

Public Meeting for Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences Expansion at Naval Support Activity Bethesda

Environmental Assessment

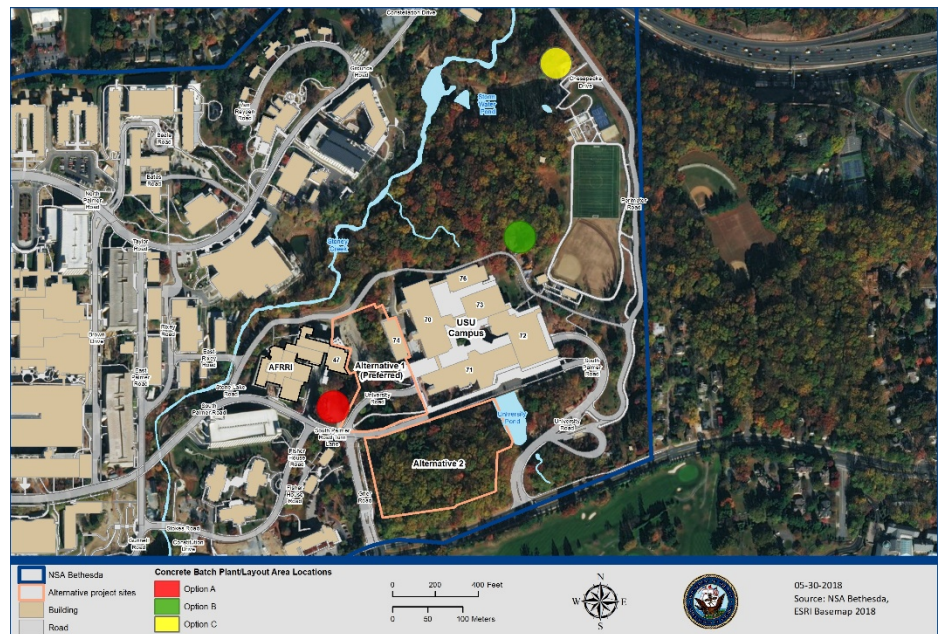
In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (**NEPA**), NSA Bethesda is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) on the **proposed construction** of a **multistory education and research laboratory and parking garage** at the Uniformed Services University (USU) of the Health Sciences. The EA also considers sites for a **temporary concrete batch plant or construction laydown area** to help reduce traffic from construction vehicles under both action alternatives.

The USU expansion was analyzed as part of the *Final Environmental Impact Statement Medical Facilities Development and University Expansion, NSA Bethesda, July 2013*, but changes in the design and construction timeline warranted a new NEPA analysis.

This **public meeting** is held to gather input and comments from the **public and other stakeholders** on the alternatives and environmental resources that were evaluated in the Draft EA. **Two action alternatives and a no action alternative** were analyzed within the Draft EA. The two potential locations for the new building, which would be approximately 480,000 gross square feet, are depicted in the map below, as well as the three potential sites for a temporary concrete batch plant.

The Draft EA analyzed the following resource areas:

- Air Quality
- Water Resources
- Geological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Biological Resources
- Visual Resources
- Noise
- Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Hazardous Materials and Wastes
- Cumulative Impacts



Alternative 1 (Preferred):

- Located north of South Palmer Road and south of Stone Lake Road
- Underground parking garage to be built under the new building
- Pedestrian bridges would connect the new building to existing USU campus buildings

Alternative 2:

- Located on a forested lot south of South Palmer Road
- Parking garage to be built aboveground on the same forested lot

No Action Alternative:

- Proposed Action would not occur
- Provides a baseline for measuring environmental impacts of the action alternatives

How to Provide Comments:

- ✓ Complete the comment form; leave it with us or return by mail (pre-addressed); or
- ✓ Email comments to navfacwashnepa@navy.mil.

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Transportation Study

As part of the Environmental Assessment, the Navy developed a **transportation study** to identify potential impacts on the traffic, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks inside and surrounding NSA Bethesda. The study evaluated the existing conditions and three future conditions that include one alternative without the proposed USU expansion called the No Action Alternative, and two action alternatives with the proposed USU expansion (Preferred Alternative and Alternative 2).

The study team **collected new traffic counts** near NSA Bethesda (23 intersections shown in the map on the next page) in April and early May 2018, and reviewed the existing pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities. The study assessed the **anticipated increase in traffic from the three future conditions (No Action, Preferred Alternative, and Alternative 2)** and the potential effect on the study area streets.

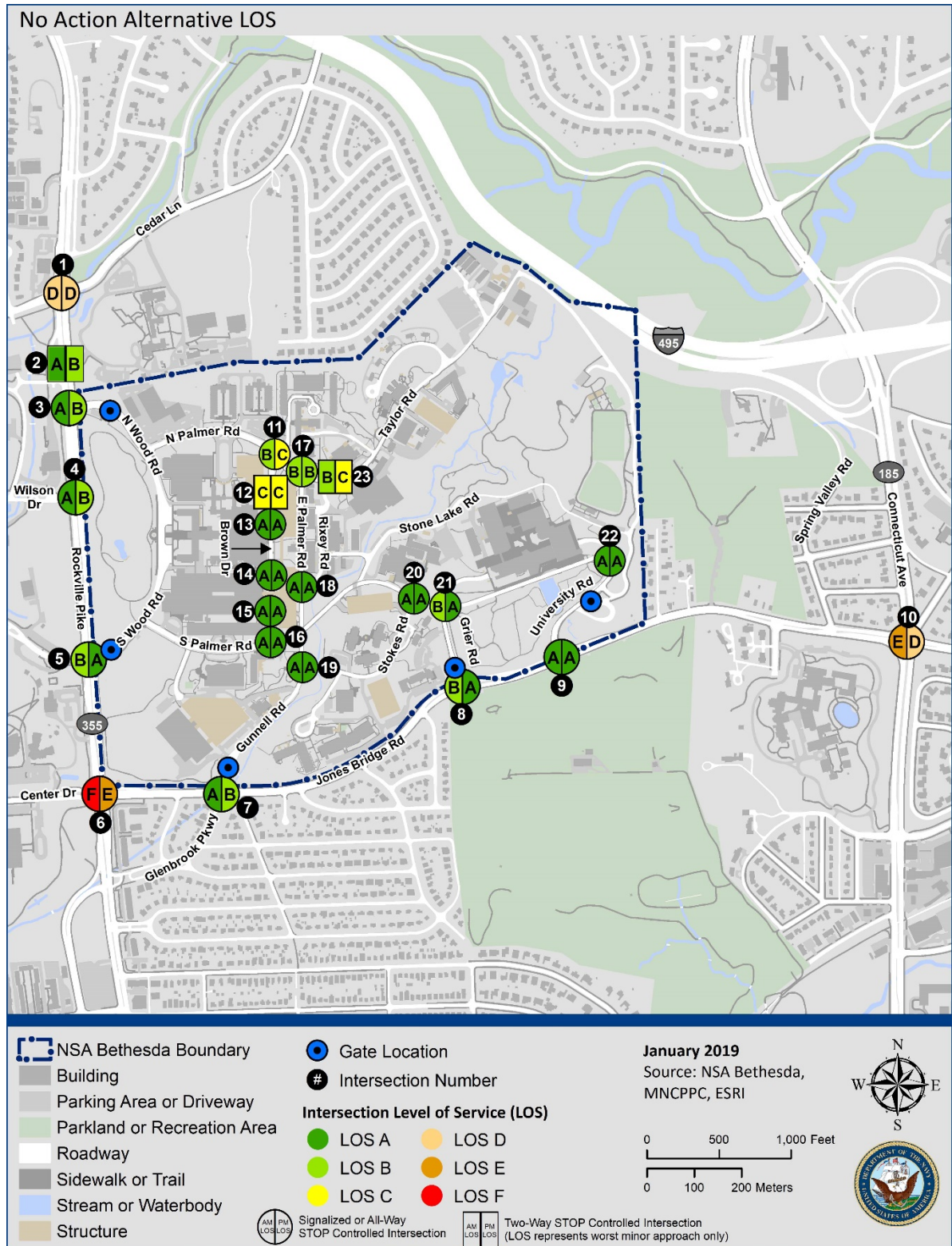
Key takeaways from the study:

- As agreed to by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC), the No Action Alternative incorporates **16 planned developments** to provide a benchmark against which to compare the Preferred Alternative and Alternative 2.
- **Existing Conditions:** All study area intersections are operating at an overall acceptable Level of Service (LOS) of LOS A through LOS E (i.e., defined by MNCPPC - 80 seconds or less of delay per vehicle to proceed through the intersection). However, **eight external intersections** experience vehicle queue lengths that exceed the available lane storage capacity at one or more intersection approaches.
- **No Action Alternative:** Long-term issues at the intersection of Rockville Pike and Jones Bridge Road would be expected. This intersection would experience an unacceptable LOS F during the morning peak hour (88 seconds of delay per vehicle). **Nine external intersections** would experience vehicle queue lengths that exceed the available lane storage capacity at one or more intersection approaches.
- **Preferred Alternative:** Two long-term issues at the intersection of Jones Bridge Road and MD 185/Kensington Parkway (eastbound approach only) and one long-term issue at NSA Bethesda Gates 1, 2, and 4 would be expected from the Preferred Alternative.
 - Compared to No Action Alternative, there would be a small increase in delay at the eastbound approach of Jones Bridge Road at the MD 185/Jones Bridge Road intersection (3.6 second delay per vehicle).
 - Under the worst-case scenario (five percent probability of occurring), the same intersection approach along Jones Bridge Road would experience an increase in vehicle queue by 12 car lengths in both lanes compared to the No Action Alternative.
 - Under the worst-case scenario (less than one percent probability of occurring), the potential gate queues onto NSA Bethesda could extend into Rockville Pike or Jones Bridge Road for less than five minutes.
- **Alternative 2:** Issues would be similar to what is described under the Preferred Alternative.
- **Construction Assessment**
 - **No Batch Plant Option (Concrete trucked onto the installation):** would have short-term, negligible impacts on transportation. Under the worst-case scenario (less than one percent probability of occurring), 5 out of 23 simulations reported that Gate 5 would experience a queue that extends into Jones Bridge Road for less than five minutes.
 - **Concrete Batch Plant (Concrete not trucked onto the installation):** options A, B, and C would all have short-term, negligible impacts on transportation. The number of trucks entering Gate 5 would be less than the No Batch Plant Option.

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Transportation Study

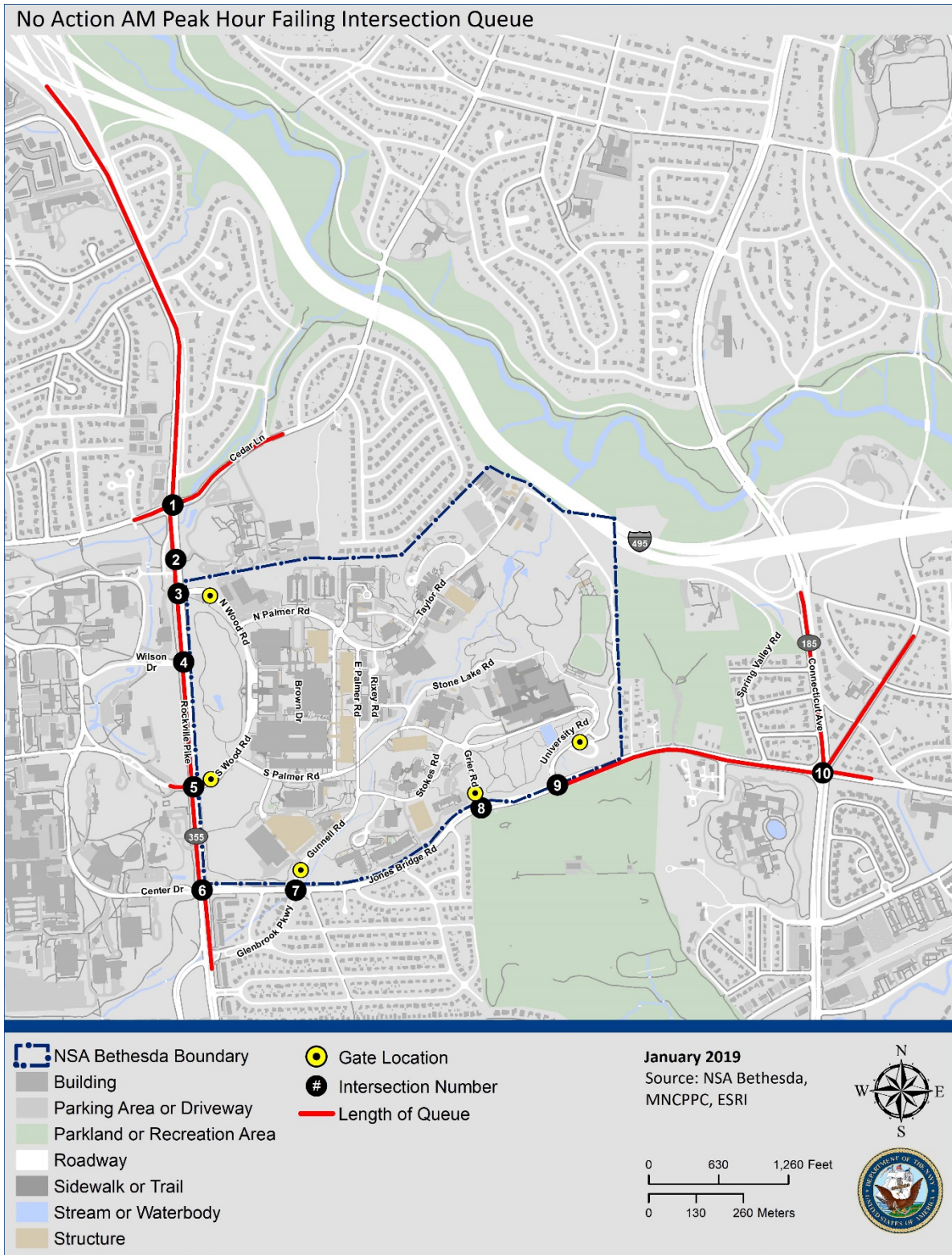
No Action AM and PM Peak Hour Intersection Level of Service



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Transportation Study

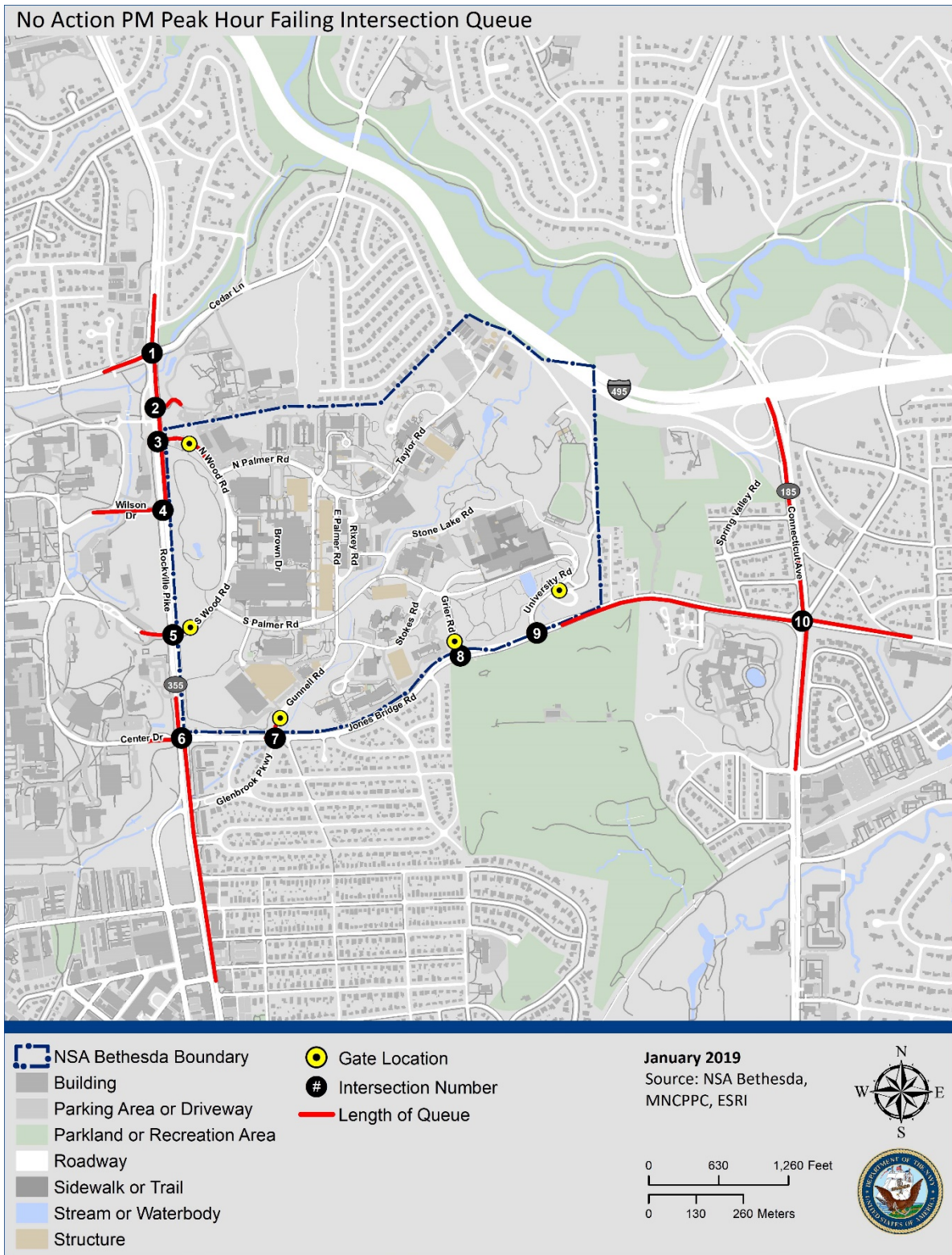
No Action AM Peak Hour Failing Intersection Queues



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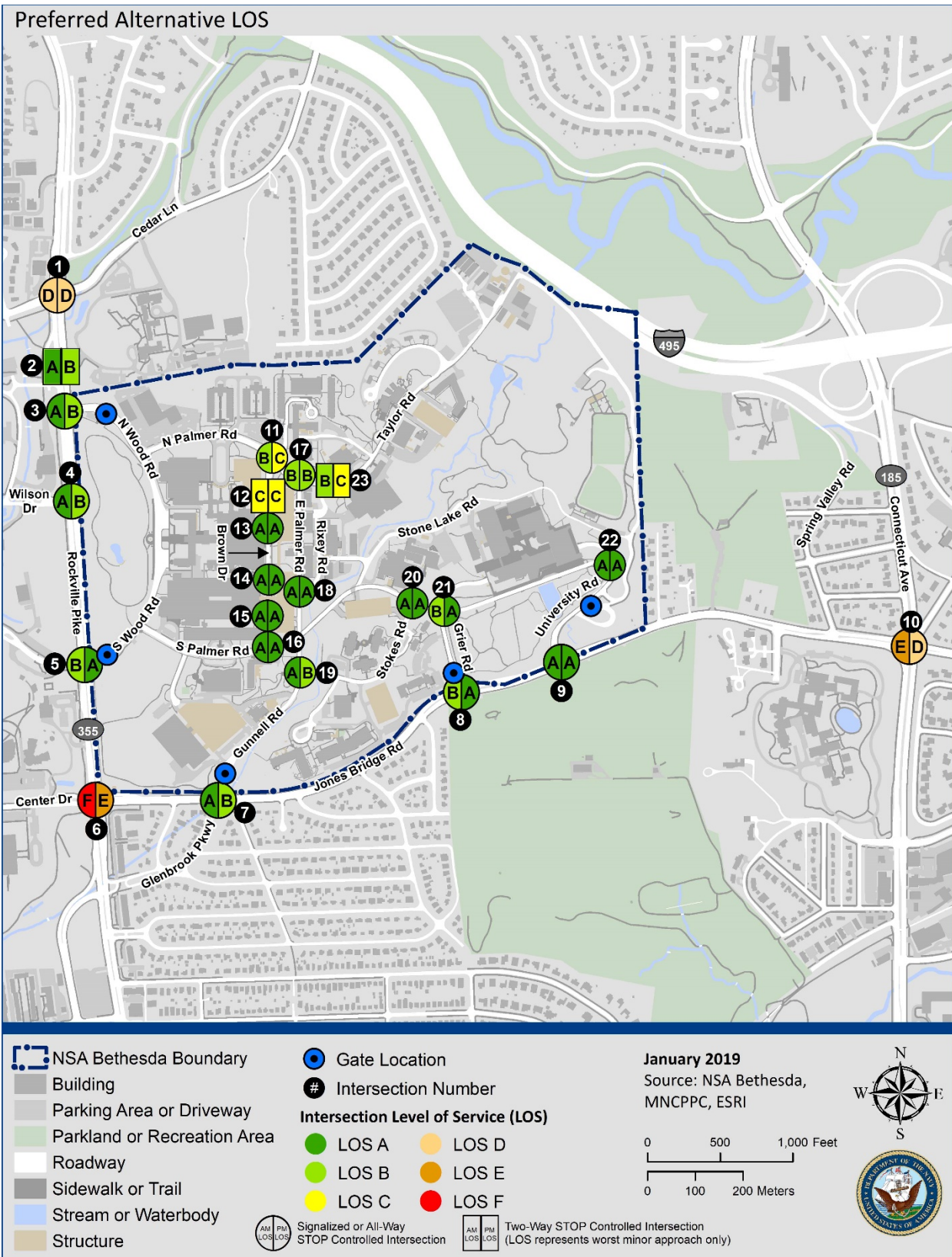
No Action PM Peak Hour Failing Intersection Queues



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Transportation Study

Preferred Alternative AM and PM Peak Hour Intersection Level of Service

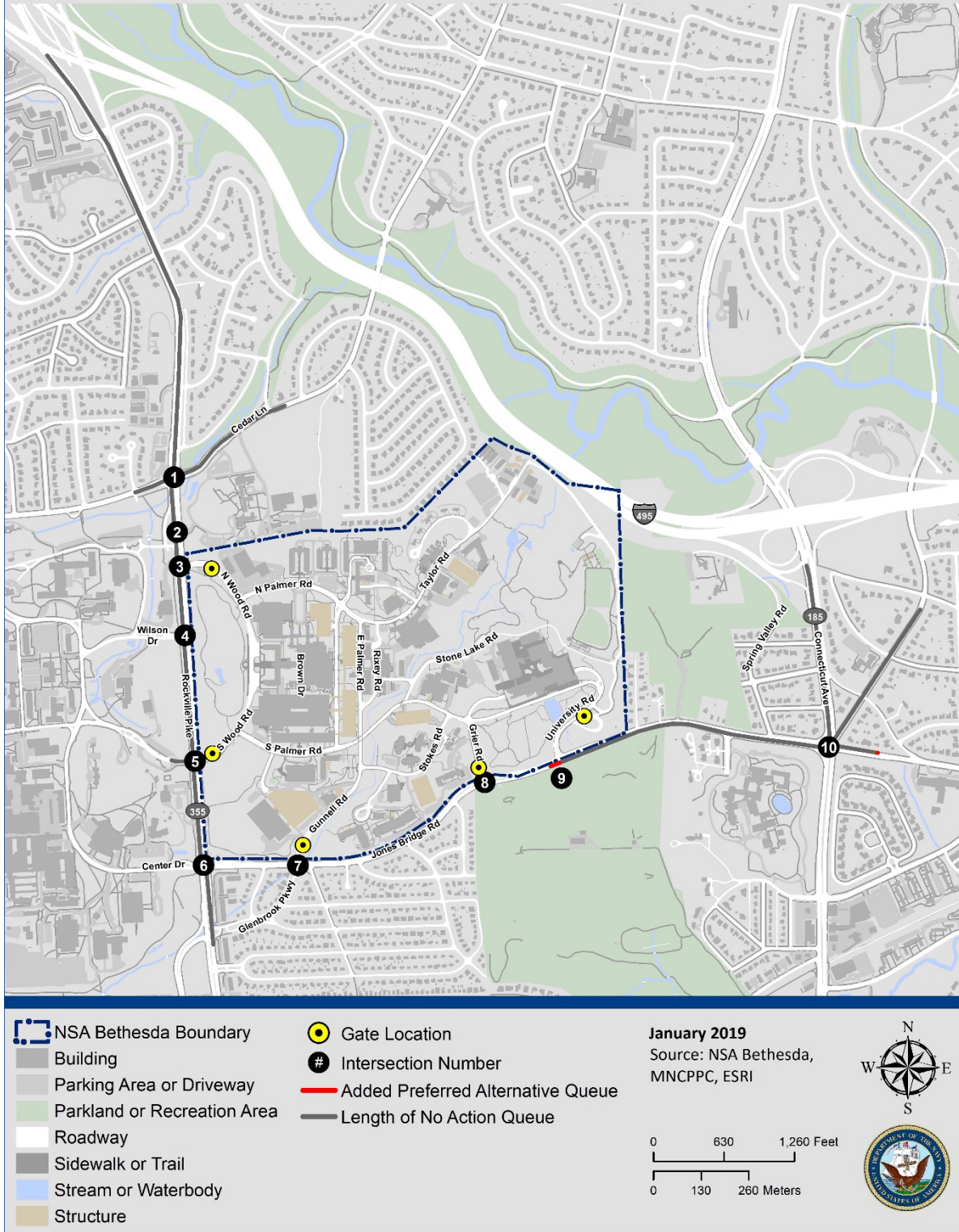


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Transportation Study

Comparison between the Preferred Alternative and No Action AM Queues

Preferred Alternative Queue Added to No Action AM Peak Hour Failing Intersection Queue

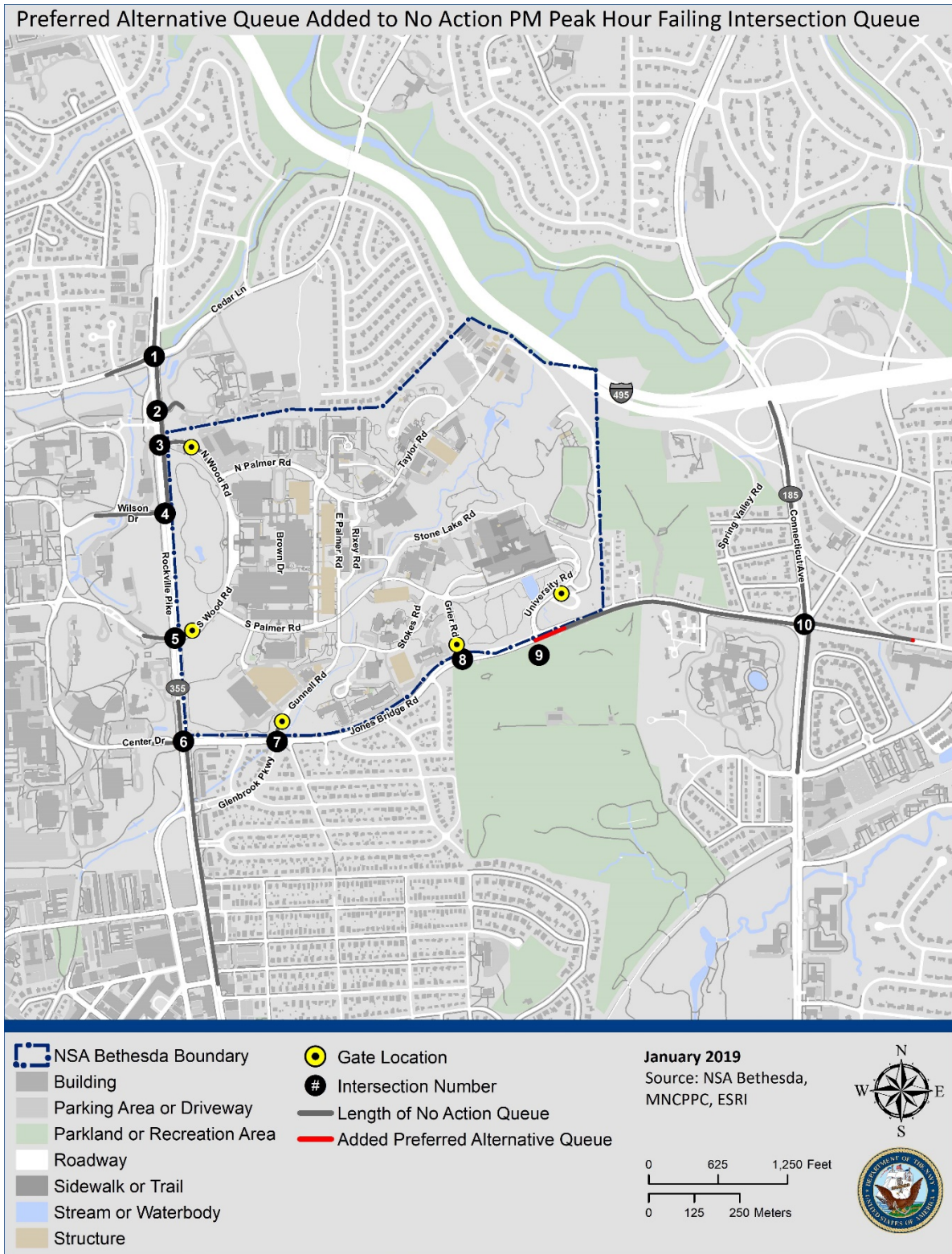


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Transportation Study

Comparison between the Preferred Alternative and No Action PM Queues

Preferred Alternative Queue Added to No Action PM Peak Hour Failing Intersection Queue



Proposed Mitigation:

- **Short term (Gates):** If the queue extends into Jones Bridge Road from Gate 5 during the AM peak hour from construction-related truck traffic, the Installation Commanding Officer may opt to implement a strategy to reduce the queue. These strategies include, but are not limited to the following:
 - Reject all trucks requiring a full vetting
 - Add a second security guard at the privately operated vehicle lane to allow two vehicles to be processed simultaneously
 - Close Gate 5 to all outbound traffic and use both lanes for inbound travel
- **Long term (Gates):** If the queue extends into Rockville Pike or Jones Bridge Road from Gates 1, 2, and 4 during the AM peak hour from new vehicles generated by the Proposed Action, the Installation Commanding Officer may opt to implement a strategy to reduce the queue. This could include, but is not limited to the following:
 - Add a second security guard at one or more lanes to allow two vehicles to be processed simultaneously
- **Long term (Connecticut Avenue at Jones Bridge Road/Kensington Parkway):** Several short- and long-term mitigation strategies were evaluated to determine if any could improve the Jones Bridge Road eastbound approach intersection operation. These included the following strategies:
 - **Short term:** Revise the existing lane geometry (lane striping) and or change the traffic signal timing. The result worsened one or more of the other approaches
 - **Long term:** Widen the intersection to include more lanes along Jones Bridge Road. The result would require partial property takings to provide enough right-of-way to add lanes
 - **Long term:** Revise Kensington Parkway operation to one-way northbound. The result would change travel patterns by increasing vehicle trips through the local roads in the neighborhood northeast of the intersection.

Based on no operational improvement occurring under the short-term strategies and property and neighborhood impacts under the long-term strategies, no mitigation is recommended for Connecticut Avenue at Jones Bridge Road/Kensington Parkway. **Also important to note, there is only a five percent probability of a longer queue occurring than under the No Action Alternative.**

The Draft Transportation Study is available for public review and comment as part of the Draft EA public review period.

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