



**AMENDMENT LETTER TO  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESMENT CONCERNING  
GROOM ROAD EMERGENCY TEMPORARY HOUSING SITE,  
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH, LOUISIANA  
FEMA-4277-DR-LA**

**BACKGROUND**

This amendment letter is to notify the public that the Final Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared for the Groom Road Emergency Temporary Housing Site (Group Site), located in East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, has been modified. This EA was prepared in September 2005 to support the Temporary Housing Mission conducted for FEMA-1603-DR-LA (Hurricane Katrina). This action will allow the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to expeditiously provide temporary housing for the disaster survivors affected by a major disaster declared on August 14, 2016 (FEMA-4277-DR-LA). In accordance with 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for the FEMA, Subpart B, Agency Implementing Procedures, Part 10.9, the EA was prepared pursuant to Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as implemented by the regulations promulgated by the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ; 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508). At the conclusion of the September 2005 EA public comment review period, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was issued for this Group Site project. On August 22, 2016, 44 CFR Part 10 was rescinded. This letter of amendment has been prepared pursuant to FEMA Instruction 108-1-1 and Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as implemented by the regulations promulgated by the CEQ (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508).

On August 14, 2016, President Obama declared a major disaster (FEMA-4277-DR-LA) for the State of Louisiana, due to the severe storms and subsequent flooding, authorizing FEMA to provide federal assistance in designated disaster areas. As a result, FEMA's Individual Assistance program was implemented to provide emergency and temporary housing for eligible disaster survivors whose homes are uninhabitable or destroyed because of this declared event. These program activities may include the repair of structures as minimum protective measures or the placement/installation of manufactured housing units (MHUs) on private residences, commercial park sites, and Group Sites. Group Sites, defined as spaces that can accommodate two or more MHUs, are an option of last resort when private and commercial sites are not available.

The Groom Road Group Site used during Hurricane Katrina is again being considered for FEMA-4277-DR-LA. The scope for this site has been modified since it was used during Hurricane Katrina. The following changes are: (1) Significant reduction in the number of acres from 62 acres (FEMA-1603-DR-LA) to 30 acres (FEMA-4277-DR-LA) and (2) From the

placement of travel trailers (FEMA-1603-DR-LA) to the placement of MHUs (FEMA-4277-DR-LA).

**ANALYSIS**

The Modified Proposed Action is similar in magnitude as the previous action and therefore, will not significantly impact geology, seismicity, prime and unique farmlands, groundwater, waters of United States including wetlands, migratory bird species, cultural resources, socioeconomic resources, low income and minority populations, hazardous materials, and public health and safety. During the construction period, minor short-term impacts to soils, air quality, surface water quality, noise, and transportation are anticipated. Furthermore, FEMA has determined that there will be no historic properties affected as a result of the proposed group housing. The State Historic Preservation Office concurred with this determination on September 24, 2016. No consultation is required with the United States Fish and Wildlife Services since the proposed group housing does not contain habitat for any Threatened and Endangered Species, Critical Habitat, and Migratory Birds based on the current land use and the site visit observations conducted on October 1, 2016. In addition, no potential hazardous materials problems were observed on the site during the site visit. However, two debris sites were identified in an Environmental Data Resources (EDR) Radius Map report generated on September 23, 2016 and random debris, including large stacks of railroad ties were observed during the site visit. Discussions with the City of Baker Engineer and Department of Public Works on September 27, 2016 have confirmed the two debris sites identified in the EDR Radius Map report were incorrectly identified in that location.

There has been a shift in demographics since the original EA was prepared in September 2005. Within the City of Baker and East Baton Rouge, the population has transitioned to a majority of Non-white. There also has been a minor increase in the poverty level in the City of Baker. However, the demographics in the state of Louisiana has remained consist over this same time period.

Demographics	City of Baker		East Baton Rouge Parish		Louisiana	
	USCB 2000	USCB 2014	USCB 2000	USCB 2014	USCB 2000	USCB 2014
White	46%	22%	56%	22%	64%	64%
Non-white	54%	78%	44%	78%	36%	36%
Families below poverty level	13%	17%	18%	18%	20%	18%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (USCB) 2000 and 2014

The proposed action is not expected to pose disproportionately high and adverse public health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations. The availability of Federal assistance, including temporary housing for displaced individuals, is consistent with Executive Order (EO) 12898. All forms of FEMA disaster housing assistance are available to any affected household that meets the conditions of eligibility and demographics are not among the eligibility requirements.

The specific demographics of the Group Site occupants are not available at this time because specific individuals or families are in the process of being identified for this site. However, the demographic makeup of the future Group Site residents is expected to be similar to the community as a whole. Furthermore, the availability of temporary housing would result in a positive impact to displaced individuals, regardless of whether they are minority and/or low income.

### **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. FEMA is required to adhere to the conditions outlined in the existing FONSI.

1. Use of best management practices (e.g., installation of silt fences and straw bales) will 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. Silt fences and construction barriers would be put in place to protect riparian zone adjacent to the site.
3. The construction contractor would be required to apply for and obtain all applicable wastewater permits, including a Louisiana Pollution Elimination System permit or waiver from the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.
4. In order to convey stormwater runoff, the contractor will be required to design drainage features so that flows will not flood Group Site residents or surrounding properties during storm events. The drainage system will be required to meet local and Parish requirements, including the acquisition of easements if applicable.
5. Area soils would be covered and/or wetted during construction to minimize dust.
6. If fill is stored on site as part of unit installation or removal, the contractor will be required to appropriately cover it.
7. During Group Site occupancy, rock cover for roads and housing pads would be periodically wetted and/or treated to minimize dust.
8. 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.
9. If necessary, a 7 A.M. to 7 P.M. construction schedule will be implemented as a noise reduction measure.
10. The piles of large timber beams located throughout the site will be removed prior to site construction. If other hazardous materials are found between start of construction and final Group Site closure, 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. Alternatively, the site could be abandoned in view of finding another site that better meets the identified project purpose and need.

11. The contractor will place fencing around the site perimeter to protect residents from vehicular traffic on Groom Road, Baker Canal, and the surrounding undeveloped property.
12. The contractor is responsible to provide 24-hour security services at the Group Site during construction and side development.
13. The contractor will coordinate with Parish traffic engineer to ensure traffic infrastructure can service the increased traffic volume. The contractor and Parish will implement traffic control measures, as necessary during construction and side development.
14. 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 regulations and the United States Army Corps of Engineers safety manual.

The contractor will 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. Once the temporary housing need has ended, the site would be seeded and restored to previous conditions to the extent practical and/or in accordance with site lease terms.

#### Conclusion

Based on the findings of the site visit, coordination with the appropriate agencies, comments from the public, and adherence to the project conditions set forth in the FONSI and adherence to the project conditions set forth in this letter of amendment, FEMA has determined that the modified scope of the proposed project does not change the effects analysis or the FONSI that was issued on September 17, 2005. As a result of this letter of amendment to the EA the Modified Proposed Action to the project as described in this amendment may proceed.

#### APPROVAL

  
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Kevin Jaynes  
Regional Environmental Officer  
Region 6 FEMA

DATE: 10/24/16