

Fort Snelling Deportation Center – Strategic Plan Section

Purpose and Role of Fort Snelling Deportation Center

Temporary Holding & Departure Operations: Fort Snelling serves as the post-processing hub in Minnesota’s federal immigration enforcement surge. Its core purpose is to **temporarily hold individuals** who have completed review at the Administrative Immigration Processing Center (e.g. the State Fairgrounds hub) and to **stage their final departures** from the United States. Once cases are adjudicated and removal orders issued, Fort Snelling provides a secure location to marshal those set for deportation, manage any short-term detention needs, and organize **departure logistics** (such as charter flights or ground transport). The center ensures that no bottlenecks occur after legal processing – individuals can be housed briefly and then moved rapidly to ports of exit. Fort Snelling’s proximity to transportation infrastructure (airport, highways, rail) allows it to function as the **last stop in the removal pipeline**, where deportees are consolidated, briefed, and then transported out efficiently. In addition, the Fort Snelling site doubles as a **command coordination node** for the operation. It hosts interagency command staff and communications facilities, enabling real-time coordination between enforcement personnel, legal teams, and transportation units. This dual role – **holding hub and command center** – is crucial to maintaining operational continuity in the final phase of the surge. By concentrating post-adjudication activities at a dedicated federal site, the plan prevents overflow at the processing center and streamlines the **“last mile” of the deportation process**. The Fort’s capabilities thus fill the gap between case resolution and physical removal, ensuring that once due process is complete, departures occur swiftly and in a controlled, accountable manner.

Legal Authority and Activation Precedent

Federal Emergency Powers: The activation of Fort Snelling as a deportation center is grounded in extraordinary **federal legal authorities** invoked due to Minnesota’s law enforcement crisis. The President has leveraged a combination of the **Insurrection Act, the National Emergencies Act (NEA), and the Stafford Act** to federalize the response and lawfully occupy and operate on this site. Under **10 U.S.C. §§ 251–254 (Insurrection Act)**, when unlawful obstructions make ordinary law enforcement “impracticable,” the President may deploy federal forces (including National Guard under federal command) to restore order and enforce federal laws. That threshold has been deemed met in Minnesota’s sanctuary crisis – state/local defiance and violence against federal officers have “made it impracticable to enforce the laws” by normal means. Accordingly, the President issued an Insurrection Act proclamation, **empowering federal troops to support DHS and ICE operations** and secure federal facilities. Simultaneously, a **national emergency** was declared under **50 U.S.C. § 1601 et seq. (NEA)** to address the broader breakdown in governance and to unlock special interagency powers and funding. This opened the door for rapid reallocation of resources and personnel to Minnesota, treating the situation as a national security and public welfare emergency.

Stafford Act & Federal Use of Territory: Critically, the President also invoked the **Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act** to establish Fort Snelling (and other sites) as part of a **federally-managed emergency operation**[6]. The Stafford Act provides authority to **seize, use, or occupy facilities and land** as needed during a federally declared emergency, subject to later compensation. Using this authority, the federal government has **reestablished a federal operational footprint on Fort Snelling’s grounds**, much as it historically did during past national crises. Orders were issued to temporarily repurpose the Fort Snelling area – which is **federal land in an unorganized territory** not under any city’s jurisdiction – for emergency use in immigration enforcement. This action **revives the precedent of federal occupation of unorganized territory** for law enforcement exigencies, harkening back to Fort Snelling’s 19th-century role as a U.S. military outpost before Minnesota’s statehood. In essence, by invoking these emergency statutes, the plan secures an unambiguous legal foundation for the **federal government to take control of Fort Snelling, deploy forces there, and conduct immigration operations on site**. All activities at the Deportation Center are conducted under federal authority and oversight, insulated from interference by defiant state or local actors. This layered legal approach (Insurrection Act + NEA + Stafford) is **“squarely rooted in the letter of federal law and precedent”**, ensuring the use of Fort Snelling is both lawful and justified as a temporary measure to resolve an extreme governance failure. By reasserting federal presence on this historic territory, the operation sends a powerful message:



federal law will be upheld and federal jurisdiction exercised in Minnesota when ordinary mechanisms break down, consistent with constitutional principles of national supremacy.

Strategic Location and Infrastructure Advantages

Proximity to Airport and Processing Center: Fort Snelling’s location offers unparalleled strategic benefits for this operation. It is situated **approximately one mile from the Minneapolis–St. Paul International Airport (MSP)**, effectively adjacent to one of the nation’s major air transport hubs. This proximity means that ICE Air removal flights or chartered deportation flights can be staged with ease – detainees can be transported from Fort Snelling to airport secure zones in a matter of minutes. The center can coordinate directly with airport authorities to schedule charter flights or utilize secure airport entrances, minimizing transfer times and security risks. Additionally, Fort Snelling lies only **about 6 miles from the State Fairgrounds** (the primary Administrative Processing Center), enabling fast shuttle of individuals between the initial processing site and the deportation center. A dedicated corridor via Highway 5 and local federal roads connects the two sites, so individuals who have completed processing can be moved under escort to Fort Snelling without long overland trips or exposure to urban congestion. This **co-location within the Twin Cities** metro ensures the enforcement surge’s two main facilities – intake/processing and detainment/departure – operate in tight synchronization. Logistically, the short distance allows staff, documents, and resources to flow between the Fairgrounds and Fort Snelling quickly, and if necessary, **overflow from the processing center can be redirected to Fort Snelling with minimal delay.**

Transit and Infrastructure Connectivity: Fort Snelling is exceptionally well-connected in terms of transportation infrastructure. It sits at the junction of **Minnesota Highways 5 and 55**, near the interchange with **Interstate 494**, meaning it has direct highway access in all directions. These major routes facilitate the movement of **buses, military convoys, and supply trucks** into the site. The area was partially carved out by highways serving the airport, VA Hospital, National Cemetery, and St. Paul, which today benefits the operation by providing ready-made arterial access. In addition, Fort Snelling is integrated into the region’s public transit network via the **Metro Blue Line light rail**. The **Fort Snelling Station** is located adjacent to the Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building’s parking lots, providing a light-rail link from the site to both downtown Minneapolis and the airport terminals. During this operation, that rail line offers a supplemental transit option for rotating staff and support personnel – e.g. federal employees or National Guard troops can utilize it to reach the site, reducing reliance on personal vehicles. (For security reasons, detainee transport will use controlled vehicles, but staff mobility is enhanced by transit access.) Furthermore, the presence of rail infrastructure raises the possibility of using rail for mass transfer of detainees if needed. The plan has contemplated a **“rail deportation depot”** concept, whereby a train could be loaded on nearby tracks to carry large groups to distant detention facilities or directly to ports of exit. In sum, Fort Snelling’s strategic location offers **multi-modal connectivity** – air, road, and rail – that significantly multiplies the efficiency of removal operations. This location was chosen very intentionally for the surge: it is **“one large campus” with heavy-duty event infrastructure (the airport) and transit links that can absorb high throughput.** The ease of access also means **rapid reinforcement and resupply:** additional personnel or equipment from federal agencies can fly into MSP or convoy via interstate to Fort Snelling on short notice, bolstering the operation as needed.

Jurisdictional and Security Advantages

Federal Enclave Outside Local Control: Fort Snelling’s status as federal land in an **unincorporated territory** provides unique jurisdictional advantages for the enforcement surge. The site is **not subject to any municipal authority** – it lies in a federal enclave (the “Fort Snelling Unorganized Territory”) outside the bounds of Minneapolis or St. Paul city governance[7]. This means local city ordinances or law enforcement have **no jurisdiction on-site**, simplifying the legal environment. Access control and security measures at Fort Snelling can be implemented solely under federal authority, without needing permission or coordination with city councils or local police chiefs who might oppose the operation. In practical terms, the **entire deportation center is a controlled federal zone**, patrolled by federal agents and, if necessary, federalized National Guard troops. The perimeter can be guarded and entry restricted under federal law (with **Federal Protective Service** and military police units enforcing), ensuring that protestors or unauthorized persons cannot disrupt operations as easily as they might on open city streets. This **clear jurisdictional boundary** also streamlines any legal proceedings arising from incidents at the site – any crimes or interference on the premises fall under federal law (e.g.



assault on a federal officer, trespassing on federal property), to be prosecuted in federal court. Such legal clarity **deters interference** and provides a strong hand for prosecutors to address any attempts to block enforcement.

Simplified Access Control & Oversight: Being on a self-contained federal installation allows Fort Snelling to maintain a **secure perimeter akin to a military base**. The layout of the fort area – situated on a bluff with natural river boundaries to the south and east, and clear perimeter roads – makes it inherently **defensible and easy to cordon off**. Checkpoints at the few access roads (like Bloomington Road or Tower Avenue) can funnel all traffic through federal security screening. This simplifies not only physical security but also **oversight of activities**: media or observers can be allowed in under controlled tours, while keeping sensitive operations shielded. Unlike a facility within a city, there is no confusion over who has ultimate authority – **Unified Command can impose emergency regulations on the enclave without local contradiction**. The Stafford Act emergency declaration further legitimizes strict access control, as Fort Snelling is designated part of the federal emergency area^[15]. Moreover, the site’s federal status has enabled the installation of enhanced surveillance and communications gear (protected by DOD/DHS authority), creating a “high-security bubble” that would be untenable on city property. All told, Fort Snelling offers **fortress-like security** suited to a high-profile enforcement mission: it is isolated from public thoroughfares, governed by federal law, and configured for **quick lockdown or defense** in case of any external threat. This high level of security is vital given the charged atmosphere – it protects both the officers and the detainees inside from outside agitators. The **physical defensibility** of Fort Snelling (originally chosen as a fort site for its command over the area) and the legal exclusivity of federal jurisdiction together make it an ideal **“safe harbor” for the final phase of operations**, free from the complications that have plagued enforcement efforts in local communities.

Existing Federal Footprint and Support Infrastructure

Robust Federal Presence On-Site: Fort Snelling already hosts a substantial federal footprint, which our operation can leverage. The centerpiece is the **Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building**, a large multi-agency federal office building at 1 Federal Drive^[1]. This 700,000+ square foot facility houses offices of several federal departments – notably the **Department of Homeland Security (including ICE and CBP)**, the **Department of Defense**, the **Department of Veterans Affairs**, and others. It even became the **base of ICE’s “Operation Metro Surge” in Minnesota in 2025^[1]**, underscoring its capacity to support large-scale enforcement operations. The Whipple Building provides immediate access to **office space, communications infrastructure, and secure meeting areas** for our interagency staff. Many key players – ICE ERO field leadership, immigration judges (EOIR), Office of the Principal Legal Advisor attorneys, and support agencies – already have a footprint or liaison presence there, minimizing setup time. Beyond the Whipple Building, the Fort Snelling area includes other federal and military facilities. There are **Minnesota National Guard and Reserve installations** nearby, including the **133rd Airlift Wing (Air National Guard)** at MSP and Army Reserve centers, as well as a Veterans Affairs campus. This means the operation is flanked by units from **all military branches (Army, Navy/Marines, Air Force through the Guard) and supporting federal agencies**, all in the immediate vicinity. For example, an Army Reserve or National Guard motor pool at Fort Snelling can be tapped for vehicle storage and maintenance. The presence of the **Minnesota Air National Guard base** (which operates large transport aircraft) is a particularly valuable asset – it provides access to airlift capability and airfield logistics expertise literally next door to our deportation staging area. The **existing federal warehouses and motor pools** can be repurposed to stage buses, vans, and equipment for detainee transport. In short, Fort Snelling comes pre-equipped with a **federal logistics ecosystem** – from secure telecommunications lines to generators, mess facilities, and medical stations – thanks to the agencies already on site. This drastically reduces the need to build infrastructure from scratch and accelerates our **30-day startup timeline**. The center can plug into these established resources to support the high operational tempo (for instance, utilizing the VA clinic for medical checks or the base’s armory for gear storage).

Motor Pool and Logistics Support (MnDOT Coordination): To augment the federal resources, the Unified Command has also **invited the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)** to participate in a support role – despite the state government’s non-cooperation stance, individual agencies or personnel under emergency authority can be co-opted for specific tasks. MnDOT’s expertise in fleet management and road logistics is being utilized to establish a large **motor pool for the operation’s ground transportation needs**. This includes maintenance crews for buses and vans, refueling operations, and drivers familiar with local routes. By involving MnDOT liaisons (under federal direction via the Stafford Act emergency powers), the operation gains access to **additional buses, snow plows, traffic control equipment, and**



maintenance facilities. For example, MnDOT’s metro district has garages and lots that can be temporarily used to park and service dozens of coach buses used to shuttle detainees from the processing center to Fort Snelling and then to the airport. MnDOT’s traffic management center is also sharing real-time information on road conditions and can assist with **route planning and temporary road closures** when moving large convoys, ensuring smooth transit between sites. This cooperative aspect is framed as part of the emergency response: even if state leaders oppose the mission, leveraging MnDOT’s capabilities under federal emergency authority helps ensure public safety (e.g. well-marked routes, minimal traffic disruption) when large-scale movements occur. The **motor pool at Fort Snelling** thus becomes a joint effort, combining **federal vehicles (DHS and DOD buses) with state transportation assets**, all coordinated by FEMA logistics staff. This unified motor pool will support not only detainee transports but also movement of personnel (shuttling hundreds of staff daily), delivery of supplies (meals, documents, equipment) and if necessary, evacuation or mass transfer operations. Integrating MnDOT’s resources exemplifies our **whole-of-government approach**: even amid an insurrection scenario, practical collaboration in areas like transportation can be achieved to keep the operation running at full capacity. The end result is a **well-oiled logistics network centered at Fort Snelling**, with ample vehicles and support crews to meet the surge demands.

Unified Command Hub under FEMA Leadership

Joint Task Force Headquarters: Fort Snelling functions as the **Unified Command hub** for the entire Minnesota surge operation, under the leadership of FEMA’s federal coordination structure. While the Administrative Processing Center at the Fairgrounds handles the public-facing intake and hearings, Fort Snelling hosts the central command post (CP) where interagency leaders converge. A **Unified Command Group** – effectively a Joint Task Force Minnesota – is established here to direct and synchronize all agencies’ efforts. This group is chaired by a **Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) from FEMA**, reflecting that the operation is run as a Stafford Act emergency incident. FEMA’s presence ensures a **“civilian-led” incident command system**, even as military and law enforcement support units are integrated. Within the command hub, senior representatives from DHS (ICE, CBP), DOD (National Guard Task Force commander), DOJ (U.S. Attorney’s liaison, U.S. Marshals), and other relevant agencies sit side by side. They utilize the Fort Snelling command center facilities – secured communications suites, conference rooms in the Whipple Building, and a 24/7 operations center – to maintain **situational awareness and decision authority** over the operation.

FEMA Coordination & Support Role: By basing Unified Command at Fort Snelling, the plan capitalizes on FEMA’s expertise in interagency coordination and incident management. **FEMA leads the mission support side:** providing logistics, administrative services, and resource coordination so that enforcement agencies can focus on their duties. The FEMA-led team at Fort Snelling handles things like **base operations support** (facility management, power, sanitation), **transportation scheduling, meals and housing for staff, medical support**, and tracking of resources expended. This allows a clear separation: ICE and law enforcement focus on case processing and enforcement actions, while FEMA’s unified command staff ensure the *machine* around them runs smoothly. Daily unified command briefings are held at Fort Snelling to sync up the Fairgrounds site activities with the removal/departure pipeline. The proximity of the airport and the presence of all key players means decisions can be made and executed in real time – for example, if an unexpected influx of 500 extra detainees occurs, the Unified Command at Fort Snelling can immediately task the motor pool for additional buses and coordinate with the airport for an extra removal flight that evening. **Integration of Forces:** With the Insurrection Act in effect, Minnesota’s National Guard is under federal command and a part of this unified structure. Fort Snelling’s command hub directs Guard units assigned to perimeter security, traffic control, engineering, and QRF (quick reaction force) duties, ensuring they operate in unison with federal law enforcement. Military engineers, for instance, report in at Fort Snelling to get tasks (setting up extra tents or fencing either at the Fairgrounds or Fort). Law enforcement coordination is also tight: ICE ERO, Border Patrol tactical teams, Federal Protective Service, and local deputized officers (if any) coordinate through a single operations center. This **unity of command** prevents the confusion that hampered initial enforcement efforts when multiple agencies acted independently. Every significant action – from warrant service to convoy movement – is approved through the Fort Snelling JOC (Joint Operations Center) to avoid conflicts. By housing the Unified Command at Fort Snelling, the operation benefits from the fort’s secure communications infrastructure (hardened lines, backup power) and existing emergency operations center space (the site has been used historically for military and federal exercises). In summary, Fort Snelling is the **brain of the operation**, where FEMA-led coordination blends humanitarian support with law enforcement needs. This model keeps the effort lawful, orderly, and well-supplied: **“the unified command structure will prevent confusion and turf battles, [and] FEMA’s leadership will keep the**



effort humanitarian in character”. All agencies remain accountable through this structure, and any issues can be immediately addressed by the assembled leadership team on the ground.

Public-Facing Operations and Services Integration

Enhanced Airport Security and Processing: One of Fort Snelling’s outward-facing roles is to bolster **public interface operations** tied to the surge, particularly at MSP Airport. Given the expected increase in removal flights and possibly travel document issues, the operation deploys additional personnel to support **TSA and CBP functions at the airport**. Fort Snelling’s command coordinates closely with airport authorities: **TSA screening capacity** is temporarily increased (with some Federal Air Marshals or National Guard troops assisting screeners if needed) to handle the chartered deportation flights and to ensure security during detainee boarding procedures. Likewise, **Customs and Border Protection officers** (normally focused on international arrivals) are augmented to manage outbound removal logistics – for instance, to process the necessary exit paperwork for deportees and liaise with foreign consulates on travel documents. These CBP teams work under the unified command, ensuring that from Fort Snelling to the airplane door, custody and control are maintained. The Fort Snelling center also stands up a small **Airport Coordination Unit**, which may include FAA liaisons and air traffic coordinators, to schedule flights at off-peak times and arrange secure loading areas at the airfield. By doing so, the operation minimizes disruption to civilian air traffic and contains the deportation activities to a manageable, discreet process. The public will see a more robust federal presence at the airport – **“surge” teams of DHS personnel** – but this is communicated as an enhancement of security and an orderly execution of law, not an occupying force. In fact, by quickly moving individuals through Fort Snelling to departure, the operation reduces the chance of spontaneous public disturbances at the airport (protesters have little opportunity to mobilize if flights are handled expeditiously).

Visa Processing & Fraud Detection Center: Fort Snelling Deportation Center also hosts interagency units focused on **immigration benefit integrity and fraud prevention**, which have public-facing elements. Recognizing that the enforcement surge will uncover cases of **visa overstays, document fraud, or sham sponsorships**, a **Visa and Document Analysis Task Force** is set up at Fort Snelling. This task force includes representatives from **CBP’s fraud detection units, ICE Homeland Security Investigations (for document and benefit fraud)**, and DOJ prosecutors who specialize in immigration-related offenses. They operate a **fraud detection lab** at the site to examine suspect documents, review visa records, and initiate any necessary criminal proceedings for egregious fraud cases. For example, if during processing at the Fairgrounds someone is found with a counterfeit work permit or evidence emerges of a larger visa fraud ring, those cases are handed off to this Fort Snelling-based team. The presence of **Army Reserve intelligence and investigative personnel** is also leveraged here – the Army Reserve can provide analysts (some of whom in civilian life are law enforcement professionals) to assist with data analysis and case building. In coordination with DOJ, the team can fast-track subpoenas or arrest warrants for fraud perpetrators. This has a public benefit: while the main mission is removal, the operation also **roots out criminal activities like human trafficking, document mills, and benefits fraud** that often accompany illegal immigration. Fort Snelling thus becomes a hub for **complementary enforcement actions** – a place where individuals with lawful status issues can actually get clarity (if someone has a pending visa petition or needs to update their status, CBP/USCIS liaisons at Fort Snelling can assist), and where bad actors exploiting the immigration system are investigated.

Community Interface and Accountability: Even as a secure federal center, Fort Snelling maintains some **public-facing interfaces** to ensure transparency and community engagement. A **Public Information Office** under DHS/FEMA is based at Fort Snelling to brief media and stakeholders. This office conducts controlled tours for press and elected officials, showing the temporary holding facilities and explaining the removal process – reinforcing that everything is being done humanely and lawfully. Additionally, Fort Snelling hosts a **Joint Information Center (JIC)** as part of the incident command system, which coordinates messaging with partner agencies. Part of the public role involves processing inquiries from the public – e.g. families of detainees can call or visit a designated office at Fort Snelling to get information about the removal timeline or to drop off personal items for their relatives before departure. There is also coordination with the **Consular Corps**: foreign consulate representatives are invited to Fort Snelling to conduct interviews or provide travel documents for their nationals in removal proceedings (the light rail and airport proximity make this convenient). In effect, Fort Snelling offers a secure but accessible venue where **the “back-end” of the immigration enforcement surge meets the public realm** – from ensuring planes depart safely, to verifying visas and identity documents, to



communicating with the community. By concentrating these functions, the operation improves its integrity (fraud units catch inconsistencies on-site) and demonstrates a commitment to due process (consular access, information desks, etc.). All these public-facing efforts are coordinated under Unified Command, aligning with the overall narrative of a **“lawful and orderly process”** rather than a chaotic roundup. Fort Snelling’s contribution in this regard is to bolster confidence that even in the final enforcement stage, **rules and rights are respected, and public safety is enhanced** (for instance, removing criminals and intercepting fraudulent documents makes the community safer).

Historical Precedent and Site Suitability

Legacy of a Deportation Site: Fort Snelling occupies a place in Minnesota’s history as a site of **mass detention and deportation**, a precedent that underscores its suitability for the current mission. Notably, at the end of the U.S.–Dakota War of 1862, Fort Snelling was used to detain approximately **1,600 Dakota people (mostly women, children, and elderly)** over the winter of 1862–63, before they were forcibly **deported from Minnesota to reservations outside the state**[30]. This tragic chapter – essentially the first large-scale deportation from Minnesota – has cemented Fort Snelling’s historical role as the place where authorities carry out removals of populations deemed unlawful or dangerous by the government of the time. While the moral lessons of that era are complex, the historical fact is that **Fort Snelling has precedent as a holding and expulsion site** under U.S. authority. Fast-forward to the modern day: the Fort Snelling Immigration Court (housed in the Whipple Building) has long been the epicenter of deportation proceedings in the region, handling immigration cases and detention for decades. In essence, Fort Snelling is **“forever connected with... deportations in Minnesota for more than a century and a half”**. The current operation consciously **reasserts this historical usage** in a lawful manner – by repurposing Fort Snelling yet again as the central node to remove individuals from Minnesota. This gives the plan a certain historical continuity (albeit in service of enforcing modern immigration law with due process). It also means the local public is somewhat accustomed to Fort Snelling’s association with federal immigration enforcement (the presence of ICE and immigration courts there is well known). By choosing Fort Snelling, we leverage a site whose very name signals a federal stronghold for enforcing policy – reinforcing the message that the **federal government is invoking its longstanding authority to impose order**. The operation does so with full awareness of the past, taking care to distinguish today’s humane, lawful process from the injustices of 1862, but the **symbolism of Fort Snelling is intentional**: it embodies federal resolve and the rule of law in Minnesota.

Physical Security and Infrastructure: From a practical standpoint, Fort Snelling’s **physical characteristics** make it an ideal detention and command site. The historic fort was built on high ground overlooking the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers confluence, a location chosen for **military defensibility**. That advantage remains today – the area can be secured with minimal force because natural barriers cover a large portion of the perimeter. The remaining approaches are narrow and easily monitored. There is ample open space (parade grounds, training areas) that can be adapted for temporary facilities, and **existing secure structures** (like old barracks or the modern Whipple Building) that can be hardened for detention uses. In planning this center, assessments found Fort Snelling superior in **“physical security, defensibility, and infrastructure connectivity”** compared to any other site in the metro. Its design as a fort means there are clear lines of sight and robust built-in fencing/walls in places, aiding perimeter defense. Meanwhile, the **infrastructure connectivity** is excellent – the site links into grid power and backup generators (with priority as a federal installation), has dedicated water and sewer lines sized for a base population, and even has its own rail spur in the vicinity. Communications infrastructure is also strong: Fort Snelling has federal fiber-optic lines and radio towers serving the base and airport, which our operation utilizes for an encrypted communications network among agencies. Additionally, the **Whipple Federal Building provides a hardened facility** with secure holding cells (ICE has holding facilities there for detainees attending immigration court) and established security protocols. This building can house several hundred people if needed, and its parking ramp and lower levels have been configured to temporarily hold overflow detainees in a controlled environment (for example, converting a part of the parking garage into a staging area with cots and dividers, which can be done given GSA’s prior renovations). The **fort’s layout and capacity to be self-sufficient** in an emergency (with its own security forces and infrastructure) means it can handle elevated enforcement phases or surges. If protests or unrest were to threaten the primary processing center, operations could **pivot more heavily to Fort Snelling**, which could lock down and continue processing critical cases or holding individuals until it’s safe to resume normal operations. In essence, Fort Snelling offers a **secure fallback and continuity site**: it can function independently if required, ensuring that enforcement doesn’t halt even in a crisis. This capability to maintain **continuity of operations** underpins the entire surge plan – **“the operation is designed to take a punch, adapt, and keep going”**, and Fort Snelling is central to that resilience. The site’s



proven sturdiness and connectivity give leadership confidence that the final phase of deportations can be executed **without interruption, safely and reliably**, even if external conditions are challenging.

Separation from Administrative Processing & Operational Continuity

Distinct Functional Zones: A key strategic decision in the plan is to **maintain separation between the Administrative Processing Center and the Deportation Center**. Fort Snelling is deliberately structured as a **separate phase two site** that only handles individuals *after* their administrative and judicial processing is complete. This separation serves both operational and perceptual purposes. Operationally, it prevents the initial intake and hearing facility (State Fairgrounds) from becoming overcrowded with detention operations. The Fairgrounds hub remains an open, civil administrative environment focused on due process – a place where individuals receive subpoenas, attend interviews and court hearings, and possibly resolve their cases **without ever being detained** beyond the day’s processing. By contrast, Fort Snelling is a more secure, closed environment where only those required for removal or further custody are sent. This distinction **streamlines workflow**: those with favorable outcomes or ongoing proceedings never go to Fort Snelling at all, while those with final removal orders seamlessly transition to Fort Snelling’s custody. It also aids the narrative that the processing center is not a “concentration camp” – it’s a bureaucratic center – whereas Fort Snelling, away from public view, handles the enforcement custody aspect.

Overflow and Surge Flexibility: Despite this separation, Fort Snelling provides critical **continuity of operations** for the overall mission, especially in overflow scenarios or elevated enforcement phases. If the Fairgrounds Administrative Center reaches capacity or faces any disruption, Fort Snelling is capable of absorbing some of the functions to ensure the mission continues. For instance, in a surge where compliance is higher than expected (thousands more people showing up than planned), Fort Snelling’s holding areas can be activated to take in overflow of individuals who have finished initial processing and await transportation. Large event tents can be erected on Fort Snelling grounds or parking areas as **additional waiting or holding areas**, mirroring the contingency setup at the Fairgrounds. Because Fort Snelling has stockpiles of cots, water, and rations on-site, it can **function as a FEMA-style shelter** in an emergency, housing people temporarily in a safe and monitored setting. Moreover, if enforcement intensifies (Phase 4 of the operation, involving more arrests of non-compliant individuals in the field), Fort Snelling’s detention capacity can be expanded rapidly to hold those arrested. This ensures that **field enforcement (raids or arrests) don’t overwhelm local jails** – arrestees are brought straight into a federal facility at Fort Snelling. In a scenario where local authorities or courts attempted to shut down the Fairgrounds operation (e.g. via injunction or lack of cooperation), Fort Snelling could also serve as a **protected location to continue critical activities**. The plan contemplates that if needed, some minimal processing (like identity checks or emergency hearings) could occur at Fort Snelling under federal auspices to prevent any pause in enforcement. Essentially, Fort Snelling is the “**plan B**” and **phase escalation site** – its federal status shields it from local interference, so even if the high-profile public operation had to scale back, the core enforcement (identifying, detaining, and removing violators) would persist at Fort Snelling quietly.

Continuity of Governance Operations: By providing this redundancy, Fort Snelling guarantees that the enforcement surge meets its objectives. The site can remain active **beyond the planned 120-day window** if necessary, even as the Fairgrounds winds down. For example, after the main surge, a **small continuing presence** (a “Whipple Zone” task force) can operate from Fort Snelling to track down remaining targets or manage extended departures. This allows an orderly drawdown: the government could publicly close the big Processing Center to satisfy political pressure, while still **quietly continuing operations at Fort Snelling on a smaller scale** until every last priority case is handled. In essence, Fort Snelling offers a way to **de-risk the mission’s endgame** – there is no single point of failure. If protests, legal challenges, or other issues hit one site, the mission can adapt and continue at the other. The separation of sites also has a calming effect on the public: it keeps the initial processing humane and transparent, while the more sensitive deportation staging is out of the spotlight. From start to finish, individuals move along a pipeline that is segmented for efficiency: **check in at Fairgrounds; final checkout at Fort Snelling**. This approach preserves the integrity of each phase and “**ensures that the operation can maintain continuity and effectiveness under a wide range of potential adverse conditions**”. The Fort Snelling Deportation Center is thus an indispensable pillar of the strategic plan – **legally empowered, geographically strategic, historically grounded, and operationally flexible**. It embodies the federal government’s resolve to see the mission through and provides the secure endpoint where the surge in enforcement achieves its ultimate



result: the **lawful removal of individuals in a manner that is efficient, controlled, and keeps faith with America's legal standards.**

