



FEMA

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Louisiana Transitional Recovery Office
1250 Poydras St
New Orleans, Louisiana 70113

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
for
CITY PARK WISNER TENNIS CENTER/GREAT LAWN PROJECT
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

BACKGROUND

On August 29, 2005, the tidal surge and high velocity winds from Hurricane Katrina caused extensive damage to City Park in New Orleans, Louisiana. Flood waters inundated City Park lagoons and greenways. The State of Louisiana Facility Planning and Control, would like to demolish the Wisner Tennis Center, courts and parking lot and replace it with a lawn and palm tree-lined promenade and water feature. These improvements will be in the Tri-Centennial area of the Park between Dreyfous Avenue and Victory Avenue.

In accordance with 44 CFR Part 10, FEMA regulations to implement the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared. The purpose of the EA was to analyze the potential environmental impacts associated with the removal of the parking lot, tennis courts and Wisner tennis Center and construction of "Great Lawn" area, including promenades and water fountain and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The need for the proposed action is to introduce a green space that will support common active and passive recreational uses. The alternatives considered were 1) No Action and 2) Construction of the Great Lawn Area (Proposed Action).

The proposed action would construct the Great Lawn in the Tri-Centennial area of City Park between Dreyfous Avenue and Victory Avenue. The improvements would include the development of a lawn area flanked by a double alley of palm trees on both sides of the lawn. Between the palm trees, a promenade with sitting areas will provide access from Dreyfous Avenue and Victory Avenue. On the north end of the lawn area, a major terrace parterre with a stepped arbor will provide a structure for a feature of cascading water from the arbor and wall runnels, all ending in a bottom basin with a spray jet. Lighting for the promenade will be provided by uplighting along the promenade.

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT

A legal notice was posted in the Times Picayune on September 6, 2009 and the public comment period went until September 20, 2009. The Draft EA was available to the public through FEMA's website www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/earegion6.shtm and the Mid-City Library, New Orleans, LA.

FINDINGS

FEMA has evaluated the proposed project for significant adverse impacts to geology, soils, water resources (surface water, groundwater, wetlands and floodplains), coastal resources, biological resources, cultural resources, air quality, noise, traffic, safety, hazardous materials and socioeconomics. During the construction period, minor short-term adverse impacts to soils, surface water, floodplains, biological resources, air quality, noise, traffic and safety are anticipated. Implementation of the proposed action would result in long-term improvements to soils, surface water and ground water. Adverse impacts would be minimized or eliminated through the conditions listed below.

CONDITIONS

The following conditions must be met as part of the implementation of the project. Failure to comply with these conditions may jeopardize federal funds:

- To minimize soil impacts, Orleans Parish should implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as using silt fencing, covering stockpiled soils, mulching cleared areas and revegetating.
- A Storm Water Management Plan should be prepared and BMP's for storm water management should be implemented to minimize any detrimental effects to water quality during project implementation.
- Orleans Parish is required to coordinate construction activities with the local floodplain administrator and comply with the local floodplain ordinance. All permits and certificates, and all the associated coordination, should be documented and provided to the LA GOHSEP and to FEMA as part of the permanent project file.
- Wetlands should not be traversed with wheeled or tracked vehicles to access the project site; wetlands should not be used for the staging of equipment, materials or construction debris; and all debris should be removed to an approved solid waste disposal facility. If these conditions cannot be met, a complete application must be submitted to the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources.
- Any fill or borrow material used must be sourced from sites that do not contain any buried cultural materials (i.e. wells, cisterns, foundations, basements, prehistoric Indian artifacts, human burials, and the like). If during the course of work, archaeological artifacts (prehistoric or historic) or human remains are discovered, St. Bernard Parish and/or its contractors should stop work in the vicinity of the discovery and take all reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds. The Parish should inform the FEMA Public Assistance program, who would in turn contact the FEMA Historic Preservation staff. The Parish would not proceed with work until FEMA completes consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer. In addition, if unmarked graves are present, compliance with the Louisiana Unmarked Human Burial Sites Preservation Act is required. In that situation, the Parish should notify the local law enforcement agency within 24 hours of the discovery, and notify FEMA and the Louisiana Division of

Archaeology at 225-342-8170 within 72 hours of the discovery. Failure to comply with these stipulations may jeopardize FEMA funding of the project.

- To minimize air quality impacts, Orleans Parish and its contractors should implement BMPs to limit emissions, fugitive dust and exhaust. BMPs would include maintaining and covering spoil piles, covering the loads of haul vehicles and keeping construction equipment properly tuned.
- Construction traffic should be monitored and controlled as appropriate.
- Orleans Parish and its contractors should ensure all project activities are conducted in a safe manner and in compliance with all state and federal occupational safety regulations, including OSHA, to protect workers and the general public.
- If hazardous constituents are unexpectedly encountered, appropriate measures for the proper assessment, remediation and management of the contamination should be initiated in accordance with applicable federal, state and local regulations.
- Appropriate measures to prevent, minimize and control spills of hazardous materials should be taken, and any hazardous and non-hazardous wastes generated should be disposed in accordance with applicable federal, state and local requirements.
- Any change to the approved scope of work would require submission to and evaluation and approval by FEMA for compliance with NEPA prior to initiation of any work.

CONCLUSION

FEMA has determined that the implementation of the proposed action with the prescribed mitigation measures discussed in the EA and outlined above would not result in significant adverse impacts to the quality of the natural and human environment. In addition, the proposed project does not appear to have the potential for significant cumulative effects when combined with past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions. As a result of this FONSI, an EIS will not be prepared (per 44 CFR Part 10) and the proposed project as described in the EA may proceed.

APPROVAL

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FEMA-1603/1607-DR-LA

Date

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Date