

**NATIONWIDE
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**US-VISIT
IMPLEMENTATION AT
PASSENGER CRUISE SHIP
PORTS OF ENTRY**

NOVEMBER 2003

US-VISIT



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COMMONLY USED ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADIS	Arrival and Departure Information System
APIS	Advance Passenger Information System
BTS	U.S. Border and Transportation Security
CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
DMIA	Data Management Improvement Act of 2000
DOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
EA	Environmental Assessment
ICE	U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
IIRIRA	Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as amended
NIV	Non-Immigrant Visa Holders
TSA	U.S. Transportation Security Administration
USA PATRIOT ACT	Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001
US-VISIT	United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ampere	A unit of electric current in the meter-kilogram-second system.
Biographical Information	Data collected and submitted by the cruise ship carriers via APIS for arrival and departure.
Biometric Information	Biometrics are automated methods of recognizing a person based on a physiological or behavioral characteristic. Among the features measured are: face, fingerprints, hand geometry, handwriting, iris, retinal, vein, and voice. For the US-VISIT program biometric information will include the collection of two fingerprints and a photograph during the entry process and two fingerprints during the exit process.
Environmental Assessment	A public document that analyzes a proposed federal action for the possibility of significant environmental impacts.
Foreign Nationals	Non-U.S. Citizens.
Legal Permanent Residents	A Foreign National who has been lawfully accorded the privilege of residing permanently in the U.S. as an immigrant in accordance with applicable U.S. immigration laws.
No Action Alternative	The No Action Alternative, if no action is undertaken, provides an environmental baseline against which impacts of the Proposed Action (and alternatives) can be compared.
Non-Immigrant Visa Holders	A subset of Foreign Nationals that require a visa to enter the country.
Preferred Alternative	An alternative that is found to best meet the stated purpose and need for the Proposed Action.
Proposed Action	A proposal made by DHS to authorize, recommend, or implement an action to meet a specific purpose and need.
Significance	The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), defines significance with respect to the context and intensity of a potential impact.
Watch List	A list containing biographical and/or biometric information (includes known and/or suspected terrorists/criminals) utilized for law enforcement purposes within DHS.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has established the United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology (US-VISIT) Program Office. US-VISIT's principal mission is to implement five legislative actions:

- Section 110 of the *Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996* (IIRIRA);
- The *Data Management Improvement Act* (DMIA);
- The *Visa Waiver Permanent Program Act*;
- The *Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism* (USA PATRIOT) Act; and
- The *Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act*.

The primary goals of the US-VISIT Program are to: secure our nation; ensure the integrity of the immigration system; facilitate legitimate travel and commerce; strengthen international cooperation; and respect U.S. privacy laws and policies. As part of this effort, US-VISIT will provide government officials with specific information about who is entering the country and who is staying past their period of authorized admission. To this end, DHS, through its US-VISIT Program, is proposing (Proposed Action) to modify both entry and exit processing of Non-Immigrant Visa holders (NIV) at fifteen (15) passenger cruise ship terminals (Table S-1). The Proposed Action will include a new arrival and departure process for twelve (12) of the fifteen (15) passenger cruise ship terminals and a new pre-inspection arrival process for three (3) terminals located in British Columbia, Canada. As capability increases, these procedures may be expanded to include additional foreign traveler groups, but the overall technology and process will remain the same during initial deployment at the passenger cruise ship terminals. In addition, cargo terminals were not evaluated in this Environmental Assessment (EA) due to the functional differences in processing passengers and cargo at these terminals.

In addition to the biographical information already captured through the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) arrival inspections and the Advance Passenger Information System (APIS) submission by the sea carriers, the US-VISIT program is proposing to collect biometric information for NIVs entering and exiting the U.S. through passenger cruise ship terminals, beginning in early January 2004. In doing so, the US-VISIT program will have the capability to collect biometrics, confirm the identity of NIV travelers, and provide the necessary data to search against both a biographical and biometric watch list. This data will help to prevent document fraud, identity theft, and unauthorized travelers from entering or remaining illegally in the U.S.

The US-VISIT Program Office has made a determination to implement an interim solution using existing DHS system technology and an interim business process. This is due to the complexity of the required undertaking, the absence of new technology, the need for timely implementation, and the expectation that a Prime Integrator (to be named in May 2004) will develop a permanent solution.

A number of interim arrival and departure alternatives for NIV travelers were initially investigated by DHS. These included the use of new technology, existing DHS system technology, new construction, and increased CBP staffing. From this initial class of alternatives it was determined that new technology and substantial new construction would not meet the needs of the program, represented an unacceptable impact to the traveling public, and could not be implemented within an acceptable timeframe.

**TABLE S-1
PASSENGER CRUISE SHIP TERMINALS
WITH FEDERAL INSPECTION SERVICE ARRIVAL CHECKPOINTS**

Passenger Cruise Ship Port Name	Port Code	Proposed New Interim Process	County	State	Country
Galveston RCI	GCS	Exit/Entry	Galveston	Texas	United States
Long Beach Carnival Cruise	LBC	Exit/Entry	Los Angeles	California	United States
Miami – RCI	MSE	Exit/Entry	Miami-Dade	Florida	United States
Port Canaveral	PCF	Exit/Entry	Brevard	Florida	United States
Port Canaveral, Terminal 10	PCT	Exit/Entry	Brevard	Florida	United States
San Juan Pan-American	SJP	Exit/Entry	Puerto Rico	Puerto Rico	Puerto Rico
San Pedro World Cruise Center	SPS	Exit/Entry	Los Angeles	California	United States
Seattle Seaport	SES	Exit/Entry	King	Seattle	United States
Seattle, Birth 30, Cruise Terminal	SBP	Exit/Entry	King	Seattle	United States
Tampa, Terminal 3	TSP	Exit/Entry	Hillsborough	Florida	United States
Tampa, Terminal 7	TST	Exit/Entry	Hillsborough	Florida	United States
West Palm Seaport	WPS	Exit/Entry	Palm Beach	Florida	United States
Vancouver, Ballantyne Pier	VBP	Pre-Arrival Inspection	Greater Vancouver Regional District	British Columbia	Canada
Vancouver, Canada Place	CPS	Pre-Arrival Inspection	Greater Vancouver Regional District	British Columbia	Canada
Victoria, Pre Inspection	VIC	Pre-Arrival Inspection	Capital Region District	British Columbia	Canada

For the new arrival and departure process, three (3) alternatives were evaluated in this Environmental Assessment (EA) in addition to the No Action Alternative. Alternatives included: CBP - Reverse Inspections (Alternative 1); Sea Carrier Screening – Non-Governmental (Alternative 2); and Self-Service - US-VISIT with Contract Support (Alternative 3). All of the alternatives (excluding the No Action Alternative) evaluated in this EA were found to have similar impacts on the natural, physical, and socioeconomic environments (Table S-2). Therefore, the selection of a Preferred Alternative was based on each alternative’s capacity to fulfill the stated purpose and need for the Proposed Action. That basis is summarized in Table S-3. Although the No Action Alternative is not considered a viable alternative because it does not meet the purpose and need, it provided an environmental baseline against which impacts of the Preferred Alternative were compared.

Alternative 3 (Self-Service - US-VISIT with Contract Support) was selected as the Preferred Alternative because it was found to best meet the purpose and need for the Proposed Action. For departure, Alternative 3 includes the deployment of self-service workstations in a relatively secure area prior to entering the ship's controlled corridor for boarding. Alternative 3 also includes the deployment of contracted US-VISIT attendants who will be available in the vicinity of the workstations to assist NIV travelers in utilizing the workstation and understanding the new departure process. The information to be captured at the self-service workstations for NIVs will include biographical data and fingerprints. For arrival, the Preferred Alternative will include the collection of fingerprint scans and a photograph for all NIVs by CBP staff at the existing arrival inspection checkpoint. This additional process will require the installation of nominal infrastructure (a small box measuring approximately 6x6x2-inches and a digital camera) at each existing CBP inspection booth. The processing time to capture this additional data is not expected to increase the average processing time of a passenger upon arrival to the U.S.

It was determined that the deployment, installation, and maintenance requirements necessary to implement the Preferred Alternative will have no permanent impact on: land use patterns; local or regional plans; zoning; residential, commercial, or community services; children, low-income, or minority populations; socioeconomics; air, noise, cultural resources; vegetation or wildlife; waters of the U.S., including wetlands; threatened or endangered species; floodways or floodplains; hazardous waste sites; or utilities. DHS has also concluded that the Preferred Alternative will not result in incremental impacts such that there would be a condition whereby individually minor but collectively significant impacts would result in a measurable impact nationwide.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 1969), this EA evaluated the impact on the natural, physical, and social environs as a result of implementing the proposed interim business process and associated technology. Results of this analysis demonstrate that there will be no significant impacts to the aforementioned resources. In summary, DHS has determined that the Proposed Action will not result in significant direct, indirect, temporary, or cumulative impacts to the environment.

**TABLE S-2
SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL PROJECT ALTERNATIVE IMPACTS BY RESOURCE CLASS**

Issue	ALTERNATIVES			
	1	2	3 (Preferred)	
	No Action	CBP - Reverse Inspections	Sea Carrier Screening - Non-Governmental	Self-Service - US-VISIT with Contract Support
Land Use:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Environmental Justice and Protection of Children:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Socioeconomics:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Aesthetics and Visual Resources:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Native American Resources:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Relocations	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Residences:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Community Facilities and Services:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Businesses:	No Impact	No Impact	Temporary Impact	Temporary Impact
Cultural Resources	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Architectural:	No Impact	No Impact	No Potential To Cause Effects	No Potential To Cause Effects
Archaeological:	No Impact	No Impact	No Potential To Cause Effects	No Potential To Cause Effects
Air Quality:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Noise:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Threatened and Endangered Species:	No Potential To Cause Effects	No Potential To Cause Effects	No Potential To Cause Effects	No Potential To Cause Effects
Wetland Impacts:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Surface and Ground Water:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Floodplain Encroachments:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Hazardous Waste and Toxic Substances:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Utilities:	No Impact	Potential Temporary Impact	Potential Temporary Impact	Potential Temporary Impact
Cumulative Impacts:	No Incremental Impacts	No Incremental Impacts	No Incremental Impacts	No Incremental Impacts

**TABLE S-3
ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES BY US-VISIT DEPLOYMENT FACTORS AND CRITERIA**

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3*
Factor/Criteria	CBP - Reverse Inspections	Sea Carrier Screening – Non-Governmental	Self-Service – US-VISIT with Contract Support
Cost¹	Marginal ⁶	Marginal	Acceptable
Space²	Marginal	Marginal	Acceptable
Staffing³	Marginal	Marginal	Acceptable
Security⁴	Acceptable ⁷	Marginal	Acceptable
Technology⁵	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

¹US-VISIT funding is limited to those funds appropriated by Congress on an annual fiscal basis.

²Space at the passenger cruise ship terminal is inherently limited. The allocation of suitable space to deploy the technology will be evaluated and negotiated on a site-by-site basis.

³US-VISIT's ability to hire additional government personnel in an acceptable timeframe is constrained by Congressional funding and time.

⁴For deployment purposes, security is defined as the ability to accurately acquire and secure biographic and biometric data.

⁵Congressional mandate of December 31, 2003 has limited the time available to develop and deploy technology.

⁶Marginal: An assessment score that does not adequately meet the stated purpose and need for the Proposed Action.

⁷Acceptable: An assessment score that meets the stated purpose and need for the Proposed Action.

*Preferred Alternative

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1.0 PURPOSE, NEED, AND SCOPE

1.1 PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

Each year approximately 449 million people enter the U.S. through 330 designated ports of entry. Approximately 56 percent of those travelers include U.S. Citizens, Legal Permanent Residents, and travelers from visa waiver countries. The remaining 44 percent of travelers (approximately 196 million) entering the U.S. are foreign nationals that are non-immigrant visa holders (NIV). The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is currently charged with inspecting these travelers, both citizen and non-citizen, entering into the U.S. through 330 designated ports of entry: air, sea, and land. Of the 330 ports of entry into the U.S., fifteen (15) are passenger cruise ship terminals (Figure 1). While not the largest ports of entry into the U.S., the selected passenger cruise ship terminals are an important link in securing the nation's borders because many foreign travelers enter and depart the U.S. through these terminals.

In 2000, Congress mandated that the Attorney General, through the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), develop and implement an automated and integrated entry/exit data system to document the arrival and departure of aliens at U.S. ports of entry. This mandate expanded upon an earlier requirement set forth in the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) in 1996. The intent of the mandate is to improve the ability of law enforcement to secure the nation's borders through improving available data while facilitating legitimate trade, travel, and commerce.

The responsibility for enforcing this mandate was transferred from the former INS to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in 2003. The key federal laws mandating this system are the *Data Management Improvement Act* (DMIA, itself an amended portion of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, or IIRIRA), the *Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism* (USA PATRIOT) Act, and the *Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act* (Border Security Act). The basic legislative requirements are to develop a system that contains available arrival and departure data on aliens transiting through land, air, and sea ports. In order to implement these legislative requirements, DHS has established the United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology (US-VISIT) Program. The primary goals of the program are as follows:

- Secure our nation;
- Ensure the integrity of the immigration system;
- Facilitate legitimate travel and commerce;
- Strengthen international cooperation; and
- Respect U.S. privacy laws and policies.

The first milestone of the US-VISIT Program is to implement a system that records the arrival and departure of visa holders at the air and sea ports. The departmental goal is to implement the first deployment of this system at air and sea ports by early January 2004. Further deployments will follow until the system has been implemented at all air and sea ports where international entries and departures occur.

The US-VISIT Program Management Office has made a determination to implement an interim solution using existing DHS system technology and an interim business process. This is due to the complexity of the required undertaking, the absence of new technology, the need for timely implementation, and the

expectation that a Prime Integrator (to be named in May 2004) will develop a permanent solution. The associated infrastructure will be dependent on the type of port: air, land, or sea, as well as the site-specific requirements at each deployment location. The first phase of this deployment will be an interim program at air and sea ports. This Environmental Assessment is restricted to an analysis of the deployment of an interim US-VISIT Program at passenger cruise ship terminals due to the unique deployment strategies and associated environment at the sea ports relative to the air and land locations. Future deployment plans are not dependent on decisions made for the implementation of the interim business process deployment at passenger cruise ship terminals because US-VISIT is utilizing technology within existing facilities that will not prejudice either the placement of future processing areas at air or land ports, the associated business process, or the development of new technology. Furthermore, these projects are independent business actions that are separated by geography and, in some cases, timing for implementation.

The current system uses passenger manifest systems, travel documents such as passports and visas, and inspector interviews to collect data on people entering the U.S. through passenger cruise ship terminals. For foreign nationals, pre-arrival information is stored in the electronic Advance Passenger Information System (APIS). This information is then verified through the use of travel documents and inspector interviews when the traveler arrives at the passenger cruise ship terminal.

The system needs to be improved with the use of biometrics in order to ensure the accuracy of collected information and prevent the use of fraudulent travel documents by foreign nationals. Few methods currently exist that provide departure data regarding those foreign nationals exiting the U.S. through passenger cruise ship terminals. There are currently no government inspection controls for passenger cruise ship terminal departures and the only information currently available is from submitted passenger manifests and immigration forms (I-94). Prior to arriving at a passenger cruise ship terminal, the cruise line carrier provides all NIV travelers a form to complete while still en route to the U.S. (Form I-94W: Nonimmigrant Visa Waiver Arrival/Departure Form). The form includes basic identification information and the address where the traveler will stay in the U.S. While this data provides useful background information such as the immigration classification of the traveler and the permitted length of stay in the U.S., verification of the data through the use of biometrics is necessary to prevent fraud. Additional information regarding the departure of foreign nationals from the U.S. is also necessary in order to identify individuals who have stayed in the country longer than permitted by law.

The current lack of accurate information presents a challenge to DHS and the law enforcement community's ability to respond effectively to potential terrorist threats. The absence of accurate data on individuals for both entry and exit makes it difficult to identify the location of foreign nationals who present a potential risk to the national security of the U.S. In order to make it more difficult for those intending to do harm to the U.S. to enter the country or overstay beyond the conditions permitted under their visa, and to provide law enforcement with the necessary data to help prevent terrorist attacks, DHS is proposing the implementation of a system that will collect biographic and biometric data on foreign visa holders entering and exiting the U.S. The major goal of this system is to secure the nation's borders while facilitating legitimate travel and commerce. With the attacks of September 11, 2001, the urgency for an effective arrival and departure data system rose dramatically. Ongoing threats from terrorist groups emphasize the continuing need for this system.

1.2 SCOPE OF ANALYSIS

During the development of the Proposed Action, the US-VISIT Program Office has coordinated closely with multiple DHS components, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the U.S. Department of State, and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). This coordination has led to an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be evaluated and for identifying the significant issues related to the Proposed Action. As a result of this agency scoping process and the environmentally limited nature of the Proposed Action, DHS has decided to prepare a Nationwide Environmental Assessment (EA)¹. US-VISIT has also begun coordination with interested parties including the International Council of Cruise Lines and the American Association of Port Authorities.

As part of the public involvement process (40 CFR Sec. 1506.6), DHS will publish notification of the availability of the EA in nationally circulated newspapers and on a project-specific website.

2.0 PROPOSED ACTION

The DHS, through its US-VISIT Program, is proposing to modify both entry and exit processing of Non-Immigrant Visa holders (NIV) at 15 passenger cruise ship terminals. The Proposed Action will include a new arrival and departure process for 12 of the 15 passenger cruise ship terminals and a new pre-inspection arrival process for three (3) terminals located in British Columbia, Canada (Table 1).

Based on Legacy Immigration and Naturalization arrival inspection data for 2002 (Advance Passenger Information System [APIS] data), NIV travelers accounted for approximately 3.7 million of the 10.2 million inspected travelers utilizing passenger cruise ship terminals. Due to the fact that there is no current immigration exit control at passenger cruise ship terminals, the number of NIV departures was estimated based on the number of NIV arrivals. Therefore, it was estimated that approximately 3.7 million or 36 percent of passenger cruise departures are NIV travelers.

The Proposed Action includes the collection of both biometric and biographic data for NIVs on both arrival and departure from passenger cruise ship terminals. As capability increases, these procedures may be expanded to include additional foreign traveler groups, but the overall technology and process will remain the same during initial deployment. Therefore, this analysis covers deployment of the system for all potentially affected travelers utilizing passenger cruise ship terminals.

¹DHS is currently in the process of developing departmental implementing regulations.

**TABLE 1
PASSENGER CRUISE SHIP TERMINALS
WITH FEDERAL INSPECTION SERVICE ARRIVAL CHECKPOINTS**

Passenger Cruise Ship Port Name	Port Code	Proposed New Interim Process	County	State	Country
Galveston RCI	GCS	Exit/Entry	Galveston	Texas	United States
Long Beach Carnival Cruise	LBC	Exit/Entry	Los Angeles	California	United States
Miami – RCI	MSE	Exit/Entry	Miami-Dade	Florida	United States
Port Canaveral	PCF	Exit/Entry	Brevard	Florida	United States
Port Canaveral, Terminal 10	PCT	Exit/Entry	Brevard	Florida	United States
San Juan Pan-American	SJP	Exit/Entry	Puerto Rico	Puerto Rico	Puerto Rico
San Pedro World Cruise Center	SPS	Exit/Entry	Los Angeles	California	United States
Seattle Seaport	SES	Exit/Entry	King	Seattle	United States
Seattle, Birth 30, Cruise Terminal	SBP	Exit/Entry	King	Seattle	United States
Tampa, Terminal 3	TSP	Exit/Entry	Hillsborough	Florida	United States
Tampa, Terminal 7	TST	Exit/Entry	Hillsborough	Florida	United States
West Palm Seaport	WPS	Exit/Entry	Palm Beach	Florida	United States
Vancouver, Ballantyne Pier	VBP	Pre-Arrival Inspection	Greater Vancouver Regional District	British Columbia	Canada
Vancouver, Canada Place	CPS	Pre-Arrival Inspection	Greater Vancouver Regional District	British Columbia	Canada
Victoria, Pre Inspection	VIC	Pre-Arrival Inspection	Capital Region District	British Columbia	Canada

3.0 ALTERNATIVES

A number of interim arrival and departure alternatives for NIV travelers were initially investigated by DHS. These included the development of new technology, existing DHS system technology, new construction, and increased CBP staffing. From this initial class of alternatives, it was determined that the development of new technology and resulting infrastructure modifications would not meet the immediate needs of the program, could not be implemented within an acceptable timeframe, and clearly represented an unacceptable impact to the traveling public. It was further determined that it was not feasible for US-VISIT to capture information on all foreign travelers within this timeframe. Therefore, a smaller group was chosen for initial deployment based on existing documentation requirements.

The remaining alternatives were evaluated further based on a number of defined factors and criteria that would meet the minimum requirements for deployment. These included:

- Cost: US-VISIT funding is limited to those funds appropriated by Congress on a fiscal basis;
- Space: space at the passenger cruise ship terminals is limited. The allocation of suitable space to deploy the existing technology at these ports will be evaluated and negotiated on a site-by-site basis;
- Staffing: US-VISIT's ability to hire additional government personnel in an acceptable timeframe is constrained by Congressional funding and time;
- Security: US-VISIT's ability to accurately acquire biographic and biometric data; and
- Use of technology: time and funding to develop new technology are not available in order to meet current security needs.

3.1 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Currently, cruise ship carriers control departing traveler access to cruise ships through the use of passenger identification cards once they are processed and provided access to the ship. This security measure is to ensure that passengers that exit or board the vessel during the duration of the voyage (such as day trips to ports-of-call) are accounted for and to ensure that, in fact, the passenger is a valid or lawful traveler. Thus, all passengers that board cruise ships are subject to cruise ship carrier security. In contrast to airports, where the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) requires all travelers to be processed through an inspection checkpoint prior to enplaning, there are no government inspection checkpoints for travelers departing from passenger cruise ship terminals. For arrivals, inspections are administered by both the cruise ship carrier (e.g., Royal Caribbean International) and the CBP.

For the new departure and arrival process, three (3) alternatives were evaluated in this Environmental Assessment (EA) in addition to the No Action Alternative. Alternatives included: CBP - Reverse Inspections (Alternative 1); Sea Carrier Screening – Non-Governmental (Alternative 2); and Self-Service - US-VISIT with Contract Support (Alternative 3). All alternatives were evaluated based on the factors and criteria stipulated in Table 2, as well as for the potential to result in significant impacts on the natural, physical, and socioeconomic environment. All three alternatives include a new departure and arrivals process for NIV travelers.

3.1.1 Alternative 1: U.S. Customs and Border Protection - Reverse Inspections

For departures, Alternative 1 will require departing NIV travelers to be screened by CBP staff at the existing arrival inspection booths (Figure 2). Currently, pedestrian flow for arrivals is designed to proceed efficiently through the inspection area in one direction (flowing from seaside to landside). In order to process travelers in both directions (for departure and arrival), the existing arrival inspection booths and larger inspection area will need to be reconfigured in order to facilitate two-way pedestrian flow. The use of a reversible inspection checkpoint could also require cruise ship carriers to modify departure and arrival schedules in order to minimize potential processing conflicts with departing and arriving passengers through the reconfigured CBP inspection checkpoint.

This alternative will require departing NIVs to pass through the CBP inspection checkpoint, thus providing an increased confidence level that the traveler will depart the U.S through the sterile corridor that leads to the escorted gangway. Alternative 1 will also meet an acceptable timeframe and utilize existing DHS technology. However, Alternative 1 will require additional CBP staff to conduct the security screening and identify NIVs through a document scan. Biometrics would then be taken and checked against database information.

For arrivals, Alternative 1 will include the collection of fingerprint scans and a photograph for all NIVs at the reversible CBP inspection checkpoint (Figure 2). This additional process will require reconfiguring existing arrival inspection booths and the larger inspection area to facilitate two-way pedestrian flow. In addition to reconfiguring the inspection area for efficient two-way pedestrian flow, the new arrival process will require the installation of infrastructure (a finger print scanner measuring approximately 6x6x2-inches and a digital camera) at each CBP inspection booth to process the biometric data. The average processing time for an arriving traveler will not increase because the biometric data will be collected concurrently with the biographical information captured through the existing CBP arrival inspection process.

Alternative 1 was not selected as the Preferred Alternative due to the requirement for additional CBP staff, the necessity to reconfigure the existing arrival inspection area for two-way pedestrian flow, and the potential for conflict with existing passenger cruise ship carrier schedules.

3.1.2 Alternative 2: Sea Carrier Screening – Non-Governmental

For departures, Alternative 2 will require NIV travelers to be screened at the sea carrier check-in counter prior to entering the sterile corridor leading to the escorted gangway to the ship (Figure 3). Alternative 2 will require the sea carrier to modify their existing check-in procedures and utilize non-governmental personnel to administer the NIV departure process.

For arrivals, Alternative 2 will include the collection of fingerprint scans and a photograph for all NIVs by CBP staff at the existing arrival inspection checkpoint (Figure 3). Similar to Alternative 1, this additional process will require the installation of infrastructure (a finger print scanner measuring approximately 6x6x2-inches and a digital camera) at each existing arrival inspection booth. The average processing time will not increase because biometric data will be collected concurrently with the biographical information already captured through the CBP arrival inspection process.

Because Alternative 2 will process NIV travelers prior to entering the sterile corridor leading to the escorted gangway to the ship, there is a lower degree of confidence that NIV travelers will board the ship. Similarly, the use of non-government personnel to assist in the new departure process will also pose an added security risk because these employees have not been cleared through a government security process. Additionally, the time to implement this alternative will require a negotiated agreement with international sea carriers. As such, it is highly likely that such negotiations will exceed an acceptable timeframe in which to deploy the Proposed Action. Alternative 2 could also require the sea carriers to modify space within their check-in area to facilitate the DHS technology in addition to the possibility of having to increase staff to process NIVs. For these reasons, Alternative 2 was not identified as the Preferred Alternative.

3.1.3 Alternative 3: Self-Service – US-VISIT With Contract Support

For departure, Alternative 3 will include the deployment of self-service workstations beyond the landside sea carrier check-in counter towards the seaside sterile corridor leading to the escorted gangway to the ship (Figure 4). Alternative 3 will also include the deployment of government-authorized contracted US-VISIT attendants who will be available in the vicinity of the workstations to assist NIV travelers in utilizing the technology and understanding the new departure process. The presence of the attendants is intended to make the process easier for the traveler and expedite processing time. The information to be captured at the self-service workstations will include biographical data and fingerprints. The use of the self-service workstations is required prior to entering the sterile corridor that leads to the escorted gangway to the ship.

Although it is possible for NIV travelers to by-pass the workstation before departing the U.S., those travelers who do not comply with the new process may be adversely impacted on re-entry to the U.S.

For arrivals, Alternative 3 is similar to Alternative 2 which includes the collection of fingerprint scans and a photograph for all NIVs by CBP staff at existing arrival inspection booths. This additional arrival process will require the installation of infrastructure (a finger print scanner measuring approximately 6x6x2-inches and a digital camera) at each existing inspection booth. The average processing time will not increase because biometric data will be collected concurrently with the biographical information already captured through the CBP arrival inspection process.

Alternative 3 will meet an acceptable timeframe and result in lower deployment costs to that of Alternatives 1 and 2. At most passenger cruise ship terminals, travelers are able to board the ship up to four hours prior to scheduled departure and the use of workstations should take approximately one minute. Therefore, time disruptions to potentially affected passengers and cruise lines are not anticipated. The workstations will also be deployed in such a manner so as to minimize disruption to non-NIV pedestrian flow through the utilization of space planning and analysis. The cost to contract US-VISIT attendants and deploy/maintain workstations will be within acceptable spending limits which are limited by Congress on an annual basis. Alternative 3 will provide an acceptable level of security, while not requiring development of new technology or additional CBP staff to administer the process.

Through consultation with the Directorate of U.S. Border and Transportation Security and analysis of potential impacts to the traveling public and cruise ship terminal operations, it was decided that Alternative 3, which will use a proven DHS technology at new workstations coupled with US-VISIT attendants, will best meet the stated purpose and need for the Proposed Action with respect to NIV arrival and departure control. Alternative 3 provides a non-intrusive method to collect and verify NIV information upon arrival and departure from the U.S. while minimizing impacts on the passenger cruise ship terminal operations and the traveling public.

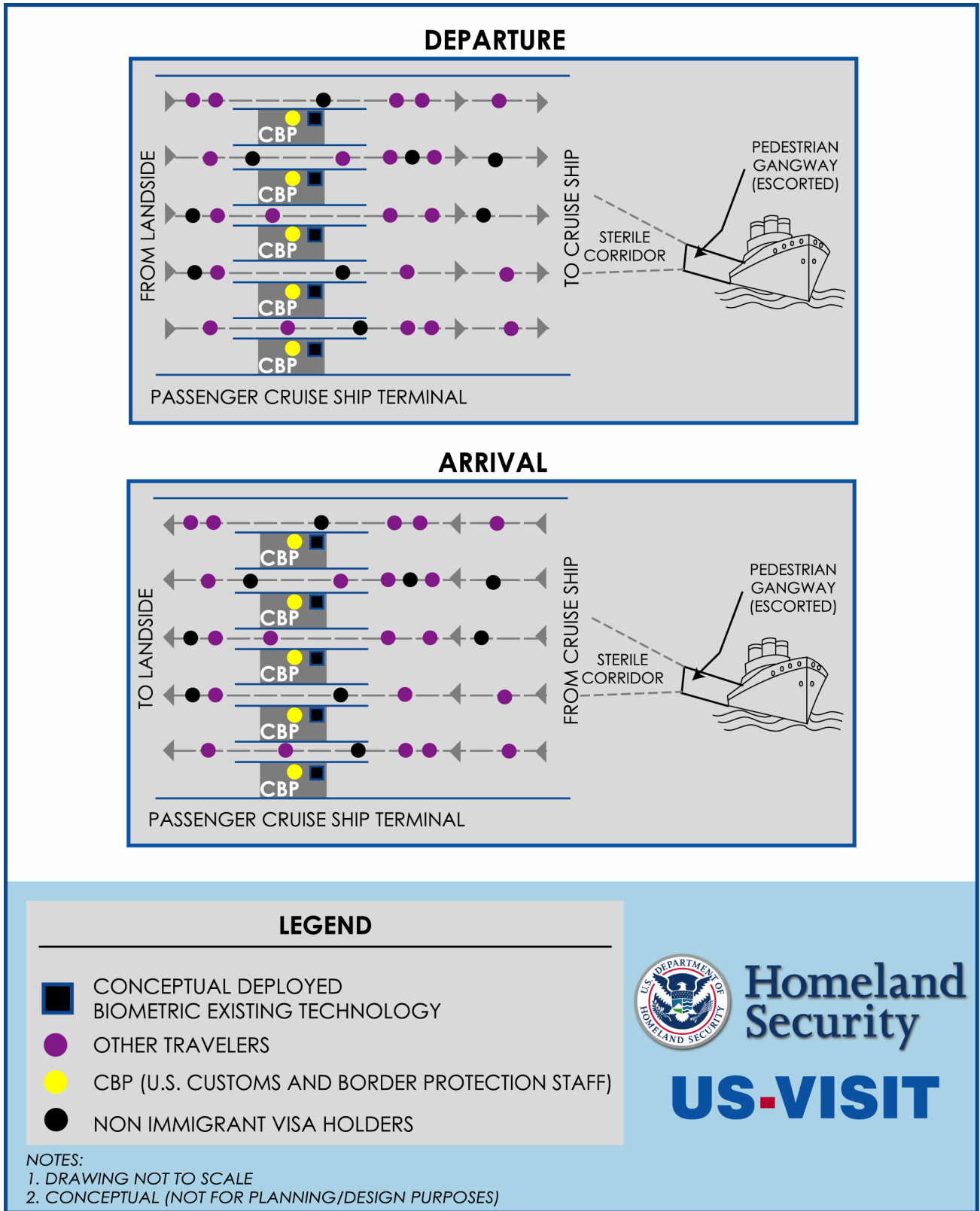


FIGURE 2
ALTERNATIVE 1: U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION - REVERSE INSPECTIONS

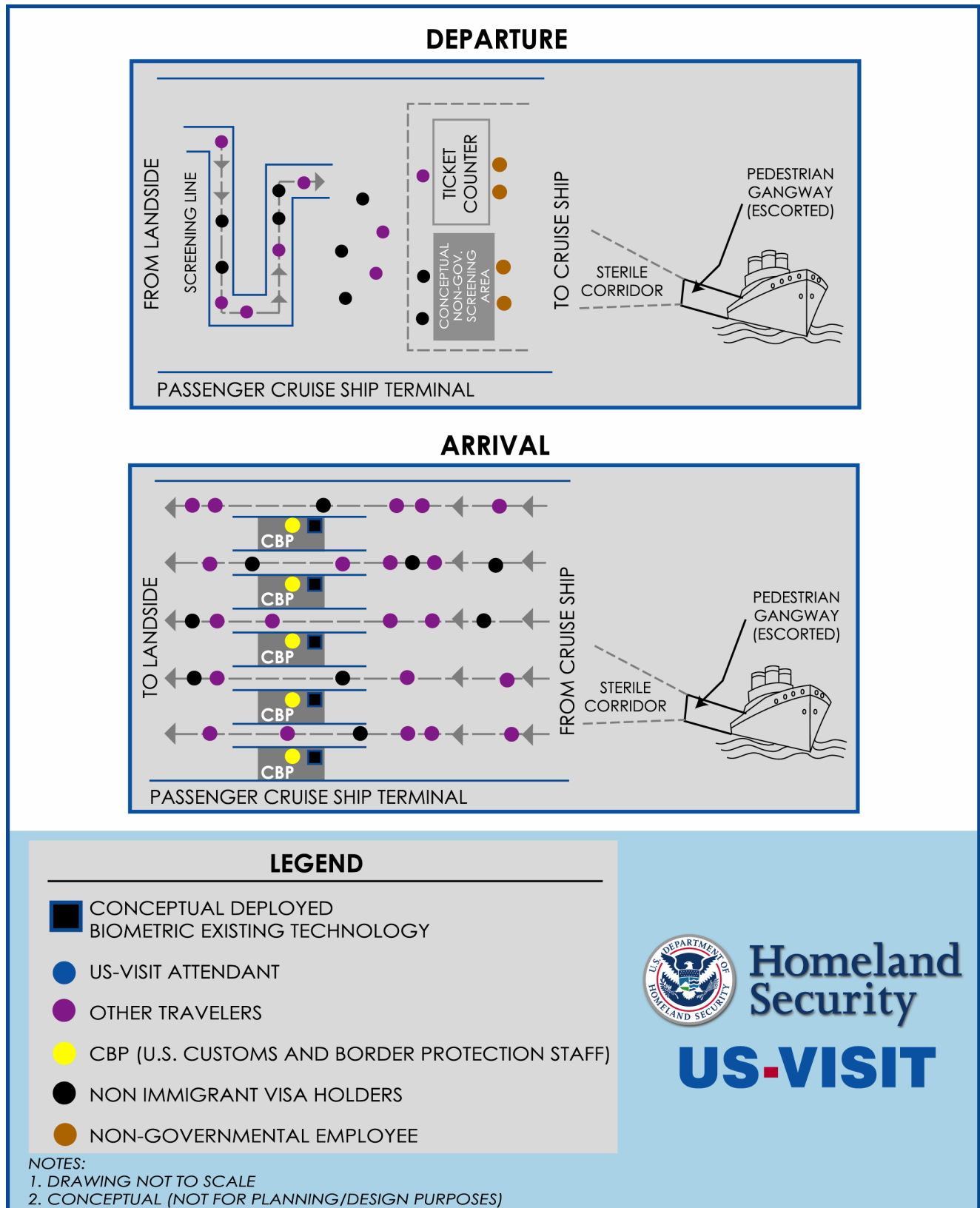


FIGURE 3
ALTERNATIVE 2: SEA CARRIER SCREENING — NON-GOVERNMENTAL

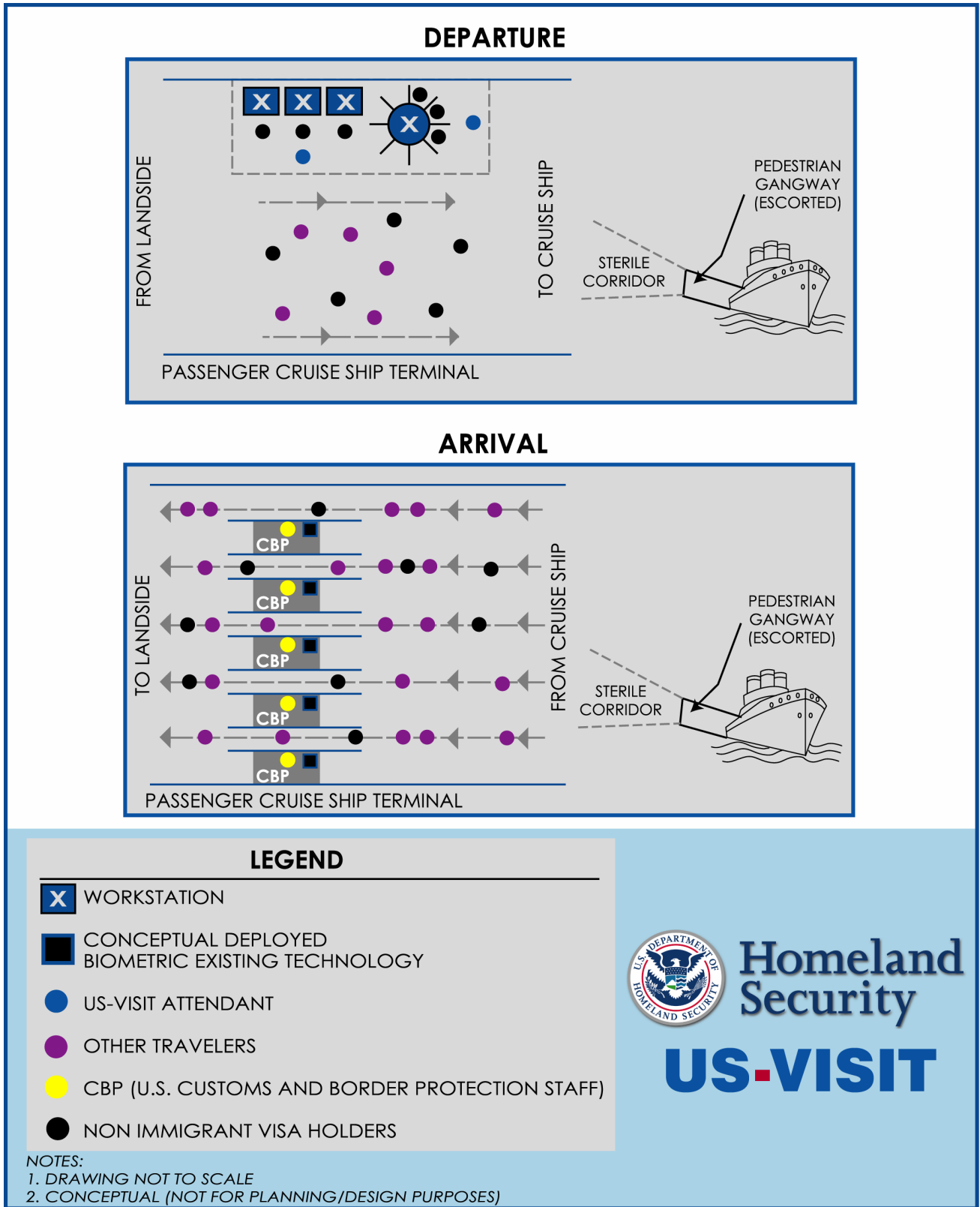


FIGURE 4
ALTERNATIVE 3: SELF-SERVICE — US-VISIT WITH CONTRACT SUPPORT

**TABLE 2
ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES BY US-VISIT DEPLOYMENT FACTORS AND CRITERIA**

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3*
Factor/Criteria	CBP - Reverse Inspections	Sea Carrier Screening – Non-Governmental	Self-Service – US-VISIT with Contract Support
Cost¹	Marginal ⁶	Marginal	Acceptable
Space²	Marginal	Marginal	Acceptable
Staffing³	Marginal	Marginal	Acceptable
Security⁴	Acceptable ⁷	Marginal	Acceptable
Technology⁵	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

¹US-VISIT funding is limited to those funds appropriated by Congress on an annual basis.

²Space at the passenger cruise ship terminal is inherently limited. The allocation of suitable space to deploy the technology will be evaluated and negotiated on a port-by-port basis.

³US-VISIT's ability to hire additional government personnel in an acceptable timeframe is constrained by Congressional funding and time.

⁴For deployment purposes, security is defined as the ability to accurately acquire biographic and biometric data.

⁵Congressional mandate of December 31, 2003 has limited the time available to develop and deploy technology.

⁶Marginal: An assessment score that does not adequately meet the stated purpose and need for the Proposed Action.

⁷Acceptable: An assessment score that meets the stated purpose and need for the Proposed Action.

*Preferred Alternative

3.2 THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

All of the alternatives evaluated in this EA will have similar impacts on the natural, physical, and socioeconomic environments. Therefore, the selection of a Preferred Alternative was based on each alternative's capacity to fulfill the purpose and need for the Proposed Action. That basis is summarized in Table 2. Alternative 3 was selected as the Preferred Alternative because it best achieves the stated purpose and need for the Proposed Action. The Preferred Alternative provides, to the extent practicable, a non-intrusive method to collect biographic and biometric information upon arrival from fifteen (15) passenger cruise ship terminals and departure from twelve (12) passenger cruise ship terminals (Table 1).

For departure, the Preferred Alternative will include the deployment of self-service workstations beyond the sea carrier check-in in the vicinity of the sterile corridor that leads to the escorted gangway to the ship. The information to be captured at the self-service workstations will include biographical data and fingerprints. The processing time is expected to be approximately one minute per arrival and departing traveler. US-VISIT contracted attendants will be available in the vicinity of the workstations to assist travelers in utilizing the technology and understanding the new departure process. The presence of the attendants is intended to make the process easier for the traveler and expedite processing time.

For arrival, the Preferred Alternative will include the collection of fingerprint scans and a photograph for all NIVs by CBP staff at the existing arrival inspection checkpoint. This additional process will require the installation of nominal infrastructure (a finger print scanner measuring approximately 6x6x2-inches and a digital camera) at each existing inspection booth. The processing time to capture this additional data is not expected to increase the average processing time of a passenger upon arrival to the U.S.

The Preferred Alternative will provide the US-VISIT Program a means to collect and verify visa holder identities. Through its deployment, the US-VISIT Program will have the capability to collect biometrics, confirm the identity of NIV travelers, and provide the necessary data to search against both a biographical and biometric watch list. This data will help to prevent document fraud, identity theft, and unauthorized travelers from entering or remaining illegally in the U.S.

3.3 THE NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under this alternative, additional processing of arriving and departing NIV travelers will not occur at the fifteen (15) passenger cruise ship terminals. The existing processes would remain in place and additional data regarding the status of foreign nationals into and out of the U.S. would not be collected. The absence of this data would continue to make it more difficult for DHS to identify the location of foreign nationals who present a potential security risk to the U.S. This alternative therefore does not satisfy the purpose and need of the Proposed Action nor the underlying legal requirements mandated by federal law (IIRIRA, DMIA, Visa Waiver Permanent Program Act, USA PATRIOT Act, Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act). Although the No Action Alternative is not considered a viable alternative, it provides an environmental baseline against which impacts of the Proposed Action (and alternatives) will be compared (40 CFR 1502.14[d]).

4.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND CONSEQUENCES

Evaluations were conducted to identify the degree of impact (if any) that the No Action and the Preferred Alternative would have on the natural, physical, and socioeconomic environments. Table 3 provides a summary of potential impacts to the social, natural, and physical environs as a result of the No Action Alternative, Alternatives considered, and the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 3). Although the No Action Alternative is not considered a viable alternative, it provides an environmental baseline against which impacts of the Proposed Action (and alternatives) will be compared (40 CFR 1502.14[d]).

US-VISIT is in the process of evaluating the number of workstations to deploy at each of the passenger cruise ship terminals in order to achieve acceptable peak wait times for workstation processing while minimizing disruptions to NIV travelers, other travelers, and passenger cruise ship schedules. The self-service workstation deployment evaluations are terminal specific and include assessing factors such as:

- Official Cruise Ship Guide Schedules;
- Time of day of each departure;
- Terminal-specific constraints to pedestrian flow;
- NIV passenger load factors based on passenger cruise ship arrival data for 2002; and
- Sea carrier dockage allocated to passenger cruise ship terminals.

The assessments will determine the number of workstations to be deployed such that there would be no more than a five to ten minute processing/queuing wait time during peak travel periods. It is anticipated that there will be no queues during average or low volume periods. To achieve this, the deployment of the workstations will be on a terminal-by-terminal basis that provides suitable processing time based on passenger cruise ship terminal-specific schedules, port-specific constraints, and pedestrian flow.

Currently, the cruise line industry recommends that all international travelers arrive at the cruise ship terminal four (4) hours prior to embarking. Therefore, the minimal processing time will not impact NIV travelers that are departing directly from the passenger cruise ship terminal. Also, it is anticipated that there will be no impact on NIV travelers that would utilize the workstations between connecting cruises. Although workstation locations will be determined on a terminal-by-terminal basis, US-VISIT will attempt to mitigate potential impacts to passenger wait times through strategic placement of the workstations, appropriate signage, and processing assistance from US-VISIT attendants. US-VISIT attendants will be available in the vicinity of the workstations to assist NIV travelers in utilizing the workstations and understanding the departure process.

The Proposed Action will be implemented within the confines of a relatively secure area within each passenger cruise ship terminal. For exit control, the Proposed Action will require the installation of workstations between the sea carrier's check-in and the sterile corridor leading to the escorted gangway to the ship. For arrival, the Proposed Action will require the installation of a fingerprint scanner and digital camera (to collect biometric data) within CBP's existing arrival inspection booths. The workstations will be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant and Energy Star compliant. The maximum amperes used by a workstation will be approximately 3.1 amperes and the material used to house the technology will be supplied by a fabricator that is in compliance with Federal and state environmental regulations and permitting.

There are three (3) structures listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) that are in the immediate vicinity of passenger cruise ship terminals. They are the San Pedro Municipal Ferry Building, the Galveston Seawall, and the Galveston Causeway. In addition to the above listed NRHP resources, there may also be additional sea terminals that are recommended as eligible for listing in the NRHP. DHS has determined that the associated equipment and construction activities necessary to implement the Proposed Action will have no potential to affect listed or Register-eligible properties because the manner in which the self-service workstations will be installed will not involve modifications to existing structures.

The deployment, installation, and maintenance requirements necessary to implement the Proposed Action will have no permanent impact on: land use patterns; local or regional plans; zoning; residential, commercial, or community services; children, low-income, or minority populations; socioeconomics; air, noise, cultural resources; vegetation or wildlife; waters of the U.S., including wetlands; threatened or endangered species; floodways or floodplains; or hazardous waste sites (Table 3).

However, there is the possibility of temporary impacts on terminal utilities or leaseholders (e.g., retail shops) due to the necessary placement of the workstations in the vicinity of the sterile corridor that leads to the escorted gangway. The installation of the technology will require power from the existing electrical network. Integrating the system into each port's electrical grid will result in minor (both in time and space) disruptions. In addition to power requirements, the Preferred Alternative may require the installation of cable in public areas. This would result in a temporary impact to pedestrian flow. The temporary impacts described above will be minimized by limiting construction activities to low/no traffic periods on a terminal-by-terminal basis. Similarly, potential impacts to leaseholders are terminal-specific and will be addressed by US-VISIT. Coordination with potentially affected leaseholders will be accomplished through cooperation with the appropriate sea port management authorities.

4.1 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The regulatory guidelines for the implementation of NEPA (Environmental Quality Improvement Act of 1970, as amended; 42 U.S.C. 4371 et seq.; sec. 309 of the Clean Air Act, as amended; 42 U.S.C. 7609; and E.O. 11514, March 5, 1970, as amended by E.O. 11991, May 24, 1977) define cumulative impact as the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions (40 CFR 1508.7). Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.

The deployment of US-VISIT technology at air ports of entry is a reasonably foreseeable action that must be considered in an analysis of cumulative impacts. To this end, DHS has prepared a Nationwide Environmental Assessment that addresses the interim business process and deployment of existing DHS system technology at 115 International airports with arrival checkpoints and 80 airports departing the U.S. Since the proposed action at airports is not expected to adversely impact any of the associated ecosystems and will have only temporary and insignificant impacts on utilities and leaseholders, no incremental impacts to the associated ecosystem or resources is anticipated. The temporary impacts on utilities and the possible impacts to leaseholders are restricted to the cruise ship terminal environment and should not result in additive or cumulative impacts when considered in light of a future deployment at air ports of entry.

Given the absence of significant impacts as a result of the Proposed Action at passenger cruise ship terminals as well as the difference in location of many of the associated land ports of entry, it is expected that no cumulative impacts would result as it relates to a future deployment at land ports of entry. A future deployment of US-VISIT at land ports of entry is also anticipated. However, this effort is in the preliminary planning stages and requisite environmental analysis and documentation will be conducted when the Proposed Action becomes better defined.

US-VISIT has concluded that neither the Proposed Action nor the Preferred Alternative at passenger cruise ship terminals will result in cumulative impacts. Although US-VISIT will be modifying entry and exit procedures at the nation's air and land ports of entry, there will be no incremental impacts as a result of the Proposed Action at passenger cruise ship terminals. This conclusion is based on the lack of significant direct or indirect impacts on the environment and sea port operations. Thus, the Proposed Action will not result in incremental impacts such that there would be a condition whereby individually minor but collectively significant impacts would result in a significant measurable impact nationwide. An assessment of the other port environments will be undertaken as required.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

This Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluated the impact on the natural, physical, and social environs as a result of implementing the proposed interim business process and associated technology. In summary, DHS has determined that the Proposed Action will not result in significant direct, indirect, temporary, or cumulative impacts to the environment.

**TABLE 3
SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL PROJECT ALTERNATIVE IMPACTS BY RESOURCE CLASS**

Issue	ALTERNATIVES			
	1	2	3 (Preferred)	
	No Action	CBP - Reverse Inspections	Sea Carrier Screening – Non-Governmental	Self-Service – US-VISIT with Contract Support
Land Use:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Environmental Justice and Protection of Children:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Socioeconomics:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Aesthetics and Visual Resources:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Native American Resources:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Relocations	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Residences:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Community Facilities and Services:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Businesses:	No Impact	No Impact	Temporary Impact	Temporary Impact
Cultural Resources	No Potential To Cause Effects	No Potential To Cause Effects	No Potential To Cause Effects	No Potential To Cause Effects
Architectural:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Archaeological:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Air Quality:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Noise:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Threatened and Endangered Species:	No Potential To Effect	No Potential To Effect	No Potential To Effect	No Potential To Effect
Wetland Impacts:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Surface and Ground Water:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Floodplain Encroachments:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Hazardous Waste and Toxic Substances:	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Utilities:	No Impact	Potential Temporary Impact	Potential Temporary Impact	Potential Temporary Impact
Cumulative Impacts:	No Incremental Impacts	No Incremental Impacts	No Incremental Impacts	No Incremental Impacts

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