



Draft Environmental Assessment  
**Proposed Fire and Emergency Medical  
Services Station**

Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program: EMW-2009-FC-  
01858

City of Payette, Idaho

*May 19, 2010*

U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
FEMA Region X  
130 228<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Bothell, WA 98021-9796



**FEMA**

*Prepared for:*

City of Payette  
700 Center Avenue  
Payette, ID 83661

and

U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
FEMA Region X  
130 228th Street SW  
Bothell, WA 98021-9796

*Prepared by:*

Holladay Engineering Company  
32 N Main Street, P.O. Box 235  
Payette, ID 83661  
(208)642-3304

[HEC@HOLLADAYENGINEERING.COM](mailto:HEC@HOLLADAYENGINEERING.COM)

DRAFT



**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**  
**PROPOSED FIRE AND EMS STATION**  
**CITY OF PAYETTE, IDAHO**

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADA	American with Disabilities Act
ARRA	American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
AFG	Assistance to Firefighters Grant
EA	Environmental Assessment
EO	Executive Order
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
IDEQ	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
PRFD	Payette Rural Fire Department
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
T&Es	Threatened and Endangered Species
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**  
**PROPOSED FIRE AND EMS STATION**  
**CITY OF PAYETTE, IDAHO**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The City of Payette Fire Department (City) and the Payette Rural Fire Department (PRFD) jointly propose building a fire station using 2009 ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) funding through the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFG). The ARRA is an economic stimulus package and the purpose of the Fiscal Year 2009 funds is to create or save jobs in recession-hit areas which include supporting 'shovel-ready' projects. Moreover, ARRA will further help achieve AFG goals of firefighter safety and improved response capability/capacity based on need, through the construction, renovation or modification of fire stations. The City and PRFD have applied to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which administers AFG, for a Fire Station Construction Grant.

The City of Payette, has a population approximately 8,100, and the service area for the Rural Department includes approximately 6,500 people. Payette and the region served by PRFD is a community of 124 square miles, located in rural southwest Idaho. Payette is the County Seat and the largest city in Payette County. The City of Payette Fire Department is responsible for fire protection and hazardous materials incidents, wild land firefighting, water rescue, extrications, and airport accident initial response within all coverage areas. Both Departments participate in mutual aid with 23 other departments in two states, Idaho and Oregon.

The PRFD is responsible for fire protection in the north half of Payette County, Idaho, a portion of Washington County, Idaho, and part of the Oregon slope area in Malheur County, Oregon. They also are responsible for the main north/south highway, US 95, portions of Interstate I-84, and the Union Pacific rail-line which runs through the service area.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations to implement NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 1500-1508), and FEMA's regulations implementing NEPA (44 CFR Part 10). FEMA is required to consider potential environmental impacts before funding or approving actions and projects. The EA analyzes the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action and FEMA will use the findings in this EA to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

**2.0 PURPOSE AND NEED**

The purpose of the FEMA AFG fire station construction grant is to provide funding to assist states and local governments in improving their emergency response capabilities. Thus the purpose of this action is to provide funding to the City and PRFD for construction of a fire station.



Since the late 1980's, the City has recognized a need for a new fire station. The existing building was constructed in 1947 and was not originally built to be a fire station. An expansion of the original 3,000 square foot building was completed in 1979 to include two additional bays. The expanded building has a total of 6,000 square feet, but unfortunately the existing structure is wholly inadequate for the two departments as they exist today. The building does not meet National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) or American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements nor does it comply with current building codes. It is literally falling to pieces.

Both Departments are housed in the existing station and make joint purchases on equipment to efficiently make the best use of minimal dollars. Due to the extreme small size of the building, the Departments have been forced to house equipment outside, which often makes it necessary to keep vehicles drained so as not to freeze. The Departments are unable to purchase new vehicles needed to accommodate growth in their service area as there is no place to house them.

Critical firefighting equipment is either stored outside or in a 10' x 40' sea container which is attached to the existing cinder block building with plywood. There is no climate control in the container so personnel and equipment are often exposed to 130 degree heat in the summer or extreme cold in the winter. The Departments have been very successful in the past when applying for grant funding to purchase new equipment, but they are unable to apply for new grants as there is simply no room left for storage of any kind of apparatus or equipment.

There are no showers in the building, no sleeping quarters, and one toilet in a 4' x 5' room shared by up to 33 firefighters (men and women). The doors on the residential size washer and dryer cannot be fully opened without moving a fire truck. Turnouts are stored on hooks on the cinder block wall directly adjacent to fire trucks. It is extremely hazardous to the firefighters to run through the parked trucks, around some areas which are less than 20 inches between the walls and the trucks, to get to their gear during a call. It is fortunate that firefighters have not been injured while preparing to respond to calls.

Volunteer firefighters are lucky to find a place to park their personal vehicles when responding to a call. After several studies, the City has determined building a new facility versus expanding or modifying the existing building is necessary. There is simply not enough room in the current station for fire operations, and there is not sufficient room to expand the building. Parking is so limited that the volunteers have no option but to park on the property of surrounding businesses.

The existing structure is located directly adjacent to US 95 Business Spur/Hwy 52, separated only by a sidewalk. There is no room to park a fire truck on either side of the station, nor is the station signaled on the 4 lane road in order to ensure safe ingress or egress for fire apparatus. There is no area around the existing station to service or reload the trucks properly.

Several studies and reports by independent companies also identified the need for a new station. The need is documented in a Space Planning Assessment conducted by the City of Payette in May, 1999; Payette County, Idaho, All Hazards Mitigation Plan, dated December 28, 2004; City of Payette Comprehensive Plan dated June, 2005; and the Payette Community Review Report, conducted by Idaho Rural Partnership, July, 2007. A community survey conducted in early 2007 indicated favorable support for the efforts of the fire department.

The existing station is located next to the Payette City Hall and the Payette Police Department. The City has not determined how the existing building will be used after the new fire station is built.



## 3.0 ALTERNATIVES

### 3.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the no action alternative, no FEMA funding would be available and the City and PRFD would continue operating out of the existing building which is undersized and dilapidated. Ongoing use of the existing station would require continued exposure of some fire equipment to damage from the elements and vandalism. Access onto the busy 4-lane road would continue with no option for a signalized access. Site distance is limited and cannot be increased because of the geometrics of the site. This presents a safety risk each time the equipment is taken out of the building.

Emergency response time is impaired by the location of the existing facility because vehicles must often get out to stop traffic before leaving the station. Police services are often required if the emergency vehicles have to cross to the east side of US95. Emergency personnel are trying to prepare to respond while trying to avoid injury from moving equipment in tight quarters. There is not adequate parking for emergency personnel.

The existing facility is inadequate for the existing needs of the fire departments. This reduces the effectiveness of the departments and impairs the City's growth potential.

### 3.2 PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action is to build a new fire station on City owned property located at the southeast corner of US95 and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue North in the City of Payette (Latitude 44° 04' 54.09" N, Longitude 116°55' 20.72" W, see Vicinity Map, Appendix A). No address has been established for the parcel. . This building would be designed and built to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification.

The existing site is presently serving multiple purposes. A small park consisting of a grassy area with a few trees and a small bathroom building is located at the north end of the site. The bathroom building was built within the last 20 years, but the exact date is not known. The park is surrounded by gravel parking area which serves the park as well as the adjacent City soccer fields. An RV waste dump station is located within the gravel parking area. The photos in Appendix A show the park and parking lot areas. The site was temporarily being used as storage for construction equipment and materials for the adjacent City street project.

Site photos are presented in Appendix A. As will be seen in those photos, the site is nearly flat with less than 3 feet of elevation change across the site. A new station in the proposed location will greatly enhance the Departments' ability to respond to incidents, and will maintain effective emergency services in all areas of the City and Rural area. In recent years the City has seen rapid growth in the northeast section of town. Not only has there been residential growth, several existing and new industrial parks served by the Departments are located directly north of this location. The City has recently installed a traffic signal at the intersection of US 95 and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, and, in anticipation of constructing a new fire station, has installed the necessary infrastructure for emergency signal control in the new traffic light. The signal would facilitate emergency access across US95 and provide faster response time to emergency sites throughout the City and County

The new facility would have adequate storage for all equipment for both the City of Payette Fire Department and the PRFD, and it would also be expandable to meet future needs. The Departments estimate that the new facility would serve the needs of the fire departments through the year 2029 without expansion. The facility would include adequate parking for



responding fire fighters, office space for fire personnel, a training/education room as well as turn-out room, bathrooms, etc.

The proposed building is planned for six double length apparatus bays that can house up to 12 apparatus; an administrative wing that provides a modest office area for the administrative and fire prevention functions, as wells as a moderately sized classroom/dining area that can seat approximately 45 persons. This area will also serve as an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to centrally manage any significant threat or hazard to the City or County if the County's dispatch center were to go down. At this time there is no backup dispatch center in the County. The facility will house a gender specific "Duty Quarters" which serve as the living quarters for up to 4 emergency personnel who are on a 24 hour shift rotation schedule.

The total proposed square footages of the building include:

Apparatus Bay Area.....	5,866 sf
Administrative Wing.....	6,568 sf
~Duty Quarters/Physical Training.....	3,191 sf
TOTAL	15,625 sf

The proposed structure will be approximately 190 feet long and 80 feet wide. The disturbed area of the site (including all landscaping, parking, and the building) will be approximately 89,600 square feet or 2.06 acres. The tallest point of the building will be approximately 30 feet above the adjacent ground surface. The proposed development is shown in the Site Plan in Appendix A. The firefighters are called to the station by a loud siren located atop the existing fire station as well as by individual pagers. The siren would be left at the old station because it functions well at that location and it would be very expensive to move.

Ground disturbance will include: 1) foundation excavations (2 to 3 feet deep) around the perimeter of the building and at several locations within the structure; 2) utility installation trenches (3 to 6 feet deep) which will extend from the building to the street to the north; and 3) light pole foundations (6 to 8 feet deep). Three poles are expected.

No specialty equipment is expected for construction of the project. Typical construction equipment such as excavators and/or backhoes, loaders, graders and water trucks are expected for the earthwork portion of the project. Fork lifts and possibly a small crane are expected for the building construction.

The construction staging area will likely be located in the future parking lot for the adjacent ball fields to the south of this project. This area is presently covered with grass which is maintained by the City for recreational use. The City owns both the proposed construction site and the adjacent ball fields. The existing bathroom structure will be removed. No other structures will be removed or modified. Much of the existing ground surface of the proposed site will be disturbed during development. All stormwater will be contained and infiltrated on site, both during construction and when the project is complete. The vegetation and gravel surfacing presently protect the native soils from wind and rain erosion. These will be left in place as long as practical to minimize soil exposure to the elements. Dust will be controlled by sprinkling exposed soil with water as necessary during construction.



### 3.3 OTHER ACTION ALTERNATIVES

Extensive research was conducted prior to selecting the proposed site for the new fire station on the southeast corner of US Highway 95 and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue North. No other suitable alternatives were found. Some of the other alternatives which were considered are listed below.

### 3.4 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND DISMISSED

#### 3.4.1 Rebuild at the Present Location:

The existing site is too small to contain a building of adequate size to house the necessary equipment or provide adequate parking for emergency personnel, so there is no opportunity to sufficiently enlarge the existing structure without displacing adjacent property owners. This option was dismissed because the physical size of the existing property prohibits adequate expansion.

#### 3.4.2 Boise Cascade Building:

There is an existing building on US95 several hundred yards south of the proposed site. The building is owned by Boise Cascade and is vacant. This building would require considerable expense to modify for use as a fire station in addition to considerable expense to purchase the building. East-west access to the city is limited from this location as emergency vehicles would have to go several blocks north or south on US95 to be able to go to the east. There is no signal access to US95 which increases hazards for emergency vehicles entering/exiting the busy highway. This alternative was dismissed because of the high purchase price, subsequent high remodel cost, and infrastructure cost to add a signalized access to the facility.

## 4.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS

For each resource category, the impact analysis follows the same general approach for the No Action and Proposed Action Alternatives. When possible, quantitative information is provided to establish impacts. Qualitatively, these impacts will be measured based on small, moderate, or large impacts as outlined in the chart below.

Impact Scale	Criteria
Small	Environmental effects would not be detectable or would be so minor that they would neither destabilize nor noticeably alter any important attribute of the resource.
Moderate	Environmental effects would be sufficient to alter noticeably, but not to destabilize, important attributes of the resource.
Large	Environmental effects would be clearly noticeable and would be sufficient to destabilize important attributes of the resource.

Impacts are disclosed based on the amount of change or loss of the resource from the baseline conditions. Impacts may be direct or indirect. Direct impacts are caused by an action and occur at the same time and place as the action. Indirect impacts are caused by the action and occur later in time or are farther removed from the area, but are still reasonably foreseeable (40 CFR Part 1508). Cumulative impacts are discussed in Section 4.7.



## 4.1 PHYSICAL RESOURCES

### 4.1.1 Geology and Soils

The site is located in the historical alluvial plain of the Snake and Payette Rivers although the rivers have down-cut somewhat, and the site is well above the floodplain at this time. The site is mapped as *Clems fine sandy loam* in the Natural Resource Conservation Service soil map of Payette County. This is a wind and water deposited soil with a typical growing season of 140 to 160 days. However, the site is inside the existing city limits, so it is not considered prime farm land, nor is the soil of statewide significance.

The site soils are subject to erosion by wind and rain when the protective vegetation or gravel surfacing is removed. The site topography is nearly flat with less than 3 feet of vertical relief across the site, and all surface drainage will be contained on site.

A geotechnical foundation investigation was completed at this site in 2007. Soil conditions consist of medium dense silty sand over medium dense sand with some silt. Groundwater seepage was not observed in the explorations which extended to depths of at least 11½ feet below the existing grade. The finished grades will remain near the present grades of the site. There are no known active faults at or near the project site. The nearest known fault is approximately 45 kilometers east of the site, and the peak firm-ground acceleration is estimated at 0.05g with a 10 percent chance of exceedence in 500 years (Effective Peak Firm Ground Acceleration in Idaho, Figure 250.05.08.2, Idaho Transportation Department Materials Manual, January 2010.) With the depth to groundwater, density of the site soils, and the low ground acceleration, the risk of liquefaction is very low.

### 4.1.2 Air Quality

The site is in an attainment area for air quality. Cars, trucks, and motorhomes presently access the site, and the site is adjacent to US95, which experiences significant truck traffic. The traffic generated by the new fire station will be removed from the existing fire station location, so there will be a small shift in traffic location within the City of Payette, but no net change in the number of trips generated by the proposed action.

Site soils will be protected from erosion because they will be covered by the development (building, parking lot pavement, and landscaping). Dust control measures will be implemented as necessary during construction.

### 4.1.3 Climate Change

The mean annual air temperature at the site is 50 to 52 degrees Fahrenheit with 140 to 160 frost free days per year (*Soil Survey of Payette County, Idaho*) The site is in a semi-arid location with an annual precipitation of approximately 10 inches per year.

The proposed building will be LEED Silver certified, thus more energy efficient than the current facility. The project will not generate new traffic, but rather it will relocate traffic from one part of town to another part of town.

### 4.1.4 Environmental Consequences to Physical Resources

#### Alternative 1 – No Action

Under the No Action alternative, FEMA would not provide funding to build a new fire station in Payette, Idaho. No impacts to geology, soils, air quality, or soils are expected.



## **Alternative 2 – Proposed Action**

No effect on geology, soils, air quality, or climate would be expected based on the small scale of the project and the temporary nature of ground disturbance. Consistent with the Farmland Protection Policy Act, no impacts on prime farmlands or soils of statewide importance would occur as none are present within or adjacent to the site. Temporary erosion protection measures (BMPs) will be implemented during construction to minimize soil erosion and fugitive dust from site work. The building will be built to LEED Silver standards, which, combined with the small scale of the project, will not measurably exacerbate climate change.

## **4.2 WATER RESOURCES**

### **4.2.1 Water Quality**

One water body is located near the site. The Lower Payette Ditch (canal) right of way borders the east side of the site. The canal is two to three feet higher than the site, so no runoff from the site can enter the canal. A landscaped area is planned adjacent to the canal, as shown on the Site Plan. Excavations for the project will be well back from the toe of the canal bank to avoid potential adverse impact on the canal bank. The surface water which exists on site consists of direct precipitation or irrigation water, and it is presently contained on site because the site is topographically lower than the surrounding streets on the north and west; and the canal on the east, and the ballfields to the south. Approximately 2 acres will be disturbed during site development.

### **4.2.2 Wetlands \***

There are no wetlands mapped at this site, and there are no known areas of wet soil or standing water. No obligatory wetland plants were observed on the site.

### **4.2.3 Floodplains \***

Under Executive Order (EO) 11988 (Floodplain Management), fire stations are considered critical actions whereby the minimum floodplain of concern is the 500-year floodplain. The nearest floodplain is for the Payette River. The closest portion of the floodplain is more than 1 mile west of the site. (FEMA flood panel V160184 0001A, February 15, 1984) No part of the proposed project is within either the 100 or 500 year the floodplain.

### **4.2.4 Environmental Consequences to Water Resources**

#### **Alternative 1 – No Action**

Under the No Action alternative, FEMA would not provide funding to build a new fire station in Payette, Idaho. No impacts to water resources or the floodplain are expected.

#### **Alternative 2 – Proposed Action**

No effect on water quality, wetlands, or floodplains would be expected based on the review of the site as presented above. All runoff from the site will be retained and infiltrated on site both during construction and during the life of the project, consistent with National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permitting provisions. This matches the present hydrologic conditions at the site, so there will be no increase in runoff as a result of this project. Water will be infiltrated using BMPs to minimize potential impacts to groundwater quality. Consistent with EO 11990 (Wetlands Protection), no impact to wetlands is anticipated because there are no wetlands present on the site, and the project will not change the site hydrology. Consistent with EO 11988, no impact to the floodplain is anticipated because no part of the site is within the



floodplain, and the project will not change site hydrology. No direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to the water quality, wetlands, or floodplains are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

### **4.3 COASTAL RESOURCES**

Idaho is not a coastal state.

### **4.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

#### **4.4.1 Vegetation, Wildlife and Fish**

The present vegetation at the site consists of several deciduous trees, lawn, and shrubs located on a large lot within an urban setting. Approximately 1 acre of lawn and several small and medium size trees will be removed for this project. Approximately 200 lineal feet of low growing juniper bushes will also be removed. The bushes are along the south side of the lawn adjacent to the existing gravel parking lot. The surrounding parcels to the east and west are developed as residential and commercial property, respectively. The parcel to the north, across the 80 foot wide street right of way, is row-cropped farm ground. The parcel to the south is a manicured lawn which is used for recreational ball fields. Based on the site's prior development, surrounding land uses, and urban setting; it provides low habitat value for terrestrial wildlife.

The proposed site will be landscaped as shown on the attached Site Plan. The landscaping will include trees and shrubs.

#### **4.4.2 Threatened and Endangered Species and Critical Habitat \***

There is no federally delineated critical habitat in the vicinity of this site. As described above, the present vegetation at the site consists of scattered trees, lawn, and shrubs located on a large lot within an urban setting which has low habitat value.

Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed species within Payette County include: bull trout and slickspot pepper grass; neither of these species are present at nor surrounding the proposed site. The site has already been disturbed by previous construction activities to create the lawn and parking areas.

#### **4.4.4 Environmental Consequences to Biological Resources**

##### **Alternative 1 – No Action**

Under the No Action alternative, FEMA would not provide funding to build a new fire station in Payette, Idaho. No impacts to biological resources are expected.

##### **Alternative 2 – Proposed Action**

No effect on threatened or endangered species or wildlife and fish would be expected based on the review of the site as presented above. No known threatened or endangered species presently use the site, nor is there suitable habitat for such species present on the site. The new landscaping may provide some roosting and nesting habitat for small birds. Based on the review as presented above, there will be no discernable impact (either temporarily or long-term) to migratory birds as a result of this project.

There will be a net loss of vegetation within the project site. In addition to the trees described above, the lawn area will be removed. The primary function of the lawn area (in addition to erosion, which was addressed in Section 4.1 above) is the infiltration of precipitation. This



function will be replaced by a combination of grassy swales within landscaped areas and infiltration galleries located under the parking areas. All infiltration systems will follow proper BMPs to protect groundwater quality. The impact scale of removing the vegetation will be small.

## **4.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES \***

### **4.5.1 Prehistoric and Historic Context**

The City of Payette is located in Payette County at the confluence of the Payette and Snake Rivers. Before the arrival of European trappers and explorers in the early 1800s, Native Americans lived in the region for at least 12,000 years. Northern Paiute, Northern Shoshoni, and Bannock populations are known to have occupied the Boise, Payette, and Snake River drainages (Liljeblad 1957). During the 1800s, Payette was a landscape of sagebrush and bunch grass covering rolling hillsides. The county and county seat were named for Francois Payette, a French-Canadian fur trapper and explorer with the North West Company, who first came to the region in 1818. He is believed to be the first Euroamerican in the area and managed Fort Boise from 1835 to 1844. The Payette name was also given to the significant tributary of the Snake River that flows through the county (Boone 1988). In 1891, the City was incorporated and became the Payette County seat in 1917.

No tribal cultural or religious sites were noted during the NEPA process for the adjacent federally funded street reconstruction project on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue North. A review of the US National Park Service's tribal consultation database also has no records for tribal interests in Payette County. Although there are no known tribal cultural or religious sites on or near the subject property, tribes will have opportunity to comment on this EA.

### **4.5.2 Historic Properties**

No historic or cultural resources were found during the NEPA process for the adjacent federally funded street reconstruction project on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue North. The site has been reviewed by the Idaho State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) in view of identifying historic properties or archeological sites which may be present, none were in their records. Given the entire site has been disturbed by past activities to create the park, parking lots, and ballfields, it's unlikely intact archeological deposits remain.

The existing fire station was built in 1947 and has been extensively remodeled with additions to support the emergency response operations function. No formal National Register of Historic Places evaluation has been completed on this structure.



### **4.5.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES TO CULTURAL RESOURCES**

#### **Alternative 1 – No Action**

Under the No Action alternative, FEMA would not provide funding to build a new fire station in Payette, Idaho, thus no impacts to cultural resources or historic properties would be expected. Response operations would continue from the existing fire station.

#### **Alternative 2 – Proposed Action**

Based on site conditions, no effect on cultural resources is anticipated as a result of this project. Consistent with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the SHPO concurred with a “no historic properties affected” determination, a copy of the response letter is attached in Appendix B.

### **4.6 SOCIOECONOMIC RESOURCES**

#### **4.6.1 Environmental Justice \***

Executive Order (EO) 12898, Environmental Justice, directs federal agencies to identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations in the United States resulting from federal programs, policies, and activities.

No residents will be displaced by the proposed action. A portion of a park will be removed; however, several acres of park (predominately used as soccer fields) remain immediately south of the project site. The fire department serves all sectors of the population equally. The new location of the station was chosen to reduce the response times throughout the service area. Socioeconomic and demographic data (including race, ethnic groups, and household income) for residents in the service area are presented in Table 1 below.

The City of Payette Fire Department serves the entire population of the City of Payette (approximately 8,000) and Payette Rural Fire Department serves portions of Payette County, Idaho and Malheur County, Oregon. The rural district includes 1,850 households. Based on 2008 Census Bureau estimates, there are 2.73 residents per household, so the rural district includes approximately 5,050 residents. The total population served by the combined departments is approximately 13,050 people.



**Table 1: 2008 Census Data for Service Area**

Total Population Served	13,050 (2008)
Median Household Income	\$43,425
Individuals Below Poverty Level	15.6%
Ethnicity	
White	88.7%
Black or African American	0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.2%
Asian	0.5%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	0.1%
Some other race	5.6%
Two or more races	3.9%

**Alternative 1 – No Action**

Under the No Action alternative, FEMA would not provide funding to build a new fire station in Payette, Idaho. No disproportionate impacts to minorities or low-income populations are expected. There is potential for delayed response times from the existing fire station’s inadequate facilities. These delays would impact the entire service population equally.

**Alternative 2 – Proposed Action**

No disproportionate impact to minorities or low-income populations is expected as a result of the proposed action. The response time for all residents should be improved equally by moving the station function as planned.

**4.6.2 Noise**

A fire station, such as the one in Payette, is typically not louder than any other commercial property most of the time, except when units are responding to an emergency. There are two primary sources of disruptive noise associated with the fire station: 1) the main siren which calls emergency personnel to the station; 2) the sirens on individual trucks. The main siren is activated whenever the emergency personnel are paged to respond to a call. This siren is a *Sentry Siren, Inc. Model 10V* which is rated at 115 decibels at a distance of 100 feet. The main siren is located in the existing fire station and it will not be moved. It will remain in its present location for the foreseeable future. The sirens on individual trucks are turned on as the vehicles leave the station and they remain on until they reach the scene with the exception that the sirens are not turned on between midnight and 4:00 a.m. Sirens are not used when the



emergency vehicles return to the station. The sirens on the trucks are L.N.Curtis & Sons model TS100 and are rated at 120 decibels at a distance of 10 feet.

The combined number of responses for the two departments was 220 in 2007, 159 in 2008, and 183 in 2009. The timing of the calls is shown in the figure labeled "Fire Times" in Appendix C. Review of this figure shows that most of the fires occur during daylight hours.

The zoning around the existing firestation is commercial to the north, south, and east; and is industrial to the west. The closest residential zoning is located approximately 650 feet west of the existing station. The proposed site has commercial property to the north, south, and west, and residential property across the canal to the east. The commercial property extends for several blocks north and south and one block to the west. There are approximately 25 residences within 700 feet of the proposed site.

The departure location for the emergency vehicles will change from one commercial zone to another commercial zone. Residential properties are somewhat closer to the new location on one side (east).

#### **Alternative 1 – No Action**

Under the No Action alternative, FEMA would not provide funding to build a new fire station in Payette, Idaho. No change in impacts from noise are expected.

#### **Alternative 2 – Proposed Action**

The proposed action will inevitably have a small to moderate impact on ambient noise levels for the residences within 700 feet of the new fire station, depending on the time of day when sirens are activated. These impacts will result from short duration and infrequent activation of equipment sirens. The impact would be small for residents while they are inside their homes and moderate if they are outside. This impacts approximately 25 residences at this time. Given the relatively low frequency of call outs, proportion of night-time responses, and distance from the residential area; the overall adverse impact on existing noise levels is expected to be small.

#### **4.6.3 Traffic**

The traffic generated by the fire station includes the volunteer personnel arriving at the station in response to a call; departing and returning in emergency vehicles; and volunteers leaving the station in their personal vehicles after responding to a call. The number of trips are not expected to change as a result of relocating the fire station.

The present fire station is located on a four-lane road (highway 52) which has no signalized access to the station, no parking, and very limited site distance when leaving the station. Emergency personnel must park across the street (4 lanes of traffic) when responding to a call. This presents a safety hazard when personnel walk across the street. Emergency personnel must stop traffic to allow each emergency vehicle to leave the station. Traffic must also be stopped when the vehicles return to the station, and personnel must cross 4 lanes of traffic to return to their personal vehicles after a call.

The proposed station would have sufficient parking for emergency personnel to park personal vehicles on-site when responding to a call. Access to and from the station is facilitated by the existing traffic signal located at the intersection of US95 and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue N. The fire station would have an emergency controller for the signal to ease ingress/egress to and from the



station during emergencies. US95 bisects the City of Payette and it must be crossed for approximately half of the fires. This requires police officers to temporarily stop traffic while the emergency vehicles cross the highway. This issue would be eliminated with the new fire station located at the existing traffic signal.

#### **Alternative 1 – No Action**

Under the No Action alternative, FEMA would not provide funding to build a new fire station in Payette, Idaho. No change in traffic conditions are expected. The risk of conflict between emergency personnel and the traveling public will remain high in the vicinity of the station during emergency response.

#### **Alternative 2 – Proposed Action**

The proposed action will improve traffic safety. No more vehicle trips will be generated by relocating the station. However, the safety entering and exiting the station during emergencies will be greatly improved. The potential for vehicle/pedestrian and vehicle/vehicle conflicts will be significantly reduced. The direct access to US95 at the existing signal will reduce the need for police officers to manually stop traffic while the emergency vehicles cross US95. Thus the new fire station location will have a large positive affect to traffic safety conditions.

#### **4.6.4 Public Service and Utilities**

The proposed fire station location is presently serviced by all public utilities including water, sewer, gas, phone (including fiber-optic), power, and cable. The service connections for water and sewer are stubbed out to the property line. The other utilities would require a simple service connection to the adjacent lines. All of the adjoining utility lines have sufficient capacity to serve the new station.

The emergency services to the public will be significantly improved by the proposed station. Response times to calls are expected to be reduced, and the safety of the emergency personnel as well as the traveling public will be improved.

#### **Alternative 1 – No Action**

Under the No Action alternative, FEMA would not provide funding to build a new fire station in Payette, Idaho. No change in public service conditions is expected. There would be no change in response times and no safety improvements.



## **Alternative 2 – Proposed Action**

The proposed action will reduce response times and increase safety to the emergency personnel and the traveling public. This is a significant improvement to public service. There is no expected adverse impact on public utilities as a result of the proposed action.

### **4.6.5 Hazardous Materials**

Aside from the use of common lubricants and cleaning agents, no additional pollutants would be dispersed by operation of a fire station. The City of Payette owns the property on which the proposed fire station would be built, and the City has no knowledge of any hazardous materials on the site. The City has owned the site for approximately 25 years. A hazardous material administrative review has been completed. There are no known hazardous materials in the project area. (see *Appendix D*). The nearest site of known contamination is at a convenience store at 917 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, which is approximately 0.5 miles west of the site. The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) reports that the contamination plume from this site is moving to the northwest away from the fire station site.

We contacted EPA for any known reports of hazardous materials in the vicinity of the site. They did not have any record of release of hazardous materials at the project site.

## **Alternative 1 – No Action**

Under the No Action alternative, FEMA would not provide funding to build a new fire station in Payette, Idaho. No impacts from hazardous materials are expected.

## **Alternative 2 – Proposed Action**

Because no environmental conditions were identified at the proposed site, no concerns related to hazardous materials are expected as a result of building and operating the new fire station.

## **4.7 Cumulative Impacts**

The Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA require an assessment of cumulative effects during the decision making process for federal projects. Cumulative effects are defined as “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: (40 CFR 1508.7). Cumulative effects were determined by combining the effects of the alternative with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

This proposed action and future growth of the station (whether in actual building size or simply additional personnel and equipment as service population increases) which is expected to occur during the life of the project, are not expected to have adverse cumulative impacts to physical resources; water resources; biological resources; cultural resources; environmental justice, traffic, public service and utilities, or public health and safety as no project impacts are anticipated. Cumulative noise impacts are anticipated to be low to moderate as these impacts will only increase as the number of calls increase. These impacts are offset by the increased traffic safety and the reduced response times.

Within the service area, it is anticipated that the cumulative effects to the public would be beneficial because of the reduced response times and increased traffic safety. This is offset in



part by the slightly increased vehicle siren noise at residences and businesses which are near to the site of the new station.

## **5.0 AGENCY COORDINATION, PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND PERMITS**

The City of Payette has conducted several informal public information meetings regarding the proposed fire station. They also held a formal public hearing on October 1, 2007. Public input was supportive of the need for a new station and of the emergency response personnel. However, the bond levy which was brought for a vote on November 6, 2007 Received 59% “yes” votes, and 67% was required for passage. Follow-up with citizens indicated that they were still supportive of the need for a new station, but they could simply not afford it.

A public notice is required for this draft EA. The public and agencies will have the opportunity to comment on the EA for 30 days after the publication of this notice. The notice identifies the action, location of the proposed site, participants, location of the draft EA, and who to write to provide comments (see Appendix E ). FEMA, the City, and PRFD will review all written comments submitted for identification of any significant issues that need to be addressed, and will incorporate them into the final EA, as appropriate. Copies of the draft EA will be sent to the City of Payette and Payette County, Idaho.

The proposed action will disturb more than 1 acre of ground surface. Therefore, a NPDES permit will be required. This will require preparation of a SWPP plan as well as filing a notice of intent with EPA prior to construction. A City building permit, including electrical and mechanical permits, will be required prior to construction. The project will be required to meet all applicable building codes and City Code requirements.

## **6.0 Project Conditions and Mitigation Measures**

- The City/PRFD shall secure and comply with applicable permitting.
- The City/PRFD is responsible for selecting, implementing, monitoring, and maintaining best management practices to control erosion and sediment, reduce spills and pollution, and provide habitat protection; consistent with NPDES requirements.
- Site soils will be covered and/or wetted during construction as needed to minimize fugitive dust.
- Construction activities will be conducted during the daytime, to reduce adverse noise impacts.
- In the event that archaeological or historic materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity shall be discontinued, the area secured, and the SHPO and FEMA notified.
- If any hazardous materials are found during construction; these shall be characterized, remediated, and disposed of as appropriate, and otherwise handled in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
- The site stormwater management system shall be operated and maintained consistent with its intended design.



- Any change to the approved scope of work stated in the FEMA grant application and described in this EA as the proposed action will require re-evaluation for compliance with NEPA and other laws and Executive Orders.

## 7.0 LIST OF PREPARERS

MaryJo Kee, Environmental Specialist, Holladay Engineering Co.

Doug Argo, Project Manager, Holladay Engineering Co.

## 8.0 REFERENCES

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