



Final Environmental Assessment

Proposed Addition to
Providence Emergency Management Agency
Building
591 Charles Street
Providence, Rhode Island

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Federal Emergency Management Agency
Department of Homeland Security
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
APE	Area of Potential Effects
ASCE	American Society of Civil Engineers
BMP	Best Management Practice
CAA	Clean Air Act
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CO	carbon monoxide
CWA	Clean Water Act
CZMA	Coastal Zone Management Act
DB	Decibel
DFG	Department of Fish and Game
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DNL	Day-Night Average Sound Level
DPS	Department of Public Services
EA	Environmental Assessment
EDR	Environmental Data Resources, Inc.
EHP	Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EO	Executive Order
EOC	Emergency Operation Center
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
MMRS	Medical Response System (MMRS)
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NHESP	Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NGVD	National Geodetic Vertical Datum
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NO ₂	Nitrogen dioxide
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

Acronyms and Abbreviations

NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
O3	Ozone
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Pb	Lead
PDM	Pre-Disaster Mitigation
PGP	Programmatic General Permit
PM2.5	Particulate matter less than 2.5 microns
PM10	Particulate matter less than 10 microns
PEMA	Providence Emergency Management Agency
PHDC	Providence Historic District Commission
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RIDEM	Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
REC	Recognized Environmental Condition
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SO2	Sulfur dioxide
SOI	Secretary of Interior
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
TESS	Threatened and Endangered Species System
THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Office
UASI	Urban Area Security Initiative
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USCB	U.S. Census Bureau
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
UST	Underground Storage Tank
VOC	Volatile Organic Compound
WPA	Wetlands Protection Act
WOUS	Waters of the United States

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT AUTHORITY

The Providence Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) & Office of Homeland Security has been awarded federal grant funding for the expansion of the PEMA Emergency Operation Center (EOC) at 591 Charles Street, Providence Rhode Island. The expansion will provide adequate space for administrative, training, and emergency operations.

In accordance with 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for FEMA, Subpart B, Agency Implementing Procedures, Part 10.9, this Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared pursuant to Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as implemented by the regulations promulgated by the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ; 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508). The purpose of the EA is to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project, and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

According to FEMA policy, environmental planning and historic preservation (EHP) considerations are integrated into its hazard mitigation, disaster response and recovery, and emergency preparedness activities. FEMA, through its EHP Program, engages in a review process to ensure that FEMA-funded activities comply with various federal EHP laws and Executive Orders (EOs). The goal of these compliance requirements is to protect the nation's water, air, coastal, wildlife, agricultural, historical and cultural resources to minimize potential adverse effects to children and to low-income and minority populations.

1.2 PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed project is located within the northern portion of the City of Providence, Rhode Island. It is bounded to the north by Gillen Street, to the west by Charles Street (Route 246), and to the south by Marietta Street. A *Site Locus Plan* is provided as Figure 1. The *City of Providence Tax Assessor's Map*, attached as Figure 2, presents the Site location, configuration, and approximate parcel boundaries. An *Aerial View* with distinguishing features of the Site and adjoining properties is attached as Figure 3.

Based on the City of Providence Tax Assessor's Property Record Cards and Tax Assessor's Map, the location of the proposed project consists of the three parcels located on Plat 71 at addresses of 587 (Lot 175), 589 (Lot174), and 591 (Lot 173) Charles Street (collectively the "Site"). The 0.67 acre Site currently features a PEMA building and paved parking areas.

Based on the City of Providence Zoning Map, the Site is located in a Commercial (C-2) zone; it is characterized as densely developed with mixed residential and commercial properties. The existing PEMA building and surrounding buildings are connected to municipal water (from the Scituate Reservoir) and sewer according to personnel at the Providence Water Supply Board. The Site building is connected to electricity (National Grid) and heated with oil stored in an underground storage tank. Certain surrounding buildings are connected to natural gas (New England Gas).

1.3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project involves the construction of a two-story building addition and a one-story attached storage facility that will occupy an area of approximately 5,800 square-feet. The City of Providence is providing the land for the expansion. The addition will include training areas, dormitories (locker and shower facilities), cooking areas, new garage, and additional space needed for necessary parking accommodations. Refer to the Proposed Layout Plan attached in Appendix A. Photographs of the existing Site conditions are provided in Appendix B.

Gilbane Building Company will provide Construction Management for the project. The work will be advertised according to typical procedures that invite multiple vendors, including minority contractors, to participate in the bidding process. All bids will be opened at a public meeting of the City's Board of Contractors and Supplies and read aloud. All bids will be reviewed and approved by PEMA and awarded to the most cost-effective responsible bidder.

2.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the proposed project is to create an infrastructure for an emergency operation center to coordinate regional emergency response, incident command support, and provide communications and rapid public warning.

Providence is the capital and the most populous city in the State of Rhode Island. The Providence metropolitan area includes Providence, Warwick, and Fall River (Massachusetts) with an estimated population of $\pm 1,622,520$ persons. Providence is the third-largest city in the New England region and 36th largest metropolitan population in the country. The population of the City is $\pm 173,000$ residents ($\pm 65,000$ households). An additional $\pm 100,000$ people work or visit the City on a daily basis.

The City is geographically very compact and it is among the most densely populated cities in the country. The city limits encompass a total area of 20.6 square-miles, (i.e., 18.5 square-miles of it is land and the remaining 2.1 square-miles is water).

PEMA is the lead agency responsible for managing the Greater Providence Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) and Providence Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) regions. With limited EOC interoperability in the eight surrounding communities associated with MMRS and UASI programs, the Providence EOC facility is needed to be fully ready and equipped to handle incidents which bisect traditional political boundaries and provide needed incident support and coordination to neighboring communities within the region. The region comprises the heart of Rhode Island's economic, educational, cultural and entertainment programs, and includes more than 60% of the state's residential population. This project will create a truly regional capability in the center of the State's most densely populated area.

The completion of this fully integrated and modern EOC will have an exceptional benefit not only to the City of Providence but to the entire region of MMRS and UASI communities. The PEMA Director will reach out to the public safety officials in these communities and make the Providence EOC facility available in the event of a large disaster in their communities. With a state-of-the-art operational EOC the Greater Providence area will have a facility capable of providing assistance and interoperability to the entire Metropolitan region.

3.0 ALTERNATIVES

This section describes the alternatives that were considered in addressing the purpose and need stated in Section 2 above. Two alternatives were evaluated: the No Action Alternative, and the Proposed Action Alternative, which is the construction of the building addition.

3.1 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND DISMISSED

Construction of a new building at an alternative location was considered. However, the alternative location was dismissed based on the availability of the adjoining land. The City of Providence owns the two vacant lots (i.e., Lot 173 parcels B and C) located contiguous to the existing PEMA facility; the resulting total area of 9,030 square-feet will be used for this construction project. The City had former plans to develop these two parcels of land and build affordable housing. However, in order to achieve its goal in building a modern, efficient and effective EOC, PEMA petitioned the City of Providence and subsequently was successful in obtaining the release of this land from the original plan making it available for the expansion. In addition, the City is providing two other adjacent vacant lots, referred to as Lots 174 and 175 for a total area of 8,160 square-feet for parking accommodation.

3.2 ALTERNATIVE 1: NO ACTION

Under the No Action Alternative, the building addition would not be constructed. The EOC and emergency response services would remain vulnerable to ineffectiveness and inefficiency that would render it difficult for emergency responders to provide emergency services during and after severe events.

3.3 ALTERNATIVE 2: CONSTRUCTION (PROPOSED ACTION)

The EOC project began in 2004 with the City designating a permanent site for the exclusive purpose of comprehensive Emergency Management. Phase I upgrades were completed in 2008 with Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grants and City funding. This proposed project represents Phase II of EOC development. In 2006 the Agency was awarded a FEMA Technical Assistance review. Following a detailed on-site analysis by the Technical Assistance Team in 2007, two major shortfalls were identified. First, inadequate space within the existing facility for administrative and emergency operations; and secondly, the lack of adequate force protection-physical security-survivability measures. Grant funding for the facility expansion will allow the Agency to attain a modern efficient and effective EOC capable of coordinating regional emergency response, redundant interoperable communications, and rapid public warning.

Subsequently, PEMA proposed to build an addition to the existing building in order to meet these shortfalls. This project will allow for the increase of needed space at the EOC, and building out a new dormitory/kitchen area, locker room with shower facility, press/media room and space for surge operations. The new facility will greatly enhance the physical plant of the EOC and provide enough space to ensure that there will be a ready 24-hour presence within the City's EOC. This additional space also means that a second compliment of staff will be on-Site should an emergency incident intensify or require the expertise of specific individuals.

There is adequate square footage on the existing property for the new construction. PEMA has taken steps to secure an adjacent lot currently owned by the City of Providence, to enhance the physical security of the Site, increase parking, and ensure a buffer zone between the neighborhood residents. PEMA has hired a professional architect to design the expansion and construction of the EOC facility. Integrated with this facility will be new force protection measures and overall security improvements to the facility as a whole.

This project will be accomplished through a combination of hard (cash match) and soft (in-kind) matches from the City of Providence. Through city departments (e.g., Department of Public Works, City Engineering, Parks Department), various resources will be utilized to accomplish this project and minimize the burden placed on the local taxpayers during this extremely difficult economic time.

4.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND IMPACTS

This section describes the potential impacts of the Proposed Action Alternative and the No Action Alternative. Where potential impacts exist, conditions or mitigation measures to offset these impacts are described. A summary table is provided in Section 4.11.

4.1 PHYSICAL RESOURCES

4.1.1 Geology and Soils

Based on a review of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic map of the area (Providence, Rhode Island Quadrangle, dated 1996), the elevation at the Site is approximately 80 feet above the National Geodetic Vertical Datum (NGVD). While the general region includes hilly topography, the project area consists of relatively flat terrain (less than 3 percent slope). Based on observations during the Site reconnaissance, the local topography slopes gradually to the south towards the West River.

Because the proposed project involves the construction of a new building addition, Executive Order 12699, Seismic Safety of Federal and Federally Assisted or Regulated New Building Construction, applies to the proposed project. According to the Executive Order, the construction of the proposed project must use appropriate seismic design and construction standards and practices. The State of Rhode Island Building Code and American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Standard are the only model codes that are substantially equivalent to federal recommendations for new building seismic design and construction. According to the National Seismic Hazard Mapping Project, there is currently a low probability of seismic activity within the project area (USGS 2010). PEMA will ensure that this project will meet and exceed all current building codes relative to seismic considerations and wind resistance that are required for this part of the United States.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) online Web Soil Survey, the proposed project Site is mapped as “Merrimac-Urban land,” which is defined as “areas so altered or obstructed by urban works or structures that identification of soils is not feasible” (USDA/NRCS 2008). Because the soils in this area are mapped as urban land, no soil characteristics such as texture, infiltration, and runoff characteristics are described. Due to the amount of imperviousness, runoff in the project area is assumed to be rapid and flows into a stormwater drainage system.

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 is to protect significant agricultural lands from conversions that are irreversible and result in the loss of an essential food and environmental resource. The Service has developed criteria for assessing the effects of federal actions on converting farmland to other uses, including a Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form AD-1066 that documents a Site-scoring evaluation process to assess its potential agricultural value. Because the project area is within the city limits and is mapped as urban land, the soils do not meet the definition of prime or unique farmland soil and the Farmland Protection Policy Act is not applicable.

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, no construction would occur and there would be no impacts on the soils or geology of the area.

Proposed Action Alternative – Because the Site has already been developed with an existing PEMA building, construction of a new building addition would not cause significant disturbance of geology and soils as part of the Site preparation work. The Site is relatively flat, therefore, grading required at the Site would be minor. Construction activities would not be deep enough to affect underlying geologic resources. Surface soils on the proposed project Site would be disturbed to install the new footings and foundations, and therefore there is potential for minor erosion and discharge of sediment-laden runoff from the project Site. Since exposed soils would be subject to minor erosion, silt fences and/or other storm water quality best management practices would be utilized during construction. It is anticipated that the subapplicant (Construction Manager) would be required to submit a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to identify appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize erosion and prevent the off-Site transport of sediment. In general, effects to geology and soils would be minor and temporary in nature.

4.2 WATER RESOURCES

4.2.1 Water Quality and Surface Water

According to the topographic map and field observations, no wetlands, water bodies, or defined drainages are present on the Site. Based on a review of USGS mapping, Canada Pond is located ¼-mile to the west, the easterly-flowing West River is located ¼ mile to the south and the southerly-flowing Moshassuck River is located ½-mile to the east.

Affected Environmental and Impacts

Based on a review of the area's topography and observations made during the Site walkover, it is anticipated that regional groundwater flows in a general southerly direction towards the easterly flowing West River. Subsequent references to upgradient and downgradient directions are relative to this anticipated southerly flow direction. However, it is noted that groundwater flow direction at the Site may vary due to underground utilities along the roadway (e.g., storm drains and utility conduits), irregular precipitation recharge, and heterogeneous subsurface soil conditions.

Groundwater in the area of the Site is classified by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) as "GB," which indicates that it is considered unsuitable for human consumption without treatment due to known or suspected degradation. A GB groundwater designation is typical for urban locations in Rhode Island. There are no known private wells on the Site and the Site is not located within a wellhead protection zone. Based on the estimated groundwater levels and the proposed construction, it is believed that construction dewatering will not be necessary, and as such, a construction dewatering permit will not be required.

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, no construction would occur. There would be no change or impacts to the water quality at the project Site.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, temporary short-term impacts to surface water may be anticipated during the construction period due to soil erosion and the transport of sediment in stormwater runoff may occur at the property boundary. However, the project will not disturb more than one acre and implementation of the 10,000 square-foot addition to the existing PEMA building is not anticipated to increase sedimentation to the distant surface waters. To protect off-Site areas from the stormwater run-off of impacted soils, controls are expected to involve the establishment of siltation fences and staked hay bales in areas of the Site susceptible to erosion.

4.2.2 Floodplains

Executive Order (EO) 11988 (Floodplain Management) requires federal agencies to avoid direct or indirect support of development within the 100-year floodplain whenever there is a practicable alternative. FEMA uses Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) to identify the regulatory 100-year floodplain for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Consistent with EO 11988, a FIRM was examined during the preparation of this EA. The entire proposed project area is not located within the 100-year floodplain (Community Panel Number: 445406 0002F) (FEMA, 2000). The Site is characterized as Zone X (area of minimal hazard, with average depths of less than 1 foot). According to the definition, buildings in Zone X could be flooded by severe, concentrated rainfall where local drainage systems were inadequate or there was a failure of a local drainage system.

Affected Environment and Impacts

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, no construction would occur and there would be no impacts to the floodplain.

Proposed Action Alternative – No adverse effects to the floodplain are expected as a result of the proposed project.

4.2.3 Waters of the United States Including Wetlands and Coastal Zones

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regulates the discharge of dredged or filled material into waters of the United States (WOUS), including wetlands, pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Additionally, EO 11990 (Protection of Wetlands) requires federal agencies to avoid, to the extent possible, adverse impacts to wetlands. A Site visit was conducted on April 29, 2010. The area surrounding the project is highly urbanized, contains very little vegetation (i.e., three landscaping trees), no apparent wildlife, and is characterized primarily by buildings, and paved areas such as streets and parking lots. No wetlands (federal and state jurisdiction) were observed on the proposed project Site during the reconnaissance. Neither the University of Rhode Island Natural Resources and Environmental Management website (<http://www.edc.uri.edu>) nor the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps show any wetlands existing within the proposed project Site (NWI, 2010).

The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) enables coastal states, including Rhode Island, to designate state coastal zone boundaries and develop coastal management programs to improve protection of sensitive shoreline resources and guide sustainable use of coastal areas. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Rhode Island Office of the Coastal Resource Management Council (CRMC), the project area is not located within Rhode Island's coastal zone (NOAA, 2004; Coastal Resource Management Council, 2010).

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, no construction would occur and there would be no impacts to WOUS, including wetlands and coastal zones.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, no impacts to wetlands or resources within the coastal zone would occur. An on-Site review of the project location did not find any potential areas meeting the definition of Waters of the U.S. in the vicinity of the Site. The proposed project would not impact waters of the U.S. and would not require a Section 404 permit. There are no navigable waters in the area; therefore, Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 does not apply.

4.3 TRANSPORTATION

The proposed project is bounded by the existing roadways of Gillen, Charles, and Marietta Streets. No expansion or re-alignment of these roadways is anticipated.

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, no construction would occur and there would be no impacts to transportation.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, implementing the project may result in temporary traffic impacts due to construction within a portion of the roadways. Construction vehicles would also result in temporary loss of on-street parking spaces.

4.4 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

EO 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations) mandates that federal agencies identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations.

According to RIDEM’s website “Mapping Environmental Justice Zones in Rhode Island,” the RIDEM has developed and implemented several measures to ensure consistent and fair consideration of community issues and concerns related to the City of Providence’s environment in many programs and areas. The Rhode Island Industrial Property Remediation and Reuse Act also requires RIDEM to consider the issues of environmental equity for low income and racial minority populations.

RIDEM defines the Environmental Justice Communities as “the percent of the block group that is minority or the percent of the block group that is low low-income (under 2x Federal Poverty Level) that are high enough to rank in the top 15% of block groups State-wide.” According to the City of Providence Environmental Justice Area Map (<http://www.dem.ri.gov/maps/index.htm>), the project Site is located along the perimeter of an Environmental Justice designated area; refer to Figure 4.

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no disproportionately high or adverse impact on minority or low-income portions of the population.

Proposed Action Alternative – The Proposed Action Alternative would be beneficial to all members of the City of Providence. There would be no anticipated disproportionately high or adverse impact on minority or low-income portions of the population; all populations would benefit from the building addition provided by the proposed project. Furthermore, the construction of the new facility is expected to create new jobs in the short term.

4.5 AIR QUALITY

The Clean Air Act (CAA) requires that States adopt ambient air quality standards. The standards were established in order to protect the public from potentially harmful amounts of pollutants. Under the CAA, the EPA establishes primary and secondary air quality standards. Primary air quality standards protect the public health, including the health of “sensitive populations, such as people with asthma, children, and older adults.” Secondary air quality standards protect public welfare by promoting ecosystems health, and preventing decreased visibility and damage to crops and buildings. The EPA has set national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for the following six criteria pollutants: ozone (O₃), particulate matter with a diameter less than or equal to 10 micrometers (PM₁₀), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and lead (Pb).

The EPA has designated specific areas as NAAQS attainment or non-attainment areas. Attainment areas are any areas that meet ambient air quality standards. Non-attainment areas are any areas that do not meet (or that contribute to ambient air quality in a nearby area that does not meet) the quality standard for a pollutant. According to the EPA, the City of Providence is currently designated as "non-attainment" for the air quality standard set for ozone (EPA 2010).

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, no construction would occur and there would be no impacts to air quality.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, no long-term impacts to air quality are anticipated. Upon completion of construction, the new building addition would not emit any air pollutants. Short-term impacts to air quality may occur during the construction phase from the operation of diesel engines and other construction equipment. Emissions from fuel-burning internal combustion engines (e.g., heavy equipment and earthmoving machinery) could temporarily increase the levels of some of the criteria pollutants, including CO, NO₂, O₃, PM₁₀, and non-criteria pollutants such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs). These minor effects would be localized and of short duration. To reduce the emission of air pollutants, fuel-burning equipment running times would need to be kept to a minimum and the contractor would be required to keep all equipment in good working order and properly maintained.

To reduce temporary dust impacts, construction contractors would be required to utilize either a hydrant, water truck (with sprinkler hoses and bars), or other acceptable means to control airborne dust during soil excavation, grading and other Site development activities when necessary, keeping fugitive dust to a minimum. During Site/earth work, dust suppression techniques would be initiated and maintained during periods when soils become dry and there is potential for airborne dust, and when windblown dusts are generated. All

reasonable precautions would be taken to prevent the excessive generation of dust during soil excavation, stockpiling, loading, and other soil handling activities.

4.6 NOISE

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

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, no construction would occur and there would be no impacts to noise levels.

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, temporary short-term increases in noise levels are anticipated during the construction period. The proposed project Site is located in a mixed residential and commercial area. To reduce noise levels during that period, construction activities would take place during normal daylight and/or business hours. Equipment and machinery installed and used at the proposed project Site would meet all local, state, and federal noise regulations. The increase in noise is expected to be minor and short-term and is expected to comply with the City's noise ordinance.

4.7 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Under Section 7 of the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), as amended, federal agencies, in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), are required to evaluate the effects of their actions on federally protected species of fish, wildlife, and plants, and their habitats, and to take steps to conserve and protect these species. Federally protected species are defined as plants or animals that are listed as threatened or endangered by the USFWS. The project area is highly urbanized, contains no wildlife and minimal vegetation (few trees), and is characterized primarily by buildings and paved areas such as streets and parking lots (RIDEM Fish and Wildlife, 2010). A Site visit conducted on April 29, 2010, confirmed that the proposed area does not contain any apparent habitats for any federally protected species. No streams or other water bodies are located on the project Site, therefore, the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act is not applicable to the proposed action.

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, no construction would occur and there would be no impacts to flora or fauna in the project area.

Affected Environment and Impacts

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, no impacts to threatened or endangered species are anticipated because there is no suitable or designated critical habitat for federally protected species in the urban project area. The majority of the Site contains paved areas and three landscaping trees, which would be removed under the Proposed Action Alternative.

A review was conducted for the Federal Threatened and Endangered Species List for the county where the Site is located, including the Environmental Resource Mapping web address (<http://www.dem.ri.gov/maps/index.htm>). To determine if designated critical habitats are located on the Site; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service web page was consulted by searching Federal Register links for individual species. The Threatened and Endangered Species Review included the Threatened and Endangered Species System (TESS) Rhode Island website (<http://ecos.fws.gov/tess/public>). The Critical Habitat map (i.e., Environmental Sensitivity Index Map) was reviewed to determine if wildlife sanctuaries or ecological resources are located on-Site or surrounding vicinity. In summary, the Site is not mapped as Priority or Estimated Habitat for state-listed species and the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) database does not contain any state-listed species records in the immediate vicinity of this project.

4.8 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, and as implemented by 36 CFR Part 800, requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their actions on historic properties and to provide the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) an opportunity to comment prior to project implementation. Historic properties are defined as those buildings, structures, properties (including archaeological), objects, and districts that are listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). For the purposes of NEPA documentation, effects to cultural resources are primarily evidenced through Section 106 of the NHPA.

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, no impacts to cultural resources would occur. Therefore, no historic properties would be affected.

Proposed Action Alternative – The Site is currently developed and no historic properties are present, therefore there is no potential for adverse effects.

Identification of Historic Properties. Mr. Jack Sullivan, Environmental Officer, (Department of Homeland Security, FEMA Region I) engaged Mr. Jeffrey Emidy, the Project Review Coordinator at the State of Rhode Island Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) who is qualified under the Secretary of Interior's (SOI) Professional Qualification Standards (36 CFR Part 61), to make a determination of eligibility; refer to Appendix C.

Affected Environment and Impacts

A study was conducted of the project area to identify historic properties in the Area of Potential Effects (APE). The APE is the geographic area within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause changes in the character or use of historic properties, if such properties exist. The scope of services included contact with the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission to determine recorded structures or archeological/cultural resources.

Based on the City of Providence Tax Assessor's Property Record Cards and Tax Assessor's Map, the Site consists of properties located at 587, 589, and 591 Charles Street. To provide confirmation whether the Site is located on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or in a local historic district zone, Mr. John Myers, City of Providence Archivist was contacted. The SHPO was contacted to verify the NRHP status, and Jason Martin, of the Providence Historic District Commission, was contacted to verify local historical status.

Available records were reviewed and interviews were conducted with officials at the Providence Tax Assessor's Office, the Providence Water Supply Board, and the Providence Department of Public Works Engineering Division and the municipal planning department. A review was conducted of aerial photographs (dated 1939, 1952, 1962, 1972, 1981, and 1992) provided by the University of Rhode Island Natural Resources and Environmental Management website (<http://www.edc.uri.edu>). Historical Atlases dated 1882 and 1895, and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps dated 1937 were available at the City of Providence Archives. City Directories (listing addresses) were available for the years between 1940 and 2001.

The Site history is listed chronologically in the attached Table 1; a summary of parcel history is provided below"

Lot	Year	Features
587:	1899	Either three small buildings with partial walls, or one three-story building with 3 Storefronts and likely residences above
	1921	Falciglia Amusement & Theatrical purchase parcel
	1922	Falcigila transfers parcel to Raffaele Pari
	1938	Stores and dwellings –still owned by R. Pari
	1952	R. Pari transfers to Matthew Pari
	1955	Stores and dwellings
	1960	Royal Realty purchases parcel from M. Pari
	1976	National Columbus Bankcorp purchased and soon demolished the building
	1991	City of Providence purchases 587 Charles Street
589:	1899	Either three small buildings with partial walls or one three-story building with 3 Storefronts and likely residences above
	1920	Falciglia Amusement & Theatrical purchase parcel
	1921	Identified as a theatre

Affected Environment and Impacts

- 1939: In February, People's Furniture Co obtains a building permit to use it as a store; (it appears that this may be actually 591, and the permit was obtained prior to purchasing Lot 591 in March)
- 1976a Map shows building as constructed in 1926
- 1976b National Columbus Bankcorp purchases parcel and soon demolished the building, (similar to 587)
- 1991 City of Providence purchased 589 Charles Street
- 591: 1899 Appears as partially vacant and partial block of 3 storefronts
- 1922 Falciglia Amusement & Theatrical purchases from R. Pari
- 1939 People's Furniture Co purchases parcel from Falciglia
- 1954 Columbus National Bank purchases parcel from People's Furniture
- 1991 City of Providence purchases 591 Charles

In summary, the Site was developed since at least 1882 with residential dwellings. In 1890, Mary Furlong owned all three lots; she sold two (Lots 587 and 591) in 1896 and held the other (589) until 1908. At that point (1908), all three lots were individually owned. In 1920, Falciglia bought the theater (Lot 589) followed by Lot 587 in 1921, which they exchanged to Rafaele Pari in 1922 for Lot 591. Between 1920 and 1922, the Site was purchased by an amusement and theatrical company. In 1924, the use of the building was identified as bank and offices. Between 1937 and 1940, the Site was occupied by dwellings and the Columbia Theatre Office. In 1952, it was converted to office use. Lot 591 was sold to Columbus National Bank in 1954. Columbus National Bank purchased the additional lots in 1976 (assembling all three lots under the same ownership for the first time since 1896 (except for the short time period between 1921-22 when Falciglia owned them all). The buildings on 587 and 589 were demolished, and by 1980, were paved as parking lots. From 1954 until 1990, the Site was utilized as a bank. The City of Providence purchased the three properties from Columbus National Bank in 1991.

Off-Site and adjoining to the north at 581-593 Charles Street (Lot 176) was historically identified as a post office, funeral home (from at least 1940 until the 1980s). Off-Site and adjoining to the south at 585 Charles Street (Lot 176) was historically identified as a shoe repair and grocery retail store (from at least 1940 until the 1960s), wholesale distribution center(1970s), vacant (1980s), and club (1990s).

According to the Rhode Island-National Register Search website (<http://www.ri.gov/preservation/search>); there are no historical properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places for Charles, Marietta, or Gillen Streets. Rhode Island maintains a State Register of Historic Places; the criteria for inclusion in which are the same as those for the National Register.

Affected Environment and Impacts

Providence currently has 35 National Register historic districts. According to the City of Providence Department of Planning and Development website (<http://www.providenceplanning.org>), the project Site is not located in a local National Register Historic District.

In conclusion, no suspected historical properties were identified through the records reviewed. The proposed building addition would not affect any known archeological or historic architectural resources in the APE. If artifacts or other potential historic materials are discovered during construction, work will be suspended and FEMA and the State Historic Preservation Officer will be contacted. Should adverse effects to historic properties be identified at a later date during excavation and cannot be avoided, they will be resolved in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA.

4.9 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Hazardous substances are defined as any solid, liquid, contained gaseous or semisolid waste, or any combination of wastes that pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health and the environment. Hazardous substances are primarily generated by industry, hospitals, research facilities, and the government. Improper management and disposal of hazardous substances can lead to pollution of groundwater or other drinking water supplies, and the contamination of surface water and soil. The primary federal regulations for the management and disposal of hazardous substances are the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).

The Site building contains a registered (Facility Id No. 18725) underground storage tank (UST) with fuel oil fill and vent pipes. According to information provided by Mr. Peter Gaynor, PEMA Director, the UST is reportedly a 2,500 gallon tank that is utilized to store No. 2 oil for on-Site heating. A spill containment basin was installed in 2000. The UST was not reported to be leaking.

Visual observation of the project area did not reveal obvious existing or potentially hazardous materials, substances, or conditions. No drums or other sources of potentially hazardous materials were observed in the project area. No aboveground storage tanks (ASTs) were observed on the exterior of the Site. No storage, use, or surficial evidence of chemicals, hazardous substances, or petroleum products was observed on the exterior portions of the Site. No evidence of staining or vintage, suspected PCB-type electrical transformers were observed on-Site or on any of the power poles. No evidence of significant stains, obvious soil discoloration, or commercial dumping was observed during the reconnaissance. Other features were not observed during the Site reconnaissance of the grounds, including drywells or sumps, septic systems, stressed vegetation, oil/water separators, process wastewater, pits, ponds, or lagoons.

Affected Environment and Impacts

A regulatory review was conducted for the Site and surrounding properties. Public information was obtained from various federal, state, and local agencies that maintain environmental regulatory databases. These databases provide information about the regulatory status of a property and incidents involving use, storage, spilling or transportation of hazardous substances or petroleum products. Information was gathered by a professional data search service, FirstSearch Technology Corporation (FirstSearch).

In summary, land use in the vicinity of the Site is characterized by a mixture of residential and commercial properties. Several off-Site properties were identified on the state and federal databases reviewed as part of this assessment. However, based on their distance and/or direction from the study Site, regulatory status, and/or hydrogeologic relationship to the Site, the listed properties are not expected to have a significant impact on soil or groundwater at the study Site.

No Action Alternative – The No Action alternative would not disturb any hazardous materials or create any potential hazard to human health.

Proposed Action Alternative – The proposed construction would not disturb any known hazardous materials, including the UST, and is not expected to create a potential hazard to human health. No Phase II Environmental Subsurface Site Assessment was completed, therefore, no specific conclusions can be drawn regarding hazardous materials and waste that may be encountered as excavation is conducted during the construction phase of the proposed project.

If hazardous constituents are unexpectedly encountered in the project area during the proposed construction operations, appropriate measures for the proper assessment, remediation and management of the contamination would be initiated in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations. The contractor would take appropriate measures to prevent, minimize, and control the spill of hazardous materials in the construction staging area.

4.10 SAFETY

Safety and security issues that were considered in this EA include the health and safety of the area residents and the public-at-large, and the protection of personnel involved in activities related to the proposed construction. Executive Order 13045, Protection of Children, requires federal agencies to make it a high priority to identify and assess environmental health and safety risks that may disproportionately affect children.

No Action Alternative – Under the No Action Alternative, no construction would occur and there would be no direct impacts to the health and safety of residents in the area.

Affected Environment and Impacts

Proposed Action Alternative – Under the Proposed Action Alternative, positive impacts to safety are anticipated through the expansion of the PEMA building and enhanced services that the building provides.

The architectural drawings will be developed in cooperation PEMA personnel to fully outline and accommodate all needed shortfalls and gaps related to this facility as identified by both the internal and external review of this facility. In addition, facility security and fencing will harden the new EOC facility; currently, facility security is limited.

Construction activities may present safety risks to those performing the activities. To minimize risks to safety and human health, all construction activities would be performed using qualified personnel trained in the proper use of the appropriate equipment, including all appropriate safety precautions. During Site development, the general contractor will be responsible for limiting access to the Site during excavation and construction of the building addition and for the implementation of standard construction best management practices (e.g., fencing) as appropriate. Additionally, all activities would be conducted in a safe manner in accordance with the standards specified in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. The appropriate signage and barriers would be in place prior to construction activities to alert pedestrians and motorists of project activities. No disproportionate health and safety risks to children are anticipated.

4.11 SUMMARY

The following table summarizes the potential environmental planning and historic preservation (EHP) impacts of the Proposed Action Alternative and conditions or mitigation measures/BMPs that will be implemented to reduce or avoid those impacts.

Affected Environment/ Resource Area	Impacts	Mitigation/BMPs
Geology and Soils	No impacts to underlying geology are anticipated. Soils on the project Site would be disturbed during construction.	Implementation of a SWPPP and appropriate BMPs would be required at the construction location, including the installation of silt fences. If contaminated materials are discovered during the construction activities, the work would cease until the appropriate procedures can be implemented.
Surface Water	Temporary, short-term impacts may be anticipated during the construction period due to soil erosion.	Appropriate BMPs, such as installing silt fences, would minimize runoff.

Affected Environment and Impacts

Floodplains	The proposed project Site is not located within the 100-year floodplain.	None
Waters of the U.S., including Wetlands and Coastal Zones	No impacts to wetlands and coastal zones are anticipated.	None
Transportation	Short-term, minor, temporary increases in the volume of construction traffic on roads in the immediate vicinity of the project Site are anticipated.	None
Environmental Justice	All populations would benefit from the Proposed Action.	None
Air Quality	Short-term impacts to air quality are anticipated during the construction period.	Construction contractors would be required to water down construction areas when necessary; running times of fuel-burning equipment would be kept to a minimum; and engines would be properly maintained.
Noise	Short-term impacts to noise levels are anticipated at the proposed project Site during the construction period.	Construction would take place during normal business hours and equipment installed and used will meet all local noise regulations.
Biological Resources/ Threatened and Endangered Species	No impacts to threatened or endangered species are anticipated.	None
Cultural Resources	The project is not likely to affect historic properties.	If artifacts or other potential historic materials are discovered during construction, work would be suspended and FEMA and the State Historic Preservation Officer would be contacted.
Hazardous Materials	Impacts from hazardous materials or waste are not anticipated.	If hazardous/contaminated materials are discovered during the construction activities, the work will cease until the appropriate procedures can be implemented.
Safety	Positive impacts to public safety are expected.	All construction activities would be performed using qualified personnel and in accordance with the standards specified in OSHA regulations. Appropriate signage and barriers would be in place prior to construction activities to alert pedestrians and motorists of project activities.

5.0 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

According to Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, cumulative impacts represent the “impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions.

Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time” (40 CFR 1508.7). In accordance with NEPA and to the extent reasonable and practical, this EA considers the combined effect of the Proposed Action Alternative and other actions occurring or proposed in the vicinity of the proposed project Site.

This EA concerns one distinct project in the City of Providence. Only short-term impacts to surface water, air quality, noise, transportation, and biological resources are anticipated during construction of the proposed project. Improving emergency management response services may also have beneficial impacts on the development potential and investment trends in the area of the project, as potential businesses would be less likely to be concerned about a lack of emergency response. All short-term impacts require conditions to minimize and mitigate impacts to the proposed project Site and surrounding areas.

6.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

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

A *Public Notice of Availability* was issued on September 1, 2010; refer to Appendix D. A (paper) copy of the *Draft EA* was available for comment at the following locations:

- 591 Charles Street, Providence RI 02904, c/o Peter Gaynor, Director, Ph: 401-680-8000
- Providence City Hall, Room 311, City Clerks Office, 25 Dorrance Street, Providence RI 02903
- GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc., c/o Mark Burbelo, 530 Broadway, Providence, RI 02909, Ph: 401-427-2731

On September 1, 2010, the Providence Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) posted a notice in the RI Secretary of State website (openmeetings@sos.ri.gov) advertising the PEMA Emergency Operation Center (EOP) *Draft Environmental Assessment* (EA) plan, and invited the public to comment on the project and its potential effects on the subject property.

The 30-day comment period ended on October 1, 2010 and PEMA did not receive communication from any interested party, either pro or con, regarding the *Draft EA*. On October 4, 2010 PEMA held a meeting at its headquarters at 591 Charles Street, Providence to discuss and review the *Draft EA*. Since no substantive comments were received, the *Draft EA* was approved as written and it was anticipated that a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be issued for the project.

7.0 AGENCY COORDINATION AND PERMITS, CONDITIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The following agencies and organizations are anticipated to be contacted by letter requesting project review during the preparation of this EA:

- City of Providence Building Department
- City of Providence Tax Assessor’s Office
- Rhode Island Historical Commission (permits are not expected to be required by the State Archaeologist)

The City of Providence has hired a professional architectural firm to develop plans for the new EOC project. Note that although design concepts and floor plans are available, to date there are no architectural plans developed or permits in place. Other than utility permits and/or local building permits, it is not anticipated that other permits or approvals would be needed from any other regulatory agencies.

General mitigation measures and conditions are expected to be required. These conditions are expected to include, but not be limited to:

- Implement appropriate best management practices (BMPs) for storm water management during construction.
- Use conventional Site preparation techniques prior to and during construction.
- Ensure that construction activities would observe the appropriate ordinances regarding traffic control, occupational safety regulations, and appropriate noise control measures.
- If artifacts or other potential historic materials are discovered during construction, work would be suspended and FEMA and the State Historic Preservation Officer would be contacted.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

No long-term detrimental impacts to geology and soils, surface waters, floodplains, WOUS, including wetlands and coastal zones, transportation, environmental justice, air quality, noise, biological resources, including threatened and endangered species, or safety are anticipated with the Proposed Action Alternative.

Impacts from hazardous materials or waste are not anticipated; however, excavation activities may expose or otherwise affect subsurface hazardous materials (present in groundwater or soils) or waste such as urban fill. Any hazardous/contaminated materials or waste discovered during construction would be disposed of and handled in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations. If hazardous/contaminated materials are discovered during the construction activities, the work will cease until the appropriate procedures and/or permits can be implemented. Consultation with an environmental consultant and/or RIDEM, will determine allowable thresholds for hazardous/contaminated materials encountered during construction.

Beneficial impacts to public health and safety are expected. There would be minor temporary impacts that are typically associated with construction projects of this nature (e.g., dust, noise, and traffic). Short-term, minimal impacts to soils, transportation, air quality, and noise are anticipated. All short-term impacts require measures to minimize and mitigate impacts to the proposed project Site and surrounding areas.

9.0 REFERENCES

Personal communication with Peter Marinucci, PEMA Deputy Director.

Conceptual Drawings provided by Jbryer Designs of Jamestown, RI.

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City of Providence Department of Planning and Development website. (<http://www.providenceplanning.org>). Accessed June 2010.

Jason Martin, Providence Historic District Commission, jmartin@providenceri.com.

RI Secretary of State Open Meetings website (openmeetings@sos.ri.gov)

10.0 LIST OF PREPARERS

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TABLE 1

SITE HISTORY TABLE

FIGURE 1

LOCUS PLAN

FIGURE 2

TAX ASSESSOR'S MAP

FIGURE 3

AERIAL VIEW

FIGURE 4

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MAP

APPENDIX A
PROPOSED LAYOUT PLANS

APPENDIX B
PHOTOGRAPHS

APPENDIX C

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION REVIEW LTR

APPENDIX D

PUBLIC NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY