, NY: the piping plover, American hart’s-tongue fern, Indiana bat, and Northern long-eared bat.
- Of these, two—the Indiana bat and Northern long-eared bat—have the potential to occur at the proposed locations.
- The monarch butterfly, a candidate species for federal listing, has the potential to occur and was seen at the Storandt property.
- No designated Critical Habitat occurs within or near the project area.

STEPS TAKEN IN THE SECTION 7 CONSULTATION PROCESS. Based on these results, CBP has undertaken the following steps regarding the Indiana Bat and Northern Long-eared Bat:

Steps of Consultation Process	TILT Property	Storandt Property (Dockside Cottages)
Biological Survey	Conducted in June 2021. No federally-listed species were observed. Concluded the Proposed Action may affect but is not likely to adversely affect either bat species.	Conducted in September 2023. No federally-listed species were observed. Concluded the Proposed Action may affect but is not likely to adversely affect either bat species.
Informal Consultation	Initiated Informal Consultation in November 2021. USFWS requested bat surveys be completed.	Informal consultation has not been initiated yet.
Bat Protocol Surveys	Delayed due to lack of real estate access.	Conducted in August 2023. Concluded the Proposed Action may affect but is not likely to adversely affect either bat species.



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SECTION 106 CONSULTATION

WHAT IS SECTION 106? The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires that Federal agencies make a good faith effort to identify historic properties that might be impacted, and in consultation with a State Historic Preservation Officer, assess any adverse effects that could result from the proposed undertaking.

WHAT IS A HISTORIC PROPERTY? A historic property is any district, site, building, structure, or object that is listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

STEPS TAKEN IN THE NHPA SECTION 106 PROCESS

Steps of Consultation Process	TILT Property	Storandt Property (Dockside Cottages)
Cultural Survey	Archeological survey and viewshed analysis conducted June 2021.	Archeological survey and viewshed analysis conducted September 2023.
Section 106 Consultation	No effect determination made November 2021. SHPO re-opened consultation in February 2022 and requested additional viewshed analysis.	In May 2024, SHPO confirmed that no historic properties, including archaeological and/or historic resources, would be affected by this project.
Findings	Two NRHP listed properties within 1-mile of the site. One adjacent property is potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP.	No NRHP listed or eligible properties found.



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CLEAN WATER ACT

The Clean Water Act (CWA) makes it unlawful to discharge any pollutant from a point source into navigable waters (i.e., Waters of the U.S.), unless a permit was obtained. Section 404 of the CWA establishes a program to regulate and permit the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands.

Section 402 of the CWA requires that a discharge of any pollutant or combination of pollutants to surface waters that are deemed waters of the United States be regulated by a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. A permit under Section 402 is required for stormwater discharges from any construction activity disturbing:

- 1 acre or more of land, or
- Less than 1 acre of land, but that is part of a common plan of development or sale that will ultimately disturb 1 or more acres of land.

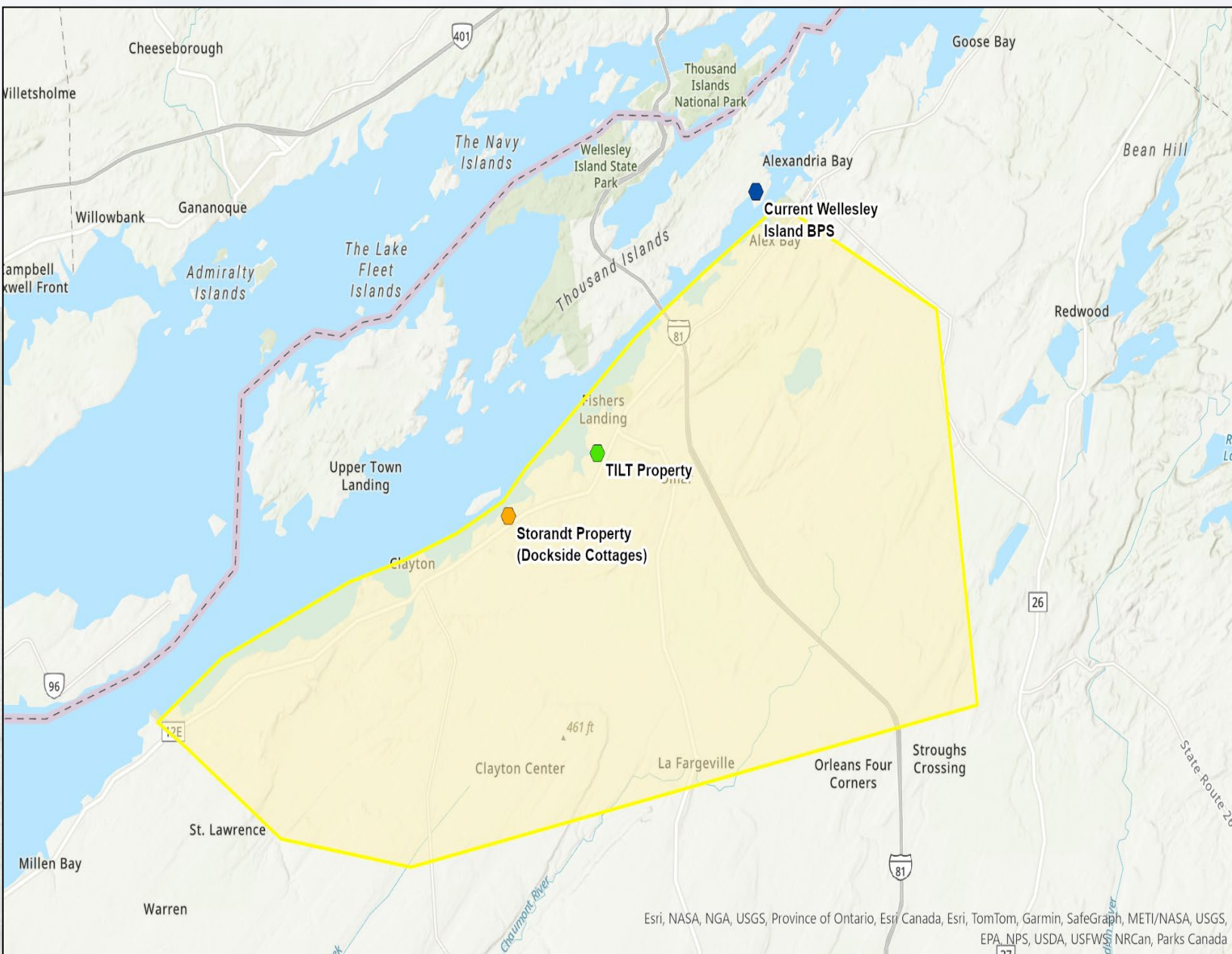
POTENTIAL MITIGATION STEPS REGARDING WATER RESOURCES NECESSARY FOR EACH SITE:

TILT Property	Storandt/Dockside Cottages
A linear wetland (0.1 acre) traverses the center portion of the site. The facility would be designed to avoid the wetland, or impacts would be mitigated so there is no net loss of wetlands.	A linear wetland (0.14 acre) traverses the northern portion of the site. Access to the waterfront would be designed to avoid the wetland, or impacts would be mitigated so there is no net loss of wetlands.
A NPDES permit would be obtained prior to construction.	A NPDES permit would be obtained prior to construction.



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ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS MAP



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HOW TO MAKE COMMENTS

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations, the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, invite public participation in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. The Public Scoping Period provides an opportunity for citizens to make formal comments regarding the proposed scope of the Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) as a part of the scoping process, or the analysis or findings in the Draft SEA once it is released for public comment. Anyone wishing to provide comments, suggestions, or relevant information on the Proposed Action may do so as follows (to avoid duplication, please use only one of the following methods).

By mail: **Mr. John Petrilla**
Execution Team | Energy and Environmental PMO
85 Enterprise
Suite 450 (4th Floor)
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656

By email: **Mr. John Petrilla at BPAMNEPA@cbp.dhs.gov**

Online:



Materials provided during this Open House will be available following the meeting at the QR Code above or <https://bit.ly/WellesleySEA>

Comments on the Proposed Action or scope of the SEA must reach CBP by **July 12, 2024**. CBP will consider all comments and material received in preparation of the Draft SEA. If you submit a comment, please include your name and address, and identify your comments for the Wellesley Island proposed construction in New York.

