

Record of Environmental Consideration

REVISED FOR FEMA ENVIRONMENTAL -- LOUISIANA -- April 2007

See 44 Code of Federal Regulation Part 10

Project Name/Number: John F. Kennedy High School
Building C Demolition
FIPS#: 033-UA9M2-00/ **AI No. 1472**

Applicant Name: Recovery School District

Project Locations: John F. Kennedy High School - Location: 30.01572, -90.08661
5700 Wisner Boulevard, New Orleans, LA 70124

Project Description:

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath caused wind and flood damages to facilities at the Recovery School District John F. Kennedy High School, New Orleans. Based on the Recovery School District and Orleans Parish School Board 2008 "School Facilities Master Plan" to restore school facilities, the John F. Kennedy High School is planned to be demolished. The Applicant plans to demolish Building C, a 13,391 square foot concrete block structure which housed industrial arts classrooms. This was the only building on the campus that was identified for repairs, rather than replacement.

The Kennedy High School is a known "Superfund Site". Following Hurricane Betsy in 1965 debris was burned and deposited on this site. Soil contamination tests on the site in 1995 indicated elevated levels of lead, arsenic and BAP (benzo(a)pyrene) derived from the burned organic matter. Over the 1996-Christmas-New Year holiday period contaminated soils exposed between the school buildings were properly removed to several feet depth. Clean soils and landscaping were imported to replace the contaminated soils. Contaminated soils remain beneath the buildings and are planned to be removed after the school buildings are demolished and the concrete floor slabs and footings removed to expose the soils. A Phase II and/or Phase III invasive site investigation will follow to define the extent of remaining contaminated soils and possible groundwater contamination. It is expected the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), the local environmental regulatory enforcement agency, will supervise and direct RSD to complete the likely remaining soil removal or remedial actions needed for the site and provide a letter concluding no further environmental regulatory action will be required at this site. RSD presently plans to remove the remaining potential environmental liabilities at this site and sell or donate the property to another entity. FEMA EHP has requested that a letter of "No Further Action" from LDEQ be submitted to FEMA, once the RSD has determined the level of contamination and developed a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) for LDEQ approval.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Determination

- Statutorily excluded from NEPA review (**Review Concluded**)
- Programmatic Categorical Exclusion - Category (**Review Concluded**)
- Categorical Exclusion - Category XII
 - No Extraordinary Circumstances exist.
Are project conditions required? Yes (see section V) No (**Review Concluded**)
 - Extraordinary Circumstances exist (see Section IV).
 - Extraordinary Circumstances mitigated. (See Section IV comments)
Are project conditions required? Yes (see section V) No (**Review Concluded**)
- Alternative Arrangements
 - Public Involvement Plan on file (see comments below)
Are project conditions required? Yes (see section V) No (**Review Concluded**)
- Environmental Assessment
- Supplemental Environmental Assessment (Reference EA or PEA in comments)
- Environmental Impact Statement

Comments: Based on documentation provided by the sub-applicant, FEMA’s Environmental / Historic Preservation Section and Alternatives Arrangement team determined that the Recovery School District and the Orleans Parish School Board provided sufficient documentation to demonstrate a satisfactory public involvement process for rebuilding schools in Orleans Parish, LA. Any changes to the scope of work will require re-submission through the state to FEMA and requires re-evaluation for compliance with national environmental policies. The applicant is responsible for obtaining and complying with all local, state and federal permits. Non-compliance with this requirement may jeopardize receipt of federal funds.

Project is Non-Compliant (see attached documentation justifying selection).

Reviewer and Approvals

FEMA Environmental Reviewer:

Name: Kelly E. Rowe, Environmental Specialist, FEMA LRO

Signature  Date 7-26-11

FEMA Environmental Liaison Officer or Delegated Approving Official:

Name: Adam Borden Environmental Team Lead, FEMA LRO

Signature  Date 7/29/11

I. Compliance Review for Environmental Laws (other than NEPA)

A. National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

- Not type of activity with potential to affect historic structures or archaeological resources (**Review Concluded**)
- Applicable executed Programmatic Agreement. Activity meets Programmatic Allowance (date of agreement and allowance number in comments) - **Review Concluded**
- Applicable executed Programmatic Agreement (date in comments). See project review below for historic structures and archaeological resources.
- Other Programmatic Agreement dated _____ applies

HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

- No historic properties that are listed or 50 years or older in project area. (**Review Concluded**)
- Building or structure 50 years or older or listed on the National Register in the project area and activity not exempt from review.
 - Determination of No Historic Properties Affected (FEMA finding/SHPO/THPO concurrence on file)
Are project conditions required? Yes (see Section V) No (**Review Concluded**)
 - Determination of Historic Properties Affected (FEMA finding/SHPO/THPO concurrence on file)
 - Property a National Historic Landmark and National Park Service was provided early notification during the consultation process. If not, explain in comments
 - No Adverse Effect Determination (FEMA finding/SHPO/THPO concurrence on file)
Are project conditions required? Yes (see Section V) No (**Review Concluded**)
 - Adverse Effect Determination (FEMA finding/SHPO/THPO concurrence on file)
 - Resolution of Adverse Effect completed (MOA on file)
Are project conditions required Yes (see Section V) No (**Review Concluded**)

ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- Project affects only previously disturbed ground – Review Concluded
- Project affects undisturbed ground or grounds associated with a historic structure
 - Project area has no potential for presence of archeological resources
 - Determination of no historic properties affected (FEMA finding/SHPO/THPO concurrence on file) (**Review Concluded**)
 - Project area has potential for presence of archeological resources
 - Determination of no historic properties affected (FEMA finding/SHPO/THPO concurrence on file)

- Are project conditions required Yes (see Section V) No **(Review Concluded)**
- Determination of historic properties affected
- NR eligible resources not present (FEMA finding/SHPO/THPO concurrence on file)
Are project conditions required Yes (see Section V) No **(Review Concluded)**
 - NR eligible resources present in project area (FEMA finding/SHPO/THPO concurrence on file)
 - No Adverse Effect Determination (FEMA finding/ SHPO/THPO concurrence on file)
Are project conditions required? Yes (see Section V) No **(Review Concluded)**
 - Adverse Effect Determination (FEMA finding/SHPO/THPO concurrence on file)
 - Resolution of Adverse Effect completed (MOA on file)
Are project conditions required? Yes (see Section V) No **(Review Concluded)**

Comments: A review of this project was conducted in accordance with Stipulation I.E of FEMA's Secondary Programmatic Agreement regarding New Orleans School Facilities Master Plan (2PA) dated August 17, 2009. FEMA is not required by this 2PA to perform additional Section 106 reviews for undertakings previously reviewed prior to the implementation of the Master Plan and during the development of this 2PA unless RSD and/or OPSB propose changes to the scope of work that FEMA determines may cause additional effects to historic properties. FEMA previously reviewed the scope of work and determined that No Historic Properties were affected by the proposed undertaking. SHPO concurrence with this determination was received, dated May 30, 2008.

B. Endangered Species Act

- No listed species and/or designated critical habitat present in areas affected directly or indirectly by the Federal action. **(Review Concluded)**
- Listed species and/or designated critical habitat present in the areas affected directly or indirectly by the Federal action.
- No effect to species or designated critical habitat. (See comments for justification)
Are project conditions required? Yes (see Section V) No **(Review Concluded)**
 - May affect, but not likely to adversely affect species or designated critical habitat (FEMA determination/USFWS/NMFS concurrence on file) **(Review Concluded)**
Are project conditions required? Yes (see Section V) No **(Review Concluded)**
 - Likely to adversely affect species or designated critical habitat
 - Formal consultation concluded. (Biological Assessment and Biological Opinion on file)
Are project conditions required? YES (see Section V) NO **(Review Concluded)**

Comments: Project is located in an urban or previously developed area. Neither listed species nor their habitat occur in or near this site, thus FEMA finds there will be no effect to threatened or endangered species.

Correspondence/Consultation/References: USFWS emergency consultation provisions determined in letters dated September 15, 2005 for Katrina.

C. Coastal Barrier Resources Act

- Project is not on or connected to CBRA Unit or Otherwise Protected Area **(Review Concluded)**.
- Project is on or connected to CBRA Unit or Otherwise Protected Area. (FEMA determination/USFWS consultation on file)
- Proposed action an exception under Section 3505.a.6 **(Review Concluded)**
 - Proposed action not excepted under Section 3505.a.6.
Are project conditions required? YES (see Section V) NO **(Review Concluded)**

Comments: Project is not within a CBRA zone.

Correspondence/Consultation/References: Louisiana Coastal Barrier Resource System Maps referenced June 14, 2011.

D. Clean Water Act

- Project would not affect any waters of the U.S. **(Review Concluded)**
- Project would affect waters, including wetlands, of the U.S.
- Project exempted as in kind replacement or other exemption. **(Review Concluded)**
 - Project requires Section 404/401 of Clean Water Act or Section 9/10 of Rivers and Harbors Act permit, including qualification under Nationwide Permits.
Are project conditions required? YES (see Section V) NO **(Review Concluded)**

Project would affect waters of the U.S. by discharging to a surface water body.

Comments: No jurisdictional waters of the U.S., including wetlands, occur in or near the project area.
Correspondence/Consultation/References: USFWS National Wetlands Inventory map (<http://www.fws.gov/nwi/>) queried on June 14, 2011.

E. Coastal Zone Management Act

- Project is not located in a coastal zone area and does not affect a coastal zone area (**Review Concluded**)
- Project is located in a coastal zone area and/or affects the coastal zone
- State administering agency does not require consistency review. (**Review Concluded**).
 - State administering agency requires consistency review.
- Are project conditions required? YES (see section V) NO (**Review Concluded**)

Comments: This project is located within the Louisiana Coastal Management Zone. Projects within the coastal zone may require a coastal use permit or other authorization from LADNR. Projects may be coordinated by contacting LA DNR at 1-225-342-9232.
Correspondence/Consultation/References: Louisiana Coastal Zone maps queried June 14, 2011.

F. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act

- Project does not affect, control, or modify a waterway/body of water. (**Review Concluded**)
- Project affects, controls, or modifies a waterway/body of water.
- Coordination with USFWS conducted
 - No Recommendations offered by USFWS. (**Review Concluded**)
 - Recommendations provided by USFWS.
- Are project conditions required? YES (see Section V) NO (**Review Concluded**)

Comments: Project scope does not include impoundment, diversion, control, or other modification of waters of any stream or body of water.
Correspondence/Consultation/References: Louisiana Map (<http://www.lamap.doa.louisiana.gov/>) queried June 14, 2011

G. Clean Air Act

- Project will not result in permanent air emissions. (**Review Concluded**)
- Project is located in an attainment area. (**Review Concluded**)
- Project is located in a non-attainment area.
- Coordination required with applicable state administering agency.
- Are project conditions required? YES (see section V) NO (**Review Concluded**)

Comments: The proposed project includes activities that would produce a minor, temporary, and localized impact on air quality from vehicle emissions and fugitive dust particles. No long-term air quality impact is anticipated.
Correspondence/Consultation/References: EPA Region 6 Non-attainment Map

H. Farmland Protection Policy Act

- Project will not affect undisturbed ground. (**Review Concluded**)
- Project has a zoning classification that is other than agricultural or is in an urbanized area. (**Review Concluded**)
- Project does not affect designated prime or unique farmland. (**Review Concluded**)
- Project causes unnecessary or irreversible conversion of designated prime or unique farmland.
- Coordination with Natural Resources Conservation Service required.
 - Farmland Conversion Impact Rating, Form AD-1006, completed.
- Are project conditions required? YES (see section V) NO (**Review Concluded**)

Comments: The site is located within an existing urban and developed area and FPPA is precluded.
Correspondence/Consultation/References: Kelly E. Rowe, Environmental Specialist

I. Migratory Bird Treaty Act

- Project not located within a flyway zone (**Review Concluded**)

- Project located within a flyway zone.
 - Project does not have potential to take migratory birds (**Review Concluded**)
Are project conditions required? Yes (see section V) No (**Review Concluded**)
 - Project has potential to take migratory birds.
 - Contact made with USFWS
Are project conditions required? YES (see section V) NO (**Review Concluded**)

Comments: The site is an existing disturbed area with little value to migratory birds and would not be included in the USFWS migratory bird management program.

Correspondence/Consultation/References: USFWS guidance letter dated September 27, 2005.

J. Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

- Project not located in or near Essential Fish Habitat (**Review Concluded**)
- Project located in or near Essential Fish Habitat.
 - Project does not adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (**Review Concluded**)
Are project conditions required? Yes (see Section V) No (**Review Concluded**)
 - Project adversely affects Essential Fish Habitat (FEMA determination/USFWS/NMFS concurrence on file)
 - NOAA Fisheries provided no recommendation(s) (**Review Concluded**).
Are project conditions required? Yes (see Section V) No (**Review Concluded**)
 - NOAA Fisheries provided recommendation(s)
 - Written reply to NOAA Fisheries recommendations completed.
Are project conditions required? YES (see Section V) NO (**Review Concluded**)

Comments: Project is not located in or near any surface waters with the potential to affect EFH species.

Correspondence/Consultation/References: Louisiana Map (<http://www.lamap.doa.louisiana.gov/>) referenced June 14, 2011.

K. Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

- Project is not along and does not affect Wild or Scenic River (WSR) - (**Review Concluded**)
- Project is along or affects WSR
 - Project adversely affects WSR as determined by NPS/USFS. **FEMA cannot fund the action.** (NPS/USFS/USFWS/BLM consultation on file) (**Review Concluded**)
 - Project does not adversely affect WSR. (NPS/USFS/USFWS/BLM consultation on file)
Are project conditions required? YES (see Section V) NO (**Review Concluded**)

Comments: Project is not along and does not affect Wild or Scenic River (WSR).

Correspondence/Consultation/References: National Wild and Scenic Rivers <http://www.nps.gov/rivers/wildriverslist.html>

L. Resource Conservation and Recovery Act

Unusable equipment, debris and material shall be disposed of in an approved manner and location. In the event significant items (or evidence thereof) are discovered during implementation of the project, applicant shall handle, manage, and dispose of contaminated soils, petroleum products, hazardous materials (such as asbestos and lead based paint) and/or toxic waste in accordance to the requirements and to the satisfaction of the governing local, state and federal agencies.

M. Other Relevant Laws and Environmental Regulations

Formosan Termite Initiative Act

In accordance with the Formosan Termite Initiative Act, (LA R.S. 3:3391.1 thru 3391.13) the Louisiana Parish of Orleans is under quarantine. The movement of wood or cellulose material, temporary housing or architectural components (e.g. beams, doors and other wood salvaged from a structure) may not leave the quarantined parishes without written authorization from the Commissioner of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and forestry or his designee(s).

II. Compliance Review for Executive Orders

A. E.O. 11988 - Floodplains

- No Effect on Floodplains/Flood levels and project outside Floodplain - **(Review Concluded)**
- Located in Floodplain or Effects on Floodplains/Flood levels
 - No adverse effect on floodplain and not adversely affected by the floodplain. **(Review Concluded)**,
Are project conditions required? Yes (see Section V) No **(Review Concluded)**
 - Beneficial Effect on Floodplain Occupancy/Values **(Review Concluded)**.
 - Possible adverse effects associated with investment in floodplain, occupancy or modification of floodplain environment
 - 8 Step Process Complete - documentation on file
Are project conditions required? YES (see Section V) NO **(Review Concluded)**
 - A Final Public Notice is required

Comments: Project is demolition of a former public elementary school building and preservation of the land as a historic cemetery area. This project increases the use of open space within the special flood hazard area.

B. E.O. 11990 - Wetlands

- No Effects on Wetland(s) and/or project located outside Wetland(s) - **(Review Concluded)**
- Located in Wetland or effects Wetland(s)
 - Beneficial Effect on Wetland - **(Review Concluded)**
 - Possible adverse effect associated with constructing in or near wetland
 - Review completed as part of floodplain review
 - 8 Step Process Complete - documentation on file
Are project conditions required? YES (see Section V) NO **(Review Concluded)**

Comments: None

Correspondence/Consultation/References: U.S. FWS NWI map accessed on-line June 14, 2011.

C. E.O. 12898 - Environmental Justice for Low Income and Minority Populations

- Project scope of work has no potential to adversely impact any population **(Review Concluded)**
- No Low income or minority population in, near or affected by the project based on information gathered from <http://factfinder.census.gov>. **(Review Concluded)**
- Low income or minority population in or near project area
 - No disproportionately high and adverse impact on low income or minority population **(Review Concluded)**
 - Disproportionately high or adverse effects on low income or minority population
Are project conditions required? YES (see Section V) NO **(Review Concluded)**

Comments: The percent populations of 70124 are: 95.7 % White 1.3 % African-American, 3.9 % Hispanic. The median household income in 1999 was \$ 51,684 and 3.6 % of families are below poverty level.

Correspondence/Consultation/References: Kelly E. Rowe, Environmental Specialist

III. Other Environmental Issues

Identify other potential environmental concerns in the comment box not clearly falling under a law or executive order (see environmental concerns scoping checklist for guidance).

Comments: None

Correspondence/Consultation/Reference:

IV. Extraordinary Circumstances

Yes

- (i) Greater scope or size than normally experienced for a particular category of action

- (ii) Actions with a high level of public controversy
- (iii) Potential for degradation, even though slight, of already existing poor environmental conditions;
- (iv) Employment of unproven technology with potential adverse effects or actions involving unique or unknown environmental risks;
- (v) Presence of endangered or threatened species or their critical habitat, or archaeological, cultural, historical or other protected resources;
- (vi) Presence of hazardous or toxic substances at levels which exceed Federal, state or local regulations or standards requiring action or attention;
- (vii) Actions with the potential to affect special status areas adversely or other critical resources such as wetlands, coastal zones, wildlife refuge and wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers, sole or principal drinking water aquifers;
- (viii) Potential for adverse effects on health or safety; and
- (ix) Potential to violate a federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.
- (x) Potential for significant cumulative impact when the proposed action is combined with other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions, even though the impacts of the proposed action may not be significant by themselves.

Comments:

V. Environmental Review Project Conditions

Project Conditions:

The following conditions apply as a condition of FEMA funding reimbursement:

1. Unusable equipment, debris and material shall be disposed of in an approved manner and location. In the event significant items (or evidence thereof) are discovered during implementation of the project, applicant shall handle, manage, and dispose of petroleum products, hazardous materials (such as asbestos and lead based paint) and/or toxic waste in accordance to the requirements and to the satisfaction of the governing local, state and federal agencies.
2. In accordance with the Formosan Termite Initiative Act, (LA R.S. 3:3391.1 thru 3391.13) the Louisiana Parish of Orleans- is under quarantine. The movement of wood or cellulose material, temporary housing or architectural components (e.g. beams, doors and other wood salvaged from a structure) may not leave the quarantined parishes without written authorization from the Commissioner of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and forestry or his designee(s).
3. Per Clean Air Act National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutant Regulations and Louisiana Administrative Code 33:iii 5151, demolition activities related to possible asbestos-containing materials (PACM) must be inspected for ACM/PACM where it is safe to do so. ACM/PACM must be handled in accordance with local, state and federal regulations and disposed of at approved facilities that accept ACM. Demolition activity notification must be sent to the LDEQ before work begins.
4. This project involves the modification of a public structure that may contain surfaces coated with lead-based paint (LBP). The applicant is responsible complying with all local, state, and federal laws and ensuring that project activities are coordinated with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality for abatement activities.
5. This project involves the demolition of a public structure at a known “Superfund Site”. Beneath the existing/remaining school buildings shallow soils are known to contain elevated concentrations of lead, arsenic and BAP. After demolition of the buildings and removal of concrete floor slabs and footings, the vertical and lateral extent of soil contamination will be defined, in cooperation with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), and a soil removal and/or remediation plan will be approved and implemented.
6. FEMA EHP has requested that a letter of “No Further Action” from LDEQ be submitted to FEMA, once the RSD has determined the level of contamination and developed a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) for LDEQ approval.

National Environmental Policy Act

Alternative Arrangements for NEPA Compliance

**REPORT OF FINDING: Final Approval
New Orleans Recovery School District
Master Plan Alternate Projects**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) Division at the Louisiana Transitional Recovery Office has determined through its Special Considerations review that the public involvement plan submitted by Louisiana Recovery School District, (hereafter, the applicant), for the above-referenced Alternate Projects associated with The School Facilities Master Plan for Orleans Parish, (hereafter, Master Plan), meets the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Alternative Arrangements (AA). Those requirements comply with the programmatic agreement between the White House Council on Environmental Quality, the Department of Homeland Security, and FEMA. This finding is based in part on the applicant's public involvement efforts and a request submitted to FEMA by the applicant for expedited review and Alternative Arrangements for NEPA compliance.

PROJECT: On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall in the New Orleans metropolitan area. Over 80% of the public school buildings in Orleans Parish were inundated with flood waters. Many of the remaining structures were damaged by wind, rain, and storm debris. Subsequently, the applicant and the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSD) commissioned the Master Plan to guide the school system's recovery process. The Master Plan consists of two phases of demolition and construction, designed to implement recovery construction in a manner that matches the pace and patterns of the repopulation of the City of New Orleans. FEMA has approved funding based on the cost to repair or rebuild all of the structures to indemnify the school system to pre-disaster condition. The Master Plan includes facility demolitions, new facility construction, and abandonment and/or consolidation of other facilities.

BACKGROUND: As part of the Greater New Orleans Area critical infrastructure, this project qualifies for expedited considerations under the Alternative Arrangements for NEPA compliance. The Alternative Arrangements process (www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/noma) has been enacted to address the basic elements of NEPA for actions taken to restore critical infrastructure devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: Applicants wishing to utilize Alternative Arrangements are required to develop a public involvement plan and to obtain public input regarding the proposed project.

ANALYSIS of PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT for this project: In a letter dated April 8, 2009, the applicant outlined public involvement activities associated with the proposed projects. These include

public meetings, consultation with community organizations and federal, state, and local resource agencies, and alterations to proposed plans in response to stakeholder comment.

FINDING:

- A. Documentation Sufficient** Based on documentation provided by the applicant, FEMA has determined that the Applicant has conducted a satisfactory process of public involvement and outreach in its project development and is otherwise eligible for consideration under Alternative Arrangements for NEPA compliance. The applicant is responsible for archiving public involvement materials relative to the projects referenced above. This material will be available at close-out for authentication and such documentation will be made available to the close-out reviewer.
- B. Final Approval** The Applicant has been responsive to requests for information regarding the above-referenced project. Due to satisfactory completion of public involvement processes identified above, and due to submission of sufficient documentation concerning the local planning process, The Environmental/Historic Preservation Staff of the FEMA Louisiana Transitional Recovery Office has determined that the applicant has sufficiently complied with the requirements for Alternative Arrangements as outlined in FR Vol. 71, No. 56, Page 14712, March 23, 2006.



4/15/2009

Nicholas Knowles, Environmental Protection Specialist
FEMA, Louisiana Transitional Recovery Office



STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
RECOVERY SCHOOL DISTRICT
1641 POLAND AVE., NEW ORLEANS, LA 70117
(504) 373-6200 • www.rsdlf.net



April 8, 2009

FEMA Environmental and Historical Preservation
1250 Poydras Street
New Orleans, LA 70112
Attn: Mr. Nicholas Knowles

Reference: School Facilities Master Plan for Orleans Parish

Subject: NEPA Public Involvement Plan

Dear Mr. Knowles:

On behalf of the Recovery School District, please find attached the Public Involvement Plan in response to the School Facilities Master Plan for Orleans Parish. We trust the information provided therein will meet and surpass any requirements the RSD must fulfill for appropriate approval under the NEPA process.

Kind regards,

Constance Caruso
Director of Planning
Louisiana Department of Education
Recovery School District

Public Information Plan

Project Description

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck the City of New Orleans. Subsequently several levees breached throughout the city. As a result the city severely flooded and remained under water for several weeks. Over 80% of the public school buildings in Orleans Parish flooded. For the buildings that did not sustain flood damage, wind and rain provided the destructive blow. Over 65,000 children attending these schools were immediately displaced. Never before in the history of New Orleans has a flood or Diaspora of this nature occurred.

The Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) and the Recovery School District (RSD) are the two entities responsible for Public Education for the City of New Orleans. In response to the severity of Hurricane Katrina, OPSB and RSD commissioned a master plan to help assist them with the recovery process. OPSB and RSD used this opportunity to envisage a 21st Century school system for the City of New Orleans.

This Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is being submitted to FEMA in response to the "School Facilities Master Plan for Orleans Parish" (Master Plan) adopted by OPSB and RSD to satisfy Alternative Arrangements. One of the main goals of the adopted Master Plan was to ensure the maximization of public involvement. It was the goal of OPSB and RSD to make sure the Master Plan not only represented the public, but would be embraced by the public. Numerous public meetings were held in developing the Master Plan. The meetings were meticulously documented and public comments were correlated for consideration in the plan. All of the public comments from these meetings are currently archived in the offices of the RSD Capital Projects Group. The 1st Phase the Master Plan is currently being implemented, and the RSD has been working very closely with FEMA to ensure successful ribbon cutting ceremonies.

There has been no previous time in the history of New Orleans Public Schools where the public has been more involved in the planning process.

Alternatives Considered

The public schools were severely damaged due to the widespread flooding and wind damage that occurred in the city of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. The alternatives considered by OPSB and RSD were :

1. Do not rebuild the facilities;
2. Repair and rebuild to pre-disaster condition and capacity. This alternative would take no consideration of the changed demographics as a result of the storm; the changed cultural environment subsequent to the age of school integration; or the substandard functionality of the buildings. This alternative pays no attention to the welfare of the children;
3. Repair and rebuild to 21st Century standards. This alternative takes in consideration the changed demographics as a result of the storm; the changed cultural environment subsequent to the age of school integration; and the substandard functionality of the existing buildings. This alternative addresses the welfare of the children.

RSD and OPSB decided to address the welfare of the children.

Public Involvement Measures

RSD and OPSB commissioned Parsons Commercial Technology Group, Inc. to develop the Master Plan. RSD and OPSB stipulated in their Request for Proposals (RFP) the Master Plan must take the public into account as part of the Goals & Objectives of plan development. Parsons, RSD and OPSB hosted numerous

meetings with the public to capture the public perception of what 21st Century Schools ought to achieve in the City of New Orleans.

For example, on November 17, 2007, 128 participants overwhelmingly requested that children should not have to walk more than a half mile to an elementary school. This was not only documented in the Master Plan, but was incorporated as part of the criteria to determine in which area schools should be redeveloped and which areas needed a new school altogether.

In developing the methodology of the Master Plan, Parsons, RSD and OPSB used four sources of data. Public Involvement was the third source: "Input from Educational and Community Stakeholders." All of the data from this source has been archived by RSD.

Public Comments and Response

The goal of the Master Plan was to capture the public vision.

Public Meetings held in the development of the Master Plan. The planning process engaged New Orleanians through a series of public meetings. Most of these meetings were televised. These included: an educators' Visioning Forum held in October 2007, a public City-Wide Forum held in November 2007, five "Phase One" community meetings across the city throughout January 2008, ten "Phase Two" neighborhood community meetings in February and March 2008 and two plan update meetings in July 2008. Data collected from these Public Meetings were used as a part of the decision-making process. All of the data collected has been archived by RSD. Representatives from FEMA and GOHSEP were in attendance for most of these meetings.

Public Meetings held outside of the development of the Master Plan. Single citizens seeking more information and large organizations seeking presentations were all accommodated. Individual meetings took place upon request. Large organizations accommodated included clergy of all denominations, the New Orleans City Council, the business community, neighborhood groups, etc.

City Agency Charrette. On January 29, 2008, Parsons, RSD, and OPSB organized and facilitated a Charrette sponsored by the Office of Recovery and Development (City of New Orleans) to discuss the Master Plan Process and to gather information on publicly owned sites that could potentially accommodate new school buildings or the expansion of existing facilities or campuses. In attendance were representatives from:

- FEMA
- Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO)
- Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA)
- New Orleans City Planning Commission (CPC)
- New Orleans Public Library (NOPL)
- New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA)
- New Orleans Recreation Department (NORD)
- Regional Planning Commission (RPC)
- Regional Transit Authority (RTA)
- Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO)

Additional Public Input. Numerous recovery plans developed in the past in response to previous needs. These plans were updated and incorporated in the Master Plan. Some of these plans include: City of New Orleans Citywide Strategic Recovery and Redevelopment Plan; U.S. Army of Corps of Engineers (USACE); National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), and other agencies relevant to the rebuilding of New Orleans.