



FEMA

U. S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region 6
800 North Loop 288
Denton, TX 76209

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
TEMPORARY GROUP HOUSING SITE
SOUTH CHOCTAW DRIVE GROUP SITE
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH, LOUISIANA
FEMA-4277-DR-LA**

BACKGROUND

On August 14, 2016, President Obama declared a major disaster (FEMA-DR-4277-LA) for the State of Louisiana, due to severe storms and subsequent flooding, authorizing the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide federal assistance to designated disaster areas. Pursuant to Section 408 of the Stafford Act, FEMA's Individual and Households Program (IHP) was initiated to provide emergency temporary housing for disaster victims whose homes were identified as uninhabitable or destroyed as result of the disaster.

Due to the scope of the flooding event, there are insufficient rental resources or other temporary housing alternatives available to house displaced residents. Options currently available include the use of hotel rooms, shelters, or co-housing with family/friends not affected by the event, and are only appropriate for a very limited time period. In response to this need, FEMA is proposing construction of emergency temporary housing sites, known as Group Sites, for residents in the East Baton Rouge Parish.

In order to implement its IHP mission in a timely and effective manner, FEMA used an expedited process to assess the potential environmental impacts of building emergency temporary housing for displaced disaster victims. In accordance with FEMA's Instruction 108-1-1, an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared pursuant to Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as implemented by the regulations promulgated by the President's Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508). This EA informed FEMA's decision on whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

The proposed site is located in the City of Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana. The site consists of approximately 55 acres of mostly open grassland with scattered, large trees located along South Choctaw Drive about 0.4 mile east of the junction of North Flannery Road and South Choctaw Drive. An arm of the headwaters of Lively Bayou is located in the northwest portion of the group site as well as an area within the 100-year floodplain. The land in this area drains to the north. Also, a small wetland is located in the southeast portion of the group site and drains to the southeast. These areas will be avoided by the proposed placement of manufactured housing units on the group site.

Construction activities will include grading, paving, and trenching to provide adequate access, parking, drainage, gravel pads, and trenching for utilities, as necessary. All activities are considered temporary and will be removed after a maximum of 18 months.

A public notice was published in the local newspaper of record, The Advocate, on November 1, 2016, and is posted on FEMA's website. The Draft EA is available for public comment at the East Baton Rouge Main Library located at 7711 Goodwood Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806. The Main Library hours are Monday to Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Friday and Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Sunday 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

FINDINGS

The Proposed Action as described in the Draft EA will not impact geology, wetlands, seismicity, coastal resources, biological resources, critical habitat, cultural resources, hazardous materials, and traffic. During construction, short-term impacts to soils, air quality, water quality, noise, and floodplains are anticipated. Long-term impacts to floodplains as the result of the proposed action are not anticipated. Long-term positive impacts to socio-economic resources such as environmental justice are expected. Furthermore, given the Proposed Action is temporary (up to 18 months), long-term cumulative affects to the project site and the area surrounding the site as a result of site development and occupancy are not anticipated.

CONDITIONS

The following conditions must be met as part of this project. Failure to comply with these conditions may jeopardize the receipt of federal funding.

1. Appropriate best management practices will be implemented during site development to minimize sediment migration from the site into nearby water bodies. Surface runoff will be controlled by using siltation controls such as silt fencing around the construction site to minimize erosion of materials into adjacent wetlands and/or waterways. Any disturbed soil will be protected with seed or sod after construction in order to decrease the amount of soil eroded by rainfall and runoff. Any fill stored on site will be appropriately covered to prevent erosion.
2. In order to control storm water runoff, the contractor will be required to design and construct drainage features so that flows will not cause nuisance flooding during heavy rainfall events. The drainage system will be required to meet local and county requirements.
3. The contractor will monitor ground-disturbing activities during construction. If any potential archeological resources are discovered, the contractor will immediately cease construction in that area and notify the Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness and FEMA.
4. Unusable equipment, debris, and material will be disposed of prior to occupancy in an approved manner and location. In the event significant items (or evidence thereof) are discovered during implementation of the project, the contractor will handle, manage, and dispose of petroleum products, hazardous materials, and toxic waste in accordance to the requirements and to the satisfaction of the governing local, state, and federal agencies.


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5. To minimize dust, site soils will be wetted during site preparation activities and seeded following construction.
6. Construction activities with elevated noise levels will be limited from 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M, unless otherwise approved by the Parish. Equipment and machinery used during construction will meet all local, State, and federal noise regulations.
7. The contractor will post appropriate signage and fencing to minimize potential adverse public safety concerns. Appropriate signage and barriers will be in place prior to construction activities in order to alert pedestrians and motorists of project activities and traffic pattern changes.
8. Once the temporary housing need has ended, the site will be seeded and restored to previous conditions to the extent practical or in accordance with site lease terms.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the EA, coordination with the appropriate agencies, comments from the public, and adherence to the project conditions set forth in this FONSI, FEMA has determined that the proposed project qualifies as a major federal action that will not significantly affect the quality of the natural and human environment, nor does it have the potential for significant cumulative effects. As a result of this FONSI, an EIS will not be prepared (FEMA Instruction 108-1-1) and the proposed project as described in the attached EA may proceed.

APPROVAL



Kevin Jaynes
Regional Environmental Officer
FEMA Region 6

Date 11/4/16