

Jackson County Health Department Relocation Project

Draft Environmental Assessment
Jackson County, Mississippi
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FEMA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....1

2. PURPOSE AND NEED..... 1

3. ALTERNATIVES.....1

4. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND IMPACTS..... 3

 4.1. Geology and Soils.....4

 4.2. Water Resources6

 4.3. Transportation..... 8

 4.4. Environmental Justice..... 9

 4.5. Air Quality 9

 4.6. Noise10

 4.7. Biological Resources11

 4.8. Cultural Resources.....12

5. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS..... 14

6. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT..... 14

7. AGENCY COORDINATION AND PERMITS..... 14

8. CONCLUSIONS.....15

9. REFERENCES.....16

Appendix A Figures

Appendix B Site Photographs

Appendix C Agency Coordination

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABFE	advisory base flood elevation
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
amsl	above mean sea level
APE	Area of Potential Effects
BMP	Best Management Practice
CAA	Clean Air Act
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CO	carbon monoxide
CWA	Clean Water Act
CZMA	Coastal Zone Management Act
dB	decibel
DFIRM	Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map
DNL	Day-Night Average Sound Level
EA	Environmental Assessment
EC	Election Commission
EO	Executive Order
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
MARIS	Mississippi Automated Resource Information System
MDAH	Mississippi Department of Archives and History
MDEQ	Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
MDMR	Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
MDOC	Mississippi Department of Corrections
MDOT	Mississippi Department of Transportation
MEMA	Mississippi Emergency Management Agency
MSU	Mississippi State University

NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NESHAP	National Emission Standards of Hazardous Air Pollutants
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NO ₂	nitrogen dioxide
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
O ₃	ozone
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
P&P	Probation and Parole
Pb	lead
PM _{2.5}	particulate matter less than 2.5 microns
PM ₁₀	particulate matter less than 10 microns
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SO ₂	sulfur dioxide
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USCB	U.S. Census Bureau
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

1.0 INTRODUCTION

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck the Mississippi Gulf Coast, causing extensive damage. Subsequently, a Presidential Disaster Declaration, FEMA-1604-DR-MS, was signed for Hurricane Katrina.

Jackson County, Mississippi, has submitted an application for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding under FEMA's Public Assistance Program being administered in response to FEMA-1604-DR-MS for the Jackson County Health Department Building Relocation Project in Pascagoula. The project consists of the construction of a new Jackson County Health Department Building.

In accordance with the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, PL 93288, as amended, and implementing regulations at 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 206, FEMA is required to review the environmental effects of the proposed action prior to making a funding decision. This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared in accordance with FEMA's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations found in 44 CFR Part 10.

2.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

The Jackson County Health Department was previously located at 4302 Hospital Road in Pascagoula (Figures 1 and 2, Appendix A) and consisted of an 11,077 square-foot building. According to the Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM), the facility was located outside of the 100-year floodplain. On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall in Mississippi causing storm surge and high winds that damaged the Jackson County Health Department Building. In lieu of repairing the now inadequate Health Department Building, the Jackson County BOS feels the residents will be better served by applying its FEMA funds to a larger, more modern facility.

The Jackson County Health Department is currently providing service at a reduced capacity, utilizing a temporary, county-owned facility located at 2902 Shortcut Road in Pascagoula. This facility is of insufficient size and does not fully serve the needs of the Jackson County Health Department. Consequently there is a need to provide Jackson County with suitable replacement facilities.

3.0 ALTERNATIVES

This section describes the alternatives that were considered in addressing the purpose and need stated in Section 2. Two alternatives were evaluated: the No Action Alternative, and the Proposed Action Alternative, which is the construction of a new Jackson County Health Department Building.

Alternative 1: No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, a new Jackson County Health Department Building would not be built. The Jackson County Health Department would continue to provide services at a

reduced capacity from its temporary location.

Alternative 2: Construction of a New Jackson County Health Department Building

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, Jackson County would construct a new facility for the Jackson County Health Department.

The new Health Department Building would be constructed on a 2.98-acre site at 4600 Vega Street in Pascagoula, Jackson County (see Figures 1 and 2). The proposed project site is outside the 100-year floodplain and ABFE. The proposed project site is primarily comprised of a maintained lawn with a few trees and a small heavily vegetated area (see Photographic Log). The proposed project site is bounded to the north by Vega Street and Jackson County Civic Center parking lot, to the east by a commercial warehouse, to the west by Vega Street and commercial property, and to the south by undeveloped land. Access to the site would be provided via Vega Street. The new Health Department Building would use existing utilities that provide service to adjacent buildings on Vega Street, including municipal water, sewer, and electricity.

The new facility would be a 21,000 square-foot, one-story building with a brick veneer and pre-finished aluminum storefront and a hot mopped modified-bitumen roof. The building, along with a parking lot containing 120 parking spaces, would be constructed on the proposed project site along with a 0.21 acre dry detention pond located on the northeast section of the site (Figure 3). The land is owned by Jackson County. Jackson County BOS is proposing to utilize Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds to construct the new Health Department Building to 361 shelter standards.

In accordance with FEMA’s relocation policy for FEMA-1604-DR-MS, the former Jackson County Health Department building would be demolished, returned to grade, and re-vegetated.

4.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND IMPACTS

The following table summarizes the potential impacts of the Proposed Action Alternative and conditions or mitigation measures to offset those impacts. Following the summary table, any resource areas for which potential impacts were identified, as well as high priority resources including floodplains, waters of the U.S., environmental justice, biological resources, and cultural resources, will be discussed in greater detail.

Affected Environment	Impacts	Mitigation
Geology and Soils	No impacts to geology are anticipated. Short-term minor impacts to soils may occur.	Appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs), such as installing silt fences and revegetating bare soils immediately upon completion of construction, would be used to stabilize soils

Surface Water	Temporary short-term impacts to adjacent surface waters are possible during demolition and construction activities.	The applicant will need a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the project. Appropriate BMPs, such as installing silt fences and revegetating bare soils, would minimize runoff.
Groundwater	No impacts to groundwater are anticipated.	None.
Floodplains	No impacts to the floodplain are anticipated.	None.
Waters of the U.S. Including Wetlands	No impacts to waters of the U.S., including wetlands, would occur.	Appropriate BMPs, such as installing silt fences and stabilizing soils would minimize runoff into adjacent waters of the U.S.
Transportation	A minor temporary increase in the volume of construction traffic on roads in the immediate vicinity of the demolition and construction sites is anticipated.	Construction vehicles and equipment would be stored on site during project construction and appropriate signage would be posted on affected roadways.
Public Health and Safety	No impacts to public health and safety are anticipated.	All construction activities would be performed using qualified personnel and in accordance with the standards specified in Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. Appropriate signage and barriers would be in place prior to construction activities to alert pedestrians and motorists of project activities.
Hazardous Materials	No impacts to hazardous materials or wastes are anticipated.	If any asbestos containing materials, lead-based paint and/or other hazardous materials are found during demolition or other construction activities, the applicant would comply with all federal, state, and local abatement and disposal requirements under the National Emission Standards of Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) program.
Socioeconomic Resources	No impacts to socioeconomic resources would occur.	None.

Environmental Justice	No disproportionately high or adverse effect on minority or low-income populations would occur.	None.
Air Quality	Short-term impacts to air quality would occur during the construction period.	Construction contractors would be required to water down construction areas when necessary; fuel-burning equipment running times would be kept to a minimum; engines would be properly maintained.
Noise	Short-term noise impacts would occur at the proposed project sites during the construction period.	Construction would occur during normal business hours and equipment would meet all local, state, and federal noise regulations.
Biological Resources	The project sites are previously disturbed and developed; no impacts to biological resources, including federally listed species, are anticipated.	None
Cultural Resources	No impacts to archeological or cultural resources are anticipated.	None

4.1 Geology and Soils

The former and proposed sites are underlain by coastal deposits, an unconsolidated geologic formation consisting of loam, sand, gravel, and clay (MARIS, 2008).

The former Jackson County Health Department Building located on Hospital Street contains soils mapped as Escambia very fine sandy loam (USDA/NRCS, 2008). The Escambia series consists of very deep, somewhat poorly-drained, moderate to slowly permeable soils that formed in sandy and loamy marine sediments of the Lower Coastal Plain (USDA/NRCS, 1997a). Escambia very fine sandy loam soils are not listed as hydric soils, but all areas are considered prime farmland (USDA/NRCS, 2008).

The proposed Jackson County Health Building project site on Vega Street contains soils mapped as Bayou sandy loam (USDA/NRCS, 2008). The Bayou series consists of deep, poorly drained, slowly permeable soils that formed in loamy marine sediments (USDA/NRCS, 2002). Bayou sandy loam soils are listed as hydric soils, but are not considered to be prime farmland (USDA/NRCS, 2008).

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) states that federal agencies must “minimize the extent to which federal programs contribute to the unnecessary conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses...” Bayou sandy loam is not classified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as prime farmland. Also, according to the FPPA, “Farmland” does not include land that is already in or committed to urban development. The sites affected by this project meet the definition of farmland “already in” urban development because they are located within the Pascagoula “urbanized area” on the Census 2000 urbanized area outline

map (USCB, 2000). Therefore the FPPA does not apply and a FPPA farmland conversion impact rating form is not required.

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, no impacts to geology would occur. Soils on the location on the former Jackson County Health Department Building on Hospital Street would be disturbed during demolition and site grading. Because the demolition site comprises more than 1 acre, the applicant will be required to prepare a SWPPP. Implementation of appropriate BMPs would be required during all ground-disturbing activities, including the installation of silt fences, and the re-vegetation of soils to minimize the potential for erosion.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, no impacts to geology would occur. Soils on the Jackson County Health Department Building on Hospital Street would be disturbed during demolition. Soils on the Jackson County Health Department Building proposed Vega Street site would be disturbed to develop the property. Because the demolition site and the construction site comprise more than 1 acre each, the applicant will be required to prepare a SWPPP. Implementation of appropriate BMPs would be required at each construction location, including the installation of silt fences and the re-vegetation of soils to minimize the potential for erosion.

On June 16, 2009, an agency consultation letter requesting project review was sent to the NRCS (Appendix C). To date, no responses have been received.

4.2 Water Resources

4.2.1 Surface Water

The Clean Water Act (CWA), as amended in 1977, established the basic framework for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States.

The former Jackson County Health Department Building located on Hospital Street is located 0.70 miles southeast of Krebs Lake. Both sites slope to the southwest toward Commuony Bayou. Stormwater run-off from each site would tend to flow in a southwesterly direction, being collected in the municipal stormwater conveyance system. Krebs Lake drains to the Pascagoula River and the Mississippi Sound. Elevations at the former project site range from 14 to 16 feet above mean sea level (amsl).

The proposed Jackson County Health Department Building project site on Vega Street is located approximately 0.90 miles southeast of Krebs Lake. The proposed site is relatively flat with an elevation at approximately 17 feet amsl. Stormwater run-off from the site would flow to the northeast into a detention pond and eventually into a municipal stormwater conveyance, which drains to Krebs Lake, then the Pascagoula River, and the Mississippi Sound.

A site visit conducted by FEMA biologists on June 18, 2009, verified these findings.

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, short-term impacts to adjacent, off-site surface waters would occur during demolition of the former Jackson County Health Department Building on Hospital Street due to soil erosion during ground disturbing activities. Because the demolition site comprises more than 1 acre, the applicant will be required to apply for a NPDES permit. To reduce impacts to surface water, the demolition contractor would implement appropriate BMPs, such as installing silt fences and re-vegetating bare soils.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, short-term impacts to adjacent, off-site surface waters would occur during demolition and construction due to soil erosion during ground disturbing activities. Because the two demolition sites and the construction site collectively comprise more than 1 acre, the applicant will be required to apply for a NPDES permit. To reduce impacts to surface water, the applicant would implement appropriate BMPs, such as installing silt fences and revegetating bare soils. No impacts to surface waters would result from the acquisition and renovation activities at the existing Amonett Street building site.

On June 16, 2009, letters requesting project review were sent to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Water Management District, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality Office of Pollution Control, and the Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission (Appendix C). To date, no responses have been received.

4.2.2 Floodplains

Executive Order (EO) 11988 (Floodplain Management) requires federal agencies to avoid direct or indirect support of development within the 100-year floodplain whenever there is a practicable alternative. FEMA uses Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) to identify the regulatory 100-year floodplain for the National Flood Insurance Program. Consistent with EO 11988, Digital FIRMs (DFIRMs) were examined during the preparation of this EA. The DFIRM was adopted and became effective for Jackson County and Incorporated areas on March 16, 2009.

The former Jackson County Health Department Building property located on Hospital Street is located outside the 100-year floodplain, in Zone X (500-year floodplain) according to the DFIRM (FEMA, 2009). Based on preliminary site plans for the proposed project, the new building would be constructed property that is located outside the 100-year floodplain, in Zone X (500-year floodplain).

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, the former Jackson County Health Department Building would be removed from the 100-year floodplain and the site returned to grade and re-vegetated; this would reduce occupancy of the floodplain and is considered a beneficial impact.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, the former Jackson County Health Department Building would be demolished, and the site returned to grade and re-vegetated; this would reduce occupancy of the floodplain and is considered a beneficial impact. The new Jackson County Health Department Building would be located outside the 100-year floodplain and would have no impact on the floodplain.

4.2.3 Waters of the U.S. including Wetlands

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S., including wetlands, pursuant to Section 404 of the CWA. Additionally, EO 11990 (Protection of Wetlands) requires federal agencies to avoid, to the extent possible, adverse impact to wetlands.

A review of the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) map indicated that there are no potential wetland areas located on the former or proposed project sites (USFWS, 2009). A site visit by FEMA biologists on June 18, 2009, confirmed that no wetlands are present on the site.

The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) enables coastal states, including Mississippi, to designate state coastal zone boundaries and develop coastal management programs to improve protection of sensitive shoreline resources and guide sustainable use of coastal areas.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the former and proposed project sites are located within the Mississippi Coastal Zone (NOAA, 2004).

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, no impacts to waters of the U.S., including wetlands, would occur.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, no impacts to waters of the U.S., including wetlands would occur.

On June 16, 2009, letters requesting project review were sent to the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR), Bureau of Wetlands Permitting, and to the USACE Mobile District (Appendix C). The MDMR responded in a letter dated June 25, 2009, that the Department has no objections to the proposed project provided there are no direct or indirect impacts to coastal wetlands and no coastal program agency objects to the proposal. To date, no other responses have been received.

4.3 Transportation

The former Jackson County Health Department Building property was located on Hospital Street, which is classified by the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) as a minor arterial street (MDOT, 2005). The proposed Jackson County Health Department Building project site is located on Vega Street, which is not classified by MDOT. Access to Hospital Street is provided by Hospital Street, a minor arterial, and Highway 90, a principal arterial.

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, short-term impacts to transportation and site access are anticipated during demolition of the former Jackson County Health Department Building on Hospital Street. There would be a minor temporary increase in the volume of traffic on roads in the immediate vicinity of these sites that could potentially result in a slower traffic flow for the duration of the demolition phase. To mitigate potential delays, demolition vehicles and equipment would be stored on site and appropriate signage would be posted on affected roadways.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, short-term impacts to transportation and site access are anticipated during demolition of the former Jackson County Health Department Building on Hospital Street and construction of the proposed Jackson County Health Department Building on Vega Street. There would be a minor temporary increase in the volume of construction traffic on roads in the immediate vicinity of these sites that could potentially result in a slower traffic flow for the duration of the construction/demolition phase. To mitigate potential delays, construction vehicles and equipment would be stored on site during project construction and appropriate signage would be posted on affected roadways.

Post-construction, traffic volumes in the vicinity of the proposed project areas would return to normal levels. No long-term traffic impacts are anticipated. On June 16, 2009, a letter requesting project review was sent to MDOT (Appendix C). To date, no response has been received.

4.4 Environmental Justice

EO 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations) mandates that federal agencies identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations. Socioeconomic and demographic data for the project area were reviewed to determine if a disproportionate number of minority or low-income persons have the potential to be adversely affected by the proposed project.

The City of Pascagoula has a population of 21,865 individuals. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (USCB) 2005-2007 American Community Survey, the median household income reported in the City of Pascagoula was \$35,894 with 22.9 percent of individuals living below the poverty level. The median household income reported in all of Jackson County was \$44,185, with 16.0 percent of individuals living below the poverty level. The median household income in the State of Mississippi was \$35,632, with 21.1 percent of individuals living below the poverty level (USCB, 2009). Minorities represented 34.9 percent, 25.0 percent, and 39.1 percent, respectively, of the City of Pascagoula, Jackson County, and the State of Mississippi populations.

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no disproportionately high or adverse effect on minority or low-income populations. All populations would continue to be adversely impacted by the reduced capacity and efficiency of the Jackson County Health Department.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, there would be no disproportionately high and adverse effect on minority or low-income populations. Implementation of the Proposed Action would benefit all populations within the City of Pascagoula by providing the Jackson County Health Department with the facilities necessary to carry out their daily operations efficiently and effectively.

4.5 Air Quality

The Clean Air Act (CAA) requires that states adopt ambient air quality standards. The standards have been established to protect the public from potentially harmful amounts of pollutants. Under the CAA, the EPA establishes primary and secondary air quality standards. Primary air quality standards protect the public health, including the health of “sensitive populations, such as people with asthma, children, and older adults.” Secondary air quality standards protect public welfare by promoting ecosystem health, and preventing decreased visibility and damage to crops and buildings. EPA has set National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for the following six criteria pollutants: ozone (O₃), particulate matter (PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and lead (Pb). According to the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), the entire state of Mississippi is classified as in attainment, meaning that criteria air pollutants do not exceed the NAAQS (MDEQ, 2009).

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, short-term impacts to air quality could occur during demolition of the former Jackson County Health Department Building. To reduce temporary impacts to air quality, construction contractors would be required to water down construction areas when necessary. Emissions from fuel-burning internal combustion engines (e.g., heavy equipment and earthmoving machinery) could temporarily increase the

levels of some of the criteria pollutants, including CO, NO₂, O₃, PM₁₀, and non-criteria pollutants such as volatile organic compounds. To reduce the emission of criteria pollutants, fuel-burning equipment running times would be kept to a minimum and engines would be properly maintained. No long-term impacts to air quality are anticipated.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, short-term impacts to air quality could occur during demolition of the former Jackson County Health Department Building, and during construction of the new Jackson County Health Department Building. To reduce temporary impacts to air quality, construction contractors would be required to water down construction areas when necessary. Emissions from fuel-burning internal combustion engines (e.g., heavy equipment and earthmoving machinery) could temporarily increase the levels of some of the criteria pollutants, including CO, NO₂, O₃, PM₁₀, and non-criteria pollutants such as volatile organic compounds. To reduce the emission of criteria pollutants, fuel-burning equipment running times would be kept to a minimum and engines would be properly maintained. No long-term impacts to air quality are anticipated.

4.6 Noise

Noise is generally defined as unwanted sound. Sound is most commonly measured in decibels (dB) on the A-weighted scale, which is the scale most similar to the range of sounds that the human ear can hear. The Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) is an average measure of sound. The DNL descriptor is accepted by federal agencies as a standard for estimating sound impacts and establishing guidelines for compatible land uses. EPA guidelines, and those of many other federal agencies, state that outdoor sound levels in excess of 55 dB DNL are “normally unacceptable” for noise-sensitive land uses including residences, schools, or hospitals (EPA, 1974).

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, short-term increases in noise levels are anticipated during demolition of the former Jackson County Health Department Building; this building is located adjacent to commercial/industrial buildings. Construction activities are not anticipated to greatly disrupt daily activities at nearby noise sensitive areas and machinery utilized at the project sites would meet all local, state, and federal noise regulations. No long-term increases in noise level are anticipated.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, short-term increases in noise levels are anticipated during the demolition and construction period. The former Jackson County Health Department Building located on Hospital Street is located adjacent to commercial/industrial building. The proposed Jackson County Health Department Building site on Hospital Street is located in a primarily commercial/industrial part of town. Construction activities are not anticipated to greatly disrupt daily activities at nearby noise sensitive areas and equipment and machinery utilized at the project sites would meet all local, state, and federal noise regulations. No long-term increases in noise levels are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

4.7 Biological Resources

The former Jackson Count Health Building property located on Hospital Street is a previously disturbed and developed site that consists of the damaged building and paved parking areas. The proposed Jackson County Health Department Building site on Vega Street is comprised of a maintained lawn with a few trees and a small heavily vegetated area. The vegetation is dominated by Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), water oak (*Quercus nigra*), and loblolly

pine trees (*Pinus taeda*). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) lists the following federally endangered and threatened animal species for Jackson County (USFWS, 2008):

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status
Louisiana black bear	<i>Ursus americanus luteolus</i>	T
Piping plover	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	T (CH)
Gopher tortoise	<i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>	T
Gulf sturgeon	<i>Acipenser oxyrhynchus desotoi</i>	T (CH)
Green sea turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	T
Loggerhead sea turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>	T
Yellow-blotched map turtle	<i>Graptemys flavimaculata</i>	T
Mississippi gopher frog	<i>Rana capito sevosa</i>	E
Louisiana quillwort	<i>Isoetes louisianensis</i>	E
Leatherback sea turtle	<i>Dermochelys comacea</i>	E
Kemp's ridley sea turtle	<i>Lepidochelys kempii</i>	E
Alabama red-bellied turtle	<i>Psuedemys alabamensis</i>	E
West Indian manatee	<i>Trichechus manatus</i>	E
Brown pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	E
Mississippi sandhill crane	<i>Grus canadensis pulla</i>	E (CH)
Red-cockaded woodpecker	<i>Picoides borealis</i>	E
T = threatened, E = endangered, (CH) = listed with critical habitat		

A site visit conducted on June 18, 2009, confirmed that the entire project site provides little wildlife habitat and does not contain habitat for any federally listed threatened or endangered species. Species likely to use the project site would be those common to suburban areas; it is unlikely that any threatened or endangered species are present.

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, some wildlife habitat would be provided when the former Jackson County Health Department Building located on Hospital Street is returned to grade and re-vegetated.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, approximately 2.98 acre of maintained lawn at the proposed Jackson County Health Department Building on Vega Street will be utilized for construction of the new facility. The former Jackson County Health Department Building located on Hospital Street will be returned to grade and re-vegetated.

No impacts to threatened or endangered species are anticipated. A consultation letter requesting project review was sent to the USFWS on June 16, 2009 (Appendix C). To date,

no response has been received.

4.8 Cultural Resources

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), as amended, and implemented by 36 CFR Part 800, requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their actions on historic properties and provide the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) an opportunity to comment on federal projects that will have an effect on historic properties prior to implementation. Historic properties are defined as archeological sites, standing structures, or other historic resources listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

On June 18, 2009, a FEMA Archaeologist and Architectural Historian, both qualified under the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards (36 CFR Part 61) in their respective disciplines, conducted an assessment of the project's potential to affect historic properties within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the damaged building sites and the proposed relocation sites. The APE is the geographic area within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause changes in the character or use of historic properties, if such properties exist. For archaeological resources, the APE consists of the legal land parcels of the former and proposed project sites; for above-ground historic properties, the APE is extended to a 0.5-mile radius around each of the former and proposed project sites. This APE was previously established through FEMA consultation with the Mississippi State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). A site visit to the proposed and former project sites revealed that none of the sites is located within the boundaries of a listed or eligible National Register Historic District.

In a letter to Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) dated June 23, 2009, FEMA determined that the former Jackson County Health Department Building located on Hospital Street does not meet the criteria for listing in the National Register, either individually or as part of a historic district.

A review of the MDAH site files indicates there are no previously recorded sites within the project area nor have any archaeological surveys been conducted that include the proposed project area. The closest recorded site is the Scholtes Site (22JA506) approximately 1.0 mile to the west. This site is recorded as a shell midden located on a back swamp of the present-day Krebs Lake. The Spanish Fort/La Pointe/Krebs House Site (22JA526) is located approximately 1.5 miles to the west. The site has European and Native American components and like the Scholtes Site is located on Krebs Lake, an ox bow of the Pascagoula River. Two sites are located less than two miles southwest of the project. The Michelle Shell Midden (22JA578) is an unevaluated shell midden/mound located on the east bank of the Pascagoula River. At least one human burial was reportedly found at this site. The Captain Grant Estate Site, 22JA728, is located to the southwest on a first terrace. The site was reportedly two mounds with one altered for a Confederate Battery. The eligibility of the site is unknown. 22JA674, an unnamed site, is located approximately 1.5 miles to the east on a first terrace and had ceramics recorded at the location. It is said to be ineligible due to its eroded condition.

Few formal archaeological surveys have been conducted in the general area. The nearest survey is 02-153, a small survey conducted approximately one half mile to the southeast. In addition, two linear surveys, 95-088 and 98-196, both associated with Route 90, were

completed to the southwest, within two miles of the proposed project. No sites were recorded during these surveys.

On June 18, 2009 a site visit was conducted for the Proposed Jackson County Health Building. A single shovel probe confirmed evidence of poorly drained soils (mottling and iron oxidation to a depth of 30cm below surface where subsoil was encountered). Field observations are consistent with those described as a Bayou sandy loam by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, the former Jackson County Health Department Building located on Hospital Street would be demolished. FEMA recommends the use of Lower-Impact Demolition Requirements, developed by FEMA and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), for demolition activities at these sites to avoid adverse effects to archaeological resources, if present.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, no impacts to archeological or cultural resources are anticipated. FEMA recommends the use of Lower-Impact Demolition Requirements, developed by FEMA and MEMA, for demolition activities at these sites to avoid adverse effects to archeological resources, if present. FEMA has determined that the proposed Jackson County Health Department Building project site APE contains a low probability for intact archeological resources to occur and contains no historic resources eligible for listing in the National Register.

Consultation letters, dated June 23, 2009 were sent to the Mississippi Department of Archive and History (MDAH) and the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians requesting project review and concurrence with FEMA’s determination of No Historic Properties Affected by the proposed project (Appendix C). No responses from SHPO or THPO have been received to date.

5.0 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

According to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, cumulative impacts represent the “impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time (40 CFR 1508.7).” In accordance with NEPA and to the extent reasonable and practical, this EA considered the combined effect of the Proposed Action Alternative and other actions occurring or proposed in the vicinity of the proposed project site.

Pascagoula and the entire Mississippi Gulf coast are undergoing recovery efforts after Hurricane Katrina caused extensive damages. The recovery efforts in Pascagoula include demolition, reconstruction, and new construction. These projects and the proposed project may have a cumulative temporary impact on air quality in Pascagoula by increasing criteria pollutants during construction activities. No other cumulative effects are anticipated.

6.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

FEMA is the lead federal agency for conducting the NEPA compliance process for the proposed project in Pascagoula, Mississippi. It is the goal of the lead agency to expedite the preparation and review of NEPA documents and to be responsive to the needs of the community and the purpose and need of the proposed action while meeting the intent of NEPA and complying with all NEPA provisions.

Jackson County will notify the public of the availability of the draft EA through publication of a public notice in a local newspaper. FEMA will conduct an expedited public comment period commencing on the initial date of publication of the public notice.

7.0 AGENCY COORDINATION AND PERMITS

The following agencies and organizations were contacted by letter requesting project review during the preparation of this EA. Responses received to date are included in Appendix C.

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, Regulatory Division
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4, Water Management Division
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Jackson Field Office
- Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce
- Mississippi Department of Archives and History (State Historic Preservation Office)
- Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (Tribal Historic Preservation Office)
- Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Pollution Control, Environmental Permits Division
- Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, Bureau of Wetlands Permitting
- Mississippi Department of Transportation, Environmental Division
- Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission

In accordance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations, the applicant would be responsible for acquiring any necessary permits prior to commencing construction at the proposed project site.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

No impacts to geology, groundwater, floodplains, public health and safety, hazardous materials, socioeconomic resources, environmental justice, or cultural resources are anticipated under the Proposed Action Alternative.

During the construction period, short-term impacts to soils, surface water, transportation, air quality, and noise are anticipated. All short-term impacts will be mitigated utilizing BMPs, such as silt fences, proper equipment maintenance, and appropriate signage. No long-term impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed project. Beneficial impacts to floodplains are anticipated as the proposed project would reduce occupancy within the floodplain.

9.0 REFERENCES

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**Appendix A
Figures**

**Appendix B
Site Photographs**

**Appendix C
Agency Coordination**