

National Endowment for the Humanities

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

CASACUBA

11200 SW 8TH STREET

MIAMI, FLORIDA 33199

CHA-264405-19

BACKGROUND

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) provides grant and cooperative agreement awards to support research, education, preservation, and public programs in the humanities. This proposed activity is supported with financial assistance authorized under the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965 (P.L. 89-209), to enable infrastructure development and capacity building, including through the design, purchase, construction, restoration, or renovation of facilities needed for humanities activities and historic landscapes.

PROPOSED ACTION

Florida International University (FIU) plans to build CasaCuba, a ±57,876 gross-square-foot humanities center located at FIU's Modesto A. Maidique campus in Miami, FL. The proposed facility will be readily accessible to the university community and to visitors from the local community and beyond, such as students, faculty, scholars, and the general public. This project is being partially funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Challenge Grants Program (Grant No. CHA-264405-19).

In addition to the building, the project includes the construction of a courtyard, gardens, and associated exterior parking, sidewalks, landscaping, utilities and signage. The roadway and service drives will also be reconstructed as required. The proposed construction will take place on a +/- 2.36-acre site, located to the west of SW 107th Avenue between SW 16th Street and SW 17th Street.

This state-of-the-art center will host public lectures, academic conferences, digital exhibits, and research projects, engaging museums, historical societies, and other academic and cultural institutions through meaningful partnerships. CasaCuba will help preserve and showcase the wealth of Cuba-related

intellectual and cultural resources at FIU, with a special emphasis on sharing and expanding its notable Cuba collections.

CasaCuba will seek to document, preserve, and share the history, experiences and legacy of the Cuban nation, and particularly the ways in which Cubans have influenced U.S. culture, and vice versa. Specifically, CasaCuba will collaborate with other local organizations to identify and preserve heritage materials that may be at risk of loss. It will work in close collaboration with the FIU Libraries on projects to enhance current digital collections and digitize new materials. CasaCuba will also collaborate with relevant FIU units and industry partners to apply the latest technologies to showcase Cuban culture in new, compelling ways, such as interactive oral history and genealogy platforms, and virtual reality. And it will host regular events aimed at diverse audiences to promote awareness of temporary and permanent holdings.

The FIU campus was constructed on land that was formerly the Tamiami Airport; however, the proposed site remained undeveloped until approximately 2001 when the site was cleared and regraded. The site is currently partially paved with a gravel parking area and grassy area. No natural vegetation or habitat remain on site. Existing land use maps classify the site as an educational facility; the site is zoned as commercial. The surrounding area is developed urban land.

The applicant has submitted a Condensed Environmental Assessment (EA) that documents impacts of the proposed action. This EA is incorporated by reference into this FONSI.

MITIGATION

The mitigation is incorporated by reference and can be found in Part III of this Condensed EA.

CONCLUSION

NEH hereby adopts the Condensed Environmental Assessment prepared by the applicant for the proposed action described above. After reviewing the assessment and the supporting materials provided by the grant applicant, NEH finds that the assessment properly documents the proposal's status of compliance with the environmental laws and requirements listed therein.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA (44 CFR Parts 1500 through 1508) and the National Endowment for the Humanities NEPA Implementing Procedures (84 FR 23805, May 23, 2019), NEH has determined that, with the mitigation measures described in Part III, the proposed action will have no significant adverse impact on the quality of the human environment. As a result of this FONSI, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

Approvals:

*Carlos Díaz-Rosillo, Senior Deputy
Chairman*

Date

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