



FEMA

Draft
**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
EMERGENCY TEMPORARY HOUSING PROJECT
EPHESUS BAPTIST CHURCH HOUSING SITE
JEFFERSON PARISH, LOUISIANA
*FEMA-1603-DR-LA, FEMA-1607-DR-LA***

As a result of damages from Hurricane Katrina on August 29, 2005, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was authorized under two Presidential disaster declarations (FEMA-1603-DR-LA; FEMA-1607-DR-LA) to provide Federal assistance to designated disaster areas in Louisiana. Section 408 of the Stafford Act authorizes FEMA's Individual Assistance (IA) Program to provide emergency temporary housing for disaster victims whose homes are uninhabitable. There are insufficient rental units available to house displaced disaster victims. The use of hotel rooms, shelters, or staying with family/friends is only appropriate for a very limited time period. In response to this need, FEMA is proposing to build emergency disaster group housing for residents in Jefferson Parish.

In order to implement its IA Program in a timely and effective manner, FEMA proposed an expedited process to assess the potential environmental impacts of building emergency temporary housing for displaced disaster victims. An Environmental Assessment (EA), dated December 7, 2005 was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and FEMA regulations for NEPA compliance (44 CFR Part 10). The EA's purpose is to analyze and document the proposed alternative's potential environmental impacts, serve as a vehicle to document compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The EA is hereby incorporated by reference.

The proposed site is located adjacent to Ephesus Baptist Church at 831 Wayne Blvd, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana and covers approximately 8 acres. The site fronts the north side of the West Bank Expressway, across from the Bayou Segnette State Park, in the Town of Westwego. FEMA contractors have been tasked with constructing a new travel trailer park (hereafter "Park") of approximately 160 units on land to be leased by the General Service Administration. At this time, Park occupancy is expected to not exceed 18 months. Activities would include, where necessary, site clearing, grading, road construction, the placement of utilities (electricity, water, and sewer), and the transport and hook-up of travel trailers to the site. The main site entrance would be located on Wayne Avenue to the north of the Church. An emergency exit would also be located on Wayne Avenue, to the south of the Church. Site preparation would include clearing and partial grading. Geotextile grade fabric and gravel would be used for the interior roadways and trailer pads. The American Disability Act (ADA) trailer pads and parking would be placed on a 2" asphalt slab with a 6" limestone base. A 6' high perimeter safety fence would be installed and maintained around the Park. When the temporary housing need has ended, FEMA expects that the trailers would be hauled from the site, to suitable locations elsewhere (to be determined on case-by-case basis). The Park site would then be seeded and restored to previous conditions, to the extent practicable, and/or used by the landowner in a manner consistent with Parish zoning.

FINDINGS

FEMA has made the following determinations from the information contained in the Ephesus Baptist Church Temporary Housing Project EA:

The above described action would not result in any significant adverse impacts related to geology and soils; hydrology and floodplains; wetlands and jurisdictional waters of the U.S.; water quality; air quality; vegetation and wildlife; state and federally listed threatened and endangered species; cultural resources; socioeconomics (including minority and low income populations); safety and security; hazardous materials and toxic wastes; and traffic and transportation. The proposed alternative has been reviewed and, to the best of our knowledge, does not have the potential for significant cumulative effects when combined with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in accordance with 44 CFR Part 10.8 (d)(3)(x).

The following summarizes much of what is outlined in the mitigation column of Table 1 of the EA and are the conditions that must be met as part of implementing this proposed action alternative:

1. Use of best management practices (e.g., installation of silt fences and straw bales) would be required to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation. If fill is stored on site, the contractor is required to appropriately cover it to prevent erosion.
2. Construction contractor would be required to apply for and obtain all applicable stormwater construction permits, including a LAPDES permit or waiver from the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.
3. Construction contractor would be required to apply for and obtain a floodplain development permit.
4. Area soils would be covered and/or wetted during construction to minimize dust.
5. In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, if unanticipated historic or cultural materials are discovered during construction, all construction activities shall immediately cease within 100 feet of the materials until their cultural affiliation and ultimate disposition are determined in consultation with the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office, FEMA Environmental Liaison Officer and other interested parties.
6. If necessary, the following noise reduction measures should be considered: (1) restricting the 24-hour schedule to the first two weeks of construction; (2) using a 7 A.M. to 7 P.M. construction schedule; (3) completing construction closest to adjoining residents first; and (4) completing noisier activities during the day if a 24-hour schedule is used.
7. If any hazardous materials are found during construction or Park occupation, all hazardous materials shall be remediated, abated, or disposed of as appropriate, and otherwise handled in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
8. The contractor would place safety fencing around the site and provide for 24-hour security services at the Park.
9. Contractor would coordinate with Parish Public Works Director to ensure traffic infrastructure can service the increased traffic volume. The contractor and Parish would implement traffic control measures, as necessary.
10. The contractor would post appropriate signage and fencing to minimize potential adverse public safety concerns. Appropriate signage and barriers should be in place prior to construction activities in order to alert pedestrians and motorists of project activities and traffic pattern changes.
11. Once the temporary housing need has ended, the site would be seeded and restored to previous conditions to the extent practical and/or used by the landowner in a manner consistent with local zoning.

CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the incorporated EA, and in accordance with Presidential Executive Orders 12898 (Environmental Justice), 11988 (Floodplain Management), and 11990 (Wetland Protection), FEMA has determined that the proposed action implemented with the conditions and mitigation measures outlined above and in the EA would not have any significant adverse effects on the quality of the natural and human environment. As a result of this FONSI, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared (44 CFR Part 10.8) and the proposed action alternative as described in the EA may proceed.

APPROVAL:

Donald Fairley, REM
Environmental Liaison Officer
FEMA- DR-LA 1603/1607

Date

Stephen DeBlasio
Housing Officer
FEMA- DR-LA 1603/1607

Date

Scott Wells
Federal Coordinating Officer
FEMA- DR-LA 1603/1607

Date

CONCUR:

Scott Armey
Regional Administrator
General Services Administration

Date