



FEMA

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
JOPLIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
JOPLIN, JASPER COUNTY, MISSOURI
FEMA-1980-DR-MO**

As a result of damages from severe storms and tornados on May 22, 2011, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was authorized under a Presidential disaster declaration (FEMA-1980-DR-MO) to provide Federal assistance to designated disaster areas in Missouri. Assistance authorized by the statute is available to individuals, families, state and local governments, and certain nonprofit organizations. Multiple Joplin School District educational facilities were damaged or destroyed as a result of the storm event. The purpose of the proposed project would be to restore permanent school facilities for the students, faculty and staff of the Joplin School District. The Proposed Action will also retrofit undamaged schools to include near absolute protection in tornado safe rooms.

An Environmental Assessment (EA), dated May 15, 2012, 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 alternatives 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 action for the Joplin School District varies for each facility damaged or destroyed depending on the damage received by the structure and its subsequent ability to continue to function as a viable educational facility. The locations of Joplin School District facilities that were damaged and/or destroyed are listed below:

East Middle School/New Elementary, 4594 E. 20th Street, Joplin, MO.
Old Irving Elementary, 311 Gabby Street Boulevard, Joplin, MO.
Roi S. Wood Administration Building, 1717 E. 15th Street, Joplin, MO.
Old South Middle School, 22nd and Wall, Joplin, MO.
Kelsey Norman Elementary, 1323 E. 28th Street, Joplin, MO.
Old St. John's/New Elementary, Old 32nd Street and McClelland Boulevard, Joplin, MO.
Cecil Floyd Elementary, 2201 E. 24th Street, Joplin, MO.
Emerson Elementary, 301 E. 19th Street, Joplin, MO.
Joplin High School/Franklin Technology Center, 20th and Indiana, Joplin, MO.

In addition to schools that were damaged and/or destroyed by the tornado, the Joplin School District intends to retrofit undamaged schools using FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding to include FEMA Tornado Safe Shelters to provide near absolute level of protection to school occupants and adjacent community population. HMGP is a supplemental program that provides funding to states to reduce or eliminate threats to future disaster events. All FEMA funding will be provided in accordance with the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, Public Law 93-288, as amended.

Site preparation relocation or reconstruction projects would require grading to construct building pads, roads, parking lots, walkways, and all utilities related to the infrastructure of the facility. Utility services including water, sewer, electric, and telephone would be extended to the site from adjacent areas. In addition, stormwater management facilities would be constructed in accordance with local, state and Federal requirements. Best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented to reduce or eliminate runoff impacts during proposed construction activities and to reduce the potential for soil erosion after construction. The facilities would include the development of temporary gravel pads or concrete footings for foundations, gravel and asphalt roadways, parking, walkways, water and wastewater collection line installation, phone and cable, and electric. Access to the various sites from surrounding roads will also be designed in accordance with prepared traffic impact studies and through coordination with applicable city staff.

The public comment period for the Draft EA was from May 17 through June 16, 2012 with a notice published in the Joplin Globe. Copies of the draft EA were also provided at the Joplin City Hall, located at 602 S. Main St. Joplin, MO 64801, at the Joplin Public Schools Administration Building located at 3901 E. 32nd Street, Joplin, MO 64801, on FEMA's Internet site at <http://www.fema.gov/hp/docs.shtm>, and on Joplin Schools Internet site at <http://www.joplinschools.org/>. The Public Notice notified residents of the proposed project, the availability of the Draft EA, and the opportunity to comment.

FINDINGS

FEMA has made the following determinations from the information contained in the Joplin School District EA:

The above described action will 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 (with the exception of Emerson Elementary); socioeconomics (including minority and low income populations); safety and security; hazardous materials and toxic wastes; and traffic and transportation. The State Historic Preservation Organization (SHPO) recommended that Emerson Elementary may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and the SHPO asked the school district to provide documentation that other alternatives to demolition be explored. For the purpose of this EA, Emerson Elementary is

only being evaluated for the safe room project. Any other work at this site will be resolved in a Memorandum of Agreement or other document and the Section 106 NHPA review will be completed at that time.

Joplin community is located in an EPA Superfund site, there is the potential during construction for the uncovering soil containing elevated levels of lead or the transport of fill material, with increased lead levels, into the construction site from other surrounding areas. Soils at Joplin School District sites will be tested for the presence of lead and in the event elevated lead levels are found, remediation will be performed.

The proposed alternatives have 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 what is outlined in the EA's Mitigation Actions section and are the conditions that must be met as part of implementing this proposed action alternative:

1. Best Management Practices (BMP), such as the development and implementation of an erosion and sedimentation control plan, the use of silt fences or hay bales, revegetation of disturbed soils, and maintenance of site soil stockpiles, would be utilized to prevent soils from eroding and dispersing off-site.
2. The construction contractor would be required to apply for and obtain all applicable storm water permits or waiver from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and local floodplain manager.
3. In order to convey storm water runoff, the contractor will be required to design drainage features so that flows will not flood site residents or surrounding properties during storm events. The drainage system will be required to meet local and county requirements, including the acquisition of easements if applicable.
4. Area soils would be covered and/or wetted during construction to minimize dust.
5. If fill is stored on site as part of unit installation or removal, the contractor will be required to appropriately cover it.
6. During the site construction and occupancy, rock cover for roads, building pads or parking areas would be periodically wetted and/or treated to minimize dust as needed.
7. If during the course of work, archaeological artifacts or human remains are discovered, construction activity shall stop in the vicinity of the discovery and all reasonable measures shall be taken to avoid or minimize harm to the finds. Consultation shall be made with FEMA, the Missouri SHPO, SEMA, FEMA PA, and the FEMA Environmental and Historic Preservation Advisor prior to resuming construction in order to formulate a course of action regarding the find.
8. Whenever possible, construction activities should be limited to daylight hours during the work week when most of the residents are at school or at work. Efforts should be made to reduce noise impacts associated with construction to the maximum extent possible. Noise

buffer areas should be included within the design of each of the sites, if possible, in order to minimize the permanent noise impact to neighboring property owners.

9. In the event that contractors on these projects encounter any materials determined to be hazardous or toxic during site clearing, excavation and/or demolition, construction activities should cease in that area and appropriate regulatory agency guidelines followed to minimize any potential harm to human health or the natural environment. Any found hazardous material shall be remediated, abated, or disposed of as appropriate, and otherwise handled in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
10. A traffic impact study has been completed for the proposed Joplin High School/Franklin Technology Center project and the Old St. John's/New Elementary project. Improvements will be made based on the recommendations of those studies. Contractor will coordinate with the City traffic engineer on each of the projects and will implement traffic control measures, as necessary.
11. To minimize worker and public health and safety risks from project construction and closure, all construction and closure work will be done using qualified personnel trained in the proper use of construction equipment, including all appropriate safety precautions. Additionally, all activities will be conducted in a safe manner in accordance with the standards specified in Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OHS) regulations and the USACE safety manual.
12. Proper signage shall be installed at each location to identify hazardous areas, equipment or materials for workers as well as site visitors, regulatory inspectors and the community at large. 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.
13. Given the history of the area, past mining activity may be uncovered during construction activity. In the event that areas of past mine workings are uncovered, work shall be stopped in that area until an appropriate plan of action can be formulated for the condition discovered. The plan of action will be determined on a case by case basis depending on the extent of the underground activity that was discovered.
14. Fencing of construction sites may be considered where large equipment, deep excavations, tall open structures or other significant hazards are present and accessible to the public.
15. Since the Joplin community is located in an EPA Superfund site, there is the potential during construction for the uncovering soil containing elevated levels of lead or the transport of fill material, with increased lead levels, into the construction site from other surrounding areas. Soils at Joplin School District sites will be tested for the presence of lead and in the event elevated lead levels are found, remediation would be performed, as necessary.
16. All debris, material and waste associated with these projects shall be required to be removed and disposed of in accordance with all Federal, state, and local regulations.
17. All sites shall be tested for lead levels in accordance with applicable city and county ordinances. All lead testing results or applicable geotechnical investigations shall be provided to FEMA, upon request.

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 will 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:

 6/18/2012

Date

Kenneth G. Sessa
Environmental Officer, FEMA Region VII