Environmental Assessment

Cedar Rapids Community School District District Services Campus

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

FEMA DR-1763-IA

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CMU	Concrete Masonry Unit
CRCSD	Cedar Rapids Community School District
EA	Environmental Assessment
EO	Executive Order
ESA	Endangered Species Act
ESC	Educational Services Center
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRMS	Flood Insurance Rate Maps
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
ROI	Region of Influence
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

1. INTRODUCTION

Cedar Rapids is the second largest city in the U.S. state of Iowa and is the county seat of Linn County. The city lies on both banks of the Cedar River. Beginning on June 9th 2008, the Cedar Rapids Community School District (CRCSD) had several properties that experienced extensive damage from the flooding of the Cedar River which flooded most of the city of Cedar Rapids. The main administrative services building, known as the Educational Services Center (ESC), the main maintenance facilities, known as the Annex and Carpenter/Paint Shop, and the main Warehouse, known as the Purchasing/Food and Nutrition buildings, were flooded up to eight (8) feet of contaminated floodwaters. The CRCSD serves 16,960 students with four (4) high schools, six (6) middle schools and twenty-four (24) elementary schools. The CRCSD service buildings are currently located at five (5) different locations throughout Cedar Rapids. The Cedar Rapids Community Schools Bus Barn is currently operating on one of the parcels which are part of the re-development and proposed CRCSD District Services Campus site.

On May 27, 2008, President Bush declared a major disaster in the State of Iowa (DR-1763-IA) pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. Section 5121-5206. The incident period began on May 25, 2008 and closed August 13, 2008.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that Federal agencies evaluate the environmental effects of their proposed and alternative actions before deciding to fund an action. The President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has developed a series of regulations for implementing the NEPA. These regulations are included in Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Parts 1500–1508. They require the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) that includes an evaluation of alternative means of addressing the problem and a discussion of the potential environmental impacts of a proposed Federal action. An EA provides the evidence and analysis to determine whether the proposed Federal action will have a significant adverse effect on human health and the environment. An EA, as it relates to the FEMA program, must be prepared according to the requirements of the Stafford Act and 44 CFR, Part 10. This section of the Federal Code requires that FEMA take environmental considerations into account when authorizing funding or approving actions. This EA was conducted in accordance with both CEQ and FEMA regulations for the NEPA and will address the environmental issues associated with the FEMA grant funding as applied towards construction of a new CRCSD District Services Campus at the proposed site.

Executive Order (EO) 11988 (Floodplain Management) requires that Federal Agencies assume a leadership role in avoiding direct or indirect support of development within the 100-year floodplain whenever there is a practicable alternative. Four (4) of the damaged facilities are located within the 100-year floodplain and subject to repetitive flooding. Rather than repair or replace the facilities at their present locations, FEMA and the CRCSD conducted a thorough review of the practicable alternatives to restoring the function of these facilities at locations outside the floodplain and not subject to repetitive flood damage.

2. PURPOSE AND NEED

Pursuant to Section 406 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster and Emergency Assistance Act of 1988, as amended, the CRCSD has requested funding through FEMA Public Assistance Program. FEMA's Public Assistance Program provides supplemental Federal disaster grant assistance for the repair, replacement, or restoration of disaster damaged, publicly owned facilities.

The purpose of this action is to assist the students of the CRCSD and the citizens of Cedar Rapids and Linn County in their recovery from the natural disaster by using the FEMA Public Assistance Program to contribute funding towards the construction of the new CRCSD District Services Campus.

The need for the project is to replace and consolidate the CRCSD Services in response to a devastating flooding that struck Cedar Rapids, Linn County, Iowa, beginning on June 9th, 2008 in a manner that prevents them from being susceptible to repetitive flood damages. Prior to the disaster, the CRCSD Services operated out of a total of five (5) different facilities;

1) Community Bus Barn – 2418 Edgewood Road ,
2) Purchasing/Food and Nutrition Building at 615 G. Avenue NW,
3) Education Services Center Annex located at 353 2nd Avenue SW,
4) Paint/Carpenter Building located at 405 1st Avenue SW,
5) Educational Services Center (ESC) located at 346 2nd Avenue SW.

Currently, the CRCSD Services operations function out of temporary facilities as the current structures were extensively damaged. The CRCSD District Services Campus provides essential services that are required for the education of the students of the Cedar Rapids School District. If the CRCSD District Services Campus were not rebuilt, the quality of educational facilities for the students would be undermined.

3. ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

NEPA requires the investigation and evaluation of reasonable project alternatives as part of the project environmental review process. EO11988 requires the investigation of practicable alternatives prior to Federal agencies taking actions that provide direct or indirect support of floodplain development. Two alternatives are addressed in this EA: the No-action Alternative, where no FEMA grant funding is applied towards construction of a new CRCSD District Services Campus, and the Proposed Action, where FEMA grant funding is applied towards construction of a new CRCSD District Services Campus in Cedar Rapids, Linn County, Iowa at a location outside the 100-year floodplain. The discussion includes the original Alternatives Analyzed to repair or restore these facilities at their current locations, which was dismissed because practicable locations outside the 100-year floodplain were available.

3.1 No Action

Inclusion of a No Action Alternative in the environmental analysis and documentation is required under NEPA. The No Action Alternative is defined as maintaining the status quo with no FEMA funding for an alternative action.

The No Action Alternative is used to evaluate the effects of not providing eligible assistance for the project, thus providing a benchmark against which “action alternatives” may be evaluated. For the purposes of this alternative, it is assumed that the Cedar Rapids School District will continue to use the temporary locations for its service operations and would not be able to consolidate five district-owned facilities into one new CRCSD District Services Campus. Therefore, no FEMA grant funding would be applied towards construction of a new CRCSD District Services Campus and the students in the Cedar Rapids School District would not be provided with essential educational services.

As a focused Environmental Assessment, only the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action will be carried forward for review.

3.2 Proposed Action

This alternative provides FEMA grant funding towards construction of a new CRCSD District Services Campus at the proposed site of the current CRCSD Community Bus Barn, 2418 Edgewood Rd. The CRCSD has contracted the design work for the proposed alternative to Shive Hattery Architecture-Engineering.

The proposed site, located at the intersection of Edgewood and Ellis Roads is identified by the National Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) as being located in Zone AE and shaded Zone X in the northern extents of the project area where current and future parking lots are planned. The new structures will be located in Zone X, outside of the 500-year floodplain and thus be consistent with EO 11988. The CRCSD District Services Campus will consist of multiple buildings situated on approximately 19.55 acres totaling approximately 168,000 square feet devoted to functional and warehouse space, and adhere to the requirements of a developed Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan for acceptable runoff coefficients.

3.3 Alternative Considered and Dismissed

This alternative would be to repair all five (5) of the existing CRCSD operation facilities to pre-disaster conditions at their current locations in Cedar Rapids, Iowa (locations of the facilities are presented in Section 2). All five (5) of the facilities were extensively damaged by the flooding beginning on June 9th, 2008 The repair of the existing damaged five (5) CRCSD facilities would require bringing the facilities up to the current codes and standards for the city of Cedar Rapids. This alternative was dismissed as being unfeasible due to the complexities in repairing the destruction and meeting compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act standards, and more importantly, because the four (4) existing facilities located off-site from the Edgewood Road location, are situated within the 100-year floodplain and are prone to frequent flooding. Once FEMA and the city of Cedar Rapids identified practicable alternative locations outside the floodplain, the current floodplain locations were eliminated as an alternative.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Two alternatives were evaluated in this EA:

- No-action Alternative
- Proposed Action

Table 4-1 summarizes the potential environmental impacts expected with each of the two alternatives. Additional information is located in Section 5.

As shown in table 4-1, the No-action Alternative could result in no environmental impacts on the environment.

As shown in table 4-1, the selection of Proposed Action would result in minor environmental impacts from the temporary increase in noise and the production of fugitive dust during construction.

Table 4-1: Summary of Impacts and Mitigation

Environmental Resource	**No-action**	**Proposed Action**
Air Quality	No impact	Fugitive dust would result from all construction activities; the project would be of short duration and would not require large amounts of heavy equipment; best management practices would be implemented
Biological Resources	No impact	No impact; threatened or endangered species are not present in the project area
Executive Order 11990/Wetlands	No impact	No significant impact; best management practices would be used to protect wetlands during construction. If required, a Section 404 permit from USACE would be obtained
Threatened and or Endangered Species	No impact	No impact; threatened or endangered species are not present in the project area
Cultural Resources	No impact	No significant impact; The Area of Potential Effects (APE) for this undertaking was considered sensitive for the presence of prehistoric archaeological sites. As a result, FEMA required the applicant to undertake an archeological survey of the proposed action. Based on the results of additional archaeological testing (Phase II) on four sites, FEMA determined in consultation with the SHPO, that they were not eligible for listing in the NRHP. Therefore, no NRHP eligible archaeological sites would be affected as a result of project implementation.
Geology and Soils	No impact	No significant impacts; construction activities would clear existing vegetation and expose soil in the area proposed construction area
Radon	No impact	The contractor will use radon resistant construction techniques to minimize the potential for radon gas to migrate into the proposed service campus school.
Land Use and Planning	No impact	Land required for the Proposed Action would involve parcels already owned by the CRCSD with the addition of four recent acquired and deeded parcels which contain residential homes and undeveloped land.
Hazardous Substances	No impact	In the event that soil and/or groundwater contamination is discovered during construction activities, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) should be contacted at Field Office #1 (563) 927-2640. Work within the sensitive area should not resume until IDNR personnel indicates no further assessment is needed of the discovery. For further assistance, consult the IDNR's guidance on UST removal guidance for proper closure procedures for any remaining underground fuel piping including removal of the pump islands at http://wwww.iowadnr.gov/land/ust/ustremovers.html, and with the State of Iowa Fire Marshall (http://www.dps.state.ia.us/fm/flammable/indes.shtml) who regulates ASTs, for proper handling during construction activities.

Noise	No impact	Construction activities would increase the noise levels in the immediate area of the construction project; activities are assumed to take place during daylight hours and no sensitive noise receptors are located near the project area
Executive Order 12898, Environmental Justice	No impact	Implementation of this alternative would have little likelihood of having disproportionate impacts on any low-income or minority groups
Transportation	No impact	Flagmen and possibly escort vehicles would be utilized; construction of the CRCSD District Services Campus would temporarily disrupt local traffic within the project area
Water Quality/Water Resources	No impact	The proposed new site is located in Zone AE and shaded Zone X in the northern extents of the project area where current and future parking lots are planned. According to a letter from the CRCSD to Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the new structures will be built on ground that is 20 feet above the 2008 Flood levels. The new structures will be located in a Zone X, outside of the 500 year floodplain and thus be consistent with EO 11988.
Demolition	No impact	Iowa DNR requires that structures be tested for asbestos containing material prior to demolition. If testing is not conducted, all debris or demolition material must be disposed of as if it contained asbestos. IDNR requires at least 10 days notice prior to renovation, repairs, or demolition. Any business or individual compensated to remove asbestos containing materials is required by the Iowa Division of Labor to obtain a certified asbestos contractor permit. Call (515)281-6175 for details or visit http://www.iowaworkforce.org/labor/asbestos.htm.
Cumulative Impacts	No impact	The consolidation of the five (5) Cedar Rapids Community School Services; maintenance, warehouse, bus barn, food and nutrition, and administrative buildings into one service campus would provide an efficiency benefit to the CRCSD. The development of the site into the CRCSD District Services Campus would not pose a significant cumulative impact from the Proposed Action Alternative or impact the city of Cedar Rapids and surrounding area. While some terrestrial habitat may be eliminated, due to the scope of work, no loss of any sensitive species is expected that would contribute a measurable amount to the cumulative effects.

Notes:

NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

5. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND IMPACTS

Chapter 5 describes the existing environmental conditions that may be affected by the proposed FEMA grant funding being applied towards construction of a new CRCSD District Services Campus. The environmental impacts of the No-action alternative were also analyzed.

This chapter also describes the potential environmental consequences of the proposed alternative by comparing them with the potentially affected environmental components. The proposed activity was also evaluated against existing environmental documentation on current and planned actions and information on anticipated future projects to determine the potential for cumulative impacts. The potential for significant environmental consequences was evaluated utilizing the context and intensity considerations as defined in CEQ regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR Part 1508.27).

5.1 Air Quality

The National Ambient Air Quality Standards established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency define the allowable concentrations of pollutants that may be reached but not exceeded in a given time period to protect human health (primary standard) and welfare (secondary standard) with a reasonable margin of safety. These standards include maximum concentrations for ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, lead, and particulate matter with a diameter of 10 microns or less.

The nearest Air Quality Monitoring System location is located at the Army Reserve post on Wenig Road NE in Cedar Rapids within two (2) miles of the project location. The monitoring station is administered by the Linn County Health Department. Linn County is considered an attainment area for all criteria pollutants listed above. Air quality in the project and the surrounding area currently complies with Federal and State air quality standards as indicated by the entire state of Iowa being within an Air Quality Attainment Area.

5.1.1 No Action

The No-action Alternative would not affect air quality. No construction activities would occur with the selection of the No-action Alternative.

5.1.2 Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would require the excavation of soil for the construction of the CRCSD District Services Campus, which would result in the production of fugitive dust. Best management practices would be utilized during construction to minimize dust. The proposed project would require approximately eighteen (18) months of construction and heavy equipment including bulldozers, scrapers, and backhoes.

Construction activities would produce a minor, temporary, and localized impact from vehicle emissions and dust particles. Equipment use would temporarily increase emissions; however, no long-term air quality impacts are anticipated. Federal or state air quality attainment levels would not be exceeded. Based upon this information, there would be minimal impacts to air quality due to the implementation of the Proposed Action.

5.2 Biological Resources

Native or naturalized vegetation, wildlife, and the habitats in which they occur are collectively referred to as biological resources. Existing information on plant and animal species and habitat types in the vicinity of the proposed site was reviewed with special emphasis on the presence of any species listed as threatened or endangered by Federal or State agencies to assess their sensitivity to the effects of the alternatives.

Biological studies consisting of literature review, field reconnaissance, and map documentation were performed. For the purpose of discussion, biological resources have been divided into the areas of protected species and habitats.

5.2.1 Protected Species and Habitat

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 establishes a Federal program to conserve, protect, and restore threatened or endangered plants and animals and their habitats. ESA specifically charges Federal agencies with the responsibility of using their authority to conserve threatened or endangered species.

All Federal agencies must ensure any action they authorize, fund, or carry out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of an endangered or threatened species or result in the destruction of critical habitat for these species. During the field visit of April 20, 2010, the following list and description of threatened or endangered species that may occur in Linn County was produced.

Table 5-1: Federally Protected Species of Linn County, Iowa

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	Potential Occurrence at Site	Reason
Western prairie fringed orchid	Platanthera praeclara	Threatened	No	No habitat
Prairie bush clover	Lespedeza leptostachya	Threatened	No	No habitat

5.2.2 No Action

The No-action Alternative would not impact vegetation or wildlife in the project area. No construction activities would occur with the selection of the No-action Alternative.

5.2.3 Proposed Action

The proposed FEMA grant funding being applied towards construction of a new CRCSD District Services Campus effect on threatened and endangered species has been determined to be “no effect”. No remaining native habitats are present on the site as the site had been utilized as agricultural and residential housing for the past 150 years. The campus will be constructed in areas that have been previously disturbed.

FEMA reviewed lists from both U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Iowa Department of Wildlife and Parks for threatened and endangered species with potential to occur in Linn County. It was determined from documentation review and a field visit of the project, that threatened or endangered species identified as having potential to occur in Linn County were not present in the area or would be impacted by the project. In the event that threatened or endangered species are

encountered in the project area, the FEMA Regional Environmental Officer shall request further Section 7 ESA consultation with the USFWS.

5.3 Cultural Resources

In addition to review under NEPA, consideration of impacts to cultural resources is mandated under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), as amended and implemented by 36 CFR Part 800. Requirements include the identification of significant cultural resources that may be impacted by the undertaking. Cultural resources are prehistoric and historic sites, structures, districts, buildings, objects, artifacts, or any other physical evidence of human activity considered important to a culture, subculture, or community for scientific, traditional, religious, or other reasons.

Only those cultural resources determined to be potentially significant under NHPA are subject to protection from adverse impacts resulting from an undertaking. To be considered significant, a cultural resource must meet one or more of the criteria established by the National Park Service that would make that resource eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The term “eligible for inclusion in the NRHP” includes all properties that meet the NRHP listing criteria, which are specified in the Department of Interior regulations Title 36, Part 60.4 and NRHP Bulletin 15. Sites not yet evaluated may be considered potentially eligible for inclusion in the NRHP and, as such, are afforded the same regulatory consideration as nominate properties. Whether prehistoric, historic, or traditional, significant cultural resources are referred to as “historic properties.”

For the purposes of this analysis, the term region of influence (ROI) is synonymous with the “area of potential effect” as defined under cultural resources legislation. In general, the ROI for cultural resources at each alternative’s site encompasses areas requiring ground disturbance (e.g. areas of grading, cut and fill, etc) associated with the proposed development of the CRCSD District Services Campus.

5.3.1 Archeological

5.3.1.1 No Action

The No-action Alternative would not impact cultural resources in the project area. No construction activities would occur with the selection of the No-action Alternative.

5.3.1.2 Proposed Action

The area proposed for the new CRCSD District Services Campus in Cedar Rapids is sensitive for the presence of prehistoric archaeological sites as it is generally in close proximity to the Cedar River and previously recorded sites have been recorded in the vicinity. Archaeological site 13LN913, a prehistoric artifact scatter was identified on the proposed site of the facilities in 2009 by the Office of the State Archaeologist of Iowa. In advance of the proposed project FEMA required the sub-applicant to commission a Phase I archaeological survey in an effort to identify potentially significant archaeological resources that could be affected by the undertaking. The surveyed resulted in the identification of eight archaeological sites within the ROI (13LN913, 13LN949, 13LN950, 13LN954, 13LN946, 13LN947, 13LN948, and 13LN953). Of those eight sites, four were determined not eligible for listing in the NRHP in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) (13LN946, 13LN947, 13LN948, and 13LN953). Additional archaeological testing (Phase II) was required for 13LN913, 13LN949, 13LN950, and 13LN954 in order to fully evaluate their significance. Based on the results of the Phase II testing, FEMA determined in consultation with the SHPO that 13LN913, 13LN950, and 13LN954 are not eligible for listing in the NRHP. While a portion of 13LN949 may be

preserved to the north under Ellis Road NW, the portion located within the ROI of the undertaking is considered not eligible. Therefore, no NRHP eligible archaeological sites would be affected as a result of project implementation.

5.3.2 Historic

5.3.2.1 No Action

The No-action Alternative would have no significant effect on cultural resources within the project area. No construction activities would occur with the selection of the No-action Alternative.

5.3.2.2 Proposed Action

FEMA Historic Preservation Specialists have reviewed the inventory of the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office for Linn County, Iowa. There are no NRHP listed, or previously determined eligible for listing on the NRHP properties within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) of the proposed project. A field inspection was made to the proposed construction site to determine if there are any previously unevaluated and potentially eligible for listing on the NRHP properties within the APE. Four properties 50 years old or older were identified on the site of the proposed facilities; however, all four were determined not eligible for listing in the NRHP by FEMA in consultation with the SHPO. Therefore, no historic architectural properties would be affected by the project as proposed.

5.4 Geology and Soils

The topography of the proposed CRCSD District Services Campus is gently rolling, with slopes from the south to the north. A field visit completed by the Office of the State Archaeologist in the area of the property indicates that a paha (a hill or ridge typically formed of sand and capped with loess) exists in the vicinity. Information from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service shows that five (5) soil types are present on the site. Soils found at the proposed CRCSD District Services Campus project area are; Colo-Ely complex, Chelsea loamy fine sand, Fayette silt loam, Chelsea-Lamont-Fayette complex and Richwood silt loam. The symbols that accompany the soil descriptions correspond with those found on the Soils Survey Legend of the Soil Survey of Linn County, Iowa.

Chelsea-Lamont-Fayette complex is found with 5 to 9 percent slopes. The Chelsea-Lamont-Fayette series consists of very deep moderately well drained soils. Chelsea-Lamont-Fayette has a depth to water table of More than 80 inches and is not prone to frequent flooding.

Fayette silt loam is found with 5 to 9 and 18 to 30 percent slope. The Fayette silt loam consists of excessively drained soils. Fayette silt loam has a depth to water table of More than 80 inches and is not prone to frequent flooding.

Richwood silt loam is found with 0 to 2 percent slope. The Richwood silt loam consists of well drained soils. Richwood silt loam has a depth to water table of more than 80 inches and is not prone to frequent flooding.

Chelsea loamy fine sand is found with 5 to 9 and 9 to 18 percent slope. The Chelsea loamy fine sand consists of excessively drained soils. Chelsea loamy fine sand has a depth to water table of more than 80 inches and is not prone to frequent flooding.

Colo-Ely complex is found with 2 to 5 percent slope. The Colo-Ely complex consists of poorly drained soils. Colo-Ely complex has a depth to water table of more than 80 inches and is frequently prone to frequent flooding.

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) was enacted in 1981 (P.L. 98-98) to minimize the unnecessary conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses as a result of Federal actions. In addition, the act seeks to ensure that Federal programs are administered in a manner that will be compatible with State and Local policies and programs that have been developed to protect farmland. The policy of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is to protect significant agricultural lands from conversions that are irreversible and that result in the loss of essential food and environmental resources. The NRCS has developed criteria for assessing the efforts of Federal actions on converting farmland to other uses, including Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form AD-1066 that documents a site-scoring evaluation process to assess its potential agricultural value. In accordance with Section 1541 of the FPPA, the alternatives were reviewed for potential impacts on prime farmlands. The Prime Farmland map of Linn County was consulted and indicates that Prime Farmlands are in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Action. However, the U.S. Department of Agriculture states that proposed projects on land already in urban development or water storage are not subject to the provisions FPPA. (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1986)

5.4.1 No Action

The No-action Alternative would have no significant effect on geology or soils. This alternative would not involve any construction, improvements, or ground disturbance to the project area.

5.4.2 Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would have no significant impact to geology and soils. Construction activities would expose soil in the area proposed for the CRCSD District Services Campus. Best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented during and after construction for sediment and erosion control. Non-structural BMPs may utilize the minimization of disturbance, preservation of natural vegetation and re-vegetation of exposed slopes and soils to minimize erosion and to stabilize slopes. Structural erosion control BMPs include the placement of mulch or grass and the covering of stockpiles. Structural sediment control BMPs include silt fencing and sediment traps.

5.5 Radon

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that is produced by the decay of uranium found within soil, rocks, and groundwater. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) currently considers residential radon exposure at or above 4.0 pico Curies per liter (pCi/L) as a public health risk. The EPA created a map for each county in the U.S. which identifies the potential for elevated indoor radon levels, with Zone 1 having the highest potential for predicted average indoor screening levels greater than 4.0 pCi/L. According to the EPA's Map of Radon Zones, Linn County is mapped within Zone 1 (USEPA 2008b). The information reviewed is limited in nature and should not be used other than as a guide to anticipating radon levels in any specific location. Site specific radon testing would need to be performed prior to construction of the proposed facility in order to determine whether or not radon levels are elevated. Radon-resistant construction techniques may vary for different foundations and site requirements, but in general include five key concepts:

- Gas Permeable Layer – Usually a 4-inch layer of clean gravel used beneath the slab or flooring system to allow soil-gas to move freely.

- Plastic sheeting – Polyethylene sheeting is placed on top of the gas permeable layer and under the slab to help prevent migration of the soil gas from entering the facility.
- Vent Pipe – A PVC pipe runs from the gas permeable layer up through the structure to the roof to safely vent radon above the facility.
- Junction Box – An electrical junction box is installed in case an electrical venting fan is needed later.
- Sealing and Caulking – Openings in the concrete foundation are sealed to prevent soil gas from entering the facility.

5.5.1 No Action

The No Action alternative would not involve any movement or excavation of soil therefore there would be no potential for adverse effects caused by elevated concentrations of radon gas.

5.5.2 Proposed Action

With the movement and excavation of the shallow soils associated with the construction of this complex there is a potential for encountering elevated concentrations of radon gas at the site. Therefore the contractor should use applicable radon-resistant construction techniques to minimize the potential for radon gas to migrate into the proposed elementary school.

5.6 Land Use and Planning

The proposed location of the new CRCSD District Services Campus includes two parcels that are currently owned by the CRCSD. One of these parcels contains the current operating CRCSD Bus Barn. Additional parcels north of the site, recently acquired and deeded by CRCSD, currently contain residential homes and undeveloped land. The property is surrounded by public roadways and mainly residential development with some undeveloped areas. The CRCSD land use and zoning regulations are administered and enforced by the city of Cedar Rapids.

According to the Shive Hattery schematic design dated 2/5/10, and the developed Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, two infiltration basins will be located in the northern portion of the property near where the current storm sewer intake is located. Also proposed in the design is the construction of a bioswale in the southern half of the project site within the parking lot area. It was noted during the site visit what appeared to be a water well located on the CRCSD Bus Barn property, northeast of the office building, near the Edgewood Drive entrance.

5.6.1 No Action

The No-action Alternative would have no significant effect on land use and planning. This alternative would not involve any construction, improvements, or ground disturbance to the project.

5.6.2 Proposed Action

Land required for the Proposed Action would involve property already owned by the CRCSD with the addition of recent acquired parcels which contain both residential homes and undeveloped land. It is with the understanding that the homes remaining on the acquired properties will be demolished. If a water well is discovered during demolition, IDNR will be contacted for guidance on water well installation/abandonment.

5.7 Hazardous Substances

Hazardous wastes, as defined by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), are defined as “a solid waste, or combination of solid wastes, which because of its quantity, concentration, or

physical, chemical, or infectious characteristics may; (1) cause, or significantly contribute to, an increase in mortality or an increase in serious irreversible or incapacitating reversible illness or; (2) pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly treated, stored, transported or disposed of or otherwise managed."

Hazardous materials and wastes are regulated in Iowa by a combination of federal and state laws. Federal regulations governing the assessment and disposal of hazardous wastes include RCRA, the RCRA Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments, Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, Solid Waste Act, and Toxic Substances Control Act. No drums or other sources of potential hazardous materials were observed in the project area.

The following is derived from a list of the federal and state databases reviewed for this project including EPA Resource Conservation and Recovery Information System List:

Five (5) underground storage tanks (5 K gasoline, 2 @ 10K gasoline, 20K diesel, 1K used oil) were installed in 1979 and removed in 1995 according to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Underground Storage Tank (UST) online database. The IDNR UST database did not indicate that the property contained any currently operating registered USTs. The former UST site, assumed to be located to the northwest of the current bus barn office building, is also a leaking underground storage tank (LUST) site which is currently classified as No Further Action. Visual observation of the project area on 4/20/10 did reveal two (2) fuel pump islands located to the northwest of the bus garage office building. It is unknown at this time whether the fuel pumps are currently in operation or connected to a fuel source. In addition, four (4) to five (5) above ground storage tanks (ASTs) were noted to the southwest of the bus garage office building. It is unknown what the contents of the ASTs are southwest of the bus garage.

5.7.1 No Action

The No-action Alternative would have no significant effect on hazardous substances. This alternative would not involve any construction, improvements, or ground disturbance to the project.

5.7.2 Proposed Action

In the event that soil and/or groundwater contamination is discovered during construction activities, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) should be contacted at Field Office #1 (563) 927-2640. Work within the sensitive area should not resume until IDNR personnel indicates no further assessment is needed of the discovery. For further assistance, consult the IDNR's guidance on UST removal guidance for proper closure procedures for any remaining underground fuel piping including removal of the pump islands at http://wwww.iowadnr.gov/land/ust/ustremovers.html, and with the State of Iowa Fire Marshall (http://www.dps.state.ia.us/fm/flammable/indes.shtml) who regulates ASTs, for proper handling during construction activities.

5.8 Noise

The Noise Control Act was enacted in 1972 (P.L. 92-574). Inadequately controlled noise presents a growing danger to the health and welfare of the nation's population. The major sources of noise include transportation vehicles and equipment, machinery, appliances, other products in commerce, climate, and recreation. Sounds, which disrupt normal activities or otherwise diminish the quality of the environment, are designated as noise. Noise can be stationary or transient, intermittent or continuous.

5.8.1 No Action

The No-action Alternative would not affect noise levels within the project area or the surrounding community. No construction activities would occur with the selection of the No-action Alternative.

5.8.2 Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would increase the levels of noise in the vicinity of the project area during the construction of the CRCSD District Services Campus. The proposed project would require approximately eighteen (18) months of construction and the use of heavy equipment. These noise levels would not be significant, as the increased level of sound would be similar to the increased construction activities occurring in the local area. No sensitive noise receptors are located near the project area. It is anticipated that all construction activities would occur during daylight hours. Based upon this information, there would be minimal impacts to noise due to the implementation of the Proposed Action.

5.9 Socioeconomic Considerations

As of the 2000 Census there were 120,758 people living in Cedar Rapids distributed among 49,820 households. The area where the proposed project is taking place for the purpose of considering local population is defined as Census Tract 10.01, Block Group 1 and Census Tract 11, Block Groups 1 and 2; the proposed project is located approximately in the middle of this defined area. Compared to the rest of Cedar Rapids, this area has a smaller proportion of minority residents; the minority population in the area is 6.34% while the City proportion is 9.11%. The white population of the area is 93.66% followed by 2.33% Asian and 1.45% African American compared to the City's proportions of 90.89%, 1.76%, and 3.66% respectively. Additionally, 1.51% of the area population reports Hispanic or Latino heritage compared to the overall City proportion of 1.71%; only 0.87% of area residents report two or more races compared to the City proportion of 1.56%.

The area population under 18 amounts to 23.16%, slightly below the City proportion of 24.47% and the area population over 65 and older is merely 8.24% compared to the City proportion of 13.08%. Median age within the defined area is 35.3 which is slightly higher than the median age for Cedar Rapids at 34.7. There were 2,023 households within the area as of the 2000 Census with an average household size of 2.41 compared to an average size of 2.36 for Cedar Rapids as a whole. A greater proportion of the area households (65.65%) are defined as families within the 2000 Census than for the City as a whole (61.87%).

Median household incomes within the area are $57,144 which is higher than the same figure for the City at $43,704. A smaller proportion of the area population (4.86%) was determined to be below the poverty threshold than for the City as a whole (7.54%).

Table 5-2: Population Statistics 1980 through 2000

Jurisdiction	1980	1990	2000
Iowa	2,913,808	2,776,755	2,926,324
Linn County	169775	168767	191,702
City of Cedar Rapids	110,243	108,751	120,758

5.9.1 No Action

The No-action Alternative would have no impact to the socioeconomics of the local area because no construction activity would occur.

5.9.2 Proposed Action

Activities associated with the implementation of the Proposed Action would be considered a positive impact with an influx of construction workers needed for the approximately eighteen (18) months of construction activities. Construction personnel would provide short-term benefits to the local businesses, which would include the purchase of food, gas, and other services. The Proposed Action will also complete a need service for the Cedar Rapids students and the Cedar Rapids residents and businesses. The Proposed Action would not displace or adversely affect any nearby residents during the construction phase beyond temporary impacts.

5.9.3 Executive Order 12898, Environmental Justice

On February 11, 1994, President Clinton signed Executive Order (EO) 12898, *"Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations."* The EO directs Federal agencies to focus attention on human health and environmental conditions in minority and/or low-income communities. Its goals are to achieve environmental justice, fostering non-discrimination in Federal programs that substantially affect human health or the environment, and to give minority or low-income communities greater opportunities for public participation in and access to public information on matter relating to human health and the environment. Also identified and addressed, as appropriate, are disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States. Based on the findings in this EA, implementation of any of the proposed alternatives would have little likelihood of having disproportionate impacts on any low-income or minority groups. After construction, the improvements created by the proposed action would be beneficial and would not cause adverse environmental or economic impacts specific to any groups or individuals.

5.10 Transportation

Currently, the project site does not interfere with normal traffic circulation within the City of Cedar Rapids.

5.10.1 No Action

With the No-action Alternative, the damaged CRCSD Services operations facilities would not be repaired and there would be no impact to the existing traffic and circulation for the city of Cedar Rapids because there would not be any construction activities.

5.10.2 Proposed Action

The construction of the CRCSD District Services Campus at the proposed site would temporarily disrupt the traffic flow on Ellis Road and Edgewood Road during the approximate 18-month construction period. Local traffic would need to slow down or stop to accommodate equipment, such as bulldozers, backhoes, and grazers, used during construction. Flagmen and possible escort vehicles would be utilized to sustain traffic flow while maintaining safe working and traffic conditions. This activity would have a short-term effect on the level of service for the connecting roads during the construction period. This level of service would, however, be expected to return to normal at the completion of the project.

5.11 Water Resources

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is responsible for permitting and enforcement functions dealing with building in U.S. waters and discharging dredged or fill material into U.S. waters. USACE regulations for building or working in navigable waters of the United States are authorized by the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899. These regulations often go hand in hand with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which establishes the USACE permit program for discharging dredged or fill material. The regulations are often used together because building in navigable waters of the United States also constitutes discharging dredged or fill material into water of the United States. In addition to regulating construction or work being done in navigable water of the United States, USACE regulates discharging into wetlands through the Section 404 permit program (see section 5.10.1, Wetlands).

Additionally, Executive Order (EO) 11990 (Protection of Wetlands) requires federal agencies to avoid, to the extent possible, adverse impact of wetlands. EO 11988 requires the federal government to minimize the occupancy and modification to floodplains. Specifically, EO 11988 prohibits federal agencies from funding new construction in the 100-year floodplain, or 500-year floodplain for a critical facility (e.g. Hospital, Fire Station), unless there are no practicable alternatives.

5.11.1 Wetlands

Wetlands are defined by the USACE as “those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.” EO 11990, Protection of Wetlands, requires Federal agencies to take action to minimize the destruction or modification of wetlands, by considering both direct and indirect impacts to wetlands that may result from federally funded actions.

Activities disturbing jurisdictional wetlands require a permit from the USACE. Two types of authorization are available from the USACE for activities regulated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act: general permits, which are issued for a specific category of similar activities and include nationwide permits defined in 33 CFR Part 30, and individual permits issued after review of the project, project alternative, and proposed mitigation.

Consistent with EO 11990, a review of the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory Map indicates no wetlands are located on the proposed project site. However, there are designated wetlands located adjacent to the proposed site to the north on the opposite side of Ellis Road NW, classified as a Freshwater Forested/Shrub wetland.

5.11.1.1 No Action

The No-action Alternative would not affect wetlands. No construction activities would occur with the selection of the No-action Alternative.

5.11.1.2 Proposed Action

The Contractor would implement specific best management practices to reduce or eliminate runoff impacts during proposed construction activities of the Proposed Action and to reduce the potential for soil erosion after construction, regardless of whether a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination

System (NPDES) Permit or a waiver from the permit requirement is secured (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2007). In addition, if required in consultation with the USACE, a Section 404 permit would be obtained. According to Shive-Hattery Schematic Designs, two storm water infiltration basins are proposed between Ellis Road NW and the employee and bus parking areas for the service campus on the north side of the project area, as required in part by the developed Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan. An additional storm water infiltration basin is proposed on the east side of the project area between the visitor and administration parking and Edgewood Road NW. Bioswales will be designed into the administration parking area on the south side of the District Services Campus.

5.11.2 Floodplain

EO 11988 (Floodplain Management) requires that a Federal agency 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 (NFIP). Linn County, Iowa is a participant in the NFIP.

Consistent with EO 11988, FIRMs were examined during the preparation of this EA. Per Flood Insurance Rate Map 19113C0290D, dated 4/5/2010, the current Cedar Rapids Community Bus Barn office building and majority of the proposed development area is located in Zone X, outside the 100-year floodplain with the northern portion of the site, dominated by parking lots, is located within Zone AE, 100-year floodplain and shaded Zone X. The Proposed Action will have no significant, long-term adverse effects to the floodplain; support occupancy or modification of floodplains; or directly or indirectly support floodplain development. Construction should occur during non-flood seasons, but in the event of construction within a flood season all equipment would need to be staged in an area not susceptible to flood events.

See Appendix A, FIGURE 3: FIRM Map for existing sites and proposed site for the CRCSD District Services Campus

5.11.2.1 No Action

The No-action Alternative would not affect wetlands or the floodplain. No construction activities would occur with the selection of the No-action Alternative. The CRCSD would continue to occupy the original dispersed locations which are located within the 100-year floodplain, thus they would remain vulnerable to future flood damages.

5.11.2.2 Proposed Action

The proposed new site is located in Zone AE and shaded Zone X in the northern extents of the project area where current and future parking lots are planned. According to a letter from the CRCSD to Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the new campus will be built on ground that is 20 feet above the 2008 Flood levels. The new structures will be located in Zone X, outside of the 500-year floodplain and thus be consistent with EO 11988.

5.12 Demolition

Land required for the Proposed Action would involve property already owned by the CRCSD with the addition of recent acquired and deeded parcels which contain both residential homes and undeveloped land. It is with the understanding that the homes remaining on the parcels will be demolished. Three residential homes located at 2925, 2929, and 2931 Ellis Road, along with the current CRCSD Bus Barn building located at 2418 Ellis Road, will be demolished according to the

Schematic Design provided by Shive-Hattery Architecture and Engineering. The residential properties listed above are located in Zone AE, within the100-year floodplain.

5.12.1 No Action

The No-action Alternative would not affect wetlands or the floodplain. No construction activities would occur with the selection of the No-action Alternative.

5.12.2 Proposed Action

If any asbestos containing material, lead paint, and/or other hazardous materials are found during remediation or repair activities, the Applicant must comply with all Federal, state, and local abatement and disposal requirements. Failure to comply may jeopardize FEMA funding.

Iowa DNR requires that structures be tested for asbestos containing material prior to demolition. If testing is not conducted, all debris or demolition material must be disposed of as if it contained asbestos. IDNR requires at least 10 days notice prior to renovation, repairs, or demolition. Any business or individual compensated to remove asbestos containing materials is required by the Iowa Division of Labor to obtain a certified asbestos contractor permit. Call (515) 281-6175 for details or visit http://www.iowaworkforce.org/labor/asbestos.htm.

5.13 Cumulative Impacts

The CEQ 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 Part 1508.7). Cumulative effects are considered for both the No Action and Proposed Action alternatives. Cumulative effects were determined by combining the effects of the alternative with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

The consolidation of the five (5) CRCSD Services; maintenance, warehouse, bus barn, food and nutrition, and administrative buildings into one service campus would provide an efficiency benefit to the CRCSD and its students. The development of the site into the CRCSD District Services Campus would not pose a significant cumulative impact from the Proposed Action Alternative or impact the city of Cedar Rapids and surrounding area. Furthermore, while some terrestrial habitat may be eliminated, due to the scope of work, no loss of any sensitive species is expected that would contribute a measurable amount to the cumulative effects.

5.14 Coordination and Permits

Construction of the CRCSD District Services Campus would require a building permit from the Cedar Rapids Zoning Department. In the event that archaeological deposits (soils, features, artifacts), or other remnants of human activity are uncovered, or if archaeological deposits are discovered during construction of the project, activities would cease in the immediate area, and the Iowa State Historic Preservation Officer and the FEMA Regional Environmental Officer would be notified before work would continue (section 5.3.1.2, Cultural Resources). Work in sensitive areas cannot resume until a qualified archaeologist determines the extent of the discovery, consultations between SHSI and FEMA are complete, and the applicant has been notified by SHSI and FEMA.

Agency coordination and/or permits may be required before implementation of the Proposed Action Alternative. CRCSD is required to obtain and comply with all required local, state, and federal permits, and if applicable, a floodplain permit and a no-rise certification prior to any construction activities. Development at the Proposed Action Alternative site shall comply with the approved site plan. Any expansion or alteration of this use beyond that initially approved would require a new or amended permit. A general NPDES Permit, or a waiver of the permit, could be required to be obtained from the Iowa Department of Health and Environment, and if required upon consultation with the USACE, a Section 404 permit may need to be obtained.

6. CONCLUSION

The EA evaluated potentially significant resources that could be affected. The evaluation resulted in identification of no significant impacts associated with the resources of climate, historic, cultural, geology and soils; floodplains; wetlands and water resources; vegetation; biological resources (endangered species act); and socioeconomic and environmental justice. Obtaining and implementing permit requirements along with appropriate Best Management Practices will avoid or minimize any effects associated with the action. No significant impacts were disclosed or identified during the public comment period. It is therefore recommended that a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) to the human or natural environment be issued for the Proposed Action Alternative.

7. PARTIES CONSULTED AND REFERENCES

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